THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH MALAYA

1896-1909

Frontispiece

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BY

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To the memory of

RAYMOND D. EAGLAND

PREFACE

'British Malaya' was a politico-geographical expression which embraced the Straits Settlements and those Malay States which were under the Residential system. The present study is confined to the States of Perak, Selangor, Pahang and Negri Sembilan, which after 1895 became known as the Federated Malay States. Purely Straits Settlements affairs have, therefore, been omitted except where they involved the Federated Malay States, as in education, currency reform and railway development. Similarly Johore comes into the picture only when the question of a through railway from Prai to Singapore is discussed.

Studies on Malaya have hitherto been directed at constitutional or political or economic aspects of British colonial policy to the exclusion of administrative or social problems. This work is an attempt at drawing together such apparently disparate subjects as labour and education, medical research and the rubber industry, tin mining and the development of communications, currency matters and immigration policies, and constitutional reforms. The action and reaction of problems, one on another, produced the synthesis of modern Malaya. It is hoped that an understanding of each of these problems will give a better perspective to the view of the country today.

The choice of dates has been arbitrary to a certain extent, but the main reason for limiting the study to 1909 is that at the time the research was undertaken in 1959, the Confidential Despatches between the Colonial Office and the Governor of the Straits Settlements were open to study up to 1909. In two other respects 1909 was a logical stop: it witnessed the transfer of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu from Siamese suzerainty to British protection, and ushered in important constitutional changes exemplified by the creation of the Federal Council in Malaya.

To Dr. Eunice Thio of the University of Singapore, and Professor Wang Gungwu of the University of Malaya, I am deeply indebted for their original suggestion of the present study and for their helpful advice. My thanks are due to Professor K.G. Tregonning of the University of Singapore for placing at my disposal the facilities of the History Department; and to

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I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Hugh Stretton of Adelaide University for encouraging and supporting me in this study; to Professor Douglas Pike of the Australian National University for opening numerous windows to show me a wider view of colonial rule and for his kind and constructive criticism; to the late Dr. Raymond D. Eagland for his patient counsel, encouragement and assistance in typing the script; to Mr. Liew Tett Fatt, formerly of the Ministry of External Affairs Library, Kuala Lumpur; to Tuan Haji Mubin Sheppard, formerly Director of Museums, and Mr. John Davies of the National Archives of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur; to Dr. Ho Seng Ong, Educational Secretary for the Methodist Mission; to Mrs. Dorothy Nixon, of the Kuala Lumpur Book Club; to the staffs of the Malayan Railway Department Library, Kuala Lumpur; the University of Singapore Library; the National Library and the Straits Times Library, Singapore; the Barr-Smith Library, Adelaide University, and the Public Library, Adelaide; the New South Wales Parliamentary Library, and the Public Library, Sydney.

I am very grateful to the Ministry of Education, Federation of Malaya, for making it possible for me to do the greater part of my research in Singapore and Malaya; to the Commonwealth Office of Education, Adelaide, and the External Affairs Department, Canberra, for so generously extending my Colombo Plan Fellowship to enable me to complete my studies in Australia.

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NOTE ON SOURCES

Books, pamphlets, speeches, letters and unpublished papers cited in each chapter are indicated in the NOTES directly following the chapter.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.R.	Annual Report
F.M.S.	Federated Malay States
S.S.	Straits Settlements
J.M.B.R.A.S.	Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (Singapore)
C O D	Open Despatches from the Colonial Office to the Straits Settlements
G D	Open Despatches from the Governor to the Colonial Office
C O D/C	Confidential Despatches from the Colonial Office to the Straits Settlements
G D/C	Confidential Despatches from the Governor to the Colonial Office

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE BRITISH FORWARD MOVEMENT IN MALAYA

For nearly half a century after the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1824, which removed commercial rivalry between the British and the Dutch and defined their respective spheres of influence in the Malay Archipelago, the British followed a course of strict non-intervention in their relations with the Malay Peninsula. This was the period of the Liberal philosophy of *laissez-faire* which influenced not only Britain's foreign policy but also her domestic affairs. Liberals contended that an imperial expansion of territory must necessarily entangle England with the affairs of foreign states and that there would be complications and commitments from which she would never escape. British foreign policy had long been based on non-commitment, and Liberals urged that this policy should continue in the interests of Britain.[1] Thus under the Liberal policy of free trade the Straits Settlements, particularly Singapore, progressed steadily and uneventfully. But from the 1860's and early 1870's there was a general forward movement by the Dutch in Indonesia and the French in Indo-China, a movement which was 'symptomatic of the new imperialist spirit which was beginning to be felt at the time'.[2] Several forces were at work, both in South-East Asia and in Britain itself, to bring about a change in British foreign policy.

In Britain was growing the imperial idea which was the very antithesis of the Liberal doctrine of *laissez-faire*. It became a faith to believe wholeheartedly

that it was the role of the British empire to lead the world in the arts

of civilization, to bring light to the dark places, to teach the true political method, to nourish and to protect the liberal tradition. It was to act as trustee for the weak, and bring arrogance low. It was to represent in itself the highest aims of human society. It was to command, and deserve, a status and prestige shared by no other. It was to captivate the imagination and hold fast the allegiance of the million by the propagation of peculiar myths—one among which was the figure of Queen Victoria herself . . . the idea of the Great White Queen. While encouraging and making profit from the spirit of adventure, it was nevertheless to promote the interests of peace and commerce. While it was to gain its greatest trophies in war, it was to find its main task in serving the ends of justice, law and order. It was an idea that moved, an idea that expanded, an idea that had to continue to move and to expand in order to retain its vitality and its virtue.[3]

It was against this background of ideas in the home country that the British policy of non-intervention was reversed and British rule and the Pax Britannica were introduced into the Malay States.

French expansionist activity in Indo-China quickened the change in British policy towards the Malay States. These were the years of intense Anglo-French rivalry which more than once led the two countries to the brink of war. With Indo-China falling under French influence, it looked as if Siam too would suffer the same fate, and the Malay States would then be in a vulnerable position. The authorities in Singapore were fully aware of the commercial possibilities of the Malay peninsula and of the danger of France or Germany moving into the political vacuum in the Malay States before the British. There was also the danger from Siam, who exercised some vague suzerain rights over Trengganu, Kelantan and Kedah, and who, in 1873, was actually making overtures to Perak to go under her protection. Ultimately it was not Siam herself but the fall of that country under French aggression that was feared. British policy in the Malay States had this in common with that in Burma: it aimed at avoiding a common frontier with the French. If Siam was annexed by the French, then her Malay territories would automatically be taken by France. If this happened the stage would be set for a first class Anglo-French struggle for supremacy. This eventuality the British Government was anxious to avoid.[4]

How much did these events influence the British in the decision to intervene in the Malay States? The answer is debatable, but undoubtedly one strong motive for a forward policy was the economic one. Capital accumulated in the Straits was looking for fresh and wider fields of investment, and the Straits for decades had had important trade connexions with the Malay States. Chinese enterprise in the tin mines in the Larut district of Perak and Kuala Lumpur was largely financed by Straits traders.

The immediate and most important cause for British intervention was the internal condition of the Malay States which, by all accounts, were in the final stages of decay and disintegration. Royal family quarrels, petty wars amongst minor chiefs, further complicated by clan warfare between rival Chinese groups in the tin mines, brought chaos to the country. The breakdown of law and order encouraged piracy in the Straits of Malacca. It became a menace not only to the commerce but also the peace of the Straits Settlements. But as late as 1872 the British Government made it quite clear that it was their policy not to interfere in the affairs of the Malay States except where it became necessary to suppress piracy or to punish any aggression upon British subjects and territories. In reply to a group of Straits traders appealing for the protection of their commercial interests in Selangor, the British Government warned the traders that if they chose to run the risk of placing their persons and property in the jeopardy that they were aware attended them in the unsettled conditions of the Malay States, it was 'impossible for the Government to be answerable for their protection or that of their property'.[5]

Conditions in the Malay States, however, continued to deteriorate. Civil unrest in Sungei Ujong, Selangor and Perak was widespread. The war amongst the Chinese miners in Larut had spread to the Perak coast, and the British authorities in Penang were forced to deal with a case of piracy there. The situation demanded some positive action. From September 1873 the British policy of non-intervention was dramatically reversed. In a dispatch to the Governor-designate, Sir Andrew Clarke, the Secretary of State, Lord Kimberley, declared:

Her Majesty's Government have, it need hardly be said, no desire

to interfere in the internal affairs of the Malay States; but, looking to the long and intimate connection between them and the British Government... Her Majesty's Government find it incumbent to employ such influence as they possess with the native princes to rescue, if possible, these fertile and productive countries from the ruin which must befall them if the present disorders continue unchecked.

I have to request that you will carefully ascertain as far as you are able, the actual condition of affairs in each State, and that you will report to me whether there are, in your opinion, any steps which can properly be taken by the Colonial Government to promote the restoration of peace and order, and to secure protection to trade and commerce with the native territories. I should wish you specially to consider whether it would be advisable to appoint a British Officer to reside in any of these States. Such an appointment could, of course, only be made with the full consent of the Native Government and the expenses connected with it would have to be defrayed by the Government of the Straits Settlements.[6]

This mandate for the Governor to intervene in the internal affairs of the Malay States was the turning point in the history of the country; it plunged Britain into a course of action which, although disastrous at first, proved eventually a triumph of the imperial ideal. The decision to intervene, however, was not followed by any detailed plans as to how a British Officer was to act. Although the Governor was expected to exercise his discretion, British Officers were placed in the Malay States to supervise and administer the Government without any specific instructions as to how they were to do it. Eventually the combination of personalities and circumstances produced something of a method of administration in the State of Perak which proved to be decisive in the evolution of the Residential system in Malaya.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESIDENTIAL SYSTEM

From the middle of the nineteenth century the rich tin fields of Larut in Perak had attracted large numbers of Chinese into the State. The sole concession rights and authority in this area had been delegated by the Sultan of Perak to a minor Malay chief, Che Long Jaffar, and later to the latter's son, Ngah

Ibrahim, who became known as the Mantri of Larut. The Mantri in time became rich and powerful and was one of the key figures in the struggle against British intervention. The Chinese miners, divided into two camps which were controlled by the rival Ghee Hin and Hai San secret societies, were in open conflict for the control of the tin fields in Larut from 1862 till the Pangkor Engagement in 1874. In the course of their struggle, in which the Mantri frequently changed sides, they became involved in local Malay politics and were, therefore, in part responsible for bringing about British intervention.[7]

The death of the Sultan of Perak in 1871 touched off a dispute over the succession. By custom the Raja Muda, or heir-presumptive, was required, together with all the territorial chiefs, to attend the obsequies of the late Sultan, whose burial could not take place until a successor had been formally proclaimed. On this occasion Abdullah, the Raja Muda, for various reasons failed to turn up for the funeral. After waiting forty days with their late Sultan still unburied,[8] the Perak chiefs lost patience and installed Ismail, the Raja Bendahara, who was a commoner with no immediate succession rights to the sultanate but who was supported by all the chiefs of Upper Perak.[9] Thus Perak in 1873 presented the spectacle of a Sultan living in Upper Perak, the Pretender Abdullah in Lower Perak, and a third claimant, Raja Yusuf,[10] whose unpopularity with the territorial chiefs twice cost him the right of succession.[11]

Sir Harry Ord, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, not only recognized Ismail as Sultan but also in September 1873 confirmed Ngah Ibrahim as an independent ruler of Larut. This was specially galling to Abdullah who now saw that the whole weight of British support was thrown on the side of his rival Ismail and of the Mantri who was strongly backing up the ageing Ismail. As Abdullah was getting more impecunious, it was imperative that he should succeed to the sultanate which would give him an enlarged income, if not the actual control of the Larut tin fields. To enlist support for his cause he travelled, in November 1873, to Singapore where he called on a friend of his, a wealthy and influential Chinese merchant named Tan Kim Cheng,[12] and Tan introduced Abdullah to W.H. Read, a member of the Legislative Council. Read was persuaded to take up Abdullah's case.[13] Probably under the guidance of Tan and Read,

Abdullah then addressed a neatly-phrased letter to the Governor, begging him to mediate in the quarrel between himself and the Mantri of Larut and to appoint a British officer to assist him as the rightful Sultan in governing his country.

This circumstance coincided well with the change in British policy, as shown in Lord Kimberley's dispatch of 20th September 1873. Abdullah's case was a perfect opportunity for British intervention: if Fate was knocking at the door, Abdullah was the key to open the doors of the Malay States. Sir Andrew Clarke acted with almost unseemly haste. In January 1874, the Governor called for a meeting of all the Malay chiefs and the leaders of the Ghee Hins and Hai Sans at Pangkor, an island off the Perak coast. But neither Sultan Ismail nor Raja Yusuf nor their followers attended the meeting. After a series of discussions, or rather harangues on the part of the Governor—for the Malay chiefs, including Abdullah, sat silent most of the time and probably did not understand what the whole business was about anyway—the Pangkor Engagement was signed on the 20th January, and by this Abdullah was recognized as Sultan by the British, and by a separate agreement the Chinese disputes were settled. It is obvious he did not know that the elevation of a chief to the position of Sultan had to have the sanction and blessing of Malay religion and ceremonial in the presence of all the most important chiefs. This reversal of Sir Harry Ord's policy towards the Mantri of Larut and the flagrant disregard for Malay custom and opinion in the selection of a Sultan must have appeared confusing even to those Malay chiefs who attended; certainly where the Mantri and his party were concerned it was not calculated to inspire confidence in the justice of the white man. These were some of the important factors which influenced Malay resistance against the British administration in Perak.

So far as the Residential system was concerned, the most important provisions in the Pangkor Engagement were Clause Six and Clause Ten. By the former the Sultan was to receive a British Resident whose advice must be asked for and acted upon in all matters other than those concerning Islam and Malay custom; by the latter, the collection and control of all revenues and the general administration of the country were to be regulated under the advice of these Residents.[14]

Why was Abdullah chosen as Sultan by the British? There is

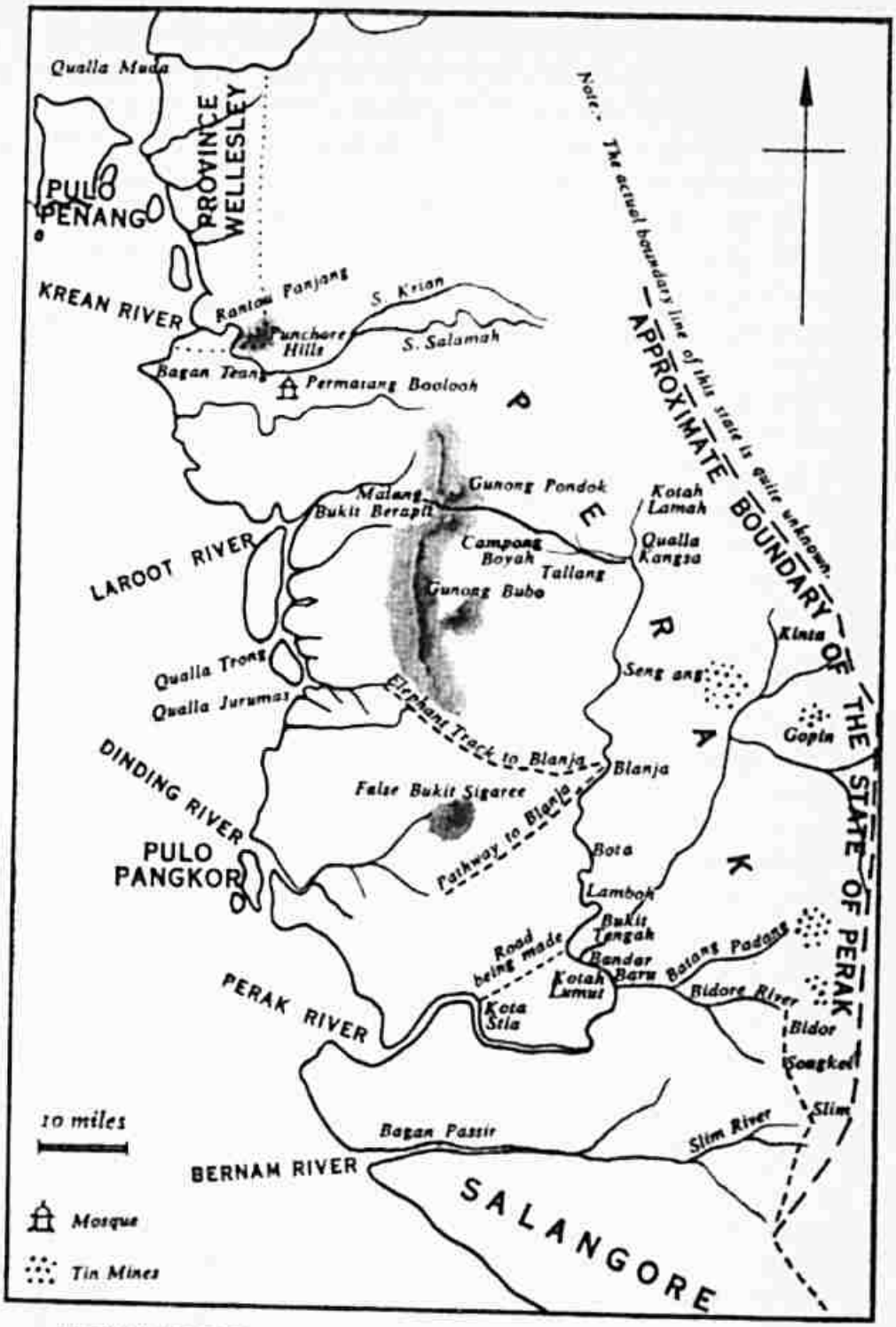
no evidence to show that Sir Andrew Clarke carefully ascertained the actual condition of affairs in the State of Perak before he acted. Since Lord Kimberley's instructions had stated that the appointment of a British officer 'could, of course, only be made with the full consent of the Native Government', Sir Andrew Clarke, in his determination to get a foothold in the Malay States, had to find the head of the Native Government; Abdullah was most willing to receive a British officer, but as he was not the *de facto* ruler, the obvious thing was to *make* him Sultan. The Governor was careful to see that his intervention in the affairs of Perak had the sanction of British law; it mattered nothing if British law was neither understood nor respected by the Malays. In the clause referring to 'advice' neither Sir William Jervois, who succeeded Clarke, nor J.W.W. Birch, the Resident, ever intended to follow the letter of the Engagement: *advice* by their interpretation meant *control*. The British at the time did not appear to have understood how intimately related were the Malays' religion and custom, their concept of justice, their system of taxation, their practice of holding land and slaves, for if they did, they were determined, at one stroke of the pen, to separate Mosque and State, so to speak. This failure to understand what was and was not part of Malay custom, and thus to make safeguards in the Engagement, was the root cause of all the trouble in Perak.

The British regarded one of their primary duties to be that of maintaining law and order, which meant *British* law and justice. Once they accepted this responsibility they were bound to come into conflict with *Malay* custom and law, and the test case was debt-slavery. Although the Minangkabau laws in the matriarchal states of the Negri Sembilan were relatively humane, the British found the criminal law in the patriarchal state of Perak 'a tissue of barbarities, inconsistencies and class favouritism, three of the most damning flaws in the administration of justice'.[15] From a background of nineteenth-century Christian morality and the Liberal tradition, British administrators felt it their mission to deliver the Malays from the thraldom of anarchy and the oppression of misgovernment by their own rulers, and to introduce British law with its impartiality and comparative humanity. This attitude finds a parallel in European impressions of Africa which was seen as a country of 'complete and anarchic savagery'.

Such impressions, says Margery Perham, were responsible for fixing 'an uncritical and generalized attitude of superiority' towards Africans, an attitude which acted 'not only as a justification of European annexation and government . . . but as an excuse for the less defensible activities of imperialism'.[16] This judgment, to some extent, holds true of the British in India and Malaya, but the truth of Winstedt's conclusions *vis-a-vis* Malay criminal law is incontestible. It was precisely because administrators like Hugh Low, Swettenham, Clifford and others were champions of the Malays that they so fervently worked to root out what they believed to be a cancer in their system: debt-slavery. In Perak, as in the other patriarchal Malay States, the common people had no civil rights of any kind; the feudal chiefs were free to grind the faces of the poor with indiscriminate taxation and a pernicious system of slavery.[17] At a time when the English public conscience was revolted by missionary reports of slavery in Africa, the British in Malaya could not be expected to condone a local practice which degraded and demoralized the Malays. If their mission was to bring light into the dark places, they could not tolerate the 3,000 slaves and debt-bondsmen (roughly one-sixteenth of the entire Malay population) estimated to have been in existence in Perak in 1874.[18]

The obligations of any power concerned with the protection of Malaya's brawling and lawless states were clear. Great Britain had to ensure peace and order and to build up communications that would consolidate isolated districts into homogeneous states. It had to contrive that rulers in theory constitutional should be so in practice. It had to enlarge the government to represent the rights and interests of immigrants who according to Muslim medieval theory had as pagans no rights at all. It had to arrange for public revenues to be spent for public [welfare]. It had to transfer administration from the hands of interested amateurs to the hands of disinterested specialists. . . .[19]

Subsequently when the Malay Rulers were convinced that their criminal law was outmoded and that their Muslim law of evidence was impracticable and a contradiction of the Malay acceptance of circumstantial evidence, they were 'glad to follow in the footsteps of Turkey and Egypt and to adopt the Indian Penal Code and a law of evidence that was a compromise between



PERAK AT THE TIME OF THE PANGKOR ENGAGEMENT

the two systems they could not reconcile. In this matter the Malays saw the desirability of interference with their religion and custom.'[20]

However morally superior the British felt themselves to be in 1874, they were in a false position right from the start. The recognition of Abdullah as Sultan was a violation of Malay custom and was secured without the sanction of either Ismail, the 'crowned head', or Yusuf, the rejected candidate, for they had both boycotted Pangkor. The first British Resident was thus committed to support a Sultan whose succession and authority were denied by more than half the territorial chiefs who wanted no truck with the British. Furthermore, by bringing humiliation to the Mantri of Larut through making him responsible for the Larut war indemnity and subordinating him to Abdullah whom he hated and despised, the British earned a powerful and deadly enemy.

Government and administration as a European understood them were non-existent in Perak, which had no well-ordered system of taxation, and revenue came mainly from customs dues on all imports and export dues on tin and jungle produce. As hereditary tax-collectors, the Malay chiefs levied taxes indiscriminately on their own initiative. Since whatever trade there was relied on river transport, the chiefs stationed their toll-houses at all important junctions of the Perak River and from their coign of vantage practically taxed all trade out of existence. Against this background of inefficient government in Perak, the British appeared to consider the state of things as an administrative problem rather than as a diplomatic challenge, and all that was required was a firm administrator to set things right. Both the choice of James Wheeler Woodford Birch[21] as Resident and the man himself showed a lack of appreciation of the seriousness of introducing British rule into the Malay States. Birch's background and training had not given him an insight into the intricacies of handling hostile natives. His experience in Ceylon had taught him that native rulers were 'perfectly incapable of good government or even of maintaining order, without the guidance and assistance from a stronger hand'.[22]

Birch arrived in Perak on the 30th of October 1874, and four days later he noted in his diary, 'I see that nothing but decision is necessary with these people'; and fifteen days later, 'Firmness

will, I trust, do it all; and with him (Abdullah) one must be firm and even peremptory. God help a country left to a man like that, unadvised by sound counsellors! I very often despair when I think of him; but he will only be a puppet and, I believe, do all that one advises.'[23] These were not the words of a diplomat. On one occasion Birch wrote to the Governor, 'It concerns us little what were the old customs of the country, nor do I think they are worthy of our consideration.'[24] One of these old customs was, of course, debt-slavery. Given no official guidance as to how he should handle the Sultan and the Malay chiefs, Birch 'dashed into Perak like a Victorian rationalist schoolmaster, confident that decision and firmness would soon remedy abuses'.[25]

One of the first things Birch did was to attempt a reconciliation between Sultan Abdullah and Sultan Ismail. He had hoped to persuade the latter to give up the sacred royal regalia without which Abdullah could not properly be installed. At the same meeting he tried to induce the chiefs of Upper Perak to put their signatures to the Pangkor Engagement and thus sanction the British choice of Abdullah. Birch's earnestness was matched by his naïvety; the diplomatic *coup* proved abortive.[26]

Finance is the basis of administration, and Birch had to find the necessary money to pay for his modest establishment of civil servants. He wished, first of all, to rationalize the fiscal system, establish a single customs collection by Government officers at the mouth of the Perak River, reduce the duty on tin, abolish the extraordinary tin royalties and set up a single opium, gambling and spirit farm for the State. In other words, he was determined to supersede the traditional functions of the territorial chiefs and control the treasury.[27] As this cut at the root of their livelihood, the Malay chiefs put up a passive resistance, but this only served to convince Birch that their hereditary revenues were political blackmail.[28] He utterly disregarded the territorial chiefs and refused to discuss administrative matters with anyone except Sultan Abdullah, who was growing more and more recalcitrant and for whom he had the utmost contempt.[29] By his refusal to draw the chiefs into his scheme of administration, Birch cut himself off from valuable sources of information and arrived at important decisions without their counsel. Grievances were swept aside where a sympathetic inquiry and discussion would have avoided misunderstandings. Nowhere was Birch's

tactlessness more evident than in the way he handled the problem of debt-slavery. He was moved, like Victorian humanitarians and missionaries in Africa, to hate the sin of slavery and love its suffering victims. Convinced of the righteousness of his own cause, he frequently gave food and shelter to runaway slaves and helped them escape, ignoring the protests of even the Sultan, who of course kept a large flock of debt-slaves in his own court.

Despite the mounting hostility amongst the Malays Birch and Sir William Jervois[30] decided to push through their administrative reforms. Under the new arrangement the Resident and the Assistant Resident, henceforth to be called Queen's Commissioners, were to administer the government in the name of the Sultan. Under threat of deposition, Abdullah finally gave his unwilling assent to the Resident's control over jurisdiction and taxation and the appointment and dismissal of *penghulus*.[31] Birch expected trouble, for he had arranged with the Governor to send a force of sepoys and a small body of European troops into the State. A show of force was expected to discourage any possible rebellion. But Birch was impatient. Before the troops arrived he had decided to post the proclamations in the villages along the Perak River. 'The crisis had come: and the force to maintain order was not there.'[32] On 2nd November 1875, in the village of Pasir Salak, an infuriated mob of Malays set on the Resident, who was speared to death while taking a bath in the river.

Of the Gilbertian campaign against the assassins, and of the trial and execution of those implicated in the murder of Birch, little need be said here. With the violent death of the first British Resident, it looked as if the experiment in direct rule had failed. The situation had demanded infinite patience and the skill of a diplomat, but as it was, everything turned on the decisions of one man. As in the case of Lugard in Africa, so in the Malay States the success or failure of British rule in its initial stages depended not on any preconceived form of administration, but on the ability of the man on the spot to adapt his mind and heart as well as his professional experience to the exigencies of a given situation. In the case of Birch a too urgent sense of mission perhaps clouded his vision and impaired his judgment. But Birch did not die because of character defects;[33] the Malays killed him not so much because they hated him personally but because he was the symbol of a foreign Power which had come to interfere,

quite unwarrantably, in their domestic affairs and customs.

The successful establishment of the Residential system has been attributed mainly to the achievements of Sir Hugh Low, who arrived in Perak in 1877 to assume the duties of Resident.[34] Before he arrived in Malaya he had spent nearly thirty years in the service of Labuan, Sarawak and North Borneo. He was a Malay scholar, naturalist and explorer with 'a respect for routine, a knowledge of official procedures, a sense of order'.[35] In Sarawak his close friendship with Raja Brooke gave him an insight into the problems of administration in a Malay country and enabled him to learn something of the principles of indirect rule.

On his arrival in Perak, Low found the nucleus of an administration; revenue and law were in the hands of British Officers. In September 1877, with the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the State Council modelled on the Indian Councils created by the Act of 1861, was formed. The civil list which was provided for by the Pangkor Engagement but which Birch had no chance of implementing, was duly settled and the chiefs and the Sultan were paid their allowances. Low planned and succeeded in giving a place in the administration to the *penghulus* who administered most of the villages along the Perak River and who thus became the instruments of Government policy as well as representatives of the common people. The large police force and military guard, which were left behind after the Perak punitive expedition, were reduced as a measure of economy, and greater responsibility for maintaining law and order was given to the *penghulus*. Debt-slavery remained a thorny problem until it was finally abolished in 1883. State finances and the system of taxation were reformed with the approval of the State Council, and by the end of 1883 the Perak war debts amounting to $175,474 were completely paid.

Under Low's administration the provisions of the Pangkor Engagement were effectively reversed. Where previously 'the Sultan was to rule with British advice, the Resident now ruled with the advice of the Malays and the leading Chinese, the Malay chiefs being compensated for their loss of revenue and power by allowances, dignities and appointments to office in the administration'.[36]

The Residential system was thus in effect a compromise between the undisguised control of government, as advocated by

Jervois and Birch, and the mere giving of advice to the Sultan, as proposed by the Colonial Office. This compromise, however, was achieved not so much by official directives as through 'a happy knack of stumbling and blundering into the only safe path'[37] by the officials who had to make the system work. In the difficult task of administering the Malay States the Colonial Office was careful to avoid definitions or anything that suggested a rigid system. It did not provide any hard and fast rules to guide the Residents whose functions and positions *vis-a-vis* the Sultan were therefore never clearly defined, nor was it possible to define anything when the whole affair was regarded as an experiment. Clearly the events in Perak showed that neither Sir William Jervois nor Birch ever intended to administer the State by the mere giving of advice to the Sultan, for it was impossible to control taxation without interfering in the general administration of the country. The truth is that *control* was the essence of colonial rule, and political and economic factors could not be so divided into compartments that the one could be controlled while the other could be left free in its sphere of operation.[38] The long and often acrimonious correspondence that followed the death of Birch, between the Secretary of State and the Governor, was a debate on the fundamental principles of indirect rule, and although it ended in the formal victory of the Secretary of State, the Governor had at least elicited from his opponent the recognition of an accomplished fact—that the Resident had political and administrative as well as consultative duties.[39] The parting shot of Lord Carnarvon was to warn the Governor that

> The Residents are not to interfere more frequently or to greater extent than is necessary with the minor details of Government; but their special efforts should be the maintenance of peace and law, the initiation of a sound system of taxation, with the consequent development of the resources of the country, and the provision of the collection of revenue.[40]

Two years later when the Resident of Selangor, Captain Douglas, was found to have exceeded his duties by arresting and deposing from the State Council an important Malay chief for alleged bribery,[41] the Colonial Secretary in Singapore reminded all Residents of the rules laid down by the Secretary of State, that they had been placed in the Native States 'as advisers, not as rulers',

and if they took upon themselves to disregard this principle they would 'most assuredly be held responsible' if trouble sprang out of their neglect of it.[42] In giving instructions to the Residents the Colonial Office did not take into account the administrative inexperience of the Malay rulers and the limited resources at their disposal. It was not fully aware that at the time the Malay governments maintained a precarious existence and were to all intents lacking in proper organization. In the circumstances the Residents 'were forced to create and control the administrative systems in the States and to expand and adapt them to meet the needs of a rapidly developing country'.[43]

'It is one thing,' declared Swettenham, 'to write in Downing Street—or even in Singapore—such contradictory and impossible instructions for the guidance of a single British Officer . . . and quite a different thing for that man to carry them out.'[44] Swettenham admitted that right from the start

> the Residents had exercised, or tried to exercise, an influence which could not truthfully be defined as the simple offer of advice, and when, in 1878, they were warned that if they departed from the role of advisers they would be held answerable for any trouble which might occur, they accepted the responsibility as preferable to a position of impotence and an attitude which no native in the country could have either understood or appreciated.[45]

Since Swettenham was one of the young Residents who later rose to the position of Resident-General and Governor of the Straits Settlements, the above views indicate that the British Residents had a tacit understanding amongst themselves not to take the dictums of the Colonial Office too seriously, for they went ahead with the business of ruling the State in the name of the Sultan. In India, as in the Malay States, the British could not trust native rulers; only the British officers themselves could be relied upon to pursue policies of progress and to ensure a good and incorrupt government. Seen in this light, imperialism 'as a kind of rescue-service', and Cromer's task of 'delivering the Egyptians from economic bankruptcy to prosperity, from the tyrannies of their Khedive to the principles of British justice' had its direct parallel in the Malay States.[46]

The Residential system was successful because while the British proceeded to set up a central state authority through which they

held the real power of government, they also secured the position of the Sultan as head of the State at the expense of the territorial chiefs. The security of the Sultan, however, was purely personal in that he received an added guarantee of tenure of office, greater pomp and ceremony, and an enlarged privy purse. Before the introduction of British rule, the functions of the royal ruler were to exercise limited powers of central government, to conduct external affairs, to provide leadership in foreign wars and to embody and symbolize the unity and welfare of the State. This at least was the theory of the indigenous political system of the Malays; in practice most of the internal power was vested in the territorial chiefs, each of whom had absolute control of his district, while the Sultan was generally in control of a royal district which he governed after the manner of a territorial chief.[47] Under the British both the Sultan and those territorial chiefs who were absorbed into the administrative system were made to identify themselves with the ruling Power. The political and financial position and security of the Sultan depended to a great extent on the personal relationship between himself and the British Government, which could if necessary make and unmake Sultans, as events in Perak showed. Sultan Yusuf, who succeeded Abdullah (banished to the Seychelles after the murder of Birch), and later Sultan Idris, were not unmindful of this fact. One might even go so far as to say that the Malay Sultans received their sovereign rights at the hands of the British Government: in the 1885 treaty with Johore and the 1887 treaty with Pahang, the rulers, formerly Maharajah and Bendahara respectively, were graciously permitted by Her Majesty the Great White Queen to assume the style of Sultan. This complex and delicate relationship between the Sultans and the British Government was the pivot of the Residential system.

The Residents, of course, kept up the pretence of merely giving advice to the Sultans. This is best explained by Swettenham himself, the past-master of indirect rule:

> The main object was to keep the Ruler fully informed on all important matters of administration. If the Resident had the right influence and exercised [it] with tact and consideration, his advice was accepted, because the Ruler realised that the proposals put to him were for the benefit of the State and the people, and as he was

asked for approval *before* any important step was taken he felt that his own wishes were being carried out without trouble to him, and he was not concerned with details.[48]

The State Council was part of this make-believe. The Sultan was President, with the Resident, territorial chiefs and a few representatives of vested interests, such as Chinese tin miners, as ordinary members. Its deliberations, carried on in Malay, were concerned only with local affairs of minor importance, such as the appointments and salaries of Malay chiefs and *penghulus*, and confirmation or modification of death sentences. The dominating figure in the Council was without doubt the Resident, who decided on the agenda and dictated Government enactments. Although the annual estimates of revenue and expenditure were laid before it, they were first drawn up by the Resident and then sent to the Governor for approval. As a body the State Council had very little influence over major policy-making, for it remained in the hands of the Residents who were under the control of the Governor.[49] Notwithstanding its limitations, the State Council served its purpose so well that similar councils with identical procedure were set up after Perak's model in Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang.

The ruler of the little province of Sungei Ujong (which later became the nucleus of the confederation of nine provinces called the Negri Sembilan) in 1874 requested an English officer to administer his State and the Sultan of Selangor did the same in the following year. After the Perak War and the controversy over Captain Douglas's action in arresting a Malay chief for alleged bribery in Selangor, the British settled down to the routine work of building up an administrative system and of organizing the finances of the States. Although British policy remained substantially the same until the Federation in 1895, Sir Frederick Weld[50] soon after his arrival as Governor in 1880, felt that it was time the British Government defined its policy with regard to the Malay States. In a dispatch to the Secretary of State, he surveyed the situation and arrived at some important conclusions which indirectly paved the way to the administrative reforms of 1895 and influenced the Colonial Office policy towards the Siamese-Malay States.[51]

Weld stated that interests affecting not only the welfare and

position of large populations but also of a country which was the key to the Far East should not be left to 'chance dealing'. The absence of a clear-cut policy was such that a slight matter, the indiscretion of a Resident or even of a subordinate, might precipitate a crisis. 'The present theory of the native States government,' declared Weld, 'is that we advise, and do not assume the possibility of our advice not being taken; but no hard and fast rule can be given for such advice.' Although the natives as a whole appeared contented, it was difficult to gauge the true feelings of the native chiefs who might attempt to regain their lost political power. The presence of a large and increasing Chinese population was a source of danger and would require firm and careful handling; a quarrel between native chiefs or a faction fight amongst the Chinese might serve as a spark to a widespread fire. The possibility of such an emergency required the continued presence of the British as guardians of the peace and the supreme arbiter in disputes that might arise. Weld recognized that the British had been relying on something more than mere advice, and unless they were prepared to evacuate, the country had to continue working on the same lines in the future.

In this situation three possible courses were open to the British Government: to prepare gradually for retiring from the Native States, to annex them, or to retain control over the States already under British rule and gradually increase the influence over the Malay States under Siamese suzerainty with the ultimate aim of extending the Residential system to them.

With regard to the first course, neither British interests nor the interests of the Malays would justify leaving the country to the anarchy that must inevitably follow a British withdrawal. 'Nothing that we have done so far,' Weld exclaimed, 'has taught them to govern themselves, we are merely teaching them to co-operate with us and govern under our guidance. To teach men to govern themselves, you must throw them on their own resources. We are necessarily doing the very reverse.' The Governor doubted the ability of Orientals to govern themselves, judging from their past history. 'Good native government,' he continued, 'seems not to be a plant congenial to the soil, and every year native rulers are confronted with greater difficulties owing to the growth of a foreign and especially a huge Chinese population.' Even to the most ardent anti-imperialist, the validity

of this judgment at the time is inescapable. Besides, a major economic factor against retirement was the fact that both British and Chinese capital had been invested in the Malay States in the confidence that the Pax Britannica would remain indefinitely.

With regard to annexation, Weld was not prepared to advocate such a policy. 'Countries in the position of the Malay States,' he said, 'require a somewhat elastic form of government; justice and firmness should be tempered by tact and discretion, and great care should be given to the selection of Residents and even of subordinate agents. The native States are not, in my opinion, ready for a system which approaches more nearly the purely British one which prevails in our Colonies.'

The opportunity of extending British influence to the Malay States outside the Residential system was taken whenever the occasion presented itself. During Weld's term of office as Governor, the little provinces which later formed the Negri Sembilan were in constant strife, and in their disputes Weld readily played the role of supreme arbiter, dispensing justice and goodwill and exhorting the chiefs to deal equitably with each other. The result was that in June 1887 an agreement was signed between Tunku Antah, the Yam Tuan of Sri Menanti (as the leader of the provinces of Johol, Enas, Muar, Jempol, Terachi and Gunong Pasir), and the Governor of the Straits Settlements. The main points of the agreement were that there should be facilities for trade and communication through the provinces, that foreign affairs should be conducted through the Governor, and that no grant or concessions should be made to other than British companies or persons of the Malay, Chinese, Indian or other Oriental races, not being subjects of any non-Oriental nations, without the consent of the Governor of the Straits Settlements. This was a prelude to the agreement in 1889 when these same provinces, in addition to constituting themselves into a confederation known as the Negri Sembilan, placed themselves under British protection and accepted a British Resident.[32]

Soon after Weld's arrival in Singapore, in response to overtures from the ruler of Pahang, an *entente cordiale* was established between that State and the British Government. For years Pahang had been thought of as an El Dorado possessing immense quantities of tin and gold, and the ruler, besieged by eager and often unscrupulous concession hunters whose tempting offers he

found difficult to resist, had at last become alive to the gravity of the situation. As a result of a mission by Hugh Clifford, the ruler of Pahang in 1887 asked for a European officer to assist him in the administration of the country.[53] The most important provision in the agreement signed on 8th October, a fortnight before Weld retired as Governor, was that foreign affairs were left in the hands of the British Government, which in return formally acknowledged the ruler's desire to use the title of Sultan.[54] Hugh Clifford was appointed as British Agent in Pahang. The following year a Chinese British subject was murdered in Pahang, and after considerable pressure from Singapore the Sultan, in return for the British Government's squashing the matter, formally asked for a British Resident to assist 'in matters relating to the Government of our country, on a similar system to that existing in the Malay States under English protection'. This offer was accepted by the new Governor, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith.[55]

INTERNAL POLICIES

Although the Perak rebellion had come as a shock to the British authorities, it did not interrupt tin production in the State as the Chinese in Larut were not involved, and British administration in Selangor and Sungei Ujong had worked smoothly. With the return of normal conditions in Perak, immigration was given new impetus; the improvement of communications and the removal of the old taxes imposed on necessities greatly increased trade and facilitated the import of consumer goods and food which materially improved the living conditions of the people.

Tin Mining

In Perak the richest revenue-producing area was in the tin mining district of Larut which in 1876 provided $213,043 out of the total State revenue of $273,043. In 1877 Larut yielded $218,216 out of a total revenue of $282,235.[56] The development of Selangor and Sungei Ujong, though not as spectacular as Perak, was equally impressive. The capital which developed the tin mines was mainly Chinese, for European capital was still shy of coming in despite assurances from the various State Governments. A few attempts at tin mining by Europeans were dismal failures,

although in 1890 it was reported that an Australian company in Larut was working quite successfully. In the 1870's and 1880's a European company, weighted down by heavy payments to promoters and by the cost of a European staff, would start off in competition with the Chinese at an enormous disadvantage. The Chinese system, using thousands of cheap manual labourers, was eminently economical as regards management. A Chinese mine-owner, hearing of the sum paid monthly to the European staff of a mining company, observed to the Resident of Selangor that he could employ 400 additional labourers on that amount.[57]

The State Governments realized that tin mining was the goose that invariably laid the golden eggs and they therefore saw to its proper feeding and protection. The first railways to be built were those connecting the tin mines with the nearest port. The Taiping-Port Weld line of about eight miles was opened in 1885, and the twenty-two-mile track connecting Klang and Kuala Lumpur was opened in 1886. Later, with the development of tin mining in the Kinta district of Perak, the State Government invested heavily in railways connecting Ipoh with Teluk Anson at the mouth of the Perak River.

The Chinese system of finance in the tin mines depended on quick turnovers and the ready availability of cash, and for this reason the tin production was to a great extent subject to the fluctuations in the local money market. When a depression set in in 1889 and lasted nearly three years, the tin mines were badly hit. The world depression was caused partly by the fall in prices of primary products, and partly by the decline in the price of silver, which led to a reduction of the export of silver dollars from Mexico. The result of this was a shortage of currency throughout the East, and the temporary closing of the Japanese mint at Osaka for the coinage of silver yen further intensified the currency shortage.[58] In the Malay States the immediate cause of the depression was therefore the shortage of money. The rapid development of the Malay States was accomplished with money from the Straits Settlements, and the supply was nearly exhausted. The field of enterprise had been widely extended and most of the available capital was invested in securities which, for the moment, were only considered safe enough to cover small cash allowances. The sudden alarm and stoppage of money supplies involved in difficulty one native or Chinese financier after another.[59]

The tightness of the money market had a chain reaction from the wealthier traders to the men with limited capital in the tin mines; with the ruin of the latter, the mines stopped working and the labourers were thrown out of employment. Under the Chinese system of mining the actual workers were supported during the preliminary period upon advances in kind and money from an investor, to whom the tin when extracted must be sold at a comparatively low price. The stoppage of credit to a Chinese mining community working under such conditions would have disastrous consequences on the finances of the State. W.E. Maxwell, the Resident of Selangor, was fully aware of this, and in 1890 he suggested that it was 'in the highest degree politic to devote a portion of the available assets of the State to the support of the mining industry' where prospects were favourable and assistance was refused by the banks and the Chettiars.[60] Maxwell's proposal of loans to Chinese miners was adopted and a total of $107,000 was advanced to the miners. At the end of the year the balance outstanding of these advances was $14,000. Largely owing to this Government assistance, the tin output for the year was kept at a satisfactory level.[61]

In Perak, at the same period of depression, many mines faced the possibility of closing down, but Swettenham, who was Resident then, did not go so far as to use State funds to help the miners. Government assistance was to a large extent unnecessary with the establishment of the Straits Trading Company in the Kinta district. The extension of the Company's operations there meant that any miner could obtain cash for his ore without the cost of smelting or sending to the Colony and paying commissions. With the money so obtained the miner had been able to to carry on his operations and pay his labourers without borrowing at an exorbitant interest, and to provide himself with provisions and other necessaries at their proper price and not at the extravagant prices charged by those who supplied them on credit.[62]

In all the States the chief items of expenditure were the establishments, allowances to Malay chiefs, and public works, including the construction and upkeep of roads. Although in the early years of the Residential system economy was the keyword in the administration, Residents like Swettenham and Maxwell realized that since outside capital was not forthcoming in the

desired proportions for the development of the States, the Government's duty was to invest all its resources in public works and essential social services, hoping that these would then attract further capital and investment. 'In the administration of a Malay State,' declared Swettenham, 'revenue and prosperity follow the liberal but prudently directed expenditure of public funds, especially when they are invested in high-class roads, in railways, telegraphs, waterworks and everything likely to encourage trade and private enterprise; and in this the Malay State is probably not peculiar. The Government cannot do the mining and the agriculture, but it can make it profitable for others to embark in such speculations by giving them every reasonable facility, and that we have tried to do.'[62]

The results of such a Government policy are shown below in the revenue of the Malay States. The figures, taken from the Annual Reports, give an idea of the phenomenal prosperity of the States.

REVENUE OF THE PROTECTED MALAY STATES, 1876-1888

Year	*Perak* $	*Selangor* $	*S. Ujong* $	*Total* $
1876	273,043	193,476	94,478	560,997
1877	312,872	226,853	97,707	637,432
1878	328,608	189,897	75,898	594,403
1879	388,372	184,387	76,632	649,391
1880	582,496	215,614	83,800	881,910
1881	692,861	235,237	97,665	1,025,753
1882	905,386	300,423	109,413	1,315,222
1883	1,474,330	450,644	117,145	2,042,119
1884	1,532,497	494,483	121,176	2,148,156
1885	1,522,085	566,411	120,214	2,208,710
1886	1,688,276	689,401	120,740	2,498,417
1887	1,827,477	1,153,897	141,502	3,122,876
1888	2,016,240	1,416,795	155,951	3,588,986

Agriculture

Even in the midst of such prosperity, British administrators were afraid that the tin deposits in the country might soon become exhausted. The country's prosperity promised no certain permanence, and its rigid economy was thus insecurely based.

Certainly the goose was still laying its golden eggs, but Swettenham saw no reason why that should preclude efforts to establish other resources. Again and again he urged the diversification of the economy by establishing a stable agriculture. The Government hoped to see its immense tracts of forest permanently settled by an agricultural population, but the expected inrush of planters and agriculturists did not take place. 'Ten years ago,' complained the Resident of Perak, 'when almost nothing was known of the capabilities of the Malayan soil and climate, it seemed likely that the field just opened would attract many experienced European planters and a considerable amount of European capital. Now that the possibilities of agriculture have been to a large extent proved, communications greatly extended, and many facilities offered which did not then exist, the State seems to have lost its attractions for the planter.'[64]

The deterrent to planters was a muddled and niggardly land policy which, in addition, had a cumbrous system of alienation. What was needed was a liberal land policy. 'The great object of the Government should be to get land taken up on almost any terms, for agriculture alone will bring about a settled and thriving population,' reported Sir Cecil Smith to the Colonial Office.[65]

Lord Knutsford replied that the Governor's suggested policy might be justified in countries which were comparatively short of population and capital, and in which an immediate influx of a tax-paying and producing population was necessary to provide resources for carrying on the Government. But in the case of the Malay States, notably in Selangor, the community might well be considered to have passed that stage in its development, when it was expedient to sacrifice the State land rights to introduce population and balance the finances. In all the States works of improvement were enhancing the value of public land. Since there was a slight depression in the Malay States, caused mainly by shortage of money and scarcity of labour, an additional argument could be made against sacrificing public lands for the sake of an immediate addition to population, which was not vital to the solvency or steady progress of the country. 'Whatever is the policy finally adopted,' the Secretary of State declared, 'it should be . . . as far as possible common to all the States, at least to all those on the western side of the Peninsula; otherwise, the mis-

chief would arise of one State or one Resident competing against others for population.'[66]

The importance of Lord Knutsford's dispatch lies in the emphasis on the need for administrative uniformity in land policy. Hitherto each State had its own system based on local custom, and although it was much improved under the various Residents, the diversity of the law merely put obstacles in the way of planters who wished to take up land.[67] Reform was necessary, and in this matter the Malay States could take the cue from the Straits Settlements where the land laws which had been in similar chaos were finally systematized under the direction of Sir Frederick Weld. In dealing with the land problems of the Colony, Weld could fall back on his experience in New Zealand where he had been a squatter, and in Western Australia and Tasmania where he had served as Governor. Weld had advocated the Torrens principle which seemed to be the most obvious remedy to all the land difficulties in the Straits Settlements.[68]

Land Reform: the Torrens System

Under the Residentship of W.E. Maxwell, Selangor was the pioneer in introducing the Torrens system of land registration into the Malay States. In 1891 the Land Code and Registration of Titles Regulation came into operation. Under this code a system of so-called 'customary' titles was introduced, similar to a system in force in Malacca, under which there was a register of customary holdings (elsewhere termed a record of rights) and every landholder received an 'extract from the register' containing the official particulars about his land, and the amount of his revenue liability; but this system was only made applicable to Muslims, and to land outside the limits of a town. To persons belonging to other religions, and to all persons within town limits, a 'permit to occupy' was issued, pending survey, to be replaced by a 'grant' in perpetuity. Provision was also made for the periodical revision of assessment and rents—excepting town lands and agricultural blocks exceeding 100 acres in extent: in the case of land held under grant, at intervals of thirty years, and in the case of land held under customary tenure, at intervals of not less than seven years. In the case of town land and of blocks exceeding 100 acres, the rent was not made liable to revision, but was fixed once for all. Every holder of an 'extract from the

register' was entitled to apply for a 'grant'. The system of registration of titles, transfers and changes, affecting land held under lease or grant, based on the Torrens principle, was administered by a central titles office in Kuala Lumpur, but the transfers, etc., of holdings under 'customary' tenure were effected by a simple entry in the register of such holdings kept by each district officer.[69]

The chief alterations introduced by the Selangor land regulations of 1891 were: the substitution of 'extracts from the register' for 'certificates of title' in the case of land under Malay tenure; of 'permits to occupy' for 'agreements for lease'; and of 'grants' for 'leases' in perpetuity, while certain classes of land were made liable to periodical revisions of rent. The exact nature of 'customary' title was a matter of great importance in Selangor as, by the Regulation of 1892, the words 'if a Muhammadan' were deleted from the Land Code, and the status of customary landholders might then be acquired by Europeans, Chinese and others, in respect of any waste land—e.g. virgin forest. If the entry in the register of customary holdings did not constitute 'title by registration', as in Australia, it appeared advisable to adopt the Australian system, under which an entry in the register conferred an absolute, indefeasible title, guaranteed by the Government, on every registered landholder.[70]

The land laws in Selangor were thus made sufficiently easy and liberal to encourage agriculturists as well as miners to extend their operations in new directions. This soon produced results, for in the early 1890's a considerable number of planters from Ceylon, where coffee cultivation had been ruined by disease, arrived in Selangor to take up land for coffee. Later, towards the end of the century, when coffee in Malaya was hit by falling prices and disease, these planters were able to turn to plantation rubber without serious loss to the country.

During 1891 the Perak Government, although it had not yet adopted the Torrens system of land registration, leased a total of 36,000 acres of land to planters. The conditions were: lease or leases in perpetuity for 1,000 acres in one block or in blocks of not less than 500 acres, each without premium and with a quit-rent of only twenty cents an acre after two years' free occupation. The Government reserved the right of levying an export duty on produce which might not exceed 2½ per cent *ad valorem*.

W.E. Maxwell, who took a keen interest in land matters, urged a uniform land policy for all the Malay States, particularly on the following points:

(a) the careful avoidance of anything approaching English tenure by grant or lease, except in respect of lands within the limits of townships, and of special agricultural holdings of large size;

(b) the adoption, in the case of peasant holdings beyond the limits of townships, of a proprietary tenure subject to the payment of assessment, similar to the customary tenure of Malacca;

(c) the general recognition of the principle that the State was entitled to share in future prosperity.[71]

'Uniformity of land revenue administration throughout the Protected Native States,' declared Maxwell, 'is a subject of pressing importance, for, in the absence of guiding principles, every year may see the various States drifting wider and wider apart in regard to matters which should be governed by one policy deliberately laid down and persistently carried out.'[72]

Maxwell's suggestions were carefully considered by the Colonial Office which at the end of 1892 agreed that, so far as it was consistent with vested interests, the development of the Malay States and native customs, the aim of the Government should be to introduce a reasonably uniform system of land tenure. While preserving for the occupant of land the full result of his own labour and capital, the Government should safeguard the principle that the State was entitled to a share in the surplus value of the land due to the increasing prosperity of the community. But the Colonial Office also pointed out that it would be impolitic to interfere unduly with the native customs affecting occupation and cultivation of land, nor was it prepared to attempt to lay down hard and fast rules on such a complex matter.[73] The need for uniformity in land policy was one of the many administrative problems which pointed the way to the Federation of 1896.

Immigration and Labour

The first general census taken in 1891 showed a total population of 424,218 with the following break-down:

Perak	214,254	Negri Sembilan	70,730
Selangor	81,592	Pahang	57,642

Out of a total population of 366,576 in Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan there were 181,451 Malays or Malaysians, while the balance of 185,125 was made up of immigrants, mainly Chinese. Pahang being the least developed, the number of Chinese there was negligible.[74]

The Malay population, on the whole, remained in their villages where they pursued their rice cultivation and other forms of agriculture on a subsistence level. Very few were attracted to the tin mines where the work was hard and uncongenial to the Malay's accustomed way of life. As most of the immigrant Chinese were absorbed by the tin mining industry, there was no surplus labour for the Government to employ in its public works. In 1885 the Governor informed the Colonial Office that the labour supply was 'probably the most difficult of all subjects in connexion with the opening up of any portion of the Peninsula', and yet it was upon this difficulty being surmounted that the prosperity of each State must depend. It had been partly overcome in 1884 by the Indian Government's agreement to the emigration of Indian labourers to the Malay States under conditions similar to those approved for the Straits Settlements, but the continued shortage of labour would hamper the development of the country.[75]

In line with the Government aim of establishing a settled agricultural population, Swettenham suggested that it would be 'an immense gain' if the Government could introduce into Perak a number of Chinese rice-growers *with their families*.[76] Although such a scheme would present great difficulties, principally on the side of the Chinese Imperial Government, the Secretary of State thought that an industrious agricultural population might be procured from India or China by the grant to carefully selected families of free or assisted passages, or the offer of land grants, or both combined, rather in the same way as English settlers had been attracted to Canada or Australasia. He deplored the fact that in tropical countries immigration was so constantly identified with the supply of indentured labour to planters, or with indiscriminate Chinese immigration, that the possibility of colonization with selected families under some State-aided system was left out of sight.[77] But if the Government were to assist the settlement of Chinese and Indian immigrants on the land, Lord Knutsford wanted a uniform policy adopted by all the States.[78]

Although these suggestions were put forward and in principle accepted, no real attempt was made to bring in the agricultural settlers in large numbers. There was a small settlement of Tamils under the charge of a Catholic priest in north Perak, but little is known about this project. With the development of the large plantations, which brought in thousands of indentured labourers from India, the original idea of an agricultural population was temporarily forgotten, until the turn of the century when the Methodist Episcopal Mission, with Government assistance, founded an agricultural colony in Sitiawan, an area opposite the island of Pangkor.

TOWARDS FEDERATION

The movement towards greater administrative uniformity in the Malay States was given impetus by developments in Pahang. The Orang Kaya Pahlawan, a territorial chief of Semantan, in December 1890 defied the Sultan's order not to collect dues and other revenues which, since the State had passed under British protection, were the property of the Government. This chief, according to Hugh Clifford, had risen to a high position from that of 'dog-boy to the Sultan', and even before the introduction of British rule, the Orang Kaya had been obstreperous, openly flaunting royal orders more than once. He contended that whatever the arrangements were between the Sultan and the British, his own district was still under his jurisdiction and that he had the right to collect taxes and dues of all kinds from his people and from all boats passing up and down the Semantan River.

The situation was reminiscent of events in Perak and the British felt that a show of force would bring the rebel chief into submission. Accordingly a small band of police, consisting mainly of Sikhs, was sent into Semantan to keep order, but unfortunately the atmosphere was so explosive that a scuffle between two Sikhs and one of the chief's men deteriorated into a gun fight in which three policemen were killed. The punitive expedition originally led by the Resident, John P. Rodger, Hugh Clifford (Assistant Resident), the Sultan and his two sons, with a mixed company of Sikhs and Malays, lasted sporadically for nearly four years. The rebel chief had a strong force of men from his own villages and a considerable number of aborigines. In the guerilla war that ensued in the Pahang jungle, the rebels initially proved

superior. Although the Government forces finally broke the back of the rebellion, they failed in their main object—the capture of the rebels, who were able to escape into Trengganu. The rebel leaders were eventually captured by the Siamese authorities and taken to Bangkok. There, as far as Pahang was concerned, the matter ended.[79]

A heavy expenditure was incurred in dealing with this outbreak which caused much damage by interrupting communications. It was a serious blow to the slender finances of the State, which was by no means as prosperous as the western States. Whereas the relatively well-developed tin mines in Perak allowed that State to recover quickly after the Perak War, Pahang had no rich tin mines to fall back on for finances. From the point of view of administration, the psychological effect of the rebellion was far more serious; it appeared as if British rule was discredited, for there was 'a general feeling of insecurity and distrust . . . in every class of the community, both within and beyond the limits of the State'.[80]

Even before the rebellion there had been a certain degree of lag in the development of Pahang. The reasons for this were the insufficient development of roads, railways, telegraphs, breakwaters, steam launches and a host of other public works which made for better administration. Natives were questioning the advantages of British intervention, in return for which the privileges of the chiefs had been curtailed and the material prosperity of the common people had not improved. Many of Pahang's troubles sprang from the Sultan's maladministration before British intervention. He had granted concessions to various people who therefore monopolized all known mining areas. The shortage of State funds and the absence of an efficient administration prevented the development of roads and river transport, without which many of the concessions remained idle. While Government revenue showed no appreciable increase, State expenditure was steadily mounting; the increase in allowances to the chiefs, who were paid altogether $64,674 out of a total revenue of $77,386 in 1891, meant that the civil administration was underpaid and had to be reduced. Furthermore, the concessions, mostly to Europeans, prevented the influx of Chinese miners who were responsible for the initial development of the other Malay States. Thus the absence of obvious and visible

results following the introduction of British rule gave cause for discontent amongst the territorial chiefs of Pahang.[81]

As a result of the Semantan rebellion the British Resident, John Rodger, reviewing the situation, declared that it was no longer possible to administer Pahang satisfactorily on the policy of retrenchment, forced on the State through lack of funds and undertaken in the hope of a rapid development of the various mining and other concessions. This policy should either be reversed or carried a step further; unless Pahang was abandoned altogether, three courses of action were possible. The first was to raise a loan either in the open market or otherwise to provide for an annual expenditure for the next five years on public works; the second was to attach the European administrative staff to a more prosperous State, such as Selangor, and to combine the budgets; and the third was to leave all collection of revenue as well as the general administration in the hands of the Sultan and his native officials, the Resident retaining only a small body-guard and one or two European assistants.

The first course would, in Rodger's opinion, be the best if it could be arranged; the second would be 'the most immediately practicable if Selangor would consent, as the relative geographical positions of the two States would render their joint administration and development comparatively easy'; the third would be the least expensive. But Rodger realized that true economy in a backward State was not to reduce but to increase expenditure. 'As I still believe in the mineral wealth of Pahang,' he declared, 'I would urge that if possible some means should be adopted to obtain sufficient funds adequately to administer the State and develop its resources, thus affording to the inhabitants of the State . . and to Europeans who have embarked their capital in its various mining and commercial enterprises that measure of assistance and encouragement which they may fairly consider themselves entitled to expect.'

The suggestion that the administration of Pahang might be returned to the hands of the Sultan was 'open to very obvious objections'. The Government, although checked by the presence of a British agent, would be 'only too likely to degenerate into the old oppressive native rule'. In that eventuality much of the work done since the introduction of the Residential system would be wasted. Hugh Clifford, who succeeded Rodger as Resident,

suggested the incorporation of Pahang for all purposes of administration with the other and wealthier States on the western seaboard. To attach Pahang to Selangor alone would not be of much benefit since Selangor, unaided by Perak, would probably find it difficult to finance Pahang on a scale sufficient to ensure a speedy return on the outlay made. Selangor had already undertaken to construct a road whose total length when completed would be eighty miles into Ulu Pahang, but there was no reason to suppose that Selangor would be prepared to continue the construction of public works for the development of Pahang on a scale larger than this.[84]

'If all the native States,' said Clifford, 'were welded into one, however, with a single head, a single purse, and a general policy for them all, Pahang would speedily receive the financial aid and close attention which she sorely needs for the complete development of her resources. . . . Unless some policy of amalgamation with the other native States is adopted, the progress of Pahang will continue to be slow, and such results as the Government will be able to effect will, as in former years, be wholly disproportionate to the large sums annually expended for the administration of the country.'[85]

The Perak Government realized the difficulties that had arisen with reference to the financing of Pahang, and in 1892 offered to give assistance, provided the question of concessions to Europeans and others could be dealt with satisfactorily and the Perak Government be consulted in regard to Pahang's expenditure. But as Perak had no direct interest in Pahang and could profitably spend in its own territory all the revenue likely to be raised there, financial help could only be given by making some sacrifice. There was no security for the advances made, beyond what could be hoped for from the future development of Pahang. 'It is therefore only reasonable,' said Swettenham, 'that if the idea of advising the native rulers in the administration of the Malay States is to be maintained, those States which now find the means of financing Pahang should have a preponderating voice in the expenditure of their own money and the schemes to which it is applied.'[86]

It is not known how often the Residents were able to meet and discuss common problems, but the difficulties of communication would preclude frequent meetings. Nevertheless it is evident

from the above reports that they were deeply aware of the need for some kind of administrative uniformity, and with so many voices raised in unison to support such a scheme, the Colonial Office was bound to pay attention to the problem.

Hitherto discussions on the Federation scheme had been confined mainly to the official correspondence at top level between the Governors and the Colonial Office, and insufficient attention given to the opinions and suggestions of the Residents who were directly concerned with the administration of the States. As a matter of fact, the Residents were responsible for all that had been done to develop the Malay States; no important administrative policy or great public work owed its initiation to the Governor who merely acted as a mouth-piece for the Residents in dealing with the Colonial Office.[87] The Residents had strong reasons of their own for administrative reforms and even for federation. They found favour with Whitehall, where Imperial Federation was still in the air, and movements towards federation in Australasia and South Africa were growing in urgency. If the Residents had not unanimously urged administrative federation, it is possible that the political changes of 1895 might have been delayed. Of course the official initiative had to come from the Colonial Office, but that does not minimize the importance of the groundwork done by the Residents. The most significant reports were those of Hugh Clifford and John P. Rodger, and, earlier, William Maxwell when he dealt with land problems in Selangor. Although the Residents' reports were written at a time when the Colonial Office had already broached the subject and Sir Charles Mitchell had conferred with the Residents to gauge opinion on federation,[88] these reports served to confirm the Colonial Office's scheme as regards its feasibility. In view of the relevance of Rodger's reports to the actual Federation scheme that was drawn up and approved by the Colonial Office, they are here quoted at length:

> ...I venture to think that all the Protected Malay States, on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, have now reached a stage in their development when more formal administration will further rather than hinder their progress, and that, their conditions being practically identical, one uniform legislative, administrative and judicial system should be adopted for them all. Hitherto, unfortunately, each State has been allowed to legislate for itself, with little or no reference

to the others, and the result has been that the same subject has been differently treated in different States, and that many elaborate enactments, frequently of a highly technical character, adopted or adapted from Indian or Colonial Ordinances, have now to be interpreted and enforced by somewhat primitive Courts and an insufficient staff of officials.

What is first required is the appointment of a legal adviser for the Native States, to assist the various Governments concerned in consolidating, revising and, above all, assimilating the heterogeneous mass of Orders, Rules and Regulations already in force, and in drafting such new enactments as may be found to be necessary. A Judge, with full powers of revision and appeal, in all civil and criminal cases, should also be appointed, who could go on periodical circuits through all the States, and before whom alone capital cases should be tried. When the local enactments have been revised and the States possess a Judge of Appeal and an officer occupying the position of an Attorney-General, lawyers might, with advantage, be allowed to practise in the State Courts, at all events in the Court of Appeal and, in my opinion, the substitution of competent legal advisers for the present very mixed body of semi-legal 'petition' writers, whose numbers are rapidly increasing, will be a distinct gain both to the public and to the magistrates. It is much to be regretted that the two most important States, with adjoining boundaries, similar conditions, and apparently identical requirements, should have passed legislative measures of so widely different a character, as has been the case in Perak and Selangor. To avoid the possibility of such divergency occurring in the future, and of the Native States drifting even further apart, it is to be hoped that some scheme of federation will soon be elaborated which, whilst preserving the individuality of each State, will connect them all in such a manner as to ensure, not merely departmental efficiency and economy, but also that general continuity of policy and solidarity of interest so essential to their progressive development and permanent success.[88]

These were some of the main advantages that would result from federation. Minor benefits would be the immediate amalgamation of the various civil services into one Native States service, of which the members would be eligible for promotion from one State to another; the economic assistance of the poorer by the richer States; and the gradual amalgamation of departments as occasion arose, by the appointment of one chief officer for each department. Departmental changes, although desirable on grounds of efficiency and economy, would need some time to

carry into effect, but the scheme of federation fortunately would not have to depend on the immediate appointment of any chief officer. Some departments were far more urgently in need of reorganization under one head than others and those which should first be taken in hand were the Police, Lands and Mines, Posts and Telegraphs, Surveys, and Schools.[90]

Although the economic backwardness of Pahang was the immediate cause for Swettenham, Clifford and Rodger to advocate administrative uniformity for all the States, the decisive factors were undoubtedly the development of tin mining, the problems of land policy and the need for developing agriculture, the shortage of labour and the expansion of education facilities, not to mention the desire for a uniform railway system running from Singapore to Penang. All these matters demanded more careful planning and integration.

The currency system also needed reorganization. The Malay States had hitherto depended entirely on the note issues of the Chartered and Hong Kong Banks for any paper currency at all, and the supply was not sufficient for the needs of the various States. The main cause of the depression in 1889, as we have seen, was the shortage of money. Swettenham considered that a Government note of issue in the Native States would benefit them and the Colony, for by this means Colonial funds loaned to some of the Native States could be released and the increased trading facilities given by a sufficient supply of notes of all denominations would be felt in the markets of the Colony.[91]

Sir Cecil Smith, when reporting this matter to the Colonial Office, supported this suggestion of a Government note issue for the Malay States. 'It is, I believe, urgently required,' said the Governor, 'and in view of what has recently been passed by the House of Commons, I gather that objections hitherto held against the principle of such a course no longer stand good. . . . There can be no question that the Native States must keep a sufficient reserve of silver against their note issue.'[92]

But whatever the reasons for federation, none of the Residents would have ventured to propose such a scheme if they had not been supremely confident of the future of the States. The revenue of Selangor in 1894 amounted to $3,334,468 (as against less than 4 million dollars for the whole of the Straits Settlements for the same year) with a capital of $450,900 invested in Indian securities

and on bank deposit, $537,000 in loans to other Malay States, and of $3,311,540 in a remunerative Government railway. These figures sufficiently demonstrated the general prosperity and commercial importance of the State.[53] In Perak the revenue in 1894 was over 3½ million dollars; the production of tin had risen over 50 per cent since 1890; the value of the Customs revenue had doubled, and of land more than trebled. The Government railway yielded a return of over 10 per cent on capital invested, and the trade of the State had increased from a value of $17,000,000 in 1890 to nearly $27,000,000 in 1894.[54]

The first official correspondence[55] on the matter of federation was a dispatch, dated 19th May 1893, to the Governor of the Straits Settlements from the Secretary of State, the Marquis of Ripon, who enclosed a memorandum drafted by Sir Charles Lucas of the Colonial Office, suggesting the federation of the four States.[56]

The Governor, Sir Cecil Smith, replied on 30th June, setting forth his opinions on the proposal. He agreed with the Colonial Office view that the system under which the Malay States were administered required revision, and suggested a confederation of the States on the lines of that of the Negri Sembilan in 1889 which was achieved by him. However, he pointed out that the important differences between the States must not be overlooked. The Chinese, he thought, would fall in readily with any system of government that was not oppressive; but the Malays with their curious and various customs and traditions needed careful handling. Although caution was necessary, there was no reason why preliminary steps should not be taken to bring about what was desired. Smith concurred with the Colonial Office suggestion that the proposed change should be made on the principle that the authority of the Governor of the Straits Settlements should remain unimpaired and that the system to be introduced must not be uncongenial to the Malay people and their Rulers or unduly wound their susceptibilities. He suggested that the appointment of the Governor as High Commissioner for the Malay States would give him a defined authority in place of the rather nebulous one which, in theory, he possessed. But so far as the Rulers and the populations of the Malay States were concerned, they would all have to look to the Governor of the Straits Settlements as the supreme authority under the Queen. Under

the Governor there should be a Resident-General who ought to be the Chief Executive Officer in charge of the duty of supervising and controlling the administration of each and all of the States. The nominee would require great tact, discretion, and administrative ability. The Resident-General should be directly under the Governor but he should not carry on any official correspondence outside the States except with the Crown Agents, and his residence should be in Kuala Lumpur, which was the most central point in the Malay States. There should be one unified Civil Service with similar rules and regulations to those in force in the Colony. The Police, Posts and Telegraphs, Railways and Education should be administered under one system. The proposal that the Rulers of the States should meet in Council should also be adopted. Finances involved could easily be met by the States concerned, with the exception of Pahang.

Sir Cecil Smith retired and left the Colony in August 1893 and was succeeded by Sir Charles Mitchell, who carried with him to Singapore the correspondence regarding federation, with instructions to report his own views on the proposal to the Colonial Office. Mitchell took eighteen months to prepare the report which he finally sent in a dispatch on 1st May 1895.

In the meantime Sir William Maxwell, who had acted as Resident in Selangor and Perak and who was then attached to the Governor's office in Singapore, was asked by the Colonial Office to give his views on the Federation before proceeding to the Gold Coast. Maxwell agreed with the general idea of administrative uniformity, but he suggested total annexation of the Malay States to form an amalgamation with the Colony, and failing this, a confederation under the Governor of the Colony. Maxwell was aware of the fact that outright annexation might frighten off the other Malay States which were then under Siamese suzerainty. Like Weld, Smith, Swettenham and others, Maxwell had hopes that one day these States would be brought into the fold of British protection. Although the Colonial Office thought his suggestions 'interesting and valuable', they had no practical effect on British policy.[37]

Sir Charles Mitchell rejected the idea of a union of the Malay States and the Colony as impracticable, on the grounds that the interests of both were not only divergent but in some respects antagonistic.[38] His fears that the political differences between the

Colony and the Malay States would make a union based on equality of status abortive, were curiously prophetic in the light of present day developments in Singapore and Malaya. However, he accepted all the suggestions put forward by Sir Cecil Smith and the Colonial Office, with the qualification that the proposed Council of Chiefs should not, for the time being, take the shape of a legislative body but rather that of a consultative and advisory council.[99]

Swettenham was entrusted with the task of explaining the objects and advantages of the Federation scheme to the Rulers and their chiefs and securing their agreement. His diplomatic skill and great influence over the Sultans easily obtained the approval and consent of the Rulers and chiefs. The Federation Treaty was signed in July 1895, and in the following year the Federation of the Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang was formally inaugurated.

NOTES

1 A.P. Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and its Enemies*, p.41.
2 R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, p. 112.
3 Thornton, *op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. ix-x.
4 W. Linehan, *A Short Account of the History of Malaya*, pp. 7-8.
5 R.J. Wilkinson, *A History of the Peninsular Malays*, p. 127.
6 F.A. Swettenham, *British Malaya*, pp. 174-5.
7 For a detailed account of the Larut Wars and the part Chinese secret societies played in the Pangkor Engagement, see L. Comber, *Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya*, Chapters 11, 12, and 13.
8 Wilkinson, *op. cit.* p. 126.
9 Raja Abdullah's domain was in Lower Perak near the mouth of the Perak River, and consequently none of his followers was present at the installation of Sultan Ismail, who was supported by the chiefs in Upper Perak, including the Mantri of Larut.
10 Raja Yusuf, for his own selfish reasons, was a staunch supporter of the British, particularly after the murder of Birch and the incrimination of both Sultan Abdullah and ex-Sultan Ismail, who were exiled. He later became Sultan.
11 E. Sadka, 'The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877' *J.M.B.R.A.S.*, November 1954, p. 10.
12 According to Leon Comber (*op. cit.* p. 168 *et seq.*) Tan Kim Cheng belonged to the Ghee Hin secret society which Abdullah was backing against the Hai San society which had the support of the Mantri of Larut and therefore of the ruling party in Perak. Tan entertained Abdullah in a royal manner, and in the course of their discussions Abdullah signed a bond making over to Tan the concessions in Larut if he could secure the support of the British for his cause. To what

extent Abdullah's success at Pangkor was due to this Chinese it is difficult to say, but Tan was wise enough not to hold his friend to his word when he finally did become Sultan.

13 'W.H. Read and Tan Kim Cheng lost no time in presenting Raja Muda Abdullah's case. From their point of view, it was a business deal. We can imagine that they both stood to gain considerably if Raja Muda Abdullah sat on the throne of Perak.' L. Comber, *op. cit.* p. 169.

14 W.G. Maxwell and W.S. Gibson, *Treaties and Engagements Affecting the Malay States and Borneo.*

15 R.O. Winstedt, *Malaya and Its History*, p. 100. For a critical study of Malay political and legal systems, see Winstedt, *The Malays, a Cultural History*, Chapters 5 and 6.

16 M. Perham and J. Simmons, *African Discovery*, p. 16.

17 John Rodger, the Resident of Pahang, described conditions in that State: 'A system of taxation under which every necessary as well as luxury of life was heavily taxed; law courts in which the procedure was the merest mockery of justice, the decisions depending solely on the relative wealth or influence of the litigants, and where the punishments were utterly barbarous; a system of debt-slavery under which not only the debtor but his wife and their most remote descendants were condemned to hopeless bondage; an unlimited corvée or forced labour, for indefinite periods, and entirely without remuneration; the right of the Raja to compel all female children to pass through his harem, a right which has desolated almost every household in the neighbourhood of Pekan. . . .' Annual Report Pahang for 1888, C. 5884.

Munshi Abdullah, the Malay historian and friend of Raffles, records how, while visiting Trengganu, some of his fellow countrymen begged him to take them as servants back to Singapore where they could enjoy the freedom and comfort of British rule as they could no longer endure the tyranny of Malay despotism: 'Every day, they said, we have to work for the Raja at our own cost and without food being supplied to ourselves or to our families. Our boats, crops and livestock are liable to be seized by the Raja without payment. If the Raja wants our property or our daughters, we cannot withstand him. If we object we are stabbed to death. Try to emigrate and we are killed, if caught, and our property is confiscated.' Winstedt, *The Malays, a Cultural History*, p. 120. (For a description of slavery as part of the Malay social system prior to British intervention, see Chapter 4, *ibid.*)

18 Winstedt, *The Malays, a Cultural History*, p. 53.

19 Winstedt, *Malaya and its History*, pp. 86-7.

20 *Ibid*, p. 102.

21 Birch had served for 24 years in the civil service in Ceylon before his appointment as Colonial Secretary to the Straits Settlements Government in 1870.

22 Sadka, *op. cit.* p. 12.

23 Wilkinson, *op. cit.* pp. 134-5.
24 Winstedt, *Malaya and its History*, p. 66.
25 *Ibid.*
26 For an account of this see Wilkinson, *op. cit.* pp. 136-40, in which is quoted Birch's diary describing the event.
27 Sadka, *op. cit.* p. 13.
28 A month after he arrived in Perak, Birch said to ex-Sultan Ismail, 'I would tell the chiefs of Perak that . . . we would not allow any of them to levy taxes in their own names but must have the revenue all collected at proper and stated places and by a fixed method and in the name of the Sultan only; if they chose to attempt to take taxes, or rather to levy blackmail, on their own account, the result would be that we should stop it by force. . . .' Wilkinson, *op. cit.* p. 136.
29 Swettenham's opinion of him was that he was 'weak, inordinately vain, and hopelessly extravagant'. (*British Malaya*, p. 195.) On one occasion, after a tirade against Abdullah, Birch wrote in his diary, 'I wish to goodness for my own sake and for the peace of the country Ismail was the Sultan.' This outburst was a telling reflection on Pangkor. See Wilkinson, *op. cit.* p. 141.
30 Lieut-General Sir William Francis Drummond Jervois, C.C.M.G., C.B., R.E., F.R.S., was born on 10th September 1821. In 1841 he went out to the Cape and served for seven years with the Royal Engineers. From 1856 he was appointed Assistant Inspector-General of Fortifications on the staff of the War Office where he remained until 1875. In that year he was appointed Governor of the Straits Settlements where he served till 1877 when he left to take up the position of Governor of South Australia. In 1883 he was transferred to New Zealand as Governor. While in Australia he made important recommendations on Australasian defence. He retired to London in 1889. *Dictionary of Australasian Biography*, pp. 250-1.
31 Sadka, *op. cit.* p. 14.
32 Wilkinson, *op. cit.* p. 148.
33 Birch was a humanitarian with the kindliness of a strict Victorian schoolmaster. His personal charity to indigent natives who came begging at his doors was at least equal to Sir Hugh Low's. The latter was long remembered by the Malays for his liberal alms. Birch was also a man of great personal courage, and he believed in courage. He once told the Malays that he did not fear death as he had only a short span of life to lose. Wilkinson, *op. cit.* p. 149.
34 The Resident who immediately succeeded Birch was J.G. Davidson, who served in Perak from April 1876 to January 1877, when he resigned on grounds of ill-health. See Footnote in Sadka, *op. cit.* p. 17.
35 Sadka, *op. cit.* pp. 19-20.
36 *Ibid*, p. 24.
37 H. Clifford, *Preface* to *The Life of Sir Frederick Weld*, by Alice, Lady Lovat, p. xii.
38 Thornton, *op. cit.* p. 105.

39 Sadka, *op. cit.* p. 23.
40 Carnarvon to Jervois, 1st June 1876, C. 1512, p. 100.
41 Correspondence relating to the affairs of the Protected Malay States; C. 2410.
42 Colonial Secretary to Residents, 17th May 1878, C. 2410.
43 Sir Samuel Wilson, 'Report on a Visit to Malaya', Cmd. 4276 (1932-33). p. 5.
44 F.A. Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, p. 101.
45 Swettenham, *British Malaya*, p. 221.
46 Thornton, *op. cit.* p. 69.
47 J.M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, pp. 44-54.
48 Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, p. 103.
49 Selangor State Council Minutes, Federal Secretariat, Kuala Lumpur. Although these observations are based on the Selangor State Council Minutes, there is reason to assume that similar conditions obtained in Perak and Negri Sembilan.
50 Sir Frederick Weld was appointed Governor of the Straits Settlements in 1880, after his term as Governor in Tasmania had ended. He retired in 1887 and was succeeded by Sir Cecil Clementi Smith.
51 The following summary and quotations are taken from Weld's dispatch of 21st October 1880, reprinted in Lovat, *op. cit.* pp. 312-18.
52 Maxwell and Gibson, *op. cit.*
53 Lovat, *op. cit.* p. 393.
54 Maxwell and Gibson, *op. cit.*
55 *Ibid.*
56 Sadka, *op. cit.* pp. 29-30.
57 A.R. Selangor for 1889, C. 6222, p. 41.
58 G.C. Allen, and A.G. Donnithorne, *Western Enterprise in Indonesia and Malaya*, p. 200.
59 A.R. Perak for 1889, C. 6222, p. 22.
60 A.R. Selangor for 1889, C. 6222, p. 52. Chetties (or Chettiars) were South Indian money-lenders and financiers who played an important part in financing the tin mines before the advent of European capital. Western banks, such as the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and the Mercantile Bank of India, had started their operations from the middle of the nineteenth century in the Straits Settlements, and from the outset many of their transactions were with Asian customers. The Chettiars, who held a key position in this, enjoyed a high reputation for honesty and business competence. They acquired a knowledge, which the Westerners could not equal, of the creditworthiness of the small Chinese and Indian traders. So the Chettiars 'became, in effect, the channel by which Western banking resources were poured into the current of Asian business. Small Asian traders, artisans and tin miners obtained most of the credit they required from the Chettiars against mortgages on their crops or against

promissory notes. The Chettiars in turn placed themselves in funds by discounting these notes with the Western banks or by obtaining overdrafts on the security of bills or title-deeds to property. The Western banks derived a considerable part of their revenue from this type of business.' Allen and Donnithorne, *op. cit.* pp. 202-5.

61 A.R. Selangor for 1889, C. 6222, p. 52.

62 A.R. Perak for 1890, C. 6576, p. 10.

63 A.R. Perak for 1894, C. 7877, p. 21.

64 A.R. Perak for 1889, C. 6222, p. 23.

65 Sir Cecil Smith to Lord Knutsford, 22nd June 1891, C. 6576, p. 4.

66 Lord Knutsford to Sir Cecil Smith, 15th October 1891, C. 6576, p. 103.

67 In 1881 land regulations in Selangor were passed, based generally on those in force in Perak, but largely remodelled, the main features of which were the recognition of the Malay customary tenure by means of 'certificates of titles' in the case of land already occupied by natives; the issue of 'agreements for lease' in other cases, pending survey, to be replaced by 'leases' in perpetuity; and a scale of premiums and quit-rents to be varied from time to time, but fixed in respect of all land taken up at the rates in force for the time being. Every holder of a 'certificate of title' was entitled to a 'lease' on the same terms as the holder of an 'agreement for a lease', and the registration of all titles, transfers and changes was made compulsory. See A.R. Selangor for 1894, C. 7877, p. 33.

68 Lovat, *op. cit.* p. 327.

69 A.R. Selangor for 1894, C. 7877, pp. 33-4.

70 *Ibid.*

71 A.R. Selangor for 1891, C. 6858, p. 55.

72 *Ibid.*

73 Lord Ripon to Sir Cecil Smith, 24th December 1892, C. 6858, p. 100.

74 Resident-General's Report for 1896.

75 Sir Cecil Smith to the Earl of Derby, Enclosure No. 5, C. 4958, 1887.

76 A.R. Perak for 1889, C. 6222, 1890, p. 14.

77 Lord Knutsford to the Officer Administering the Government of the Straits Settlements, 16th September 1890, C. 6222, p. 87.

78 Lord Knutsford to Sir Cecil Smith, 15th October 1891, C. 6576, p. 103.

79 H. Clifford, *Expedition to Kelantan and Trengganu—a Report*, p. 30. This was one of the earliest reports giving a detailed description of the conditions in Kelantan and Trengganu.

80 A.R. Pahang for 1891, C. 6858, p. 97.

81 *Ibid.*

82 The following is a summary of Rodger's Report on Pahang for 1891, C. 6858, pp. 98-9.

83 A.R. Pahang for 1893, C. 7546, p. 109.

84 *Ibid*, p. 110.

85 *Ibid.*

86 A.R. Perak for 1893, C. 7546, p. 19.

87 Swettenham to the Secretary of State, F.M.S. Despatch No. 328, 4th September 1902.

88 E. Thio, 'British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1909', unpublished thesis for the degree of Ph.D., University of London, p. 196.

89 A.R. Selangor for 1894, C. 7877, pp. 46-7.

90 A.R. Selangor for 1895, C. 8257, p. 44.

91 A.R. Perak for 1892, C. 7228, p. 24.

92 Sir Cecil Smith to Lord Ripon, 2nd August 1893, C. 7228.

93 A.R. Selangor for 1894, C. 7877, p. 46.

94 A.R. Perak for 1894, C. 7877, p. 21.

95 Swettenham claimed that it was he who first suggested the idea of federation, in a draft written in January 1893, to Sir Cecil Smith soon after Swettenham's return from England on leave. While in England he had discussed the matter informally with Sir Charles Lucas of the Colonial Office. Smith apparently took no action in the matter until the dispatch of 19th May 1893 from the Colonial Office arrived. Swettenham was rather piqued when Smith, many years later, claimed to be the author of the federation idea, and such was the prestige involved that there followed a voluminous exchange of letters between the two ex-Governors. Although Swettenham was undoubtedly the first person to discuss the matter with the Colonial Office, the idea of federation, strictly speaking, was not entirely his, as can be seen in the opinions expressed by the various Residents since the Semantan rebellion in Pahang in 1890. For Swettenham's own views of the controversy, see *Footprints in Malaya*, p. 106, and *British Malaya*, revised edition 1948, pp. 363-4.

96 Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, p. 106.

97 Thio, *op. cit.* p. 195. Dr. Thio gives a much fuller discussion of Maxwell's proposals than is here attempted.

98 *Ibid.* p. 196.

99 Sir Charles Mitchell to the Secretary of State, 1st May 1895, GD/C.

MALAYA IN 1906

1

FEDERATION

CONSTITUTIONAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

THE Federation Treaty consisted of six short Articles. The first merely reaffirmed previous treaties and engagements between the British Government and the Malay Sultans who 'severally placed themselves and their States under the protection of the British Government'. By the second Article the States agreed to constitute themselves into a Federation 'to be known as the Protected Malay States to be administered under the advice of the British Government'. The third Article limited the authority of each Ruler to his own State. By the fourth Article the Rulers agreed to accept a British officer, to be called the Resident-General, as the agent and representative of the British Government under the Governor of the Straits Settlements. Although the Rulers undertook to follow his advice in all matters of administration other than those touching Islam, their obligations towards the British Residents would not be affected by the appointment of the Resident-General. Article Five provided for the economic co-operation between the States, and the Rulers undertook to send a body of armed and equipped Indian troops for service in the Straits Settlements should hostilities break out between Her Majesty's Government and that of any other Power. 'Nothing in this agreement,' concluded the treaty, 'is intended to curtail any of the powers or authority now held by any of the above-named Rulers in the respective States, nor does it alter the relations now existing between any of the States named and the British Empire.'

The key to Federal control was Article Four, which became the legal basis for the portentous changes in the existing administrative structure. Where previously each Ruler had to follow the advice of the Resident in his own State, under the new agreement all the Rulers were bound to follow the lead of the Resident-General: as a result, the functions of the Residents themselves inevitably diminished in importance.

The administrative scheme which was drawn up to define the functions of the various officers and organs stated that the duties of the Resident-General were 'to travel as much as possible in all the States, keeping himself in touch with the Native Rulers, the Residents and all matters of administration'.

> While travelling or residing in any State, the Resident-General can communicate with anyone direct on any subject, but shall issue no instructions to any Government Officer except through the Resident of the State where the Officer is employed. Similarly if any Native or European official or unofficial addresses him on any subject, the Resident-General shall, after consultation with the Resident, send the reply, if any, through him. This instruction will not prevent the Resident-General from using his discretion in a matter of urgency, but in this case he will take the earliest opportunity of informing the Resident of his action and the circumstances which led to it.[1]

Under the new scheme, Residents would administer the States as before except that they would be directly under the control of the Resident-General instead of the Governor, to whom, however, they could appeal through the Resident-General in case of a difference of opinion, but pending the Governor's decision, they must act on the instructions of the Resident-General.[2] The Residents were responsible for drafting the legislative measures which were to be sent to the Resident-General for transmission to the Governor for approval before State Council meetings, and no legislative enactment could be published or acted upon until the Governor's sanction had been given to it.[3]

Each State, according to Article Two of the scheme, would have its autonomy preserved, and would collect and spend its revenue after providing for Federal charges. But Article Six ruled:

> State Councils of the various States will meet and conduct their various business as hitherto. They are legislative and advisory bodies

and have no control over public expenditure, but they may, as hitherto, decide on the selection, remuneration, removal and replacement of Native Officers, subject always to the sanction of the Resident-General and the Governor.[4]

The loose and casual provisions for the post of Resident-General were such that their interpretation depended almost entirely on the man who drafted the scheme and treaty and who became the first Resident-General. That man was Frank Swettenham. Writing many years after the event, he said that the intention in 1896 was that the Resident-General should maintain close relations with the Rulers and chiefs and keep them informed and interested; that he should not interfere with the work of the Residents, but that he should give them all the help he could and consult with them on any federal question, so far as it concerned their States; that he should try to settle questions between the different Residents and that any reference to the Governor should be made through him. 'It was perfectly understood,' declared Swettenham, 'that he was to be the Chief Executive Officer and in control of the Residents. His duty to the High Commissioner was to refer to His Excellency every important proposal, to try to obtain the High Commissioner's approval and then see that it was carried out.'[5] Commenting on the Federation Treaty itself, Swettenham said that it made the Malay States one for all general purposes of administration and that 'in agreeing to the appointing of the Resident-General, it was for the first time plainly stated that he should have executive *control*'.[6] Thus the intentions of the British Government were sharply at variance with the explicit guarantee of the position and powers of the Rulers. A Union rather than a Federation was what Whitehall had in mind. The Colonial Office hoped to tighten up the administrative machinery of the Malay States which would be controlled as separate districts of one British Protectorate with the Residents reduced to the position of Agents, as in the provinces of Ceylon. The central Government then would control a common treasury and a single legislature which would gradually supersede the State Councils as legislative bodies.[7]

The basis of centralized control was the Federation Treaty, just as Pangkor and the earlier treaties were the basis of State control by the Resident. Sir George Maxwell neatly summed up the

situation with the equation: 'As a Resident [was] to a State Government, so [was] the Resident-General to the Federal Government.'[8] Neither the Federation Treaty nor the administrative scheme attempted to define the position of the Resident-General and the High Commissioner *vis-a-vis* the Sultans, but subsequent events clearly showed that they both had precedence over the Rulers. The two appointments were simultaneously created and were complementary to each other. The minutes of the 1897 and 1903 Durbars, which were formal and dignified meetings, established 'beyond the possibility of doubt the fact that, in the early days of the Federation, the Resident-General had precedence, under the Federal Scheme, over Their Highnesses the Rulers'.[9]

Although the appointment of the Governor as High Commissioner under the Federation scheme would give him 'a defined authority' in place of the vague one which he had possessed, it was not intended that the High Commissioner would interfere personally and directly in the affairs of administration. It was understood that the Resident-General would keep the High Commissioner informed on all matters. A Secretary for Malay Affairs was subsequently appointed to give the new High Commissioner one officer experienced in matters concerning the Malay States.[10] While Sir Charles Mitchell was High Commissioner for the Malay States, and except for the period when Swettenham occupied that position, the only important functions of the High Commissioner were to attend the Durbars of 1897 and 1903.

With regard to the status and powers of the Malay Rulers, the British Government took great pains to reassure the Sultans of its intention to safeguard their rights and privileges. In expressing a general approval of the Federation scheme Chamberlain, the new Secretary of State, urged Sir Charles Mitchell to give the Rulers assurances that the changes contemplated by the British Government were solely intended to 'promote strength by combination, uniformity of policy and harmony of purpose'.[11] Lord Ripon earlier, in a private memorandum to the Governor, had also stressed the importance of not wounding the susceptibilities of the Malay chiefs or giving them the impression that they were to be subordinated one to another.[12] In the instructions to Swettenham, whose task was to entice the Rulers and chiefs

into the Federation, the Governor said that it would be 'most important' to point out that in binding themselves and their States by the Federation agreement, the Rulers would not 'in the slightest degree' be diminishing the power and privileges which they possessed, nor be curtailing the right of self-government which they enjoyed.[13]

These assurances, however, referred more to the theory than the practice of government since the real substance of power had never been in the hands of the Sultans but in those of their Residents. Precise statements of fact as to the relationship betweeen the British and the Malay Sultans are elusive and often misleading; nevertheless, the control of the Rulers over secular affairs undoubtedly had declined with the expansion and complication of administrative matters, and this decline continued further after federation. In the elaborate Federal machinery the Sultans took no part, nor did they, in fact, express any desire to be more active than they were accustomed to be. If their actual powers were almost nil, their high offices were retained and guaranteed, their enlarged incomes were assured, and their display of pomp and ceremony was even advanced by their role in the British imperial scheme of things. Within the Federation the wealth and dignity of the Sultans were certainly greater than they could have been as independent Rulers of separate Malay States.[14]

The absorption of authority by British officers after federation was absolute, and while the protecting Power was *de facto* ruling the Malay States, the Sultans became merely a registering body. On a strict interpretation, the terms of both the Federation Treaty and scheme were in many respects contradictory. While Article Six of the scheme stated that the State Councils had no control over the public expenditure, Article Two provided that:

> Each State will maintain its existing autonomy as regards every other State and will collect and after providing for Federal charges... spend its own revenue.

The treaty itself gave no power of control to the Resident-General, nor did it in any way change the advisory status of the Governor's representative in the States. Since the treaty did not establish any central government and did not make any attempt

at a division of powers, the term 'Federation' as applied to the union of Malay States was a misnomer.[15]

A division of sovereignty between the Federal government and the State governments is the backbone of federalism, where in the distribution of legislative power whatever is not expressly conceded to the Federal authority is reserved to the States.[16] Within this general definition are variations with the power weighted in favour of either the constituent States or the Federal government. The Australian Constitution of 1900, for instance, which was modelled on the United States Constitution, conferred specific powers on the Commonwealth Parliament and, subject thereto, left the States with their existing powers.[17] The Canadian Constitution of 1867, on the other hand, differs from the earlier Constitution of the United States and the later Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth in assigning particular legislative powers to the individual members and vesting the residue of legislative powers in the federal government.[18]

Nowhere does the Malayan Federation of 1895 approach either the Canadian or the Australian Federation in constitutional structure. In practice the Government of the Federated Malay States[19] resembled rather the South African Union of 1909, by which the four self-governing colonies of the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange River were given a unitary government in which the Union Parliament was supreme.

The recommendation by Sir Charles Mitchell that the legislative powers enjoyed by the separate State Councils should not be interfered with, and that separate treasuries should be maintained, was approved by the Secretary of State as 'sound and judicious'. The growth of federation was a gradual process and any attempt to hurry on a closer union would probably arouse suspicion and distrust. Nevertheless, the intentions of the British Government to set up a central legislative body which would supersede the legislative powers of the State Councils were carried out in the years that followed federation. One of the reasons why the Federal Secretariat centred in Kuala Lumpur was able to absorb the executive and legislative powers without so much as a whimper of protest (except from Sultan Idris of Perak) may be found in the history and legal status of these bodies. The State Councils, the first of which was created in Perak in 1877, had no written constitution. As no powers were delegated to them, they

remained purely advisory bodies, presided over by the Ruler who appointed all the members on the advice of the Resident. The juristic position, however, would seem to be that the executive and legislative powers in each State were exercised by the Ruler-in-Council, and therefore theoretically the system of government before federation was the government of the Ruler-in-Council acting upon the advice of the British Resident.[20] The fact that not one of the Rulers consulted his State Council on the matter of federation gives the lie to the belief that the State Councils had any important legislative or executive powers. In 1895 there were only six meetings of the State Council in Perak, five in Selangor and only one in Negri Sembilan and Pahang. An analysis of the minutes of the Perak State Council showed that the Council dealt with only minor matters such as the appointment of native chiefs, the grant of money to mosques and Malay royalty on the Civil List. The other subjects were:

> The administration of two intestate estates; a parish boundary; a question of lepers in one district; a mention of currency note issue; coconut beetles; petition writers; leave to policemen; nipah palms; trading boats in a river; roads, drainage and irrigation in a district.[21]

The fact that legislation was in English while the language of the Council was in Malay made it very difficult for Council members, few of whom spoke English, to carry on any intelligent debate on matters placed before them, and the annual estimates and expenditure were passed by the Resident with the prior approval of the Resident-General and the High Commissioner. It was the practice of the Resident to explain informally to the Council what had already been approved and made lawful by authorities higher than itself. Except in respect of small sums connected with the payment of salaries to Malay chiefs and minor Malay royalty, the State Council had no control over State finances.

Article Twenty-one of the Federal scheme had provided for an annual assembly of chiefs and Residents:

> Once a year there should be a meeting (if possible under the presidency of the Governor) of the Resident-General, the Residents, the Native Rulers and members of the State Councils (or as many of them as can attend) to discuss matters affecting the mutual interests of the Native States.

These meetings, if carefully managed, would be of great interest and value and they should be held only for the purpose of bringing the Heads of the various States together and discussing matters of mutual interest. The meetings should, where accommodation is available, be held each year in a different State.

This Council of Chiefs, which the Governor referred to as the 'Federal Council', was intended to be a purely consultative and advisory body composed of all members of the various State Councils. The Colonial Office had looked forward to the establishment of a central Federal legislature which should gradually supersede the State Councils. In July 1897 the first of the 'Federal' councils was opened in Kuala Kangsar, the royal town of the Sultan of Perak. All the Malay Rulers and important chiefs were brought together to discuss Islam, Malay customs, and questions specifically concerned with the welfare of the Malays. Although no legislative measures were passed, Swettenham, who conducted most of the meetings, declared that:

From every point of view the meeting has been an unqualified success, and it is difficult to estimate now the present and prospective value of this unprecedented gathering of Malay Sultans, Rajas and Chiefs. Never in the history of Malaya has any such assemblage been ever imagined. I doubt if anybody has ever heard of one Ruler of a State making a ceremonial visit to another; but to have been able to collect together in one place the Sultans of Perak, Selangor, Pahang and the Negri Sembilan is a feat that might well have been regarded as impossible .... The most important result of this meeting is that it has brought home the reality of Federation to the Malays of the four States, and aroused, as nothing else could have done, an interest in the general weal of a Confederation that binds the chiefs in a Union of mutual interests and personal friendship.[22]

But on the grounds that the actual discussions formed only a small part of a programme 'crowded with fish drives, water sports, amateur theatricals, picnics at waterfalls, displays of fireworks and other forms of entertainment', the Durbar has been considered unimportant apart from increasing the general stock of goodwill.[23]

The political importance of the Durbar cannot be measured by legislative enactments which it did not attempt to pass. In

the art of indirect rule the setting of the stage is perhaps more important than the actual performance of the players, and this fact an astute administrator like Swettenham, who had a thorough knowledge of Malay psychology, must have grasped and exploited fully. One of the secrets of successful British administration, wrote Swettenham, was to recognize what he called the political problem, which could be solved by the Residents identifying themselves with the Malays, by speaking their language, sympathizing with their customs, showing consideration for their prejudices, consulting them about everything, making friends with them, and 'getting at their hearts'.[24]

The gathering together at a friendly meeting of Sultans and chiefs, whose history had been one of strife and animosity, turmoil and insecurity, was itself a remarkable achievement of British diplomacy when it is remembered that in 1875 the British had failed to reconcile the chiefs of Upper Perak with their countrymen from Lower Perak. The seeds of Malay national consciousness were sown and the potsherds of the ancient Malacca hegemony, shattered by the Portuguese impact in the sixteenth century, were set together towards an ultimate restoration in the twentieth century. British control of Malay affairs was so easily achieved because the Sultans and chiefs were confident that their interests were identified with those of the protecting Power. As Hugh Low's diplomacy calmed the minds of the Malays after the Perak War, so Swettenham started the Sultans and chiefs along the road to national unity.

The romantic nature of the Malay predisposed him to a sensitive appreciation of order and harmony, of fair-dealing and ceremony. If the aim of the first Durbar was to win the hearts and minds of the Rulers and chiefs, the British scored a major victory. 'Hardly a man among those who attended the Durbar,' enthused the Resident of Pahang, 'failed to return to his village in Pahang without having gained some enlargement of his ideas, some desire to see similar improvements effected in his own neighbourhood, and some added knowledge by means of which to measure the comparative insignificance of the State of which he is a native. As an old chief remarked to me, "Until we visited Perak, we were like unto the frog beneath a coconut shell, not dreaming there were other worlds than ours".'[25]

To the chiefs of Negri Sembilan, the visit to Perak was 'a

source of unmixed pleasure'. The Resident of that State declared that:

> Their minds have been raised to a conception of good government which they had not previously contemplated, and no appeal that may henceforward be made for enhancing the welfare of these States will fail to penetrate their conservatism.[26]

Notwithstanding the professed benefits of the Durbar, it was six years before another conference was held. Difficulties of transport, accommodation and other arrangements for a meeting of chiefs were some of the reasons given by the Resident-General for not holding an annual conference. It was agreed that further meetings would be convened at such dates and in such places as might be fixed by the Resident-General with the High Commissioner's approval. Swettenham, who was anxious to drive along the development of the States as fast as possible, saw no reason why he should be hampered by a Federal Council, especially when no important decisions could be arrived at by the Rulers and chiefs.[27] The outstanding feature at the 1903 Durbar, which was timed with the official opening of the through railway from Prai to Kuala Lumpur, was the protest of Sultan Idris of Perak against the loss of powers of his State Council. Speaking on behalf of the Sultan, the Resident, J.P. Rodger, reminded the assembly that the duties of British officials were to advise and assist and not to supersede the Rulers in the administration of their own State. In a speech which was otherwise a paean of praise for the wisdom and justice of the British, Sultan Idris said:

> ...I do not quite clearly understand, but you are all aware that the States have become friendly, amicably assisting one another; if, however, the four States were amalgamated into one, would it be right to say that one State assisted the other, because assistance implies something more than one, and if there is only one, which is the helper and which is the helped? A Malay proverb says that there cannot be two masters to one vessel; neither can there be four Rulers over one country.[28]

Sultan Idris reminded the British that the Pangkor Engagement provided for a Resident, not a Resident-General, to advise him, and declared, 'It is my hope that the affairs of each State may be managed by its own officers, so that the Government may be separate entities....'[29]

If Sultan Idris's speech, which was one of the few recorded utterances of the Rulers, expressed the feelings of the other Sultans, it would appear that the Malay Rulers were in favour of loosening the Federation against the British desire for a closer union.[30] Constitutional reformers in later years used this mild reproach of British administrative methods by Sultan Idris as a stick to beat the bureaucracy of Federal centralization; but the astute Sultan himself was careful at the Durbar to reassure his protectors of his loyalty to the Great White Queen: 'I am fully satisfied, and, so long as the revolution of the heavenly bodies continues, I have not the remotest desire to be under the protection of the flag of any other Power.'[31]

Soon after the Federation Treaty was signed in July 1895, Swettenham proceeded to lay the foundations of the Federal administrative pyramid at the apex of which sat the Resident-General; at the base of it were a Legal Adviser, whose task was to draft measures to give effect to the new agreement; a Judicial Commissioner; a Commandant of the Malay States Guides; a Commissioner of Police; a Commissioner of Lands and Mines; and a Secretary for Chinese Affairs. Later a Federal Inspector of Schools, a Head of Post and Telegraphs, and an Accountant-General were added to the Federal Secretariat. As administration became more centralized, many of the powers previously held by the Residents were removed to the remote control of the Resident-General whose office assumed complete control over the growing finances of the States. Under these circumstances, the State Governments, 'even if they wished were powerless to check centralization in the Federal Government and escape from the ever-expanding activities of the federal departments'.[32] In his closing speech at the Durbar, Swettenham declared that 'irresponsible and ill-informed people' had urged the abolition of the posts of British Residents; his reply was that in the Federation Treaty it was expressly stipulated that previous arrangements were not to be interfered with except as specified and those previous arrangements provided for the appointment of Residents. This was to reassure Sultan Idris that the British did not intend to remove the Residents.

The logical results of a centralized administration were that the functions of a Resident should decrease both in number and importance, and that the position of Resident should be taken

over by Secretaries to Government. The process had already begun with Federal Heads of Departments taking instructions from and reporting to the Resident-General, whereas in the old dispensation the same instructions would have been received from and the reports made to the Residents of the State concerned. The powers of the Heads of Departments varied and were ill-defined. For instance, all control over railways was taken from the Residents, but in the Land Department the Commissioner for Lands and Mines, having only limited power and responsibilty, had to take his orders from the Residents in the alienation of land. The Financial Commissioner, on the other hand, had direct control over the various financial departments and officers. The change in the functions and powers of the Residents would in no way interfere with pre-Federation arrangements with regard to their relations with the different Sultans whom they could and did 'advise' as before; the Rulers on their part would never find Federation a barrier to taking the same intelligent interest in the administration of their respective States. The unifying of the different departments in the Malay States under responsible Heads communicating mainly with the Resident-General, and the curtailing of the powers and functions of the Residents, would make very little difference to the 'previous arrangements' so far as the Rulers were concerned. These previous arrangements were exceedingly simple and informal, largely owing to the fact that the control of the public purse was vested solely in the hands of the Residents, thereby absolving the Rulers from all worry, responsibility or interest in such mundane matters.[21]

Swettenham himself recognized the advantages that might be expected from this change, and many of the young men in the Civil Service were in favour of introducing a system under which Secretaries would replace Residents. Swettenham, however, would not recommend it for the reason that it would be an open violation of the trust the Malay Rulers had placed in the British Government. The Resident was to the Malay Ruler and the State Council what no Secretary could ever be. Much as Swettenham desired uniformity and centralization, he saw the importance of the Resident as a counterpoise to Federal control. By the existing system the Rulers and his chiefs looked upon the Resident as 'their man' who would support them against any other Resident

or, if the need arose, make a fight for them with the Resident-General.[34] Although most of the powers had been taken out of the hands of the Residents, it was psychologically expedient to preserve the institution of Residentships, for in the Residential system form was more important than content.

At the heart of administrative union lay the question of finance. Under the Federation Treaty it was agreed that debts incurred together with existing debts were to be regarded as joint liabilities between the States, to be settled when the indebted State had the means to make payment. Meanwhile interest would be paid or would accrue and be added to the debt. Federal charges were to be divided between the States in the following ratio: Perak 53 per cent, Selangor 42 per cent, Negri Sembilan 4 per cent and Pahang 1 per cent. In practice this was cumbersome. Swettenham's suggestion of a common purse for all the States was supported by the Colonial Office, but no such step could be taken without the full approval of the Malay Rulers, and if any State was a permanent drag on the rest, the proposal could not be made. Although Pahang was the principal debtor, its prospects were believed to be good. While the mineral deposits in the other States had been fully exploited, Pahang's resources remained untouched; and, acting on the belief that this backward State would one day come into its own, the Federal Government took over Pahang's debt to the Straits Settlements Government.[35]

Under these circumstances Swettenham thought a common purse for the Malay States would greatly simplify financial matters. Accordingly in 1899 he broached the subject of amalgamating State revenues to the Sultan of Perak, but unfortunately for the Resident-General's plans, Sultan Idris raised such insuperable objections that the subject was never mentioned again.[36]

THE CIVIL SERVICE

On the transfer of the government of the Straits Settlements from the India Office to the Colonial Office, a separate Civil Service for the Colony was instituted, with the emphasis on the Cadets being trained in the Malay and Chinese languages and their customs. In 1882 began the open competition for service in the Straits Settlements, Hong Kong and Ceylon, the successful candidates being allowed to choose in their order among the

vacancies in the three Colonies. The open competition applied only to the Straits Settlements; Cadets were appointed to the Malay States Civil Service by nomination, were entitled Junior Officers and were usually between twenty and twenty-three years of age.[27]

A unified Malay States Civil Service, graded and classified in a manner similar to the civil services of the Straits Settlements and Ceylon, was one of the aims of the Federation, and the Colonial Office wished to see future officers for the Malay States Civil Services recruited by open competition. Cadets were to be appointed to the joint service of the two Colonies of the Straits Settlements and Hong Kong, with a view to their being transferred, at the discretion of the Secretary of State, from one Colony to the other. The Colonial Office suggested the inclusion of the Malay States under this system, but the Governor of the Straits Settlements would be left with the choice of agreeing to this or keeping the Malay States Service separate, provided that the principle of continuity of service was maintained for pension purposes.

One possible drawback to the system of open competition in the Eastern Colonies was the handicap to both Europeans and Asians educated in the East who wished to enter the higher ranks of the Civil Service. In Ceylon an effort was made to meet this difficulty partly by creating a lower division of Civil Service and partly by reserving to the Government the power of appointing to the higher division of the Service those who had not entered by the door of competition. The Colonial Office thought this system might be adopted in the Malay States.[28]

In contrast with the liberal attitude of the Colonial Office, the Governor, Sir Charles Mitchell, preferred a system whereby coloured people, including Eurasians, were effectively debarred from joining the Civil Service. In his opinion the adoption of the principle of open competition for recruiting for the Civil Service of the Malay States exposed the country to two 'dangers' from which it was free under the previous system of selection, the danger of having to increase largely the pay of the Civil Service, 'and the danger of receiving recruits of African or Asiatic descent . . . who would be very unacceptable to the population of the Federated Malay States so that no useful occupation could be found for them'.[29] Sir Charles Mitchell, who

once declared, 'I am nothing if I am not economical',[40] was known to be niggardly in public expenditure and investment, and his reluctance to spend more money on the Civil Service than he could help was understandable, but to attribute to 'the population of the Malay States' the Government's refusal to take coloured people into the Civil Service was nothing short of fraudulent. Not even the Malay Rulers or their State Councils had any say in the question of recruitment for the Civil Service, let alone the public. What he implied, of course, was that those who were already in the Service wished to keep it as exclusive as their local clubs. Henceforth it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a non-European to enter the Civil Service of the Malay States, excepting a few privileged members of Malay royalty. What the States really wanted, declared Sir Charles, was:

> ... young men of good physique and [an] energetic and fearless disposition, of moderate attainments, and, if possible, well brought up. High scholarship is unnecessary, and when it is coupled with a disinclination to forego luxuries and suffer discomfort and hardship, it is a possible drawback to efficiency. I have previously at the Colonial Office endeavoured to lay stress upon bodily training and personal character and I should be glad if some test could be put in force so as to exclude candidates who might be found unfit in this respect.[41]

Under these circumstances the Governor advised that the system of open competition should be declared inapplicable to the Federated Malay States and that instead of it the principle of limited competition should be adopted, candidates being selected and nominated by the Colonial Office and by the Government of the Federated Malay States.[42]

Exclusiveness and a not-too-generous salary scheme were not designed to attract 'the flower of Britain's youth' to the service of the Empire. The glamour of carrying the torch of civilization to the benighted East was getting tarnished towards the end of the century, and 'well brought up' gallants of London's gay nineties were not prepared to forsake the fashionable salons of the West End for the sweat and smells of the tropics. Two young gentlemen, who signed themselves as 'Oxonian and Cantab', wrote angry and disillusioned letters to the London *Times* to

say how they were misled to join the Malayan Civil Service and had to live and work under 'atrocious conditions' on a salary of £200 a year. They declared there were few posts of any attractive income in the Service and even the highest officials were badly paid; all posts of value or importance were held by men collected from all parts of the world and diverted from various occupations such as tea-planting. 'When posts in the service of any value are to be filled up,' said the two young men, 'the appointments, as often as not, are made in a manner so arbitrary as to cause grave discontent among the officers as a body; and we know for a fact that many of them would go so far as to resign did they not feel themselves too old to begin a new career elsewhere.'[43]

The justice of these charges is attested by the report of the 1902 Education Commission which declared that, because of the poor salary schemes offered to those who wished to join the education service, the Straits Settlements (which to the average Englishman included the Malay States) had 'unfortunately acquired a bad name in the English scholastic world' which was likely to survive for many years.[44] Swettenham himself for many years fought the Colonial Office for better service conditions and on one occasion had to suffer the humiliation of having his request for a salary increase curtly turned down by the Secretary of State.[45] Before the conversion in 1904 of the Straits dollar from the silver to the gold standard and the fixing of the exchange rate at 2*s.* 4*d.* to the dollar, officers in the Service worked under an unstable exchange rate. The dollar, worth 4*s.* 3*d.* in the 1870's, stood at 1*s.* 10*d.* in 1898. The leave and pension value of the dollar originally fixed at 4*s.* was reduced to 3*s.* after 1896. The cost of living in the Malay States was from 15 per cent to 50 per cent higher than in Singapore, and the purchasing value of the dollar in the Malay States and of the rupee in Ceylon were, for local purposes, practically the same.[46] Mainly as the result of Swettenham's work the salary schemes for the Civil Service were converted from Straits dollars to sterling.

With the rapid expansion of administration after Federation, the Civil Service became understaffed, often requiring one man to hold two or more offices. In Negri Sembilan the financial officer had to supervise the police force controlling thirty-six country stations, and the public works officer directing the building and repairs of roads and the survey staff of five large districts. The

Resident, E.W. Birch, warned that driving officers at full speed and requiring them to perform duties that were unrelated to each other could only result in breakdown and spasmodic work.[47] Sickness and other causes further depleted the working force of the Service. The Resident of Pahang complained of the great difficulty of filling subordinate posts as there was a general reluctance to accept service in Pahang where the cost of living was high, the food supply generally bad and housing accommodation poor. Long working hours were the rule, without the compensation of any recreation or relaxation such as the local clubs might provide in the larger towns.[48]

Dating from the time of Hugh Low in Perak, the practice grew up of leaving in the hands of Malay *penghulus* all those affairs which immediately concerned the native population. The Resident of Selangor reported that most of them had 'done well' but few could be considered 'thoroughly efficient'. Even after Federation the status, duties and powers of these headmen were undefined. 'It is to the younger generation,' declared the Resident, 'that we must look for any encouraging results, and I venture to think that British intervention in the Malay States can never be fully justified unless we are in a position to show both mental and moral improvement among the natives of the country, as well as merely material progress.'[49]

In reply to an inquiry from the Colonial Office, Swettenham, as High Commissioner, stated that it was his policy to give every encouragement to the Malays and whenever possible to employ them as officials in every capacity for which they were fitted.[50] In his report for 1902 the Resident General, W.H. Treacher, admitted that while many years would pass before any appreciable number of Malays would be fitted to take their place in the administration, no direct steps had been taken to overcome the reluctance of the Malays to take part in the development of the country. Notable exceptions were Sultan Idris of Perak and the Raja Muda who took an active and intelligent interest in all matters affecting the development of the State and the welfare of their people. The examples set by the Sultan and his heir-presumptive had a beneficial effect on all the Malay chiefs connected with the administration of the various districts.

At a conference in 1901 the Residents, discussing the possibility of increasing the powers of Malay officials, decided that

subject to certain restrictions, the *penghulus* should be authorized to act as collectors of quit-rents. The Residents believed in responsibility as 'a factor of utmost value in any scheme for developing the capacity and character of native chiefs and headmen', and a young Raja was given full administrative control of Upper Perak while others were employed as magistrates and settlements officers.[51] In 1903, after thirty years of British control, the Establishment List of the Federated Malay States showed 587 employed as *penghulus* and magistrates, 1,175 as policemen, 874 in sundry occupations and 240 Malay chiefs and others drawing pensions and allowances, making a total cost of $939,722 a year.[52] The posts of *penghulus* and magistrates were in existence before British intervention, so that in fact the amount of responsibility delegated to the Malays was very small. The main barrier to Malays rising to higher appointments in the Civil Service was the severe competitive examination held by the Civil Service Commissioners in England. No one could become a satisfactory magistrate until he was able to satisfy local examiners that he had a fairly good knowledge of the principal laws of the country, including the law of evidence, and of the General Orders and Rules of the Government.

BENEFITS FOR THE MALAYS

While there were genuine attempts to give the Malays greater responsibility in government, they were neither systematic nor whole-hearted. The root-cause was the official policy for native education which was not geared to the changing needs of the country and which had the effect of tying the Malays down to their traditional subsistence agriculture. Such Malay vernacular schools as existed did not train the Malays to take a more active part in the economic development of the country. Inevitably all aliens, whether they were Chinese miners, Indian labourers or European administrators, had the lion's share of the country's wealth; the Malays merely retreated from the tide of commercial activity and material prosperity, preferring the quiet of the *kampongs* to the rat-race of economic development in the towns and cities.

Again and again British officials complained of the reluctance of the Malays to place themselves at the service of the Govern-

ment. Well-meaning Residents had offered 'every reasonable form of encouragement' to young Malays to qualify for posts in the Government service by way of scholarships, but because there was no obvious connexion between their education and the jobs they were expected to do, these opportunities were not eagerly taken. At the 1903 Durbar the Resident for Selangor urged all the chiefs and Rulers to impress on their people the advantages they would gain by joining the Government service. Well-intentioned as these exhortations were, the British officials failed to realize that they were talking to the Malays in a language they literally did not understand.

To justify British intervention in the Malay States Residents never tired of talking of the 'benefits' conferred on the Malays. Proudly the Resident-General declared that British protection

> has given [the Malay] security for life and property, unknown before to the common people, when wives, daughters and orchards were at the mercy of the aristocracy; it has given him a permanent title to his land; it has established for him means of communication by road and rail; it has opened for him a local market for his labour and his produce; it offers him free education for his children, free hospital treatment and medicines when sick; and banks where he can deposit at interest his small earnings; it has abolished slavery and piracy; it has practically put an end to the scourges of small-pox and cholera; it has established the reign of law and equity throughout the land—it has made the *raiat* equal to his rajah before the law; it helps him to drain and irrigate his padi fields; it contributes to the cost of the erection of his mosque; it has opened to him offices under Government to which fixed salaries and pensions are attached, and it has freed him from arbitrary taxation and forced levies and the system of *kra* or compulsory labour.[53]

Indeed the achievements of the British were impressive. But who were the recipients of all these benefits? The Government gave the Malay beautiful laws he did not understand, hospitals with Chinese cooks, vernacular schools with Inspectors who could neither read nor write his language, a system of surveys which required a wait of a year or longer if he wanted a grant, post offices without country deliveries, a savings bank which he probably never heard of, waterworks which supplied only the towns, State Councils and Sanitary Boards whose proceedings were conducted behind closed doors, markets where the price of

foodstuffs was always increasing whilst he could not sell his own agricultural produce without first paying a tax, and a railway whose increasing fares made it difficult for him to travel. The Malays, declared a leading newspaper, were not badly treated, but 'we are a little tired of reading in every speech delivered in London about this part of the world, the same old stock yarns about the wonderful benefits conferred on the Malays. The man who hustles gets the cake, and as the Malay neither hustles nor is encouraged to hustle, he has to be content with the crumbs.'[54]

British good intentions took the form of an agricultural settlement which was opened in 1899 at the recommendation of the Resident-General and the Resident of Selangor. The aim was 'to educate the children of Malays to take part in the administration and enable them to reap some of the advantages of the present prosperity'. To put this into effect, it was decided 'to give them an English-Malay education, and to teach them a trade'. The British Resident hoped that the scheme would result in filling the clerical service with Malays.[55]

An area of about 224 acres of land in Kuala Lumpur lying between the Klang River and Batu Road was reserved and a Board of Management appointed in 1900 to 'manage and maintain the Settlement'. A woodcarver and a house-builder were brought in from Negri Sembilan, and a blacksmith and a silversmith were engaged on contract. A vernacular school was to be started and technical education 'taken in hand vigorously' by placing apprentices to the woodcarver and silversmith, and a tailor and rattan worker were added to the staff. The Board of Management, consisting originally of two Malays and three Europeans, decided that rice should be grown, and four acres of *sawah* land (swamp rice fields) were given out and an English plough costing £5 and four water-wheels for irrigation each costing £55 were ordered from England.

By the end of 1902 the Secretary to the Board declared that 'things were in a mess', and that only one European member took any interest in the Settlement. The silversmith's apprentice was dismissed for 'laziness and incompetence' and the services of the tailor and his apprentices were dispensed with; land marked out for rice-growing was found to be subject to flooding and some of the rice-growers were indeed flooded out and had left the Settlement. The irrigation wheels broke down, and since

the cost of repairs was too high, it was decided to build a dam instead. A Malay elder told the Board that the rice scheme would never be successful so long as water-wheels were used, as they were unsuitable. After two and a half years the school building, which had cost $2,000, was still unfinished. The silversmith, whose work was unsatisfactory and had to be supervised by an overseer, absconded and was finally located on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Finally, the Board warned the poverty-stricken villagers that if they did not contribute more to the fund for a place of worship which the Government had promised to build for them, they would get no mosque. As if to bolster up morale, the Board asked the Sultan of Selangor to procure a bandmaster from Johore to start a drum and fife band.

This pathetic brain-child of well-meaning British officials dragged on interminably, with the Malay villagers harassed by rules and regulations which they did not understand. Impatient benefactors were intent on making the Malays engage themselves in activities which had no great attraction for them. After huge sums of money had been spent on this scheme, which included 'the spread and encouragement of technical education and the revival of certain forms of Malay handicrafts and ornamental workmanship which were in danger of dying out', the Agricultural Settlement remained a shanty town and later deteriorated into a slum area while Kuala Lumpur expanded in size and importance. As the Resident of Selangor summed up the situation:

> It is a matter of history that it is a superhuman task to persuade a Malay to take up with interest any work to which his personal inclination does not lead him. He may consent for the time being as a favour to his adviser, but his compliance will terminate with the cessation of personal incitement, if not before. This is what has happened in the case of the younger population of the Settlement. They are not drawn to the work, and they decline to be bound to it. It is not improbable that the result which we desire may be obtained in the future, by slow degrees, and I am well assured that the influence of the gentlemen who form the supervising committee will ever be judiciously exercised to that end, but it will be a matter of time, and will only be accomplished in the end by unlimited patience and sympathetic handling. The obstacle to present progress being simply the temperament of the people whom we desire to benefit, advance must be made at their rate, not with the rapidity with which we ourselves are anxious to infuse it.[56]

If the experiment of the Malay Agricultural Settlement proved to be a disappointment, the prosperity and development of the Malay States advanced by leaps and bounds. The falling price of Liberian coffee was counteracted by the high price of tin. Another satisfactory feature in the progress of the Federation was the absence of friction between the Rulers of the different States and their British advisers, and to this may be attributed the able supervision and guidance of Swettenham, who watched the Federal experiment with anxiety as it seemed impossible to expect complete harmony of ideas between men brought up with such different backgrounds and habits of thought.

The rich alluvial plains continued to yield immense quantities of tin, whose supplies were believed to be inexhaustible. The country had limitless supplies of water which were required for washing and hydraulicking purposes, and the tin industry could draw on China for labour. Swettenham declared that since the Government relied on the Chinese 'to contribute to our revenue, carry out our public works and to work our mines', it was of 'the extremest importance' that the labour supply should continue in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of the country. So important was this matter that the Government seriously contemplated the direct importation of Chinese labourers by subsidizing direct steamers from China, or offering free tickets, or making loans to Chinese capitalists who would undertake to bring in Chinese migrants.[57]

Pahang was the only State which lagged behind the development of the other States. The main obstacles to Pahang's progress were the lack of population and the difficulties of transport. As the one, to a great extent, depended on the other, the Government believed that if transport facilities were provided population would be sure to increase. Although the eighty-two mile trunk road from Selangor to Pahang had been completed and was 'everything that could be desired', practically the only way of travelling over it was by bicycle or bullock-cart. The latter mode of transport was slow, uncomfortable and expensive, and at the end of the road carts were often unobtainable. The *gharries* (animal-drawn carriages) in Pahang were of 'the worst possible description', being little faster, less reliable and even more expensive than the bullock-carts. The journey from Singapore to Kuala Lipis, the administrative centre of Pahang, took at least a

fortnight by steamer to Pekan on the coast and thence by small boats up the tortuous Pahang River. Until the introduction of motor-cars Pahang was effectively cut off from the rest of the country. Internally, however, the work of Hugh Clifford in Pahang, aided, no doubt, by the great psychological impact of the 1897 Durbar, achieved results almost as remarkable as those of Hugh Low in Perak. The Resident reported that Malays of all ranks had learned to place implicit confidence in the Government, and chiefs readily co-operated in all matters where the Government required their assistance.[58]

The twentieth century opened in a blaze of prosperity for the Federated Malay States. The total revenue for 1900 exceeded $15½ millions, and the value of trade was nearly $100 millions. The fact that the value of exports exceeded that of imports by $10 millions was highly satisfactory and showed that the country had a large margin of purchasing power. The significance of these figures lay in the fact that the exports were the real produce of the country while imports were purchased for local consumption. The duty on tin and, to a lesser extent, income from railways and land, were the principal sources of Government revenue. Royalty on tin since 1874 yielded a total of $47 millions; the Malay States in the meantime had invested more than $23 millions in the construction of railways, and by the end of 1901 the country had 360 miles of fully equipped railways built out of current revenue. The population increased from 418,509 in 1890 to 676,138 in 1900. Malays from Sumatra, Java and the neighbouring islands flocked to the States, bringing the Malaysian population to 313,763 in 1900 as against 230,090 in 1890. While the number of Indians rose from 20,177 to 52,501 over the same period, the Chinese outstripped them all with a total population of 309,874.[59]

Until the closing years of the nineteenth century the development of the Malay States had depended almost entirely on Chinese capital and labour. Speaking at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute in London in 1896 Swettenham declared, 'In Malaya so much has been done by Orientals that the achievements of the white man look very small indeed.... Of private European enterprise, except in planting and a few mines, there has been practically none.' He deplored the fact that so little European capital had been attracted into the country and blamed

British officials for not doing more to make it easy for European investors to enter the Malay States. It should be the object of the British officers who ran the country, said Swettenham, to encourage every legitimate enterprise for the advancement of the country and the profit and prosperity of those who lived in it. Beyond the preservation of peace and the protection of life and property, the official was there 'to open the country by great works: roads, railways, telegraphs, wharves. . . .'[60] In 1895 Chamberlain, himself a great believer in railways as the instrument for developing the Empire, had advised the Governor of the Straits Settlements that 'in the future the work of constructing highways and railways along or across the Peninsula' should be pursued 'not merely with a view to profit and development of particular districts, but upon comprehensive principles' and with a preference for such works as were capable of future extension to meet future needs.[61]

As Resident-General, Swettenham gave every encouragement to European and Chinese capital. He spent a great deal of his time on leave in England publicizing the opportunities for investment. The policy of granting agricultural land to planters on favourable terms, which had been advocated and practised by Swettenham, was extended to all the other States. By the end of the century a strong community of planters was established and was later responsible for developing plantation rubber on such a large scale that the agricultural product soon rivalled tin in economic importance. The policy of driving along the work of developing the Malay States is best described by W.H. Treacher, the Resident-General who succeeded Swettenham:

> The general policy of the British Advisers has been to interfere as little as possible with the manners, methods and prejudices of the different nationalities composing the population of the States; to interfere not at all in matters touching the Muhammadan religion—the religion of the Malays; to attract capital—European, Chinese and others; to encourage the immigration of Chinese, Indian and other labourers; to assist the development of the mineral and agricultural resources of the States by making roads whenever the necessity of them was apparent, by constructing railways, by works of drainage and irrigation, by establishing security for life and property, by constituting Courts of Justice, by opening free hospitals and schools, by giving good titles to land and by abolishing import duties (except

on Opium and spirits) and all restraints on trade, commerce and industry.[62]

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

While the economic development of the Malay States was based on the tin industry, the administrative success of the Federation may be ascribed to the work of Swettenham. In controlling the Federal Secretariat while he was Resident-General, Swettenham arrogated to himself the essential powers of the State Councils; it was to his credit that the control of the Governor of the Straits Settlements and of Whitehall was reduced to a minimum. As there was no formal Federal Legislative or Executive Council to check his arbitrary powers, Swettenham's administration was in the form of a benevolent dictatorship. Ruthlessly single-minded he saw only the major basic needs of the country and was able to press on with the work of systematizing the administration and initiating schemes for development. He was supremely confident of his own views as to what was best for the country. Sir Charles Mitchell's excessive caution in spending public money and the fact that he had nominal control over the activities of the Resident-General must have been irksome to a man of Swettenham's temperament. Differences of opinion did not deter Swettenham who, in the case of railway development, had the support of Chamberlain while the latter was head of the Colonial Office. When Swettenham became Governor of the Straits Settlements in 1900, he merely shifted the centre of control from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore. Towards the end of 1902, however, when he realized that his term of service was drawing to a close, he reviewed the situation and came to the conclusion that he was, in fact, setting a dangerous precedent in the administration of the Malay States. Writing to the Secretary of State in September 1902, Swettenham declared that as he had been for over twenty-eight years connected with the development of the Malay States and was to a large extent responsible for the administrative Federation, his successor would be placed 'in a somewhat difficult position' and he asked the Colonial Office to consider 'future arrangements' while he was still in Singapore.[63]

Swettenham's long and intimate connexion with Malaya and his mastery of the Malay language made it possible for him to

command the respect and confidence of both Rulers and Residents in the administration of the States. It was hardly possible, argued Swettenham, that a new Governor with no experience of Malay affairs or a knowledge of the language, should minutely direct the work of the Residents in the Malay States or could have more than a very general knowledge of what was going on there. The strongest argument in favour of the Federation was the appointment of a Resident-General who, while he lived in the country, knew all the principal people and had almost as good a knowledge of any single State as its Resident and ought to have far wider knowledge than any of the Residents about the best means of developing the resources and advancing the interests of their people.

But as the duties of the Resident-General were under the supervision of the Governor, Swettenham said that the Malay States gave him 'at least twice as much work as the Colony' did, and the majority of it was 'much more difficult than the ordinary routine work of an old established Colony which could be carried on successfully by anyone of average intelligence with some knowledge of public business'. As an example of the difficulties his successor would have to face, Swettenham cited the fact that almost every single question discussed at the Conference of Residents in 1902 was referred to him for a final settlement. 'It not infrequently happens,' he said, 'that I find myself unable to agree with the resolutions passed by the Residents and Resident-General, and that has been the case in a good many instances in regard to matters dealt with at this last Conference. It seems to me, however, that it would be very difficult for any High Commissioner without a good deal of personal knowledge and experience of the very special conditions of these States to set his opinion against that of the Resident-General and the four Residents.'[64]

The general tone of this dispatch indicated that Swettenham was in favour of making the Resident-General more independent of the Governor. His arguments appeared to point to the entire separation of the Federated Malay States from the Colony for administrative purposes. Chamberlain, however, did not consider it practicable to carry out such a measure, 'having regard to the geographical position and the intimate trade relations of the Colony and the Protected States'.[65]

Assuming that it was best to continue the system under which the administration of the Federated Malay States was subordinate to the High Commissioner, Chamberlain asked Swettenham whether he would advise the abolition of the post of Resident-General after the retirement of the last officer to hold that position. The administration could then revert to the system which existed before the Federation, with the Governor communicating directly with the Residents. Chamberlain also considered that it might be desirable not to restrict the appointment of future Residents-General and Residents to officers from the Civil Service of the Malay States and Straits Settlements. This proposal, no doubt, was aimed at giving reality to the idea of service to the Empire when officers of the Crown could serve in any part of the world. Swettenham was not opposed on principle to the appointment of an outsider to the service of the Malay States, but he considered it impracticable for the time being. The field of selection could be widened by every successful step in the direction of unifying the service of the Colony and that of the Federated Malay States. Chamberlain thought that many of the questions discussed at the Conference of Residents were only incidental to the process of systematizing the administration of the Malay States and, when once settled, would not recur, or if they did would not require such great attention. 'Your own efforts,' said Chamberlain, figuratively patting Swettenham on the back, 'in the direction of establishing the Government of these States on a regular basis have been so far-reaching and so successful that the next High Commissioner will find himself confronted by a far less arduous task than fell to Sir Charles Mitchell and yourself.'[66]

After this reassurance from the Colonial Office, Swettenham, feeling that his fears for the welfare of the Malay States were perhaps exaggerated, changed his mind about reorganizing the administration. In December 1902 he informed the Secretary of State that 'it would be a mistake to change the existing relations between the Resident-General and the High Commissioner', not because of the relative positions of the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States and their intimate relations, which he thought would 'grow even closer', but because the few men who had for years held the most responsible posts in the Malay States—men like Treacher, Clifford, Rodger and

others—were fast disappearing from the scene; and when they had all gone it was important that their successors should feel that there was in Singapore a High Commissioner who had the confidence and full authority of the Colonial Office to deal with 'any troublesome questions or any troublesome individual in the Federated Malay States'.[67]

While agreeing to the system under which the administration of the Malay States was subordinate to the High Commissioner, Swettenham strongly advised the retention of the post of Resident-General, which should be filled only by an officer 'of the highest capacity'. It would be a retrograde step to abolish the post of a Resident-General who was the link which kept all the Federal machinery of Government together and represented unity of purpose and identity of treatment. Swettenham considered it 'better that [the Resident-General] should be able and determined, without that knowledge [of Malay] than that he should possess it as a weak officer of only moderate intelligence'. Once he was there he would rapidly gain experience and, by travelling about the country, get to know its needs and possibilities; and if he was an intelligent stranger, his fresh ideas would be 'worth more than time-worn faculties blunted by the climate and perceptions deadened by perpetual contact with the same surroundings'. As the Federation was in many respects quite unlike anything to be found elsewhere, previous experience was not often of great assistance. 'There is no patent remedy for this complaint,' concluded Swettenham, 'and the only form of relief which I can suggest is that the High Commissioner should always have as his secretary one of the very best of the Federated Malay States younger officers who has had a considerable experience in the office of the Resident-General.'[68]

This was Swettenham's *Nunc Dimittis*, for in December 1903, while on leave in England, he sent in his resignation which the the new Secretary of State, Lord Lyttelton, accepted 'with the greatest regret'.[69] With the retirement of Swettenham the last of the great colonial administrators of the nineteenth century was removed from the Malayan stage; an era had come to an end. It has been said that he resigned because of differences of opinion between himself and the British Government over policy towards the Siamese-Malay States,[70] but there are no actual records to substantiate this view. As an empire builder he possessed con-

summate skill and diplomatic finesse as seen in his relations with the Malay Rulers and chiefs, although he was not above using threats and bribes when the occasion demanded it. When the Sultan of Johore refused to fall in with Swettenham's plans for the Johore railway, the Governor threatened to invoke Article Three of the 1885 Agreement with Johore by which the British Government had the right to appoint an Agent to reside in the Sultan's court, thereby curtailing the independence of the Ruler. When the Sultan of Pahang complained that he had bartered his independence for a bauble by accepting British protection, Swettenham gave him a sop in the form of an honorary title. His relations with the other Sultans, particularly with Sultan Idris of Perak, however, were marked by great understanding and sympathy. His policy of constructing a central railway connecting Penang and Singapore showed great vision and was a demonstration of his unshakeable faith in the future of the Malay States which could, and did, pay out of current revenue for every mile of railway track laid down. The heavy investments of all available Government revenue on public works of all kinds, particularly roads which opened up good agricultural land, prepared the way for the establishment of the rubber industry. If Swettenham's educational policy towards the Malays brought no great visible results, one of his services to the Empire and to Malaya was to foil an American attempt to monopolize the tin-smelting business of the Malay States and Straits Settlements by imposing a heavy duty on tin ore that was exported; if the Americans had succeeded, they would have destroyed an important part of Malaya's tin industry. When British shipping and the trade and commerce of Singapore were threatened, he passed a Chinese Immigration Bill to prevent the Germans and Americans from gaining a monopoly of shipping between the Straits and China and Hong Kong.[71] A glowing tribute was paid to Swettenham by the new High Commissioner for the Malay States when he declared:

> Throughout the States the powerful personality of my predecessor has impressed itself on the country and its administration. But for his vigorous initiative and resolution, his great administrative ability, the confidence with which he was regarded by the native rulers as well as his own officers, and his unshakeable faith in the future of

the country, the enormous advances which it has made in every direction, could never have been attained.

The extent of that advance can only be properly appreciated by those who have seen something of the Malay States outside British protection. To pass from the one to the other is to pass from the Anglo-Saxon period to the twentieth century.[72]

The successor to Swettenham was a dour Scotsman whose only experience of the Malay States consisted of a brief visit to Singapore in 1901 when he accompanied the Duke and Duchess of York on a round tour of the Empire. The appointment of Sir John Anderson[73] as Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States in April 1904 was a departure from the usual practice of selecting someone on the spot. During his seven and a half years' tenure of office, Sir John Anderson gave new impetus to primary and secondary education and continued his predecessor's support of the growing rubber industry by granting a large number of free tickets to planters for the recruitment of labourers from India and by setting up a loan fund of $500,000 in 1905 for planters. In 1907 he established the Tamil Immigration Fund which was instrumental in the final abolition of indentured labour a few years later. Constitutionally his most important and controversial achievement was the creation of the Federal Council and the replacement of the post of Resident-General with that of Chief Secretary.

Although the British Government had in mind a Federal Council as part of the scheme of Federation, its creation was deferred on the advice of Sir Charles Mitchell. So long as the Sultans and chiefs were satisfied with their State Councils and the Chinese capitalists were represented in them, there was no demand for any change in the system of government. The Malay Rulers and chiefs had their periodic Durbars where they could discuss problems concerning mainly Malay affairs, and the Chinese were preoccupied with the business of making money. Not so used to such autocratic government was the small but vocal body of Europeans who were engaged in commerce or planting. As early as 1903 the English language *Malay Mail* had sounded a note of dissatisfaction with the Government, and had suggested the formation of a Federal Council, consisting of the Sultans, the Resident-General, the Heads of Departments and a

few Chinese and Indians to represent their communities. Of particular interest is the suggestion that a senior Sultan should preside at the proposed Council and that the position of the Sultans should be safeguarded by allowing them an appeal to the High Commissioner in the event of any proposition brought forward by any of them being defeated by a majority, 'so long as the Resident-General and two other non-Malay members of the Council were in the minority. . . .'

So long as the Government-in-the-dark form of administration goes on, we doubt if Federation affects the public one way or the other. Kuala Lumpur benefits by being the Federal capital, and Selangor standing alone, might have escaped increased railway rates. Generally speaking, Federation is at present very much more of a Service plaything than a public pet: but carried to its logical conclusion . . . the public will cease to be barred from taking an intelligent interest in the Government of the land they live in, and then and only then will they joyfully proclaim that they are proud to belong to the Federated Malay States where all are working together in confidence and sympathy to make it the pride of its people and a pattern to its neighbours.[74]

Exactly a year later the same newspaper intensified its criticism of the Government. The prerogative of power, it declared, was a danger to all civil servants in a Crown Colony; it was especially dangerous in a country like Malaya where the whole machinery of Government was carried on behind closed doors by a privileged class. Outside India there were few countries in the world where a handful of British officials found themselves such exalted and irresponsible individuals as they did in the Federated Malay States. 'We gladly bear witness to their honesty of purpose and their unflagging zeal in the public service. They are not found unworthy of the positions they have been called upon by fate and competitive examination to occupy . . . the men of the Federated Malay States service are a credit to the Empire. . . .'[75] But the Government and the intelligent portion of the community were not in touch. No systematic attempt was made to ascertain public opinion; no machinery existed for enlightening the people as to the policy of the Government; millions were expended without an expression of public opinion, and there was no channel of inquiry. 'If not a soul in the country could read or write any

known language it would hardly be possible to do less in educating them to share in the administration.[76]

Intimation of what the Government intended to do about this state of affairs came in October 1908, when the official reason given for rejecting the Planters' Association demand for representation in the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements was that Governor Anderson was already negotiating with the Colonial Office for the creation of a Federal Council for the Federated Malay States.[77] On the 20th of October 1909, the Agreement for the constitution of a Federal Council was signed by Sir John Anderson and the Rulers and chiefs of the Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang.[78]

The formal inauguration of the Federal Council was held on the 11th December 1909, at Kuala Kangsar. In the course of his opening speech Sir John declared:

> The development of the last few years has shown that both in regard to legislation and finance some change was desirable. The rapid increase of the commercial, mining and planting communities in these States, the large amount of capital which is at stake, and the growth of a public opinion, which desires some mode of bringing its views directly to bear on the legislative proposals of the Government as well as on its administrative measures, have made it imperative to constitute a central body to control the finances and to direct the course of legislation.[79]

Although these were important factors, the cardinal reason for the creation of the Federal Council was the desire to solve the problem of the relationship between State autonomy and the centralized power under the Resident-General. Sir John Anderson realized that by the Federation Treaty the Rulers had undertaken to follow the advice of the Resident-General in all matters of administration other than those touching Islam, and that the Residents became the mouthpiece not of the High Commissioner but of the Resident-General, who had no formal Executive Council to assist him and was subject only to a vague and undefined control by the High Commissioner. He thought that the remedy for this was to alter the old scheme so that the High Commissioner, instead of the Resident-General, would become the head of the Government of the Federated Malay States. The first step was to set up a Federal Council which he

could control, and a second was to change the post of Resident-General to that of Chief Secretary who would be divested of most of the powers formerly held by the Resident-General.[80]

Behind this manœuvre was the intention to 'restore' some of the powers of the State Councils absorbed by the Federal Secretariat. Article Nine of the Federal Council Agreement provided that:

> Laws passed or which may hereafter be passed by the State Councils shall continue to have full force and effect in the State except insofar as they may be repugnant to the provisions of any law passed by the Federal Council, and questions connected with the Muhammedan Religion, Mosques, Political Pensions, Native Chiefs and Penghulus and any other questions which in the opinion of the High Commissioner affect the rights and prerogatives of any of the above-named Rulers or which for other reasons he considers should properly be dealt with only by the State Councils shall be exclusively reserved to the State Councils.

Article Ten declared that the draft estimates of revenue and expenditure should be considered by the Federal Council but should immediately on publication be communicated to the State Councils. Next followed the time-worn enigma: 'Nothing in this Agreement is intended to curtail any of the powers or authority now held by any of the above-named Rulers in their respective States. . . .'[81]

Article Nine was an attempt at a division of powers. State Councils were to pass only those laws which exclusively concerned Malays, and the residual powers were vested in the Federal Government. A legal authority, however, declared that the Agreement 'defined no powers'. While it purported to reduce the powers of the State Councils so that they should pass no laws repugnant to the provisions of any law passed by the Federal Council, it gave no definite powers to the latter to pass any laws at all. Legally no enactment passed by the Federal Council under the Agreement of 1909 had any force in any State except when the Ruler of that State had assented to it.[82]

As in the Federation Treaty, the Agreement of 1909 had irreconcilable provisions. While nothing in the Agreement was intended to curtail any of the powers or authority of the Rulers, Article Nine severely circumscribed these same powers. Sir John

Anderson conceded the fact that any authority the British Government had in the country was derived from the Malay Rulers, but the Agreement completely ignored the juristic position of the Sultans. Thus, the Council was to be established on a day to be fixed by *His Majesty the King of England*, not by the Malay Rulers; its unofficial members were to be nominated by the High Commissioner, not by the Rulers; and in the composition of the Council, the High Commissioner and the Resident-General took precedence over the Rulers.[83]

If the division of powers between State and Federal Governments was vague and unsatisfactory, the absence of an Executive Council further confused matters. Theoretically the executive power remained in the hands of the Rulers-in-Council, but in fact the executive authority was exercised by the High Commissioner and his chief staff officer, the Resident-General. The practical results of the Federal Council were the very opposite of the intentions of the British Government. The influence and powers of the State Councils and Residents decreased in proportion to the increasing efficiency and uniformity under the Federal Government until the Sultans lost all semblance of independent rule. In theory the Sultans were brought directly into the Government machinery, but in practice they occupied the same status in the Council as any ordinary member. None of the Rulers could ever preside under the Standing Orders and they had neither the power of veto nor any special rights not possessed by other members, except that of representation in absence. 'The Council legislated whether they were there or not (on several occasions all were absent and sent no representatives), they voted like other members, and bills after being passed were signed by the High Commissioner and not by the Rulers. The legislative power had in fact, passed out of the hands of the Sultans and State Councils, except for matters of trivial importance, and the executive power remained where it had always been under the Federation—in the hands of the Resident-General.'[84] Ironically enough the Sultan of Perak was reported to have said at the inaugural meeting of the Federal Council that the new Council, which would meet frequently instead of only once in five or six years, and which would pass legislation instead of only discussing it as in the Rulers' Durbars, 'was a great improvement on the former plan'.[85]

In place of an Executive Council, the High Commissioner arranged for the Resident-General and Residents to meet him to discuss State and Federal matters. But as the High Commissioner had in fact become the chief executive officer of the Federated Malay States, the continued existence of the Resident-General was an anomaly. The Resident-General instead of being what Sir John Anderson would call 'the mouthpiece of the High Commissioner', more or less combined the duties of both, subject only to the nominal control of the High Commissioner. He had such large powers to overrule the Residents that he had become 'the final authority to all intents and purposes . . . on all matters affecting the Federated Malay States', except when an appeal was made to the High Commissioner. This position was unsatisfactory to the High Commissioner and to the Residents. To define the position clearly, the post of Resident-General was abolished in November 1910, and in its place the office of Chief Secretary to the Government was created. It was not proposed to take away any of the powers vested in the Resident-General but in future he would discharge his duties as Chief Secretary. 'I think,' said Sir John Anderson, 'there is a difference between the titles, if they are taken in their ordinary meaning, which will, more or less, clearly define what is the intention of the Government with regard to the post in future.'[86]

This important constitutional change was preceded by no 'resolution' or debate; the Federal Council, wrote a former Chief Secretary, was not asked to express an opinion; 'a bare announcement by Sir John, a feeble protest by the unofficial members, and the thing was done'.[87]

It was really immaterial whether the chief executive officer of the Federated Malay States was called Resident-General or Chief Secretary; what was important was the setting up of the Federal Council which marked a distinct advance in the constitutional development of Malaya. Chinese capitalists had always been represented in the State Councils, but this was the first time that private European vested interest received official recognition by representation on the Federal Council. The four nominated unofficials (three Europeans and one Chinese) were reported to have 'fully appreciated the opportunity' which was given them of taking part in the consideration of legislative proposals of the Government and of giving the views of those they represented.[88]

Thus the seed of constitutional government, sown by Sir Hugh Low when he created the Perak State Council in 1877, bore its first fruit in the formation of the Federal Council in 1909. Subsequent constitutional reforms and political development stemmed from these early beginnings. While the Malay Rulers lost political power, they were compensated by an increase in prestige in the growing wealth and importance of their States. In the year of Federation, the revenue of the four States was just over $8 millions; in 1909 it topped $25 millions. The value of trade in 1908 was above $113 millions, of which the export of tin and tin ore accounted for nearly $56 millions. From an insignificant beginning plantation rubber exported in 1909 was valued at $14½ millions. On this promising financial basis, the Federation was on the threshold of becoming a modern state.

NOTES

1 Scheme for the Administrative Federation of the Protected Malay States, Clause 5.
2 *Ibid.*, Clause 7.
3 *Ibid.*, Clause 6.
4 *Ibid.*
5 F.A. Swettenham, 'Malay Problems', *British Malaya*, May 1926.
6 Swettenham, *British Malaya*, p. 273.
7 E. Thio, 'British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1909', p. 202.
8 *Straits Times*, 5th October 1932.
9 Sir George Maxwell, 'The Position of the High Commissioner in the Federated Malay States', *British Malaya*, October 1926.
10 Swettenham, 'Malay Problems', *British Malaya*, May 1926.
11 Secretary of State to Sir Charles Mitchell, 27th December 1895, COD/C.
12 Thio, *op. cit.* p. 199.
13 Sir Charles Mitchell to Swettenham, 7th June 1895, GD/C.
14 R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, p. 140.
15 Sir Samuel Wilson, 'Report on a Visit to Malaya,' Cmd. 4276 (1932-33), p. 6.
16 L. Le Marchant Minty, *Constitutional Laws of the British Empire*, pp. 138-47.
17 O. Hood Phillips, *The Constitutional Law of Great Britain and the Commonwealth*, p. 721.
18 *Ibid.* p. 703.
19 The term 'Federated Malay States' came into general use although there was, strictly speaking, no legal authority for it. In a dispatch to the Governor, dated 31st December 1897, the Secretary of State declared that two ordinances were imperfect as they contained no definition of the term Federated Malay States, 'a title which does not

appear to have been hitherto formally defined, but which seems to have come into general use, in place of the title "Protected Malay States" as given to the original agreement by which the Federation of these States was formed. . . .' The Secretary of State also pointed out that there was 'no such thing as "the Government of the Federated Malay States"' since each of those States still retained its separate and independent Government. Chamberlain to Sir Charles Mitchell, 1897, COD/115.

This small but important point illustrates the looseness with which legal terms were used by British officials in the Malay States; it serves to explain in part the general confusion with regard to administrative aims and practices. While Whitehall was under the impression that the autonomy of the four States was maintained, British officials on the spot acted on the assumption that these States were amalgamated into a union with a central government.

For purposes of convenience, the term Federated Malay States will be used throughout this thesis as the four States under the Federation were known by that title during this period.

20 R. Braddell, *The Legal Status of the Malay States*, p. 13.

21 Sir George Maxwell, 'The New Policy for the Federated Malay States', *British Malaya*, August 1926.

22 Resident-General's Report on the Durbar of Rulers, 1897.

23 Thio, *op. cit.* p. 217.

24 Swettenham, *British Malaya*, p. 293.

25 A.R. Pahang for 1897, C. 9108.

26 A.R. Negri Sembilan for 1897, C. 9108.

27 Thio, *op. cit.* p. 217.

28 Minutes of the Conference of Rulers, 1903, pp. 24-5; quoted by Kamaruddin Ariff, 'Sultan Idris, 1849-1916', unpublished thesis, University of Malaya, Singapore. Sultan Idris, who went through the turbulent period of British rule in the 1870's, was groomed for the Sultanate by Sir Hugh Low. His experience as a Malay magistrate developed his natural astuteness which lifted him above the average Malay Rulers and chiefs. His close friendship with Swettenham was one of the reasons why the latter had no difficulty in securing the agreement of the Sultans to the Federation.

29 Minutes of the Conference of Rulers, 1903.

30 Thio, *op. cit.* p. 229.

31 *Malay Mail*, Kuala Lumpur, 30th September, 1st and 2nd October 1903.

32 Sir Samuel Wilson, *op. cit.* pp. 6-7.

33 See the *Malay Mail*, 3rd October 1903.

34 Swettenham to the Colonial Office, 7th December 1902, GD/C.

35 Resident-General's Report for 1896.

36 Thio, *op. cit.* p. 215.

37 W. Makepeace and others, *One Hundred Years of Singapore*, Vol. I, pp. 91-3, 120-2.

38 Secretary of State to the Governor, 27th December 1895.

39 Sir Charles Mitchell to Chamberlain, 15th February 1889, GD/C. During this period the belief was widespread among British expatriate officers that coloured peoples were lacking in 'physical and moral strength' which they believed themselves to possess in abundance. When Lord Lyttelton, the Secretary of State, inquired whether Eurasians might not be promoted to the more responsible positions in the Public Works Department in the Colony, Sir John Anderson in a dispatch dated 17th August 1904, replied:

'It would be a remote contingency in which a Governor would be prepared to take the responsibility of recommending the promotion of a Eurasian to any of the senior posts which necessarily involve a larger measure of independence of the control and supervision of the Colonial Engineer.

'Neither the domestic atmosphere nor the social standing of the Eurasian is such as to imbue him with that sense of honour and moral courage which are essential to the discharge of serious responsibility; and he can never hope to command the same respect from the Chinese, Klings [South Indians] and others employed on Public works as a European; and, so far as this Colony is concerned, any European would consider it an indignity to be asked to serve under a Eurasian.

'At the same time, if a Eurasian be placed in the same junior class with a number of Europeans, he naturally expects to be treated on an equal footing with his colleagues as regards promotion, and the Government has, when the question comes up, either to face the reproach of refusing to promote a man on the ground of colour, or to promote a man against whom there may be nothing to allege, but in whom it is impossible to repose that confidence which it ought to be possible to place in the holder of a senior post, and will have to resort to shifts and expedients for watching him and for getting the really responsible part of his duties performed by others.'

40 Sir Charles Mitchell's speech at the ceremony of laying the foundation stone for the Government Offices, Kuala Lumpur, 6th October 1894; reprinted in J.M. Gullick, 'Kuala Lumpur, 1880-1895', *J.M.B.R.A.S.*, August 1955, p. 166.

41 Sir Charles Mitchell to Chamberlain, 15th February 1899, GD/C.

42 *Ibid.*

43 The London *Times*, 25th October 1898, reprinted in the *Malay Mail*, 22nd November 1898.

44 Education Commission Report, Singapore, 1902.

45 Swettenham to the Colonial Office, 11th January 1896, COD/. As Resident-General, Swettenham was drawing $12,000 per annum (£1,800 at the exchange rate of 3 shillings to a silver dollar) with an allowance of $10 a day when travelling, but this was considered inadequate. 'My service has now extended over 25 years, spent entirely in one of the most trying of tropical climates,' declared

Swettenham, 'and I am only too well aware that my health will not allow me to hope for more than a very few years of further work. I shall therefore only be enabled in effect to reorganise the new scheme and see it well established before I shall have to seek entire rest from work and responsibility. Hence in my particular case I cannot look forward to any increment of salary being granted within such a period as would be of practical value, which is the incentive held out under ordinary circumstances to every public officer.'

46 *Malay Mail*, 22nd November 1898.

47 A.R. Negri Sembilan for 1896, C. 8661.

48 A.R. Pahang for 1901, CD. 1297.

49 A.R. Selangor for 1896, C. 8661.

50 Swettenham to the Colonial Office, 25th November 1902, GD/.

51 A.R. Perak for 1902, CD. 1598.

52 Minutes of the Conference of Rulers, 1903.

53 Resident-General's Report for 1902.

54 *Malay Mail*, 15th January 1903.

55 The following account is taken from 'Short History of the Malay Agricultural Settlement', by John Hands, *Malayan Historical Journal*, December 1955; and from the Annual Reports.

56 A.R. Selangor for 1902, CD. 1598. The Malay Agricultural Settlement project showed that the good intentions of officials were not balanced by a sense of reality. While it was laudable to want to preserve and encourage Malay arts and crafts, the prospective customers were confined to a handful of curio collectors. Commercially there was no market in the rough mining town of Kuala Lumpur for hand-made ornaments, no matter how exquisite the workmanship. After weeks of work the blacksmith produced a set of wood-carving tools, made to the order of the Vice-Chairman of the Management Committee, which was valued at $5. A set of silver buttons, made at a cost of $1.75 by the silversmith's apprentice, was bought by a member of the Committee for $2.50. The sale of *krises* and *parangs* realized $37.97. It would appear that the Committee wished to set up a curio shop for their own amusement rather than a thriving prosperous community of Malay artisans. What the country needed at the time when land was being opened up and townships built was not silver buttons and ornamental daggers, but ploughs and hoes and building tools.

57 Resident-General's Report for 1898.

58 A.R. Pahang for 1899.

59 High Commissioner's Report on the Malay States, 1900.

60 Reported in the *Straits Budget*, Singapore, 28th April 1896.

61 Colonial Office to Sir Charles Mitchell, 27th December 1895, COD.

62 Resident-General's Report for 1900.

63 Swettenham to Chamberlain, 4th September 1902, F.M.S. Despatch No. 382.

64 *Ibid.*

65 Chamberlain to Swettenham, 24th October 1902, GD/C.
66 *Ibid.*
67 Swettenham to Chamberlain, 7th December 1902, GD/C.
68 *Ibid.*
69 Secretary of State to the Officer Administering the Government of the Straits Settlements, 16th December 1903, COD/C.
70 Thio, *op. cit.* p. 380 *et seq.*
71 Y.E. Parry, 'Sir Frank Swettenham as Governor and High Commissioner', unpublished thesis, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1958, pp. 25-9.
72 Report of Sir John Anderson to the Secretary of State, 1904, Cd. 2777, p. 5.
73 Sir John Anderson was born at Gartly, Aberdeen, in 1858 and graduated from Aberdeen University. He joined the Colonial Office as a clerk in 1879 and in 1887 was Bacon Scholar at Gray's Inn. At the Imperial Conference of 1897 he was secretary to Joseph Chamberlain. He was 46 years old when he arrived as Governor of the Straits Settlements. See A. Wright and H.A. Cartwright, *Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya*, pp. 123-4.
74 *Malay Mail*, 11th April 1903.
75 *Malay Mail*, 6th April 1904.
76 *Ibid.*
77 N.M. Chong, 'Sir John Anderson as Governor and High Commissioner, 1904-1911', unpublished thesis, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1958, p. 31.
78 Maxwell and Gibson, *Treaties and Engagements affecting the Malay States and Borneo.*
79 Proceedings of the Legislative Council, F.M.S., 11th December 1909.
80 Federal Council Paper No. 39 of 1925.
81 Maxwell and Gibson, *op. cit.*
82 Braddell, *op. cit.* p. 16.
83 *Ibid.*
84 Emerson, *op. cit.* pp. 149-50.
85 Sir John Anderson to the Colonial Office, 20th December 1909, GD. Many years later the Sultan of Perak admitted that he had spent many weary hours in the Council, apparently without profit.
86 Federal Council Proceedings, 2nd November 1910.
87 Sir George Maxwell on Decentralization, *Straits Times*, 5th October 1932. 'The simple fact is that the Resident-General mistook himself for a Governor and the results were embarrassing . . . there was nothing to prevent the Native Rulers taking the opinion of the High Commissioner either before or after consulting his Resident or Resident-General, and if the High Commissioner was disposed to say yes, where the Resident-General already had said, or in the future might say, no, the effects were not conducive to that severe harmony which is the essence of perfect administration. A Chief Secretary will not say no, but will communicate his views to the High Com-

missioner and yea or nay will go out as the verdict of the Government.' *Straits Times*, 2nd February 1911. The fault, of course, lay with Swettenham who set the pattern of administration when he became the first Resident-General.

88 Sir John Anderson to the Colonial Office, 20th December 1909, GD.

2

CURRENCY REFORM

DEPENDING as it did on world supply and demand, the tin mining industry was vulnerable enough without having to rely to some extent on the availability of hard cash to finance it. In the 1880's the shortage of money (mainly Mexican dollars which had to be imported) had had a chain reaction which threatened to dislocate the tin industry. But for timely and judicious Government assistance many of the smaller Chinese mines would have been forced to close down. The issue of paper currency at the time was controlled by the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China and the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, but their currency notes were meant only for a limited circulation. Swettenham's suggestion in 1892 for a remedy was for the Government to issue its own notes, on a limited scale, but the banks which had the monopoly of note issue raised such strong objections that nothing came of it. Although the Government was stable, the finances sound, and trade was flourishing, the lack of Government control and regulation in currency matters was a weakness which a tenacious *laissez-faire* policy helped to perpetuate until the closing years of the century. Several attempts were made over a period of nearly forty years to deal with the matter, but the situation was never serious enough to galvanize the Government into action. Not until the threat of financial chaos was actually staring the Government in the face was anything drastic done, and then it was at the instigation mainly of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce.

In 1867 when the government of the Straits Settlements was transferred from the India Office to the Colonial Office, the Indian rupee, which had been hitherto in circulation in the Straits Settlements, was declared no longer legal tender. In place of the Indian rupee, the silver dollar of Hong Kong, Spain, Mexico, Peru and Bolivia was made legal tender.[1] Subsidiary silver and copper coins had been supplied from the Hong Kong Mint, but on the closing of that Mint, in 1868, two years after its opening, it became necessary for the Straits to provide their own subsidiary coinage which in part, after 1871, was struck at the Royal Mint.[2]

The American trade dollar and the Japanese yen in 1874 were admitted to unlimited legal tender, and these, together with the Mexican and Hong Kong dollars, formed the currency in use in the Straits Settlements and the Malay States for over twenty years. In 1895 the American trade dollar, which had ceased to be minted in 1878, was made non-legal tender. The Japanese yen was demonetized in 1898 as a result of the establishment of a gold standard by Japan and the demonetization of silver yen in the country of origin, and after 1898 the import of Japanese yen was prohibited.

As a result of the closing of the Indian mints to the free coinage of silver in 1893, the supply of dollars which had been minted in Bombay was cut off. The export of dollars from Mexico was practically at a standstill due to the decline in the price of silver, and with the closing of the Japanese mint at Osaka, the shortage of silver dollars in the Far East generally was becoming a serious hindrance to trade. Late in 1893 a Departmental Committee, presided over by Lord Herschell, was appointed to investigate the currency problems in British colonies in the Far East. The Herschell Committee did not recommend any change in the standard value, but owing to the scarcity of Mexican dollars, it suggested that a British dollar should be issued for circulation in the Straits and in other British colonies in the Far East. As a result of this recommendation the Bombay Mint in 1894 began the coinage of a British dollar weighing 416 grains and of 900 fineness.[3]

While the Herschell Committee was sitting in the Colonial Office, the Secretary of State telegraphed the Governor asking for a full report as to remedial measures suggested for securing

greater fixity in the rate of exchange. The Governor replied that there was a great difference of opinion in the Straits and that it was impossible to suggest remedial measures which would meet with equal approval from European, Chinese, Indian, Arab and other commercial communities. However, the Governor appointed a local committee, consisting of Government officials and members of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce, to consider the matter.

The local Currency Committee of 1893 did not have any special terms of reference. There were no specific proposals by the Government and the Committee was not asked to advise on the desirability or otherwise of any step contemplated by the Government.[4] Except for the majority of Chinese traders, especially those connected with the planting enterprises, most of the people interviewed by the Committee declared that the fall in exchange value of the silver dollar had adversely affected the trade of Singapore. Government officials believed that the falling value of silver greatly checked the inflow of British investment in the Straits and the Malay States. Not only was money not available for new enterprises, but capital invested in the Straits was gradually being withdrawn. European capitalists were reluctant to invest in a place where the currency was so unstable, and European employees in the Colony were finding that the purchasing value of their salaries was diminishing rapidly.[5]

Between 1890 and 1893 public revenue had fallen off by 17 per cent. At the same time the charges upon the Colony in respect of payments which had to be met in gold had necessarily increased. If the situation had continued to deteriorate the Colony might have been forced to impose new taxation to meet the extra costs. In view of this the Government was urged to adopt its own currency policy. Five members of the Committee suggested that the use of the rupee might be extended to the Straits Settlements and the Malay States, but the other members were in favour of retaining the silver standard. The three Chinese members were strongly opposed to the introduction of the rupee, arguing that the forced circulation of coins of nominal value would handicap all local industries, impede their development and raise unnecessarily the price of every class of labour. The low rate of exchange, far from being a threat to commerce, had assisted the quick development of the internal resources of the Straits Settlements

and the Malay States. The Chinese members attributed the low prices of local produce to the world-wide depression which affected even a gold country like Australia.[6]

As opinions were so divided no action was taken on the recommendations of the 1893 Currency Committee, and the matter was temporarily shelved.

The question of a gold standard was raised in 1897 by the Singapore Chamber of Commerce, which appointed a sub-committee to inquire into the local currency with a view to calling the attention of the Government to the question of converting the Straits currency to a gold standard.[7] The immediate reason for this private investigation was the sudden fall in the value of silver and the fear that the metal might become too low in price and too unstable to serve any longer as the standard of value for the currency of the Straits Settlements. The effects of the falling price of silver were:

(a) Rising prices of imports, especially those from gold countries, and the resultant higher cost of living affected wage-earners;
(b) Unrest among salaried officers, who were demanding compensation as well as wage increases;
(c) Chinese labourers were dissatisfied with their wages, which were inelastic and had not kept pace with the rising cost of living.[8]

The sub-committee of the Chamber of Commerce declared that the falling price of silver did not really benefit miners. It suggested that the fixing of the dollar at two shillings sterling on a gold basis would protect European capital and would serve to encourage a further inflow of investment.

The report met with some criticism and the opinions expressed by the Government and private individuals were so conflicting that nothing was done. In the meantime the Resident-General was asked to assess the opinions on currency reform in the Federated Malay States. In August 1898, Swettenham informed the Colonial Secretary that two of the Residents were in favour of gold, while the other two preferred the States to remain on a silver basis. The Chinese were generally in favour of silver, though Swettenham thought it was possible that they did not fully understand the issues at stake. The Malays had no interest in the question, and no account was taken of the opinions of

Government employees, natives of the United Kingdom, Australia, India or Ceylon, who regarded the question from a personal point of view.[9]

As far as the Malay States were concerned, exports greatly exceeded imports. The exports were nearly all sold for gold, but the cost of production was paid for in silver. Hence, the falling price of silver benefited Chinese and European miners and European planters. As most of the imports were from silver countries and therefore paid for in silver, the consumers (mainly Chinese) did not greatly feel the fall in the value of silver. For this reason it was easy to understand why Chinese and European miners preferred the *status quo*. On the other hand, while the Government exported nothing, it imported large quantities of British manufactures which were paid for in gold. The Government was thus at a disadvantage as its revenues were collected in depreciated silver. Its largest revenue being from tin, the Government in effect got less and less from export duty as the gold value of silver decreased. Further, the Government had to compensate Civil Servants for the lowered exchange rates. The fall in the price of silver also affected adversely the price of tin.

The Government's policy at this stage of the development of the Malay States was to encourage Europeans to take up land for planting. As their needs were supplied by imports from gold countries and labour from India, a further fall in the value of silver would cut both ways and damage rather than benefit their interests. Since the bulk of their capital came from gold countries, a fall in the price of silver would immediately reduce the value of their property in the Malay States. The situation had so alarmed European investors that they regretted the investment of money in a country where such fluctuations were possible, and the result was that they declined to make further investments or to expand their operations.[10]

This last fact was a very serious consideration, for the development of the Malay States, especially in planting, had to depend on capital from the United Kingdom and other gold standard countries. It was essential for investors to feel confident that a property which, say, cost £100,000 and yielded an income of 4 per cent should not, in a few years, depreciate to £75,000 yielding 2½ per cent on the original outlay.[11] But not only planters were affected; the Government, too, was in an unfavourable

position. To finance the Johore Railway a sum of £500,000 was borrowed from London. As the interest and principal had to be repaid in gold, it would cost the Government a great deal if such loans were raised on a two shilling dollar exchange and had to be paid at a one shilling and sixpenny rate. Since the chief need of the Malay States was capital and labour, it was almost a necessity to secure fixity of exchange with gold standard countries if capital were to be attracted into the country. For the Government a gold standard would have many advantages, both direct, as a large consumer of European manufactures and a large employer of Europeans to whom it had to show consideration; and indirect, as leading to the introduction of European capital and the consequent development of the country.

Although the matter was urgent, the Government hesitated about taking any action the repercussions of which could not be known. Meanwhile the value of the dollar continued to depreciate. In 1902 the exchange dropped from 1*s.* 10*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* and was on the down grade all through the year. In June 1902 the Chamber of Commerce asked the Government whether it was prepared to investigate the feasibility and expediency of securing fixity of exchange, 'in view of the recent serious decline in the value of the dollar current here, the violent fluctuations in the price of silver, and the extreme uncertainty as to the future of this metal, all of which are not only causing great inconvenience to the trade of the Colony but constitute grave obstacles to the development of its great natural resources by stopping the flow of capital from other parts of the world'.[12] After consulting the Legislative Council, the Governor in July asked the Colonial Office for an inquiry by an expert, preferably with experience of Indian currency problems. The result was the Barbour Commission of 1903. The terms of reference were:

(a) The expediency or otherwise of introducing a gold standard of currency in the Straits Settlements and the neighbouring Malay States;
(b) The practicability of making the change and the steps which in the opinion of the Committee should be taken to effect this object if the change should be decided on.

At the time of the Barbour Commission the standard coin in the Straits Settlements was the silver Mexican dollar. The British

dollar and the Hong Kong dollar were treated as equal under Order-in-Council. Subsidiary coins of legal tender were the Straits Settlements silver pieces of 50 cents, 20 cents, 10 cents and metal pieces of 1 cent, ½ cent and ¼ cent. The limit of legal tender in the case of silver subsidiary coins was two dollars, and of copper or mixed metal coins one dollar. By enactments in the different Malay States the same currency was established, with the exception of the Hong Kong dollar which was not placed on the same value as the standard coin.[13]

As late as 1897 the European community were divided in their opinions, but in 1902 they were unanimously in favour of gold. Commercial firms represented in the United Kingdom and Europe urged the Barbour Commission that it was absolutely essential that the Straits currency should be placed on a gold basis with as little delay as possible. Europeans and other salary earners, and a number of wealthy and influential Chinese bankers, merchants, land-owners, revenue-farmers, ship-owners and other capitalists sent in a petition expressing the view that it was extremely desirable that the Straits currency should have a fixed relative value to the British sterling sovereign. The petition said that violent fluctuations in exchange were detrimental to the interests of the Colony and the Malay States and that many commercial firms had been adversely affected by the severe depreciation in silver.[14]

In the Federated Malay States, however, opinion was still divided. The majority of planters and miners in Perak favoured gold. Other miners preferred silver. While local traders in Penang asked for a change to gold, Singapore merchants voted for silver.

In view of this confusion of opinions, the Barbour Report declared, 'It is a matter of course that the immense majority of the people concerned in this inquiry are unable to support any opinion on the complicated question of the best standard of value by reasons which would stand examination. The fact remains that the majority of those able to form an opinion appear to be in favour of a change to a gold standard, the chief exceptions being the banking community and the mining community. The latter if we except those in receipt of money wages, have probably been the principal gainers from the continuous decline in the gold value of the dollar.'

Although both the Straits Settlements and the Federated

Malay States had indeed prospered under the silver standard, the value of the dollar had fallen from 4*s.* 2*d.* in the 1870's to 1*s.* 6*d.* in 1902, and the point at which advantages were derived from a low or falling exchange had been passed and distinct disadvantages had set in.[15]

STRAITS SETTLEMENTS

	Imports	*Exports*
1881	$ 84,599,397	$ 77,925,962
1891	$135,886,217	$125,805,772
1901	$310,381,094	$226,553,270

FEDERATED MALAY STATES*

	Imports	*Exports*
1882	$ 5,669,078	$ 5,538,641
1892	$ 19,161,159	$ 22,662,359
1901	$ 39,524,603	$ 63,107,177

* *Excluding Pahang, whose value of imports and exports was very small.*

Fluctuations in exchange brought in an element of speculation which constantly interfered with legitimate business. The introduction of a gold standard would not do away altogether with this evil, but it would transfer it from the trade with gold countries to the trade with silver countries, and the trade with gold countries was much larger than that with silver countries.[16] The disproportion in favour of trade with gold countries was increased with the addition of Siam and the Philippines to the list of gold standard countries. The total trade with China and other silver countries was smaller than that with gold countries but the number of transactions with silver countries was much larger; and although the existing evils might be transferred to a different class of operations by the adoption of a gold standard, their magnitude would not really be reduced.[17] The most important problem facing the Government was that, with rapidly developing countries such as the Straits Settlements and the Malay States, there must be an attractive atmosphere for European investment. The absence of any fixity of exchange with Western countries undoubtedly discouraged such investment and tended to exclude European traders. Those in favour of maintaining the *status quo* argued that as Singapore, Penang and

Malacca were collecting and distributing centres for purposes of trade, and as many countries with which the Straits had commercial relations had had a silver standard and had used the same currency, the change to a gold standard might seriously upset the prosperity of the Straits Settlements. There was something to be said for this argument, but the fact remained that as Singapore was a great free-trading centre with excellent natural harbour facilities, the adoption of a gold standard would not make any substantial change, as events later proved. The Barbour Report believed that the Chinese merchants, who chiefly managed the trade between the Straits and the adjoining silver-using countries, were as well fitted to deal with the difficulties of exchange as merchants of any other nationality.[18]

The Barbour Report of 1903 declared that, taking due account of all the difficulties that might arise, it was practicable for the Government to change to a gold standard. It was indispensable in the proposed change to substitute for Mexican and British dollars a currency special to the Straits under the control of the Government, who should maintain a gold standard themselves, incurring the initial cost of the change and receiving any profit which might ultimately ensue from their own currency. The flourishing condition of the Straits and the Malay States, and the profit on over-valued coins would, with careful management, enable the Government to maintain a gold standard.[19]

The recommendations of the Report were as follows: the Government should gradually introduce a special Straits dollar of the same weight and fineness as the British dollar then current in the East as a substitute for the Mexican and British dollars, the latter dollars being demonetized as soon as the supply of the new dollars was sufficient to permit this being done with safety. The Government should obtain large quantities of the new dollars which should be made full legal tender concurrently with the Mexican and British dollars, and steps should be taken to put them into circulation. Simultaneously with the circulation of the new dollars, the import of Mexican and British dollars should be temporarily prohibited, and the export of the new dollars made unlawful. Normally there was a large import and export of Mexican and British dollars. When their import was prohibited, there would be a tendency for the Mexican and British dollars to leave the Straits Settlements, and if there was

a generous supply of the new dollars, the change of currency might be completed without any great delay.

When there were sufficient new dollars to justify the measure, the British and Mexican dollars should be finally demonetized. After sufficient Straits dollars had been coined to meet the requirements of business in the Colony and the Malay States, the coinage of dollars should stop until the exchange value of the dollar had reached whatever value in relation to the sterling sovereign might be decided upon by the Government as the future value of the Straits dollar. After this stage had been reached, the Government should issue new dollars in exchange for gold, and at a fixed rate. When the gold standard was established it would not be necessary to make *any* gold coins legal tender in the Colony and the Malay States, but the Government should be prepared not only to give in exchange for a sovereign such number of dollars as would be declared equivalent to a sovereign, but also to give sovereigns in exchange for dollars at the same rate so long as gold was available, or to give bills on the Crown Agents in London based on the fixed rate of exchange. The scheme would take some time to work and would involve some expenditure, but it would be 'a perfectly safe and . . . sure method of establishing a gold standard involving no risk and creating the minimum of disturbance'. If the time within which the gold standard became effective was unduly prolonged, the matter might be expedited by establishing a gold reserve, part of which should be made up of the profits made on the coinage of dollars, and the whole or any portion of the gold reserve should be invested in gold securities.[20]

While the Barbour Commission was sitting in London, Sir Frank Swettenham informed the Secretary of State that he thought the safest plan might be to leave the currency on its old basis and to expand the principle, lately adopted, of the sterling salary scheme. He said that as silver became cheaper more dollars would go into Government treasuries and the revenues would not suffer if the Government 'took care to safeguard its interests'. For example, Swettenham suggested that the cost of postage to Europe could be increased from 4 cents to 5 cents.[21] It is curious that Swettenham who in 1898 favoured a gold standard should in 1902 advise against a change of currency. He seemed unwilling to take any risk in an experiment which might turn out badly

and would cost the Government a large sum to initiate. When the need for a solution to the currency problem was so urgent, why did Swettenham, who never lacked foresight and imagination in his distinguished career in the Malay States, suddenly feel timorous? Possibly Swettenham, who was approaching his retirement, did not want to risk a major financial failure and civil unrest while he was Governor of the Colony and so incur the only stain on his brilliant record of success as an administrator.

Fortunately for the country, Swettenham's opinions made no impression on the Colonial Office and the views of those who feared a change were put aside; the recommendations of the Barbour Commission were adopted with few modifications and steps were immediately taken to effect the change of currency from a silver to a gold standard.

The Malay States followed the lead of the Straits Settlements in introducing the change of currency. Enactments were passed and orders issued to effect the constitution of the Straits Settlements silver dollar of 1903 the standard coin of the Malay States, with the British dollar of 1895 and the Mexican dollar equal to the standard coin. The Straits Settlements currency notes and subsidiary silver and copper or mixed metal coins were recognized as legal tender within the usual limits. The import of the British dollar, the Mexican dollar, the Japanese yen and all copper and mixed metal coins was prohibited by the Governments of British North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei. Export of the Straits dollar of 1903 was prohibited except in respect of the Straits Settlements and Johore. The circulation in the Federated Malay States of the copper and mixed metal coins issued by the Governments of British North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei was not permitted.

The coinage and distribution of the new Straits dollar proceeded as quickly as circumstances permitted. In the Malay States the balance of trade was decidedly in favour of exports, the chief item of which was tin. Since Malayan tin was sold mainly in European and American markets where the tin price was not influenced by the exchange and where the obligations in gold were small, the Government hoped that the permanent exchange value of the dollar would not exceed two shillings.[22] The Mexican and British dollars were demonetized with effect from 1st September 1904, and their place was taken by the new Straits dollar. The

operations connected with the change of currency worked smoothly, and financially the condition was sound. The exchange value of the dollar was finally fixed at 2*s.* 4*d.* on 30th January 1906, although the intervening period was one of great anxiety both for the Government and the commercial community due to the unexpected rise in the price of silver and to violent speculation in exchange.[23] The new Malayan currency was managed by a body known as the Malaya and British Borneo Currency Commissioners, with the sole right of issuing coins and notes against a reserve of sterling securities held in London. On 29th January 1906, an Ordinance was passed providing for the issue in Singapore of notes for gold at the rate of $60 for £7. The Currency Commissioners also held the power to issue notes in Singapore against telegraphic transfers in favour of the Crown Agents in London, at a rate which would cover the cost of remitting the gold from London to Singapore, and the acceptance of notes in Singapore in exchange for gold paid in London by the Crown Agents. Under this new arrangement a sum of a million sterling was quickly accumulated. A complication then arose with the unforeseen rise in the price of silver. The Government decided to reduce the silver content of the dollar; and to obviate a drain on the silver reserve during recoinage British sovereigns were made unlimited legal tender. In 1908 the Crown Agents in London were empowered to hold in gold part of the coin reserve of the Note Guarantee Fund, which hitherto they had been able to hold only temporarily for the purchase of silver or for investments. At the end of 1907 there had been a run on the Currency Commissioners in Singapore, and the gold reserve had been rapidly exhausted. Exchange was maintained by selling telegraphic transfers on the Crown Agents against loan moneys advanced against the security of the Currency Commissioners' investments, and the Government wisely decided to hold its gold reserves in London only.[24] The subsequent years brought more currency troubles, especially during the First World War, but the most important thing was accomplished: the change to a gold standard. Since then the Malayan currency has been on a foreign exchange based on the currency of the United Kingdom. The supply of currency depended upon the balance of payments between Malaya and the outside world, and any alteration in the balance was adjusted by changes in the volume of the currency

necessary to maintain its external value. As the rules governing the gold reserve held in London remained unchanged until 1954, Malaya possessed a currency as stable as sterling for half a century.[25] Is it a coincidence that the sudden increase in European investment in the rubber industry in Malaya took place just after the country's currency was placed on a gold basis?

NOTES

1 Report of the S.S. Currency Committee, May 1903, (The Barbour Commission), Cd. 1556, p. 5. For a concise history of currency in Malaya from the Portuguese epoch to 1893, see R. Chalmers, *A History of Currency in the British Colonies.*

2 The total amount of coins struck at the Royal Mint from 1871 to 1901 inclusive was 6,462,000 dollars, and a further 750,000 dollars were struck in 1902. The subsidiary coinage issued in the Straits Settlements, 1871 to 1902, amounted to the nominal value of 1,887,500 dollars. Report of the S.S. Currency Committee, 1903, (The Barbour Commission), p. 5. The following account of currency history in the Straits Settlements is a summary from the Report.

3 S.E. Harris, *Monetary Problems of the British Empire*, pp. 388-91; and Makepeace, Brooke and Braddell, *One Hundred Years of Singapore*, p. 49.

4 Report of the S.S. Currency Committee, 1893, Cd. 1585, Appendix No. 16.

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.* The amount of British dollars imported into the Straits Settlements by the banks from 1895 (the year in which they were first coined) to 1901 inclusive, was 119,224,442 dollars. During the same period 80,883,437 other dollars were imported, making a total importation of 200,107,879 dollars. The recorded exportations between 1895 and 1901 inclusive amounted to 170,732,168 dollars. This was exclusive of the amount taken out of the Colony by Chinese migrants returning to China. It was impossible to ascertain the amount of money so taken out, but it was believed to be quite considerable. Report of the S.S. Currency Committee, 1903. (The Barbour Commission), Cd. 1556, p 6.

7 Report of the Sub-Committee of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce, November 1897, Cd. 1585, Appendix No. 17.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Swettenham to the Colonial Secretary, 18th August 1898, Cd. 1585, Appendix No. 18.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

12 Report of the S.S. Currency Committee 1903, (The Barbour Commission), Cd. 1556, p. 7.

13 Johore, having no currency of its own, was also using Straits currency.

The Treaty of 1885 with Johore settled, among other problems, the supply of subsidiary coins for use in that State.

Government Note Issues in the Straits Settlements were regulated by Ordinance No. 4 of 1899. One, five, twenty, fifty or one hundred dollars were legal tender in the Straits Settlements for the amount expressed therein, except a tender by the Commissioners of Currency at their office or a tender in redemption of its own notes by any bank lawfully authorized to issue notes.

Government notes of the Straits Settlements were made legal tender in the Malay States by local enactments, subject to the same limitations in the case of the one dollar notes which could not be legal tender for a sum greater than ten dollars.

The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China were authorized, subject to certain conditions, to issue notes payable to bearer on demand. These bank notes were not legal tender but they circulated freely. The authority to issue notes expired in December 1904 in the case of the Chartered Bank, and in August 1908 in the case of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. Under Enactments in the Federated Malay States it was unlawful for any bank to issue within the States any bank notes payable to bearer on demand. However, this did not prevent the circulation of bank notes issued in the Straits. Report of the S.S. Currency Committee 1903, (The Barbour Commission), Cd. 1556, pp. 3-4.

14 *Ibid.* p. 8.

15 Taken from the Report of the S.S. Currency Committee, 1903, (The Barbour Commission), Cd. 1556, p. 9.

16 See Report of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce to the Colonial Secretary, 17th December 1902, Cd. 1585, Appendix No. 18, Enclosure 12.

17 *Ibid.* pp. 9-10.

18 *Ibid.* p. 10.

19 *Ibid.* pp. 11-12.

20 *Ibid.* p. 13.

21 Swettenham to Chamberlain, 27th November 1902, Cd. 1585, Appendix No. 18, Enclosure 4.

22 Resident General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1904, Cd. 2777 (1905), p. 7.

23 Makepeace, Brooke and Braddell, *op. cit.* p. 51.

24 *Ibid.* pp. 52-3.

25 Allen and Donnithorne, *Western Enterprise in Indonesia and Malaya*, p. 201.

3

IMMIGRATION AND LABOUR

MALAYSIANS

ON THE subject of the immigration of Malaysians, who comprised the group of people of the Malay race inhabiting Sumatra, Java, the Celebes and other islands in the Malay Archipelago, it is not intended here to write at any great length, partly because facts and figures are not readily available, and partly because, from the point of view of the development of the country, the part they played has been a minor one compared with that of the Chinese and Indians. Nevertheless a brief sketch of their position in the country would throw into relief the reasons why such large numbers of foreign labourers were imported to work the tin mines and agricultural plantations.

Until about 1820 tin mining, which had been carried on for centuries in the Peninsula, had been entirely in the hands of the Malays. Then the practice began of importing immigrant Chinese labour from China, principally from Kwangtung and Fukien. In contrast to the Malays for whom mining was an occupation during the off-season of rice-planting, the Chinese worked full time at the mines. Between 1840 and 1860 the major mining areas had passed into occupation and use by Chinese miners under an arrangement with the Malay chiefs.[1]

The indigenous Malay population, excluding the aborigines who were the earliest settlers in the Peninsula, was never very large before the establishment of British rule. At the time of British intervention, the total Malaysian population in Perak,

Selangor and Negri Sembilan was probably no more than 70,000. Civil wars prior to the Pangkor Engagement emptied whole villages in the States, and the depredations of feudal chiefs often forced villagers to move from place to place so that, lacking stability and security, the population tended to decrease rather than increase. Perak in 1870 had an estimated population of 30,000 Malays; Selangor in 1874 had about 5,000; and Negri Sembilan had between 30,000 and 40,000 Malays.[2]

After the establishment of the Residential system the Malay population began to increase, due partly to the return of refugees to their old settlements, and partly to the influx of foreign Malays. Bugis from the Celebes and Korinchi, Rawa, Mandiling, and Batak people from Sumatra settled in various parts of the country. But differences in cultural origins, despite their common allegiance to Islam, kept these Malaysian groups in separate communities. In Selangor, for example, hostility between the Bugis aristocracy and the Sumatran peasants of more recent immigrant origin was quite common, and Perak Malays accepted only Minangkabau immigrants from Sumatra as being akin to themselves.[3]

In the village community, every able-bodied man and woman was required to help with the planting of rice, the basic agricultural occupation of the Malays. Some fruit trees and spices were also grown but only for their own consumption. The sale of surplus stocks of rice was the only source of income for the Malays, but although there was a ready market for rice amongst the Chinese mining community, the Malays did not respond to any great extent to this economic opportunity. The Malays' lack of commercial enterprise was further handicapped by the absence of efficient agricultural implements, water buffaloes and a reliable system of irrigation. The lack of proper irrigation subjected rice-growing to the vagaries of the weather and the crops were made or marred by rainfall. Supported by an irregular collection of jungle produce, such as rattans, gutta percha and bamboo, the Malays depended on one of the poorest forms of subsistence agriculture for their living.

Apart from the fact that there were never many Malay men to spare from their villages, their aversion for organized labour made it impossible for employers to recruit labour amongst the Malays. Perhaps this was, in a way, to the benefit of the Malays,

who thereby escaped some of the evils of the plantation system. But while the British policy of non-interference in Malay affairs had its merits, it also explains why the Malays played such a small part in the development of the country. The Malays, said W.H. Treacher in the Resident-General's report for 1900, had been given everything possible under the circumstances: security, communications, education, health and medical services and a host of other benefits; the only complaint the Malays could make was that the British had not *forced* them to become industrious by making them work, after the manner of the Dutch with the natives of the East Indies.[4] Although small numbers of imported Javanese and foreign Malays were from time to time employed as seasonal workers, in the coffee plantations and later in the rubber estates, these never exceeded 9,000 at any time. The bulk of agricultural labourers were Tamils from South India.

ESTATE LABOUR IN THE FEDERATED MALAY STATES[5]

	1907	*1908*	*1909*
Tamils	43,824	43,515	55,732
Chinese	5,348	6,595	12,402
Javanese	6,029	4,999	6,170
Malays	2,872	1,961	2,778

Centuries of comparatively easy living in a country where a minimum of effort could produce enough food for the family, coupled with an other-worldly outlook enjoined by Islam, were not incentives for the Malay to join in the scramble for material wealth. Whatever incentive he might have had for economic betterment was probably destroyed by long periods of civil war and by the rapaciousness of feudal chiefs, who could take away not only the villagers' grain and goods but also their wives and daughters. Debt-slavery, or the threat of it, was a crushing burden on the common Malays until the establishment of a legal system which bestowed on them the rights of property and the real protection of the Government.

Integrated into a tightly-knit political, economic, social and religious system, the Malays could not easily break away from the accustomed pattern of living, nor was there any real desire to do so. The Malay house with its simple furnishings, with an acre or two of land, a few goats, some poultry and a buffalo, set

the usual limit to family possessions. Most of the families were poor by material standards, but their way of life satisfied their primary needs, and many were indeed rich with the contentment of being in perfect harmony with nature: as a race the Malays had achieved an equilibrium with the parasite of malaria which killed thousands of immigrants not so conditioned. The simple pleasures of festival days, the joys and sorrows of births and deaths, the rhythms of seedtime and harvest, all these made up a pattern of traditional living without the strain and stresses of a more materialistic life. If the Malays failed to produce surplus wealth and lagged behind in the race for economic betterment, their pattern of life had as much to offer as to deny. 'While we are anxious to see him take life more seriously,' said Swettenham, commenting on the habits of the Malay, 'he is content with the gratification of small ambitions, and the many natural advantages he enjoys have spared him the effort to invent ideals, either of conduct or attainment.'[6]

The Malays, therefore, could not be regarded as an available source of labour supply. When they worked it was for themselves, on their own land, and very few could be persuaded to accept employment as agricultural labourers or on public works. While the States were making great strides in all-round development, the Malays were not sharing as fully as was desirable in the general prosperity which was chiefly the work, and to the advantage, of the Chinese and Indians. Fundamentally the Malays were handicapped by an unprogressive system of education which failed to prepare them for the economic revolution in the country and to equip them to compete with the more aggressive Chinese and Indians; thus cut off from the centres of modern economic activity, they missed the opportunity to develop even the elements of industrial or entrepreneurial skill. While towns and cities were springing up in mining and commercial centres, the Malays remained in feudal isolation in their riverine villages, and the price for escaping the sweat of the mines and plantations and death in a pauper hospital was economic stagnation. In any case, taking into account the temperament of the Malays, their economic uplift could not come from labouring in the mines or plantations but from a development of traditional Malay agriculture. This was brought about gradually by the extension of Western enterprise which gave the necessary stimulus to the

Malays to produce coconuts and rubber on small holdings for export. The development of rice-growing came with Government assistance in supplying better seed, more efficient agricultural implements, an extensive and expensive irrigation system, and scientific research to produce better crops.

Until the great expansion of railway construction which demanded a large labour force, the Government was content to leave the business of recruiting labour in the hands of private individuals. While the tin industry remained in the hands of the Chinese, the Government played the part of benevolent arbiter in industrial disputes and protector of the Chinese and Indian labourer. Now and then royal commissions were appointed to investigate the problems of labour, but these commissions and the legislation that followed dealt exclusively with Chinese and Indian labour.

There are many common features between Chinese and Indian immigration into Malaya. Except for those who entered the country as traders or clerks in the Government service, the majority from both groups emigrated from their home countries under either the indenture system or some other form of assisted migration. In common with most people who emigrate from their own countries, the Chinese and Indians shared the same basic desire for making a better living across the seas than they could at home, but unlike Europeans who emigrated to the Americas and Australasia, most of the Chinese and Indians originally had no intention of settling down in Malaya; while they remained in the country they formed small colonies of Chinese and Indians whose way of life was indistinguishable from that of their home countries.

THE CHINESE

'From rags to riches' is a phrase that sums up the history of many Chinese in South-East Asia. With very few exceptions most of the early Chinese immigrants arrived in the Straits Settlements with nothing more than the clothes on their backs and their worldly goods slung over their shoulder in a kit-bag. Crushing poverty at home and the lure of wealth were the driving force of Chinese emigration. Amongst these immigrants a few made their fortunes through sheer hard work, initiative and

enterprise. As the years passed they acquired extensive and valuable property in the country, and gradually they decided to stay more or less permanently and bring their families over from China. From this group sprang the new class of entrepreneurs, bankers, business and professional men. Substantial numbers were able to save up enough money over the years to buy or start a small business in the towns; these formed the new Malayan bourgeoisie. But thousands never realized their dreams of finding the proverbial pot of gold at the rainbow's end. Worn out by hard work under severe tropical conditions or ill-fortune they succumbed to the attacks of beri-beri, malaria, dysentery and other tropical diseases. Many found their way to pauper hospitals and filled nameless graves. The risk of death and disease, however, did not deter the thousands who made up that continuous stream of humanity that flowed from South China to Malaya, a country which had acquired the name of an El Dorado in the minds of the poverty-stricken landless Chinese peasants.

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries small numbers of Chinese traders had settled in the Philippines, the East Indies, Siam, Indo-China and Malacca, but under Spanish and earlier Dutch persecution, the number of Chinese did not increase significantly, except in Siam, where they were not only respected and made welcome but many were eventually absorbed into Siamese society and occupied responsible positions in the government of the country. With the founding of Penang in 1786 and Singapore in 1819, a new phase in Chinese emigration began. For the first time in history Chinese traders found that a European Power not only did not persecute them but actually encouraged them to settle down in its territory. The free trade policies of the British were a novelty which suited the business instincts of the Chinese traders admirably, and the later growth and expansion of the Straits Settlements and the Malay States were the result of a combination of British initiative and Chinese enterprise.[7] It is significant that the nineteenth century, which witnessed the extension of British control from the periphery of the Malay Peninsula into the Malay States themselves, saw also the rise of Chinese economic power in the same area.

Chinese immigration into Malaya was due partly to the favourable conditions created by the British in a country with a sparse native population, and partly to the breakdown of the

Chinese economy, the unstable home conditions produced by the decline of the imperial authority, and especially the mounting administrative inefficiency in the over-populated areas of South China.[8] The Taiping Rebellion had devastated large parts of Central and South China, leaving the local inhabitants with the choice of facing starvation and the depredations of war-lords, or of emigrating to the Nanyang which, for the Chinese villager or small trader, had an appeal similar to that of America or Australia for the impoverished Irish at home or the underprivileged Briton in the United Kingdom. Large numbers had supported the Taiping Rebellion, and after its defeat many of its supporters were forced to seek safety in exile.

With regard to Chinese immigration into the Malay States it has been claimed that 'the Chinese followed the fray' and that 'as soon as British power was extended over the Western Malay States, thousands of Chinese poured into them until in a generation, from being a small minority they formed about two thirds of the total population'.[9] Since the Chinese had ventured into the Malay States long before there was any thought of extending British control over them, it would equally be true to say that the British flag followed the Chinese into Malaya. Whichever way one interprets the fact, the truth remains that the growth of modern Malaya stemmed from the symbiotic relationship between the British administrators and the Chinese immigrants. While the British provided the framework of a just government, the Chinese supplied the manpower: they became the key to the country's development and thus the basis of British power and control.

In the early days of British administration Sinophiles amongst the British who had had extensive experience of the Chinese and their culture, and Anglophiles amongst the Chinese who had waxed prosperous under British rule, now and then sang each other's praises. Notwithstanding the truth and sincerity of their sentiments, the fact remains that mutual distrust and antipathy towards each other was widespread. The activities of white traders in China did not endear the European to the Chinese. Living on the glories of the past, the Chinese Emperor had treated with contempt the overtures of the British Government to establish diplomatic relations during the reign of George the Third. The so-called Opium War and its consequences were perhaps still

fresh in the minds of many Chinese immigrants. The Boxer Rebellion and its savage defeat was another national humiliation which Chinese nationalists could not easily forget. Mutual contempt for each other, however, was tempered in the Straits by a sneaking admiration and respect for each other's virtues. The Chinese admired the British for their justice and upright government; the British on their part never stinted their praise for Chinese industriousness even when they disliked them as a people. Thus Swettenham once declared, 'It is almost hopeless to expect to make friends with a Chinaman, and it is, for a Government officer, an object that is not very desirable to obtain. The Chinese, at least that class of them met with in Malaya, do not understand being treated as equals; they realise only two positions—the giving and the receiving of orders; they are the easiest people to govern in the East for a man of determination, but they must know their master, and he must know them. The Chinese admire and respect determination of character in their rulers, and hold that it is a characteristic as necessary as the sense of justice. The man who possesses the judicial mind, but is too weak to enforce his own judgment, will never be successful in dealing with the Chinese.'[10] However, when the question of introducing Chinese labour into South Africa was raised, Swettenham freely testified to the reliability of the Chinese labourer.

Hugh Clifford, who spent his early career in Malaya, was more forthright in his opinions of the Chinese. In a letter to the London *Spectator*, Clifford wrote:

So far as I can remember, the only classes of Chinese to whom I have referred in my stories are, firstly, the raw coolies imported from the southern districts [of China], and secondly, the hawkers and shopkeepers who trade with the Malay villagers. Of the former I do not hesitate to assent that both morally and intellectually they are among the lowest of our human stock, and I challenge anyone who has personal acquaintance with them to show that as a body they can excite any feeling kinder than that of pity in the European administrator. Of the latter class of Chinese I have written at length elsewhere. Neither their characters, their methods, nor the effects which they have upon their neighbours command our respect, and those who know the Peninsula best will agree with me that the presence of these people in the Malay villages is to be regarded as a

subject for mixed regret.... These men (the capitalist class) have probity, shrewdness, and many admirable commercial qualities; they are most praiseworthy and most useful citizens. That, however, does not cause the Malay in his secret heart to rate them much higher than their countrymen, though he is acute enough to perceive that there is more to be got out of them. I entirely agree ... in regarding the Chinese as indispensable in the Malay Peninsula, and during the last dozen years I have personally spared no effort to induce men of the stamp ... to undertake commercial enterprises in Pahang. I fully appreciate the advantages of their presence, and I have the greatest admiration for many of their qualities. It must be confessed, however, that the Chinese, as we know them in the Peninsula, do not inspire Europeans with anything approaching to affection—the kind of feeling, I mean, which undoubtedly is very generally (and often quite illogically) entertained for the Malays by those who have come into intimate contact with them.[11]

In an editorial comment the *Malay Mail* declared:

Most Europeans dislike the Chinese as a race when brought into contact with them—a feeling heartily reciprocated by the Chinese themselves. But the longer one lives amongst the Chinese and the better one gets to understand them, the stronger grows one's regard and admiration for their many sterling qualities.

Mr. Clifford has passed most of his time in the one real Malay State of the F.M.S. [Pahang]. His wonderful knowledge of the Malay language has enabled him to reach the heart of the Malay. Mutual confidence and esteem is the result. Had Mr. Clifford taken up Chinese instead of Malay, and passed his time among Chinese instead of among Malays, he would probably have sung the praises of the former just as heartily and sincerely as he now does those of the latter....

The Chinese trader has a reputation for honesty all over the East. The presence of what we may call the petty shopkeeper in Malay villages often causes unpleasantness, but the unpleasantness is not all of the Chinaman's making. We remember asking such a shopkeeper once, what he would take in cash for all his stock. His reply was something under $100 or if book debts were included, over $1,000. The most enthusiastic admirer of the Malay will admit that gentleman's rooted aversion to paying his debts.[12]

In the economic development of Malaya, there is no gainsaying the importance of the Chinese. Captain Francis Light, the

founder of Penang, considered the Chinese to be 'the most valuable part of our inhabitants', and John Crawfurd, the Resident of Singapore from 1823 to 1826, held the opinion that the Chinese were 'next to Europeans, and indeed in many respects before them, the most active and valuable agents in developing the resources of the Peninsula'.[13] Sir Charles Lucas, of the Colonial Office, declared that it was 'impossible to overestimate the importance of their share in the development of the Straits'.[14] Swettenham testified, 'Their energy and enterprise have made the Malay States what they are today, and it would be impossible to overstate the obligation which the Malay Government and people are under to these hard-working, capable and law-abiding aliens.'[15]

The usefulness of the Chinese lay in their multifarious activities. At the time when Malaya needed artisans of all kinds, they supplied the need.

> The Chinese are everything: they are actors, acrobats, artists, musicians, chemists and druggists, clerks, cashiers, engineers, architects, surveyors, missionaries, priests, doctors, school-masters, lodging-house keepers, butchers, pork-sellers, cultivators of pepper and gambier, cake-sellers, cart and hackney carriage owners, cloth hawkers, distillers of spirits, eating-house keepers, fish-mongers, fruit-sellers, ferrymen, grass-sellers, hawkers, merchants, agents, oil-sellers, opium shop-keepers, pawn-brokers, pig-dealers, and poulterers. They are rice-dealers, ship-chandlers, shop-keepers, general dealers, spirit-shop-keepers, servants, timber-dealers, tobacconists, vegetable sellers, planters, market-gardeners, labourers, bakers, millers, barbers, blacksmiths, boatmen, book-binders, boot and shoe-makers, brickmakers, carpenters, cabinet-makers, carriage-builders, cartwrights, cart and hackney carriage drivers, charcoal burners and sellers, coffinmakers, confectioners, contractors and builders, coopers, engine-drivers and firemen, fishermen, goldsmiths, gunsmiths and lock-smiths, lime-burners, masons and bricklayers, mat, kajang and basket makers, oil manufacturers and miners. To which we may add painters, paper lantern makers, porters, pea-grinders, printers, sago, sugar and gambier manufacturers, sawyers, seamen, ship and boat-builders, soap-boilers, stone cutters, sugar boilers, tailors, tanners, tin-smiths and braziers, umbrella makers, undertakers and tomb-builders, watch-makers, water-carriers, wood-cutters and sellers, wood and ivory carvers, fortune-tellers, grocers, beggars, idle vagabonds or 'samsengs' and thieves.[16]

Originally emigration from China was voluntary and unassisted. Migrants sailed from the South China coast in junks, usually during the south-west monsoon between June and October. The junks hugged the coast of Indo-China, Siam and the Malay Peninsula, and the journey might take weeks or months. Live animals, such as pigs and fowls, as well as bags of rice and jars of oil and preserved vegetables were part of the provisions carried. Before steamships came into general use, the hazards and hardships suffered by these early migrants were comparable with those endured by European migrants who braved the Atlantic and Indian Oceans to settle in Australasia. When emigration became commercialized, many of the migrant ships were 'floating hells'. Human cargo was piled on in these ships with no thought for sanitation or safety. Until Government intervention put a stop to overcrowding on migrant ships, emigrants died by the score on the journey.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the general method of recruiting migrants was as follows. The recruiter chartered a boat at Amoy, Swatow, Canton or Hong Kong. Some three weeks before departure, news would pass around the villages adjoining these ports that a ship was going to Singapore. Groups of intending migrants were formed under headmen who were generally, but not always, returned migrants. The leader took his men to a lodging house at the port of embarkation, and their departure was arranged for through the agents of the ship. Around 1890, the cost of the passage, when paid in advance, was about seven or eight Mexican dollars. Depending on the circumstances of the migrants, some paid cash for their passage while others travelled on credit. The cost of passage on credit was usually about 50 per cent more than cash payment, and the headman was usually responsible for those on credit passage. Each migrant had a ticket which specified the port of disembarkation (usually Singapore) and whether his passage had or had not been paid for. On arrival the 'free' migrants could go where they pleased, or where their leaders chose to take them if they had been specifically recruited for a firm or a mining company. Migrants on credit-tickets were detained on board ship while their leaders went out to look for prospective employers. They usually dealt through labour-brokers who were often members of secret societies. If there was a demand for workers, the leader made a large profit, getting

perhaps $20 per head for his men, who usually cost no more than $13 or $14 to bring over from China. The usual price was from $17 to $20 and the margin between this and the passage rate constituted the profit made.[17]

This system of recruitment savoured of a mild form of slavery, especially when the *Sin-Kheh*, or new migrant as he was called by those already settled in the Straits, had to work for practically nothing until the cost of the passage borne by his employer had been repaid. The unfortunate *Sin-Khehs* who could not be employed immediately on arrival were detained in depots or were transhipped to Malacca, Penang or Klang where again they had to go through the same business of waiting for an employer to redeem them. In 1872 and 1873 there were petitions from Chinese merchants and the leading citizens of the Straits Settlements to protest against the kidnapping of new migrants for transhipment to Sumatra and against overcrowding in ships. Following this the Government introduced a system of registration of new arrivals at the port of disembarkation, but the abuses continued.[18]

In 1877 the Chinese Protectorate, a new branch of the administration, was formed with officials specially trained in the Chinese language and customs. The head of the Chinese Protectorate was W.A. Pickering whose ability to speak several dialects enabled him to win a great deal of confidence from the Chinese community and to make the department a great success. So great were his influence and prestige amongst the Chinese that the Protectorate was called *Pek-ki-lin*, that is, Pickering. The duties of the department were to register labour contracts and generally to protect the *Sin-Khehs* from injustice and exploitation by explaining to them the meaning of new laws by which they felt themselves aggrieved.[19] Soon after the Protectorate was formed an Ordinance was passed, imposing a penalty on all those who by force or fraud induced any migrant to leave the Colony for service elsewhere. This Ordinance was designed to protect Chinese labourers from being shanghaied to work in Sumatra. Further legislation in 1880 was aimed at preventing labour-brokers from bringing in Chinese labourers on speculation which involved the migrants in heavy obligations far exceeding the cost of transport and requiring years of work to discharge. During the last decade of the nineteenth century the number of 'free' migrants increased with a corresponding decline

in the number of credit-ticket migrants. Recruitment by brokers was gradually being replaced by immigration with the assistance of friends and relatives who were in the Straits or the Malay States. In such cases the migrants voluntarily worked for their benefactors until they felt they had paid off their obligations. If there was a family business, the *Sin Kheh* usually remained with it until he died. The figures for 1890 show that there were 121,820 'free' migrants as against 21,213 credit-ticket immigrants.[20].

The Chinese Imperial Government was aware of the abuses of the credit-ticket system (picturesquely termed the 'pig business' by the Chinese themselves), but internal instability and the lack of an efficient administration at all the Treaty ports prevented the Imperial authorities from doing anything positive about the matter. Neither they nor the British agents attempted to supervise the movements of migrants, apart from an unsatisfactory form of registration at the port of disembarkation. The terms of employment, which varied between the Colony and the Malay States according to the nature of work, were extremely harsh by present-day standards. It was often a case of Hobson's choice for the new migrant, but judging from the continued flow of immigration, whatever conditions were imposed in Malaya were apparently better than the living conditions in China. One year was the maximum term in which a legal contract could be made for the Chinese labourer, but if the debt to the employer was not paid off within twelve months, the period of contract could be extended. An agricultural *Sin-Kheh* in the Colony had to work 360 days for which he received $30. From this was deducted $19.50 for his passage and other expenses from China. He was given free food, lodging, some clothes and a mosquito net.[21] For mining work in Perak and Selangor the *Sin-Kheh* had to work for the same period of time, but he received $42, from which was deducted $22 for cost of passage. He also was given free food, lodging, clothes and a mosquito net. Under the provisions of the 1895 Labour Code the contract could be terminated by mutual consent, or by the labourer paying all money due to his employer and $2 'smart money' for every month or every thirty days' work which remained unfinished under the contract. No passages back to China were paid.[22] Although food was supplied it was, from a dietary point of view, of such inferior quality that large numbers died of beri-beri. Mining employers ran a truck

system which included the sale of opium. The addiction of labourers to this drug often led them into a chronic state of indebtedness to the employer. Sometimes a labourer had to work for three or four years before he was free of his debts. In large European agricultural plantations where contract work was used, the payment of labourers was left entirely in the hands of contractors who invariably exploited the *Sin-Khehs*. Labourers who fell ill seldom received medical treatment, and thousands died either at the *kongsi* house or at the pauper hospital. There were cases of flogging and general maltreatment in both European and Chinese estates. The abuses were due entirely to the lack of a proper system of inspection of working conditions in the estates. In 1889 a draft ordinance for the protection of Chinese labourers on agricultural estates was drawn up but it was not introduced. In Perak, which had had a well-established Chinese Department since 1883, working conditions were constantly checked and industrial disputes were settled by an officer from the Department. Labourers in Perak were consequently better treated. They received medical treatment at Government hospitals, but employers often did not send their labourers for treatment until they were actually dying, and then only to avoid the cost of burying the dead.

The Labour Commission Report of 1890 suggested that severer penalties be imposed on employers guilty of maltreating labourers and that Magistrates or a Protector of Chinese be given powers to cancel a contract of work should there be proof of maltreatment. It further recommended that the Government should establish a system of inspection of working conditions in the Colony and the Malay States, abolish licensed depots and labour-brokers, substituting Government depots in China and in the Colony, reform the methods of recruiting migrants, and get the sanction of the Chinese Government for the credit-ticket system. In effecting these reforms, the consent and co-operation of the Chinese Government were essential. In the proposed negotiations, the Colony Government should reassure the Chinese Government (a) that emigration of unpaid passengers would only be allowed by the Straits Settlements to countries approved by China; (b) that this was effectually guaranteed by the migrant being shipped under Government charge and similarly landed; that he would be detained by Government until the contract was

made known to the employer, and, after the contract was signed, inspection would ensure that he would not work elsewhere during the term of contract; (c) that the migrant should be physically fit to leave China and had the fullest opportunity before leaving China of ascertaining the conditions of service; and (d) that every precaution would be taken against kidnapping. In return the Colony Government should ask China to agree to the setting up of depots at Swatow and other Treaty ports where migrants could be lodged before embarkation, to sanction assisted passages, to allow no credit-ticket passenger to emigrate except through the depots and, finally, to give every assistance to licensed recruiters.

For various reasons, principally events in China (such as the Sino-Japanese war of 1894 and the Boxer Rebellion of 1900), no action was taken on the main recommendations of the 1890 Labour Commission Report until 1904, when a Convention was signed between Britain and China to regulate Chinese immigration into British Colonies and Protectorates. A temporary measure was taken to protect Chinese labourers in 1891, when the Chinese Agricultural Labourers' Protection Ordinance was passed. It reduced the working period in a twelve-month contract to 330 days, with a nine-hour limit to each working day. Labourers were to get two holidays in each lunar month as well as all regular Chinese holidays without reduction of pay. The Ordinance also regulated accommodation and medical attention. Lost time due to sickness or other causes was to be made up by labourers. The Protector of Chinese was to inspect working conditions once a year.[23]

In the chief mining towns in the Malay States, Chinese miners organized their own labour. A Chinese Immigration Depot, under the management of a committee headed by the Capitan China, was opened in 1890 in Kuala Lumpur. The Depot had accommodation for 1,200 men and all *Sin-Khehs* had to pass through it for registration. They stayed there at the labour-broker's expense until employment was found for them. *Lau-Khehs*, or old migrants, were also eligible to stay for a small fixed charge. The Depot, in effect, served as a labour exchange, and apart from the incidental abuses, served the purpose quite well.[24] Employers in need of labour applied to the manager of the Depot, who then communicated with the brokers. When a deal was made, duplicate

copies of the contract were drawn up, specifying the terms of service, place and nature of work, food and clothing, and so on. On the expiration of the *Sin-Kheh's* year of service he would get a discharge ticket which entitled him to work wherever he pleased. Employers who engaged labourers without the discharge ticket were liable to a fine of $200.[25]

The discharge ticket regulation was introduced to protect employers from labourers who absconded before completing their contract. Before 1893 nearly all Chinese tin mines operated on the truck system. Labourers were engaged for terms of six or twelve months, either on contract work of stripping the overburden, or on wages raising ore, or as co-operative or tribute workers. In each case labourers were paid once every six months when books were made up and profits shared. In the meantime labourers had to depend entirely for their subsistence on advances made by their employers. These advances often amounted to large sums.

Old migrants, or *Lau-Khehs,* worked under conditions slightly different from those for *Sin-Khehs.* They received an actual cash advance in the presence of the Protector of Chinese and were taken to their place of work at the employer's expense. They were generally paid after the half-yearly smelting of the ore, which was often undertaken by the employer himself. In the case of tribute-workers, accounts were also settled every six or twelve months. *Lau-Khehs* were classed as (a) tribute-workers, (b) wage labourers, or (c) piece-work labourers.

Tribute-workers had no fixed pay but had the right of retaining for themselves the value of the minerals obtained by them from the mines, subject to an obligation of paying to the mine-owner or his lessee a fixed percentage of such value, or of selling to the mine-owner or his lessee all the mineral at a fixed price. The mine-owner or his lessee would make advances of money, food and other supplies in return for the mineral obtained, which was pledged as security thereof.

Labourers on time wages got free food and could earn $6 to $8 per month for seven hours' work per day. They were usually paid every six months. Overtime was paid at 6 to 8 cents an hour. Overtime wages were settled separately every three months. Men with initiative and strength could become headmen and earn $12 to $15 a month. Wage earners had to provide their own

clothing, and luxuries such as opium were usually, but not always, supplied by the mine-owner or advancer. Such labourers were under no restraint to stay at any mine.

Piece-work labourers were usually unskilled. They were employed in removing the overburden or top soil, and in making and repairing waterways or water courses. They were paid for stripping off the overburden so much per *nai chang* (30 feet by 30 feet and 1½ feet deep) and for lifting up the tin-bearing soil for washing. For the piece-work labourer the advancer provided rice; the other things he had to get for himself from wherever he liked, except opium, tobacco and oil which must be purchased from the mine advancer.[26]

As a result of an innovation in the method of tin mining and the extension of the activities of the Straits Trading Company, both the truck system and the discharge ticket regulation broke down. About 1890 the *lanchut kechil* or short wash-boxes, shaped like a coffin, came into general use.[27] The *lanchut kechil* was cheap (it cost about $4), and measuring about eight feet long, it could be carried from place to place. Tin ore could be concentrated in it wherever there was a small pool of water, which could be used over and over again. This made it possible for thousands of acres of mining land, which were formerly considered uneconomical to work with more elaborate machinery, to be brought under production. Only a few men were required to work the *lanchut kechil* which, for the Chinese labourer, literally placed the rich tin ore within his reach. By working hard a tribute-worker could earn as much as $3 a day—a fortune in the 1890's. There was a report of a group of tribute-workers who hit a particularly rich lode and in a fortnight each man earned about $600.[28]

About the same time the Straits Trading Company established its own smelting works in Singapore and set up collecting centres in all important mining areas. By paying cash on the spot for any amount of tin ore, it drastically changed the system of financing the mines. The cash payment for ore dispensed with the half-yearly smeltings often undertaken by the miners themselves, and thus the half-yearly payment of wages or profits. As surface mining with the *lanchut kechil* produced immediate results, labourers began to insist on frequent payments. If the employer refused, they ran away in hundreds, leaving nothing but debts behind them. The demand for labourers was so great

that employers often did not care whether their men had discharge tickets or not. Both employers and labourers were against the system, for it prevented the former from employing labour freely and the latter from seeking employment wherever they wished. To enforce this system strictly, a large team of officers would be required to carry on careful and systematic inspection. This the Government failed to provide. In any case it was useless to prosecute absconded labourers when their assets were nil. In the face of mounting dissatisfaction, the Government after an inquiry agreed to abolish the discharge ticket regulation.

The immediate result of this was that employers refused to make large advances to labourers who, after 1893, seldom got more than a few dollars to keep them going until the first few bags of tin ore were produced. This meant also that the contract and wage system gradually gave place to the tribute system in which labourers and employers shared profits.[29] After the abolition of the discharge ticket regulation, labourers were better paid, better fed and generally better treated. Although the price of tin was falling, production continued to rise. After employers had agreed amongst themselves to stop giving large advances to labourers, there was no inducement to abscond.

The rapid expansion of tin mining, due to better roads and railways, brought about an acute shortage of labour, and the Chinese labourer found himself in a position to dictate terms to his employer. Of course there were no workers' unions as we know them today, but the labourers who lived together in large *kongsi* houses or barracks were able to arrive at a common understanding as to how to use their bargaining power. The experienced labourer particularly could demand and obtain such high wages that many advancers could not afford the money necessary to open mines. No labourer would remain at a mine without the certainty of getting at least thirty-five cents a day plus food. This often meant that land was wastefully mined; and unless the mine was close to a town, with brothels, Chinese theatre and other amusements, the labourer would move elsewhere. The Labour Code of 1895 further strengthened the labourer's position where bargaining for wages and working conditions was concerned. The Code did not recognized as valid in law any engagement to work for more than thirty days unless it was made in writing. Since both labourer and employer had an aversion to formal written

contracts, it meant that any labourer who agreed to work in a mine with advances and without a written contract could, at the end of thirty days, leave the mine even though he might still be indebted to the employer.[30] Although the Labour Code was designed to protect the labourer, it did not solve the labour problems of employers. The discharge ticket regulation, introduced to protect employers, had been proved useless. Labour legislation thus swung from one extreme to another. Theoretically employers could still protect themselves by written contracts, but labourers who knew of the advantages of unwritten contracts exploited the situation. Since registration was not compulsory 'labourers in the mines, whether engaged on the spot or outside the States, were outside the law'.[31] The Code was not drafted so as to bring the law close to usage. 'As it stood, it was not worth the time or expense of the employer to arrest and prosecute an absconded labourer, for the punishment was slight and would not deter him from repeating the offence.'[32]

To make things worse, the Government was indirectly guilty of crimping labour from the mines. The extension of railway construction and public works called for a large labour force which could be obtained only at the expense of the mines. The labour shortage grew steadily worse until in November 1897 the Malay States Miners' Association[33] memorialized the Resident-General, urging him to do something to ease the labour shortage.[34]

The number of labourers in the mines of the Malay States in 1897 was estimated at 90,000 and since the Government required at least 10,000 men for its railways and other public works, the labour force in the mines would be reduced by at least 10 per cent. The Government's demand for labour helped to raise the price of labour; high costs and the shortage of labour had forced many low-grade mines to close down. This meant a serious falling off in tin output and thus in Government revenue from tin exports. The influx of migrants had steadily declined since 1893, and after 1895 no employer could undertake with profit to himself the risk of importing Chinese labourers when he had to pay at least $35 per head for passage money, advances, and so on, while labourers could easily abscond with impunity. The depressed state of the tin market had ruined many old established mining firms and crippled others so seriously that there was little capital available

among the mining community for anything beyond keeping open those mines already in operation. Under these circumstances the Government, with the large resources at its command, was urged to import its own labour for railway construction and other public works.

The Malay States Miners' Association pointed out that, undertaken on a large scale as a Government immigration scheme, labour could be obtained from China at much cheaper rates than those which private employers had to pay. The cost of bringing migrants from China to Klang would cost no more than $20 instead of the $35 per head that private employers had to pay. The Association declared:

> The adoption of such a measure would be to the advantage of everyone and far preferable to the foolish competition between the Government and miners for the insufficient supply of labour already in the country, a competition which can only be disastrous to both. On the other hand, by adopting a suitable scheme of immigration which could ensure a plentiful labour supply the Government can considerably reduce the cost of railway construction while the miners will be able to go on working their mines at a profit.[35]

As the whole future of the Malay States depended on a cheap and plentiful supply of labour, the importation of such labour could no longer be left in the hands of miners or small groups of planters. If nothing was done to remedy the labour shortage, the Government would have to face the prospect of seeing its main source of revenue cut off with the wholesale closing down of the mines. The Miners' Association suggested that out of the £500,000 available for railway construction, £10,000 a year be set aside for three years for the express purpose of importing labour not only for Government works but also for the mining, planting and other industries of the country.

The *Malay Mail*, taking its cue from the Miners' Association's memorial, drove the point home:

> The object of the railway is to develop the country, but it will be a suicidal policy to drive out the very people who would ultimately use the railway, before the line itself is constructed. Neither Malay nor Tamil patronage will make such a line pay or keep up the revenues of these States. As in the past, so in the future, we must

look to the Chinese tin-miner as the very backbone of this country for many years to come.[36]

The decline in immigration was due mainly to the fall in the price of tin in the early 1890's, but although prices took a sharp rise after 1896 and reached a record peak of £123. 6*s*. 6*d*. per ton in 1899[37] the supply of labour took a few years to catch up with the demand. The seriousness of the labour shortage can be judged from the following figures:[38]

TOTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION IN THE F.M.S.

Year	*Balance*	*Deaths*	*Total Available*
1896	9,597	11,341	−1,744
1897	−5,422	10,754	−16,176
1898	3,217	7,816	−4,599
1899	32,433	7,908	24,525
1900	41,329	12,198	29,131
1901	33,741	11,830	21,911

The Miners' Association's memorial apparently had the desired effect, for at the end of 1899 a scheme for assisted migrants was introduced by Swettenham who made arrangements with a syndicate of Chinese merchants and steamship owners to bring migrants from Canton to Klang. The Government agreed to pay a subsidy of $5 for every immigrant landed during the first year and $4 for the second and third year of the agreement, the total subsidy for any one year not exceeding $50,000. The objects were to reduce the cost of passage from China to Malaya and to divert profits from capitalists in Hong Kong and the Straits to the mining employers in the Malay States.[39]

This arrangement temporarily solved the labour problem for a couple of years, but it fell short of the recommendations of the 1890 Labour Commission Report, which had stressed the importance of getting the support and co-operation of the Chinese Government. The Spanish-American War unexpectedly complicated shipping arrangements, and the capitalists interested in the scheme started quarrelling among themselves. Stiff competition from Hong Kong eventually forced the Straits Settlements Chinese merchants to dissolve the syndicate. By this time the tin industry had recovered sufficiently to induce migrants to leave for the Malay States on their own account.[40]

As this scheme proved unsatisfactory, the Government in 1901 proposed to facilitate Chinese immigration by subsidizing direct steamers from Canton to a port in the Malay States. The matter was referred to the British Ambassador in Peking, Sir Ernest Satow, who consulted the British Consul-General in Canton, Mr. B.C.G. Scott, who had had wide experience in connexion with Chinese emigration from South China. In a letter to Satow, Scott pointed out the difficulties of establishing direct emigration of Chinese to the Malay States. The chief obstacle was the opposition of the Chinese Imperial Government to the kind of emigration that had been going on, particularly the activities surrounding emigration: kidnapping, fraudulent inducement, advances to relatives of emigrants, using credit tickets and other abuses. From the financial point of view, it was impossible for any company to pay a line of steamers from Malaya to run direct to Canton unless it could secure a large passenger traffic; and to do this the company would have to compete—and compete successfully—with Hong Kong. This required the setting up of a whole machinery of recruiters, up-country agencies in Canton Province and depots where emigrants could be collected, lodged and boarded for a long or short period, pending the arrival of the steamers. The steamers could not afford to wait for migrants; the emigrants, as at all other ports, had to be ready for the steamers.[41]

In proposing this scheme the Straits Government had suggested that the steamship company should not engage in the actual business of recruiting. If this was strictly adhered to there would not be enough migrants to make it a paying proposition. On the other hand, if recruiting were entrusted to a group of people, all the old abuses would come in again. Scott suggested that it would be easier to establish direct emigration from Hong Kong or Swatow, Kiungchow or Pakhoi, where emigration had been carried on successfully for years. There are no records to show that this scheme was put into practice, for apparently nothing definite could be arranged until some agreement had been arrived at with the Chinese Government. In the meantime the Straits Government had to take steps to deal with the Germans whose shipping in the Far East had expanded enormously at the expense of the British.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century German

shipping had invaded what was considered an exclusively British sphere and by 1899 the Germans had captured most of the passenger traffic between China and the Straits and the Dutch East Indies. They were able to do this because of better service and treatment of the poor Chinese migrants. Under the auspices of the Dutch Indies Government the Planters' Association of Deli, Sumatra, had sent officers to Pakhoi to establish direct emigration of Chinese labourers to Sumatra. The negotiations were carried through successfully by the energetic intervention of the German Government, the *quid pro quo* for its assistance being that the agents for the Deli Planters' Association in China should be German merchants, and the ships employed all under the German flag. As a result, direct emigration to Sumatra was successfully introduced at Swatow, Kiungchow and Pakhoi. In 1899 British shipping was practically confined to thirty vessels of the Ocean Steamship Company (the Blue Funnel Line) and the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. On the other hand, the Hamburg-American, the North German Lloyd, the German-Australia, the Australian-Lloyd, the Rubbatino and the East Asiatic Company carried a total of 200,000 tons of cargo (about 58 per cent of the grand total) from Singapore.

On 2nd July 1901, the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements introduced a Bill 'to mend the law for the protection of Chinese immigrants'. The most important points were as follows: Section 7 made it compulsory for the agent of an immigrant ship to inform the Protector of Chinese of the probable date of arrival, and threw the responsibility of preventing immigrants from disembarking on the master of the ship. Provision was also made for sending back to China those immigrants who were found unfit for labour, or those who did not or could not repay the recruiter for the money spent in bringing them into the Colony. Section 33 prohibited the importation of Chinese into the Colony on any ship not flying the British flag. It was found that when foreign ships brought Chinese migrants into the Colony, British officers were unable to control these ships effectually either as to their sea-worthiness, their accommodation or their provision for medical attendance.[42]

The ostensible reasons for passing this Bill—the brainwave of Swettenham, who was then Governor—were the protection of

Chinese immigrants and the prevention of bubonic plague which had broken out in Hong Kong and China in 1898-9; the real motive was to break the stranglehold of German shipping on British interests and 'rehabilitate the maritime commerce of Britain in its whilom position of absolute supremacy in these waters'.[43]

After the removal of the German threat to British shipping, negotiations were under way between the British and Chinese authorities to regularize the immigration of Chinese in British Colonies and Protectorates. A Convention was finally signed in London on 13th May 1904.[44]

The Convention officially secured the co-operation of the Chinese Government in the business of Chinese emigration which it had for decades opposed but which it had no power to control. In the Convention it was agreed that when indentured emigrants were required for a particular British Colony or Protectorate, the British Government would notify the Chinese Government, stating the name of the Colony or Protectorate for which emigrants were required, the name of the Treaty port of embarkation and the terms and conditions of the indenture. In return the Taotai at the Treaty port was to appoint a Chinese Inspector who, together with the British Consular Officer at the port, should explain the text of the indenture to the emigrant and any particulars of which the Chinese Officer considered it essential that the emigrant should be informed, concerning the laws and customs of the country to which the emigrant was going.

An emigrant under twenty-one had to have parental consent to emigrate; if he had neither parents nor guardians, the authority of the Magistrate of his district would suffice. Emigrants would be medically examined before they were given an emigration permit, which would be signed by the Chinese Officer and countersigned by the British Consular Officer. The Chinese Government was given the right to establish a consulate in the Colony or Protectorate to which emigrants were going, in order to look after the interests of Chinese subjects. The Convention stipulated that every indenture should clearly specify the name of the country for which the labourer was required, the duration of the indenture and, if renewable, on what terms, the number of working hours per day, the nature of work, rate of wages,

mode of payment, rations, clothing, grant of a free passage out and, where such was provided for therein, a free passage back to the port of embarkation for the migrant and his family, and free medical attention. The indentures were to be signed in the presence of the Chinese and British Officers. An employer could not legally transfer the emigrant to another employer without the emigrant's free consent and the approval of the Chinese Consul in the Colony or Protectorate.

A fee was paid to the Chinese Government for each indentured emigrant for expenses of inspection: three Mexican dollars per head for any number of emigrants not exceeding 10,000 and two Mexican dollars per head for any number in excess thereof, provided they were shipped from the same port. The Convention was to remain in force for four years from the date of signing; after this period either party could terminate it by giving a year's notice.

Although in theory Chinese immigrants entered the Malay States as indentured labourers, the British Government followed a liberal policy which aimed at increasing the number of 'free' labourers. Most immigrants were not under any contract for a period exceeding one month enforceable in a court of law. Large numbers of immigrants were redeemed from their obligations by relatives and friends. In this respect the various benevolent societies run by the Chinese themselves were of the greatest value to the *Sin-Kheh*.[45]

CHINESE LABOUR IN THE TIN MINING INDUSTRY OF THE F.M.S.[46]

Type of Work	*1903*	*1904*	*1905*	*1906*	*1907*
Contract	65,656	50,558	63,590	59,259	75,923
Wages	29,051	no data	30,472	27,519	30,965
Tribute	91,666	142,111	114,952	125,882	124,480
Total	186,337	192,669	209,014	212,660	231,368

While the authorities were preoccupied with the problem of importing labour into Malaya, the position of the mining labourer was undergoing a change. The tribute system or share-working in the mines had grown up with wage labour and piece-work, and after the turn of the century more and more labourers preferred tribute work. Tribute-workers increased from 114,952 in 1905 to 125,882 in 1906, and contract labourers decreased from 63,500 to 59,259 in the same years.[47] As the price of tin rose the

number of tribute-workers increased, while the number of contract and wage labourers increased only when the price of tin fell below a point at which it did not pay the labourer to work on tribute.[48]

The Labour Code of 1895 had made the Chinese labourer a free and independent man, and the Labourers' Wages Priority Enactment of 1899 had given him priority of wage payment over the claims of other unsecured creditors upon the sale of mines and estates.[49] The truck system had been part of the Chinese mining industry from the time it started, and although its evils were self-evident to the Chinese Affairs Department, which had permitted the practice in the absence of any alternative, it was not so regarded by the miners themselves. In 1908 the truck system was officially abolished in favour of the payment of wages. In the same year an Enactment was passed prohibiting the sale of opium and intoxicating liquor to labourers as remuneration. These two Truck Enactments were subsequently incorporated into the Labour Code of 1912, but they were never effectively enforced, 'partly because of inadequate administrative machinery, and partly because . . . the Chinese labourers preferred the truck system . . . to being put to the trouble of buying and cooking food for themselves'.[50]

From 1903 a new method of recruiting immigrants was gradually replacing the indenture system, which was finally abolished in 1914. Those already settled in the Malay States would send for their friends and fellow clansmen, rather in the way that Irishmen in New York, for example, would send for their friends and families after they had made enough money for the purpose.[51] Although the bulk of the Chinese immigrants went to work in the mines, a substantial number were employed in the various trades in the growing townships. Simultaneously with the expansion of the mining industry there grew up communities of squatters on the fringes of the mining centres. Chinese squatters cleared the land and started market gardening, raising vegetables, pigs and poultry to supply the needs of the townships. Few of them had any official permission to squat on Government land, but since they were indispensable as suppliers of fresh vegetables to the mining population, the Government took a lenient view of things and, once the squatters were established, charged a small annual quit-rent.

The Government had always stressed the need for establishing an agricultural population to balance the shifting mining labourers. About 1890 there was a suggestion that Government might introduce agriculturalists from China and India, but nothing was done until 1903, when the Perak Government with the approval of the High Commissioner brought forward a scheme 'for interesting various Missionary Societies in China to introduce members of the flocks, with their families, as permanent agricultural settlers into the State'.[52] The Government undertook to pay the preliminary expenses of the Agent in China, about $600, and to provide passages for the first 500 settlers at a cost not exceeding $18 for an adult man or woman and $12 for children. A sum not exceeding $25,000 would be advanced by the Government by instalments for settling the first batch of 500 settlers on the land. No interest would be charged and the final payment was to be completed by the 31st December 1919. When the first batch had been settled, a further advance of $25,000 would be made for the introduction of the second batch of 500 on similar terms. A concession of 2,500 acres of land in the Sitiawan district of Perak (opposite the historic island of Pangkor) was given by the Government in the first instance, with roughly ten acres to a family. The land would be free for five years, after which an annual rent of fifty cents an acre would be charged. The Government promised to build the necessary main roads and undertook not to allow opium, gambling or spirit shops to be established in the settlement or within a three-mile radius of it. One of the conditions laid down by the contract was that the Contractor undertook that every family should plant at least three acres of rice and raise as many crops a year as the soil and climate would permit. On the rest of their plot they could grow whatever they pleased.[53]

With the consent of Bishop Warne of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, Dr. H.L.E. Luering accepted the Government offer and left for China where he spent three months in Foochow and Hinghua and returned with about 350 settlers, including about 70 women and children.[54]

Not all the members of the first 'flock' introduced by Dr. Luering were Christians, although there were sufficient numbers amongst them to warrant the claim that Sitiawan was the first Chinese Christian community in the Malay States. The Methodist

Mission had hoped that, once removed from their traditional surroundings, the new settlers would find it easier to embrace Christianity. There were difficulties in the beginning, for it was reported that a few of the settlers left the sheltered atmosphere of Sitiawan for the rough mining towns in Kinta where the chances of getting rich were much greater than those offered by an agricultural settlement. Nevertheless this scheme worked well, for although the primary aim of the Mission was to save souls, the missionaries in charge of Sitiawan were also practical men.

The settlement was a strip of jungle with alternating high land and swamp. The first arrivals were housed in barracks built for them by the Government until the settlers could clear the jungle and set up their own cottages. Many, unaccustomed to the enervating climate, died of malaria and other tropical fevers. Tigers were a menace, and wild pigs often caused havoc to vegetable plots. The concession consisted of some 2,700 acres of land which was divided up into three-acre lots amongst the settlers (the original suggestion by the Government of ten-acre blocks was apparently considered too extravagant). The swamp land was cleared and planted with rice, while the dry land was used to grow coconuts and rubber. Soon after their arrival the settlers put up their own smithy where agricultural tools and other implements were made, and a vermicelli factory was erected. It was hoped that after the first rice harvest the settlers would be able to export some of the products of their factory to other parts of the State. The Settlement was well-stocked with agricultural implements, pigs and poultry and a start was made with cattle. Through the Mission, ploughs and other equipment were sent from America.[13] Two years after the Settlement was established, its temporal prosperity was assured. By 1905 the livestock, principally pigs, was valued at $10,000. The settlers had also taken to rubber planting, from which it was hoped to derive sufficient income to enable the Mission to carry on its evangelical work. By 1909 the Mission rubber plantation had 80,000 rubber trees planted, of which 20,000 were at the tapping stage. At current prices, the Mission had an income of $200 a day from rubber.[14] Apart from its agricultural produce, Sitiawan later developed an important fishing industry. After the initial difficulties, unavoidable in any pioneer community, Sitiawan became a thriving

township. Right from the start the Protector of Chinese, William Cowan, and other Government officials had taken a keen interest in the project. The founding and development of Sitiawan may be seen as a microcosm of the larger phenomenon of modern Malaya, the product of British initiative and Chinese industry combined.

Population growth was rapid in the Malay States after the establishment of British rule. In 1879 the Chinese population in Perak was just over 20,000; in 1901 when a general census was taken, the Chinese numbered nearly 150,000 in that State. The combined total of Chinese in Perak and Selangor in 1901 exceeded that of Malays in the same States by more than 90,000.[57] Between 1881 and 1900 an estimated total of 1,681,711 Chinese immigrants had gone to Perak and Selangor.[58] No detailed figures are available for Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, but the figures for Perak give an idea of the rate of population growth during this period.[59]

CHIEF COMPONENTS IN THE POPULATION OF PERAK

	1879	*1901*
Malays	59,682	141,723
Chinese	20,373	149,375
Indians	837	34,710
Total	80,892	325,808

POPULATION IN THE FEDERATED MALAY STATES[60]

State	*Area in sq. miles*	*1891*	*1901*	*Percentage increase*
Perak	6,500	214,254	329,665	53.87
Selangor	3,200	81,592	168,789	106.86
Negri Sembilan	2,600	65,219	96,028	47.23
Pahang	14,000	57,444	84,113	46.42
Total	26,300	418,509	678,595	62.14

In 1901 Taiping, the administrative capital of Perak, had a population of 13,331; Ipoh in the Kinta district had 12,791; Kuala Lumpur had 32,381; Seremban, the capital of Negri Sembilan, had 4,765; and Pekan, the capital of Pahang, had 1,142. A break-

down of the total population of the Federated Malay States in 1901 shows the following:[61]

		Percentage increase	
Malaysians	312,456*	34.9	between 1891 and 1901
Europeans	1,422	98.3	
Eurasians	1,522	169.8	
Chinese	299,739	83.4	
Indians	58,211	188.8	

*Including about 20,000 aborigines.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Selangor had the fastest rate of population growth. From a total of 168,789 in 1901 the population reached 326,642 in 1907.[62] Over the same period Perak increased from 329,665 to 431,000. In 1907 Negri Sembilan had a population of 121,249 and Pahang had about 100,000. The total for all the States was thus 978,891.[63]

THE INDIANS

Indian immigration into the Malay Peninsula started soon after the founding of Penang where Indians were employed as domestics and agricultural labourers. In the early days of Singapore Indian convict labour was used by the Public Works Department: St. Andrew's Cathedral and Government House were built mainly with convict labour. After the transfer of the Colony government from the India Office to the Colonial Office in 1867, convict labour was stopped. In the meantime indentured labour was introduced. This continued until 1870, when it was discovered that an Indian Government Act of 1864 made it illegal to engage any native of India for services outside India, and Indian immigration was suspended for two years. After inquiries into charges of ill-treatment of labourers in the sugar plantations of Province Wellesley, the Indian Government agreed to leave the welfare of immigrants in the hands of the Straits Government and to relax the restrictions on emigration from India, but it was not until 1884 that Indian immigration into the Malay States was legalized.[64]

In 1887 the Indian Government abolished all registration and supervision of non-indentured emigrants so that emigration of

labourers not bound by any contract was left free of control. In the same year the Straits Government (with the support of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Johore) agreed to contribute $30,000 to subsidize steamship fares between Negapatam in South India and Penang. By this means the Government hoped that a larger number of labourers would arrive in Malaya, but the Indians did not take this opportunity to emigrate in the numbers expected, and the subsidy was withdrawn in 1892.[65]

Around the 1890's the principle of emigration from India and China was basically the same, although the terms of service differed greatly from those in use with the Chinese. Recruiting in India was left in the hands of recruiting firms in Madras or Negapatam. Beyond the Indian Government's insistence on a recruiting licence, there was practically no Government supervision. After intending emigrants were certified medically fit, they were taken into the depot where they came under the protection of the Straits Government and remained until their embarkation. From Negapatam the Indian migrant was brought to Penang in one of the subsidized steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company. On arrival the migrant was inspected by the Indian Immigration Agent; if he was a contract labourer, he was detained in the Government depot until his contract was signed, and then handed over to his employer, who also had custody of the contract. A duplicate copy in Tamil was given to the labourer and the office register served as the Immigration Agent's record of the transaction. Contract labourers for the Malay States did not sign their agreements in Penang but at the place where they were to be employed.[66]

Despite all these measures Indian immigrants between 1880 and 1890 became gradually fewer. Most of them were employed in the sugar plantations in Province Wellesley and Krian (North Perak) and the coffee estates in Selangor. Conditions of work then cannot be described as congenial. Malaria was rife. There were few of the social amenities that the Tamils were used to having in their own villages in India, and at best their employment on these agricultural plantations served as a temporary relief to poor harvests at home. One of the chief stumbling blocks to immigration was the three-year contract, which hung like a millstone round the neck of the labourer. The contract could be extended if the labourer at the end of three years had not paid

off his obligations to the employer. There was competition from Ceylon and Burma for Indian labour, and since it was cheaper to travel there than to Malaya, Indian labourers naturally preferred the nearer to the farther place of employment. The fact that the journey to Malaya was several days longer than the trip to Burma or Ceylon must itself have been a psychological barrier. Although wages were slightly higher in Malaya, the higher cost of living practically cancelled out any advantage they might enjoy. The picture usually painted of India was one of unemployment, poverty, oppression and starvation. In times of drought and other catastrophes of nature there was, no doubt, real hardship, but in times of good harvests the people in South India earned an average of five rupees a month. With the low cost of living, they were not too badly off even if nearly always paid in grain. It was the attraction of earning some hard silver that brought the Indian immigrant to work in Malaya as well as in other countries.[7]

The rapid expansion of agriculture—particularly coffee planting—railway construction and other public works both in the Colony and the Malay States had depleted whatever labour force there was in the country. The tin industry, as we have seen, had its own labour problems. Like the Chinese, the Indians returned to India in large numbers every year, and unless a continuous stream of immigration was maintained the shortage of labour in any one year could become disastrous. The sugar plantations were profitable only with cheap labour, and the sugar planters had always relied on indentured labour. The Government was never in favour of the indenture system, and when there were charges of maltreatment of labourers in the sugar plantations, it made some attempt at modifying the system, but this met with stiff opposition from the planters. Their argument was that in the absence of adequate labour supplies, they had to rely on the indenture system to keep their plantations going. Until the abolition of the indenture system, sugar planters only conceded the reduction of the term of contract to 600 working days and the increment of wages by a few cents. The introduction of the *kangany* system of recruitment in India slowly undermined the indenture system. From 1905, the threat of Java to the Malayan sugar industry hastened the abolition of the form of labour on which its prosperity depended. The final abolition of Indian

indentured labour roughly coincided with the end of the Malayan sugar industry in 1910.[68]

In contrast to the sugar planters, the coffee planters in Selangor had always preferred 'free' labour recruited under the *kangany* system, which started when former Ceylon coffee planters settled in the Malay States after their disastrous failure caused by plant disease in Ceylon. Indian labourers who had worked for these planters voluntarily emigrated to work for their former employers. Under this system the planter recruited his labourers through his *kangany*, or overseer, who obtained men from his own village in India and who was paid a commission for each labourer he got. Apart from its freedom from the shackles of a formal contract, the *kangany* system had a personal touch which made it easier for the labourer to leave his home and family to work in a distant foreign country, and consequently it was more popular with Indians than the indenture system. After 1904 the expanding rubber plantations were worked by labourers recruited by *kanganies*. The great advantage of the *kangany* system was that it could regulate supply to demand and channel labourers where they were most needed. But from the point of view of the labourer, both the indenture and the *kangany* system carried grave evils: under the former the labourer was held in bondage to the employer, and under the latter he was often victimized by the overseer. Under both systems the Indian labourer started life in Malaya in debt.[69] Unlike the Chinese labourer in the mines, the Indian labourer had to work for very low wages with no prospect of getting rich, such as there was for the enterprising Chinese labourer working on tribute.

The indenture system could not ensure a regular supply of labourers, who were often of poor quality, physically speaking. Against the heavy cost of bringing in indentured labour, employers had to face the risk of desertions and crimping by labour contractors for Government public works. The Government was anxious to encourage the expansion of agriculture, but the shortage of labour made it difficult for planters even to maintain their estates. The condition of the labour market can be seen from the figures in the following tables which show the number of indentured and unindentured Indian immigrants entering Malaya over a period of ten years ending 1890:[70]

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION OF INDENTURED INDIAN LABOUR

1881	-879	1886	-2,992
1882	-1,452	1887	-4,736
1883	-1,450	1888	-4,684
1884	1,539	1889	-2,747
1885	1,642	1890	-2,960

UNINDENTURED INDIAN LABOUR

	Arrivals	*Departures*	*Number Available*
1881	5,769	5,269	500
1882	8,276	5,947	2,329
1883	8,979	9,041	-62
1884	14,365	10,749	3,616
1885	19,819	13,417	6,402
1886	17,316	18,105	-789
1887	12,156	12,596	-440
1888	15,312	13,190	2,622
1889	15,285	14,099	1,186
1890	18,301	15,276	3,025

The cost of landing a labourer in Penang was about $20, out of which $8 was recoverable from the labourer, and the balance of $12 represented the recruiting agent's expenses and commission. Wages in the 1890's for 'free' labourers varied from 20 cents to 30 cents a day. The Singapore Government rates were 23 or 24 cents. Municipal rates were 24 or 25 cents a day. Contractors and planters usually paid $7.50 a month for labourers. In the Malay States, where the cost of living was higher, labourers got 30 cents a day, with free quarters if employed by the Government.[n]

Between 1890 and 1910 the Government introduced a number of laws which ultimately brought about the emancipation of the Indian labourer from the bondage of indebtedness to his employer through either the indenture system or the *kangany* system of recruitment. In 1892 the Government tried to introduce a Labour Ordinance to protect the Indian labourer, but its provisions were so objectionable to the planters and other employers that it never came into force. In 1897 a new Bill was introduced. Its main features were the landing of labourers as far as possible free from debt, an increase in the minimum wage, the shortening

of the period of service for which contract labourers were bound, and the abolition of the penal clauses by which labourers who received advances in India could be compelled to enter into and carry out the contracts for which they were imported into Malaya. The last clause was the essence of the Bill, and it was against it that planters raised the most strenuous objections. The planters were willing to concede all the other points, but the removal of the penal clauses would leave the employer, who had to import his own labour at great expense, no means of redress should the labourer abscond. The aim of the Government was the promotion of free immigration and free labour, hence this attack at the root of the indenture system. What was most galling to the planters was the fact that the Government, who had done nothing to recruit labour for public works, except to subsidize migrant ships, was directly and indirectly the greatest crimper of them all. Whenever labour was required for a large Government scheme the near-by estates would suddenly find themselves robbed of their labourers. Planters maintained that they would be the first to agree with the Government that free labour was preferable to the indenture system, but until the supply of such labour was sufficient to meet the demand, there was no alternative to the indenture system.

The root cause of all this trouble was the system of recruitment in India. There the professional recruiters (Messrs. Adamson, MacTaggart & Company, and Ganapahti Pillai & Company) employed sub-agents who in turn employed others to do the actual recruiting. With 'squeeze' all the way through the elaborate recruiting machinery, the cost of importing a labourer was much higher than it need have been. The Government realized that the only way to break the back of this iniquitous system was to pave the way for free immigration. When it became known that emigrants could obtain their passages by applying to the Straits Settlements Government Agent at Madras or Negapatam, while retaining their freedom to contract on arrival in the Straits, a stream of free immigration would result. If this was supplemented by the *kangany* system, the country would have enough labour for its needs. The Indian Government had withdrawn all restrictions on Indian immigration into Malaya on the understanding that migrants should be landed in Penang as free agents.[72]

Mainly as the result of the Governor Sir Charles Mitchell's visit to India and his conference with Indian officials and professional recruiting firms, a fresh Indian Immigration Bill was introduced and passed in 1898, under which all former laws on immigration were repealed. The main point of the Bill was that, if the immigrant had signed a contract in India, the law courts in Malaya should adopt and enforce that contract, and should punish the immigrant if he did not fulfil it. Further, if the immigrant wished to cancel his contract before his term expired, he was liable to repay his employer the cost of importing him from India. If, on the other hand, the immigrant served out the term agreed upon in the contract, there would be no further claim on him for the money advanced for his passage, and he should leave the service of his employer a free man. The 1898 Immigration Bill said nothing substantially different from any other previous immigration bills. It is clear that the Government was bowing to the wishes of the planters in retaining the penal clauses, and as the Bill met nearly all the requirements of the planters, the indenture system continued for another ten years.

Seeing that it was impossible to change drastically the system of Indian immigration, the Government turned its attention to improving labour conditions. One of the most serious problems was the high death rate of both Chinese and Indian labourers. In 1900 the Institute of Medical Research was established in Kuala Lumpur with the aim of solving the mystery of beri-beri and other tropical diseases. While measures were taken to combat malaria, hundreds of labourers died in the estates and tin mines. Most of the Indian immigrants arrived in Malaya in poor health, and under the attacks of malaria, beri-beri, dysentery and other diseases, thousands of Indians never realized their hope of returning to their home villages with their meagre savings of silver.

CAUSES OF DEATH AMONG INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE F.M.S.

	1907	*1908*
Malaria and fevers	1,665	2.065
Dysentery	1,396	1,658
Diarrhoea	744	1,040
Beri-beri	97	136
Old age	76	119
Stomach complaints	317	401
Total	4,295	5,419

These figures, taken from the Annual Reports of the Federated Malay States, speak for themselves.

In view of the difficulty of obtaining immigrants and of the actual number of labourers available, the wastage through death posed a serious problem:

Arrivals of	*1907*	*1908*
Statute immigrants	4,240	3,999
Unindentured immigrants	17,758	24,302
Others (approx.)	9,000	10,500
	30,998	38,801
Departures (approx.)	15,000	12,000
Total available	15,998	26,801

Towards the end of the century doctors were advancing the theory that beri-beri was related to diet, and late in 1901 the Protector of Labour had suggested to the Resident-General that the Government should, on big public works, supply grains other than rice to the labourers. By enabling them to have more food at less expense, the Government would prevent rather than incur the cost of curing sickness or of total loss through death.[73]

In the matter of wages, the Government also had to take the initiative, as planters, representing vested interests, could not be expected to pay their labourers more than they could help. In advising the Resident-General in this matter, Sir Frank Swettenham was careful to point out that Tamils and Europeans went out to Malaya with basically the same hope of doing better than staying at home, and therefore when settling the rate of pay for Indian labourers the Resident-General should bear in mind the fact that the Tamil, like the white man, spent more in Malaya than in his own country. Swettenham suggested that the Government daily rate of pay of 25 cents might be increased to 30 cents or more. As the value of silver had decreased considerably, real wages even at 30 cents a day were not very substantial.[74]

Schools were started from 1901 for the children of Indian labourers in the estates. Nothing much is known about the nature and standard of schooling in these estates beyond the fact that it was in their own language, mainly Tamil, but judging from subsequent reports on education, the standard for these estate children was extremely low. The official attitude towards the

Indians was similar to that towards the Malays, that from the economic point of view they would have no future as clerks: their value to the country would be in becoming 'good agriculturalists and, those fitted for it, good citizens and workers at the various trades. . . .'[75] The aim of giving some elementary schooling was to induce the new generation of Indians to settle down in the country of their adoption and thus form a resident labouring class. Most Tamil immigrants were Hindus who had made vows to their temples to return home, but their children had none of these religious ties. They were therefore regarded as potential settlers whose value to the country was much greater than the cost of their education and upbringing.[76]

By 1900 it was obvious to planters that there was no future in coffee: disease and low prices forced the planters to abandon their coffee estates, and when it was proved that cultivated rubber could fetch high prices, planters began a feverish replanting of their estates with Para rubber. Unfortunately for the planters, substantial numbers of Indian immigrants had left the country when the coffee estates had to close down. From 1901 the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States Governments had subsidized a combined mail and immigration steamship service between South India and Penang, but Indian immigration continued to drop and in 1903 when both rubber and sugar planters were crying out for labour only a mere trickle of immigrants arrived. Malaya at this time was not the only country demanding cheap labour: there was competition for it from Ceylon, Burma, Fiji, Mauritius, British Guiana and the West Indies. The fact that Malaya paid its imported labour in rapidly depreciating silver was perhaps one of the reasons why there was a shortage of Indian immigrants, whose desire for hard cash naturally attracted them to those countries where the currency was linked with gold or sterling.[77]

The main responsibility for the importation of Tamil labourers was carried by the various planters' associations, which were divided roughly into two rival groups with different views on the type of labour they should import. The Selangor Planters' Association was the first of its kind to be formed in 1892, after which similar bodies were established in Perak, Negri Sembilan and Johore. The early years of their existence were marked by provincial jealousies. A suggestion put forward in 1894 for the

formation of a central association to represent planters from the Federated Malay States and Johore hung fire until 1896, when Federation provided the necessary stimulus for the establishment of the United Planters' Association, inaugurated in April 1897.[78] Apparently the U.P.A. did not represent the interests of the sugar planters, who in 1901 formed the Malay Peninsula Sugar Industry Association. As the sugar industry relied on indentured labour for its prosperity, the M.P.S.I.A. organized a systematic recruitment of indentured Tamil immigrants from Madras and Negapatam. In contrast with the rather vague aims of 'safeguarding the planting interests in general', which were the main *raison d'être* of the other associations in the Federated Malay States, the M.P.S.I.A. had immediate advantages and tangible benefits to offer its members, who were by no means confined to sugar planters. Indentured labour, however, was never popular in Selangor where planters from the beginning depended on free *kangany* recruited labour. All those estates which badly required labour therefore joined the M.P.S.I.A. which in 1906 changed its name to the Malay Peninsula Agricultural Association.[79]

Soon after Sir John Anderson took up his post as Governor in 1904, he made a tour of the Malay States. In Kuala Lumpur he met a deputation of planters who complained that the Government, by paying slightly higher wages in the Public Works and Railway Departments, was responsible for enticing away labourers from the planters who had paid for their importation. Although the migrant ships between South India and Penang were subsidized by the Government, Sir John Anderson thought there was some justification in their complaint, and he arranged for 6,000 of the 8,000 tickets—which under an arrangement with the British India Steamship Company the Government was bound to take—to be given free to the U.P.A. which would distribute the tickets amongst its members. The understanding was that the Government would be free to recruit in the States any labour required beyond the number specifically imported on its behalf.[80] While members of the U.P.A. were jubilant, those of the M.P.S.I.A. felt that this was a gross act of favouritism. But they had only themselves to blame for preferring indentured labour when the express policy of the Government was to bring about free immigration and labour. Consequently an intense rivalry developed between the two groups of planters in the

scramble for labourers, the one recruiting free and the other indentured immigrants.

Having gained one concession, the U.P.A. began agitating for another; petulant letters appeared in the press needling the Government for representation in the Legislative Council. But many members of the U.P.A. realized that until they were in a position to say that they represented the entire planting community in Malaya, their cause was weakened. Accordingly the U.P.A. in April 1907 resolved itself into the United Planters' Association of the Malay Peninsula. But this was only a change in name: the M.P.A.A. stuck resolutely to its policy of recruiting indentured labour. The whole of 1907 was taken up with negotiations between the U.P.A. and M.P.A.A. to try to arrive at a merger, but it seemed impossible to find a solution that would satisfy both sides. All planters, of course, felt in theory that unity was necessary, but all equally fought shy of uniformity and were unwilling to give up their local independence and autonomy.

Rubber plantations were opening up so fast from 1905 onward that the existing arrangement for importing labour was totally inadequate to meet the needs of planting. Besides, what appeared to have been a magnanimous gesture on the part of the Government in giving free steamship tickets to the planters was in fact a rather clever scheme for the Government to get labour for its public works, especially the Johore Railway, without the onus of actually organizing the recruitment. Although between 1905 and 1907 nearly 17,000 free tickets had been given to the planters, the benefit did not all go to them, and the press was again flooded with letters of recrimination. In the face of things it was irrelevant for the Government to deny the repeated charges of crimping levelled against it by the planters. With the price of rubber having risen more than 100 per cent between 1901 and 1905, something positive had to be done to get the rubber on the market.

Sir John Anderson's sympathies were entirely on the side of the planters, for it was his special charge to stimulate and protect the planting industry. At the time when the arrangement was made for the distribution of free steamship tickets, he had also introduced a loan fund of $500,000 for the benefit of bona fide planters. When it looked as if both the Government and the planters were bedevilled by the shortage of labour, the Governor in August 1907 introduced a Bill to set up a Tamil Immigration

Fund. The object of this Bill was to compel employers of Tamil labourers, indentured or free, to supply their own labour requirements by contributing to the Fund which would pay for free passages for Tamil labourers and their families from the Madras Presidency to Malaya.[81]

An Immigration Committee, composed of officials and unofficials appointed by the Governor, would manage the Fund and decide on the rate of contribution. It was suggested that $5 a year should be charged for every Tamil labourer planters already had in their employment. Planters in Perak, Negri Sembilan, Johore and Pahang unanimously supported the Bill and some went so far as to offer more money than was suggested. But the Selangor Planters' Association vehemently protested against the passing of the Bill without further careful consideration of its principles. Selangor planters had good reason to object to the Bill, which was designed to benefit employers who were short of labour. If the Fund was to be raised by taxing planters according to the number of labourers they had, the burden would fall most heavily on the Selangor planters who, as a group, employed the largest number of Tamil labourers recruited under the *kangany* system. They would, in fact, be asked to pay anything from 200 per cent to 1,000 per cent more than other employers. At a public meeting of the Selangor Planters' Association, the secretary declared, 'We are asked to pay for what we are not receiving. . . . The man who has to sit still on his estate until it comes into bearing has got to pay on all his old coolies. He is taxed on his present force and is getting nothing for it. He has got to pay to get labour for other people.'[82]

At the third reading of the Bill in the Legislative Council in Singapore, on 6th September 1907, Sir John Anderson urged that the Bill should be passed without delay in its original form, and when the Committee got to work they would be able to devise an equitable system of assessment. The measure was not considered to be final; what was needed was information and experience in carrying out the scheme.[83] On this assurance the Bill was passed and the Tamil Immigration Fund came into operation from 1st January 1908.

Once the Bill for the Tamil Immigration Fund was passed, neither the U.P.A. nor the M.P.A.A. had any reason to exist as separate bodies, since the main problem of labour recruitment

was taken out of their hands by the Immigration Committee. Accordingly the U.P.A. dissolved itself in December 1907, and at the suggestion of the chairman of the M.P.A.A. a new body called the Planters' Association of Malaya was constituted, representing all the planters' associations in the country. Since then the planters in Malaya have always presented a united front. It was easy for the U.P.A. and the M.P.A.A. to sink their differences in 1907 because the latter group had decided to switch over to rubber planting when the sugar industry could not compete with that of Java. The Government congratulated the planters on their successful formation of the Planters' Association and assured them that any representations which the Association might make would always receive careful consideration from the Government. When the Federal Council was formed in 1909, the unofficial 'opposition' was, more often than not, led by members representing the planters.

The Tamil Immigration Fund was the climax of forty years of Government legislation to regulate the flow of Indian labour into Malaya. Sir John Anderson's brilliant idea not only solved the main problem of labour recruitment—finance—but also indirectly united the planters and prepared the way for the final formal abolition of indentured labour in 1910. By 1906 the Malay States had an estimated total of 95,000 Indians, the bulk of whom were free labourers and traders.[84]

INDIAN IMMIGRATION INTO THE F.M.S.[85]

Year	*Statute*	*Unindentured*	*Traders, etc.**	*Total*
1906	2,778	19,817	9,000	31,600
1907	3,999	24,302	10,500	38,800
1908	4,240	17,758	9,000	31,000
1909	3,013	17,687	8,000	28,700

* Estimated

From the time the Tamil Immigration Fund came into operation, all Indian labourers were landed as free agents in Malaya, except those who were specifically recruited by private employers on the indenture system. The provision of free tickets and the fact that Malaya had now a currency based on gold attracted large numbers of Indian immigrants. The subsequent develop-

ment of the rubber industry which was to contribute so much to stabilizing the economy of the country was due entirely to the unrestricted flow of Indian labour into Malaya.

NOTES

1 Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, p. 6.
2 *Ibid.* p. 23.
3 *Ibid.* p. 25.
4 Resident-General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1900, p. 10.
5 From the Annual Reports on the F.M.S.; 1907—Cd. 4471; 1908—Cd. 4722; 1909—Cd. 5373.
6 High Commissioner's Report on the F.M.S. for 1902, p. 5.
7 Wang Gungwu, *A Short History of the Nanyang Chinese*, pp. 1-8.
8 *Ibid.* Chapter I.
9 L.A. Mills, 'British Malaya, 1824-1867', *J.M.B.R.A.S.*, November 1925, pp. 212-13.
10 Paper on Malaya read at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institution, London, held on 31st March 1896; reported in the *Straits Budget*, Singapore, 28th April 1896.
11 *Malay Mail*, Kuala Lumpur, 14th January 1902.
12 *Ibid.*
13 Mills, *op. cit.* p. 199.
14 Sir Charles Lucas, *A Historical Geography of the British Colonies*, Vol. I, p. 219; cited by Mills, *op. cit.* p. 199.
15 Swettenham, *British Malaya*, p. 232.
16 J.D. Vaughan, *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements*, p. 16; quoted by Mills, *op. cit.* pp. 200-1.
17 Labour Commission Report on the S.S. and Protected Malay States, Singapore, 1890, pp. 9-10.
18 Report on the Labour Question in the Crown Colonies, 1892, C. 6795, Vol. XI, p. 96.
19 Mills, *op. cit.* p. 209.
20 Labour Commission Report, 1890, p. 10.
21 The mosquito net was part of the kit that a Chinese labourer carried with him. The widespread use of the mosquito net probably accounted for the number of Chinese labourers who died of malaria being smaller than the number of Indians who died of the same disease. This prophylactic was not usually issued to Indians in the plantations and if it was they refused to sleep under it.
22 Resident-General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1903, Cd. 2243 (1905).
23 Report on the Labour Question in the Crown Colonies, p. 99.
24 It is not known if these depots or *hongs* still exist for men, but similar *hongs* can be found today in all the large towns of Malaya for female domestic servants of the older generation. The unemployed usually stay at the *hongs* for a small charge, and housewives who want domestic help may apply there personally to interview prospective servants and discuss terms, or word can be sent to the *hong* and

the likeliest applicant be sent to the home of the prospective employer for an interview.

25 A.R. Selangor for 1890, C. 6576 (1892), p. 40.
26 Resident-General's Report for 1903.
27 For a detailed description of the *lanchut kechil*, see the section on tin mining, p. 167.
28 A.R. Perak for 1891; note by Massey-Leech, the Collector and Magistrate for Perak, C. 6858, pp. 15-16.
29 A.R. Perak for 1893, C. 7546, p. 7.
30 Wong Lin-Ken, 'The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914', unpublished thesis for the degree of Ph.D., University of London, 1959, p. 592.
31 *Ibid.* pp. 594-5.
32 *Ibid.* p. 608.
33 It is not known when exactly it was formed, but its membership included both European and Chinese miners.
34 *Malay Mail*, 3rd December 1897. The following is a summary of the memorial signed by J.C. Pasqual, Hon. Sec. of the Malay States Miners' Association.
35 *Ibid.*
36 4th December 1897.
37 Wong Lin-Ken, *op. cit.* p. 563.
38 Modified from Wong Lin-Ken, *op. cit.*, p. 564.
39 *Ibid.* pp. 614-15.
40 *Ibid.* p. 618.
41 B.C.G. Scott to Sir Ernest Satow, May 3, 1901, GD/C8.
42 *Straits Budget*, 6th July 1901.
43 *Straits Times*, 8th July 1901.
44 Annual Reports on the F.M.S., Cd. 1956 (1904) and Cd. 2246 (1905).
45 Resident-General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1906, Cd. 3741 (1908).
46 Taken from the Annual Reports on the F.M.S.
47 A.R., F.M.S. for 1906, Cd. 3471, p. 8.
48 A.R., F.M.S. for 1907, Cd. 4471, p. 7.
49 Wong Lin-Ken, *op. cit.* p. 667.
50 *Ibid.* pp. 668-9.
51 Resident-General's Report for 1903, Cd. 2243.
52 Minutes of the Conference of Rulers, July 1903; *Malay Mail*, 1st and 2nd October 1903.
53 *Ibid.*
54 Conference Minutes of the Methodist Mission, Coleman Street, Singapore, 1904, p. 32.
55 *Malaysia Message*, February 1904, p. 49.
56 *Ibid.* May 1909, p. 60.
57 A.R., F.M.S. for 1901, Cd. 1297, p. 25.
58 *Ibid.* p. 24.
59 *Ibid.* p. 25.
60 *Ibid.*
61 *Ibid.*

62 A.R., F.M.S. for 1909, CD. 5373: Special General Returns.
63 *Ibid.*
64 Labour Commission Report, 1890, p. 40.
65 N. Jagatheesan, 'Migration of Indian Labour into Malaya', unpublished thesis for the degree of B.A. Hons., University of Malaya, p. 20.
66 Labour Commission Report, 1890, p. 42.
67 Report of the Protector of Labour, F.M.S., 30th October 1901; published in the *Malay Mail*, 13th January 1902.
68 Jagatheesan, *op. cit.* pp. 24-6.
69 *Ibid.*
70 Labour Commission Report, 1890, p. 43.
71 *Ibid.*
72 Sir Charles Mitchell to the Secretary of State, 3rd and 10th August 1897, GD/C.
73 Report of the Protector of Labour, F.M.S., October 1901.
74 High Commissioner to the Resident-General, 31st August 1902.
75 Report of the Protector of Labour, F.M.S., October 1901.
76 *Ibid.*
77 A.R., F.M.S. for 1902 and 1903, Cd. 1819 and Cd. 2243 respectively.
78 *The Planter*, Kuala Lumpur, November 1920, pp. 67-8.
79 *Ibid.*
80 Governor's Report on the F.M.S. for 1904, Cd. 2777, p. 4.
81 *Malay Mail*, 26th August 1907.
82 *Ibid.* 7th September 1907.
83 *Ibid.*
84 Resident General's Report for 1906, Cd. 3741.
85 Chief Secretary's Report on the F.M.S. for 1910, Cd. 5902 (1911), p. 9.

4

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AGRICULTURE

UNTIL the introduction of coffee cultivation in the 1880's, agriculture in the Malay States had no commercial importance although the sugar industry in Province Wellesley and Penang became profitable after 1860. Tapioca grown by some Chinese farmers as a commercial crop made no important contribution to the economy and because its cultivation led to a rapid exhaustion of the soil the Government gave no encouragement to its spread. The commercially important crops were therefore confined to coffee, coconuts and rubber. Because rice-growing was the basic agricultural occupation of the Malays whose way of life may be said to revolve around the rice field, it was very important from the administrative point of view, but as an export industry it was insignificant.

Although the Chinese mining population provided a ready market for locally-grown rice, the Malays did not respond to this demand to any great extent. This may be explained by the traditionally self-sufficient, if poor, economy of the Malays who had no experience of commercial agriculture. Two other factors further hindered the development of Malay rice cultivation: the lack of reliable systems of irrigation and the absence of efficient agricultural implements. Until these two needs were supplied by the Government, there was no hope of improving the economic condition of the Malay farmer.

Traditional Malay agriculture was primitive and wasteful. In

Selangor, where the indigenous population had been very small, the total area of land under cultivation in 1884 was estimated at 14,000 acres, a considerable proportion of which was under wasteful periodical *ladang* cultivation. *Ladangs* were clearings in the forest where, after the trees and other vegetation had been felled and burned, various crops were planted, such as hill padi, maize, bananas, sugar cane and tapioca. These clearings were usually abandoned after two or three years when the soil showed signs of exhaustion, and new clearings were made, planted, and then abandoned in the same manner. This migratory system of cultivation was injurious to both forests and cultivators. Sporadic attempts were made by the Government to induce the Malays to settle permanently on the land by assisting them to plant coconuts and other permanent tree crops and by teaching them the elements of crop rotation.[1]

Fine padi land was plentiful in Selangor but it was badly cultivated as ploughs were practically unknown. Like the Chinese, immigrant Sumatrans and Javanese were at first attracted by tin, but when they found that Chinese competition was too much for them they turned to agriculture, with a preference for growing cash crops like pepper, gambier, tobacco, sago and coffee, rather than rice. Since 1882 Messrs. Hill and Rathbone had had extensive plantations near Kuala Lumpur where Liberian coffee, cocoa and tea were grown. Seeds and cuttings from their estates were periodically supplied to local farmers to induce them to take up some form of permanent agriculture.[2]

Commercial agriculture was also non-existent in Pahang, where the Malays generally grew only one crop of rice a year, sufficient for their own needs and a little to sell in return for clothes and other personal expenses. Whenever crops failed or were insufficient, they eked out a living by working on rattan, gutta percha and other jungle produce. The Resident of Pahang estimated that each adult male Malay consumed from 4 to 5 *pikuls* (approximately 500 to 600 lbs.) of rice a year, and an average Malay family would require 18 to 22 *pikuls* (2,400 to 3,000 lbs.) of rice a year. In favourable seasons the farmer would get 800 to 1,000 *gantangs* of padi or 20 to 25 *pikuls* of husked rice, thus leaving a small margin for sale after providing for the family. During bad years the yield could drop to as low as 250

gantangs (about 6½ *pikuls* of husked rice), and the farmer would then have to resort to maize or rice purchased from more fortunate neighbours or from Chinese dealers to whom they sold their jungle produce.[3]

In the 1890's there were three modes of planting in different parts of Pahang: planting in irrigated fields, in ploughed land, and hill or dry rice cultivation. In some parts of Pahang the swamps used for rice planting were natural but for the most part they were irrigated by artificial means. A combination of local farmers would be formed to bear the cost of building irrigation canals. Swamp rice yields the best crop but as it entails the most labour it was unpopular with many of the natives of Pahang. Hill or dry rice gives the smallest return, but since it requires little care after the rice is planted, it was the favourite method of planting among the Pahang Malays. As in other parts of Malaya where rice was grown, fresh clearings in Pahang were made every two or three years when the old clearings were abandoned. In the process large quantities of valuable timber were destroyed for the sake of a few pikuls of rice.[4]

The general efficiency of rice cultivation in Pahang may be judged from a description of the agricultural implements used by the farmers:

> The implements employed are most primitive and inefficient. The plough used is a clumsy wooded instrument which barely succeeds in scratching the surface of the soil; no harrow is used, and the *tuei*, which is almost universally used for the purpose of reaping, is an instrument which is only capable of cutting from two to four ears at a time, thus rendering the process of reaping peculiarly tedious. In some parts of Pahang Malays who have migrated from Sumatra have introduced an implement called a *sabit*, which more nearly resembles the European reaping hook, and which is a great improvement on the *tuei*. The Malays of Pahang, however, dislike innovations of any kind, and are slow to adopt improved agricultural implements or modes of agriculture which differ from those employed by their fathers before them.[5]

Practically no precautions were taken to protect their crops which were regularly damaged by wild pigs, field mice and a large species of bat called *kelasan* by the Malays. To ward off wild pigs native farmers used a charm called *tangkal babi*, which

consisted of a line hung upon upright bamboo poles, under which it was piously supposed that no wild pig would pass. Against rats, mice and bats no precautions were taken other than certain incantations and magic ceremonies which were supposed to protect the crops from these vermin.

Ignorance about seed improvement was general; seed from one year's crop was used for the next, and successive crop failures were thus often due to poor seed. With the absence of crop rotation the soil was progressively exhausted and the standard of agriculture steadily deteriorated to a low level. It was clear that rice cultivation in all parts of the Malay States called for the serious attention of the Government, but in the absence of a department of agriculture or officers specially trained to assist local farmers, little could be done to improve Malay agriculture.[6]

While rice cultivation was marked by a general poverty of methods and production, the sugar plantations thrived in the Krian district of Perak and in Province Wellesley. In 1886 sugar exports from Perak were valued at $180,000. The European-owned Gula Estate had over 850 acres and Chinese planters had over 6,000 acres under sugar.[7]

The Krian district was originally populated by Malay rice farmers, but the lack of drinking water and an irrigation system forced them to abandon large tracts of land which sugar growers subsequently acquired for their plantations. Of all agricultural occupations, rice-growing was considered the most suitable for Malays, but the Government could not afford much money to open up agricultural land with roads and initiate schemes for irrigation and drainage when most of its revenue was tied up in railways.[8] Government assistance did not always ensure the success of farmers, for in Selangor much of the land opened by foreign Malays with Government help was either deserted or totally neglected. The District Officer thought it was hopeless to expect such immigrants to live by agriculture alone for several years after their arrival, unless they had seasonal work of some kind to supplement their income.[9]

With the rapid development of the Malay States, rice production fell far short of the needs of the growing population, and both the Perak and Selangor Residents were anxious to see more land opened for the growing of rice, but unless native farmers were assisted by comprehensive Government irrigation schemes

there would be no hope at all of increasing rice production.

Krian appeared to be the natural rice bowl of Perak. In 1892 there were 37,000 acres of land under rice, but it suffered from the disadvantage of being a hot-bed of plague due to periodic drought. In 1889 an attempt was made to start an irrigation scheme there, but the question was variously discussed as a drinking-water scheme with a land irrigation project, and vice versa. During the following years various schemes were proposed, but since Perak had no funds to undertake such a large scheme by herself, the project was postponed. Part of the difficulty of Krian was the migratory nature of the rice growers who were mainly foreign Malays. E.W. Birch,[10] Resident for Perak in 1893, saw that these cultivators would never be permanent settlers until they could be assured of regular crops and of a supply of potable water. As a result of Birch's representations the Governor obtained from India an irrigation expert who, after a survey, strongly recommended an irrigation scheme for Krian. Shortage of funds, however, again prevented any large-scale undertaking, but as a temporary measure more than 100 miles of agricultural drains were cut between 1890 and 1896 at a cost of $122,172. The lack of any control over the actual irrigation meant that these drains were not of much use, for the irregular nature of the rainfall seriously interfered with the rice harvests.[11] The following table[12] shows how the trade returns of Krian were affected by the harvests of 1894 and 1895.

EXPORTS

	Bushels	
	1894	*1895*
Rice	51,379	2,038
Padi	540,373	53,686
Total	591,752	55,724

Decrease 536,028 bushels

IMPORTS

	Bushels	
	1894	*1895*
Rice	3,170	4,670
Padi	1,342	9,219
Total	4,512	13,889

Increase 9,377 bushels

The value of exports decreased by $339,102 and of imports increased by $61,025.

In 1896 a $400,000 scheme was put in hand to irrigate 50,000 acres of rice land in Krian.[13] By the following year the detailed estimates were more than $850,000; work on the scheme was

finally under way in 1898. For over eight years the Krian irrigation scheme advanced slowly and at last in August 1906, it was formally opened. It had cost the Government $1,600,000. The reservoir covered an area of 10 square miles, capable of holding up to 1,500 million cubic feet of water. The spill weir, 635 feet long, was capable of discharging 6¾ million cubic feet of water per minute. The main irrigation canal was 21 miles long, with 15 miles of branch canals and 140 miles of distributary channels. Besides irrigating 70,000 acres of land, the reservoir also provided the district with a good supply of potable water.[14] At the same time a small experimental farm was established in Krian to devise ways and means of improving traditional methods of cultivation by introducing new varieties of rice and improving grain by hybridization. Elsewhere in Malaya, particularly around Kuala Selangor, irrigation works were undertaken by the Government to assist all rice farmers, but by far the largest and most ambitious was the Krian scheme which turned the district into one of Malaya's rice bowls.

Scattered over different parts of Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan were plantations producing varying quantities of pepper, gambier, tapioca and sugar, but as an export industry sugar was the most important, and although hampered by periodic labour shortage, the sugar plantations prospered.

SUGAR EXPORTS FROM PERAK[15]

Year	*Pikuls*	*Value*
1898	274,720	$1,214,701
1899	276,689	$1,282,237
1900	278,156	$1,315,974
1901	343,881	$1,500,000
1902	no data	$1,588,790
1903	no data	$1,807,679

From 1905 sugar production declined owing to severe competition from Java and the growing attractiveness of rubber, in favour of which planters were abandoning the sugar cane. By 1910 rubber had completely eclipsed sugar and other agricultural products in economic importance, and the last sugar factory closed down in 1913.[16]

Coffee was first introduced into Malaya about 1882 by a few planters from Ceylon where they had been growing it success-

fully until the industry was destroyed by plant disease. The cultivation of coffee had flourished in Ceylon for nearly 100 years until 1869 when a fungoid disease (*Hemileia vestatrix*) related to wheat rust first made its appearance in the coffee trees. Within a few years the disease practically wiped out all the trees in the country.[17]

Ceylon planters who arrived in Malaya to try their luck again experimented with different varieties of coffee before deciding on Liberian coffee as the most suitable under Malayan climatic conditions. Although as a beverage Liberian coffee is inferior to Arabian, it has two important advantages in Malaya. It is more hardy than its Arabian relative and thrives well in strong sunlight. Its ripened fruit do not fall from the trees, so that picking can be delayed at the planter's convenience.[18]

Coffee planters settled mainly in Selangor where the Government since 1884 had waived all quit-rent on agricultural holdings for the first three years of cultivation in order to induce people to take up agriculture. The actual rent received from land was not worth consideration when compared with the importance of securing population, drainage and cultivation of the land. The Government's aim was to see a thriving agricultural population producing not only for local needs but also crops like coffee, pepper, gambier and tea for export. By 1887 Liberian coffee was pronounced a success and its cultivation spread to Perak and Negri Sembilan. So anxious was the Government to see the coffee industry established that it lent sums varying from $2,000 to $40,000 to substantial planters on condition that they provided an equal sum to be used in opening plantations.[19] At the same time as these large European owned estates were opening up, Malays and Javanese were also clearing land for coffee. In Perak and Selangor the policy of the Government was to direct planters to the coastal districts as much as possible, leaving the inland areas free for tin miners, since tin deposits were seldom found to be payable except within a few miles of the hills, although it was probable that planting land in the latter was as rich as in the former districts. Planting being a permanent occupation, it was important that it should not be disturbed by mining which involved the destruction of the surface soil.[20]

The coffee industry by 1895 was enjoying a boom and agriculture in Selangor was almost exclusively devoted to Liberian

coffee.[21] But while planters were blissfully tending their coffee trees and making plans to extend their operations, events in South America were to shatter all their dreams.

The world demand for coffee had been rising steadily all through the nineteenth century, and consumption in the United States particularly was increasing rapidly. A wonderfully fertile soil and cheap imported European labour kept the Brazilian coffee industry flourishing. Easy profits led to increased investment and careless methods. While the world drank coffee, Brazilian planters were drunk with prosperity. Between 1890 and 1896 nearly all the three million inhabitants of Sao Paulo, Brazil's largest coffee producing region, 'entirely gave up planting corn, rice, beans, everything they needed . . . coffee was so immensely profitable that they put all their labour in coffee'.[22]

From 1894 the coffee market was over-stocked. Brazil's production for 1894-5 was placed at more than 6½ million bags, and after 1895 the price of coffee declined. By this time Sao Paulo's new coffee trees were coming into bearing, and prices fell sharply. An outbreak of bubonic plague in Brazil in 1899-1900 temporarily halted the downward plunge of prices, but from 1901 huge crops became a regular feature in Brazil. Fifteen million bags were produced in 1901-2, and the following year 20 million bags. As a result the world's coffee trade was completely demoralized for many years.[23]

The repercussions of Brazil's over-production were immediate in Malaya. The price of Liberian coffee, which had never been in great demand anyway, fell so low that the whole future of the Malayan coffee industry was over-clouded. Small-scale planters had to abandon their estates. To those planters from Ceylon it looked as if Fate was playing a practical joke. Many who had no alternative desperately hung on to their estates, hoping for better times. The Government was as badly affected as the planters, for people like Swettenham, Maxwell and Rodger had done everything to nurse the coffee industry, and the planters' ruin was the Government's loss. Bravely trying to put heart into the demoralized planter, Swettenham declared, 'Looking at the price which has to be paid for very indifferent coffee in Europe (or at any rate in England) I cannot believe that there is yet serious cause to doubt that the cultivation of Liberian coffee in the Malay States can be made a profitable venture.'[24]

If Swettenham had seen what was happening in Sao Paulo he would not have been so hopeful. As if to convince planters and the Government of the futility of coffee as an agricultural industry, an omen appeared in the form of a caterpillar which multiplied by the thousand and attacked the coffee trees.[25] The price of coffee in January 1897 was $31.50 per *pikul*, but by the end of the year it stood at $22.50; in 1901 it was $18.29. When the price fell below $19 per *pikul* the Government decided to suspend the export duty on coffee. Coffee trees which had been planted during the boom years were coming into bearing at the close of the century, and although there was practically no profit, planters continued to export coffee to recoup some of their capital.

COFFEE EXPORTS FROM THE F.M.S.[26]

	1898 *Pikuls*	1899 *Pikuls*	1900 *Pikuls*
Selangor	22,948	26,407	34,295
Negri Sembilan	3,163	4,541	6,199
Perak	2,837	932	4,269
	28,948	31,880	44,763

The slight increase in exports in 1900 was due to a small rise in the price of coffee (bubonic plague in Brazil temporarily stopped exports and halted the downward plunge of prices), but from 1901 prices fell steeply until in 1903 it reached the lowest level. Liberian coffee was completely out of favour with planters who turned to coconuts and rubber to recoup their losses. In 1907 there were still about 10,000 acres under coffee but two years later there were less than 5,000 acres. From 1905 the coffee industry in Malaya ceased to be of any economic importance.

Coconuts as a commercial crop became important from about 1890 and discerning planters had cautiously put in a few acres of coconuts in their plantations as a possible second string to their coffee. As it required very little care, coconut growing became a favourite with local farmers. One of the first Europeans to start coconut planting on a large scale was a German merchant of Singapore by the name of R. Engler who took up land near Port Dickson in 1896. In the same year a factory set up by the Coconut Planting and Oil Manufacturing Company in Kuala Selangor

gave added incentive to coconut cultivation.[27] Acreage under coconuts increased in proportion to the decline of coffee planting. In 1902 the Malay States exported 20 million coconuts and by 1905 the Federated Malay States had about 100,000 acres under coconuts, valued at $17½ millions.[28] The value of copra exported in 1907 was $452,270 and in 1908 it was $462,870.[29] By 1909 the Federated Malay States had 250,000 acres of coconut plantations valued at $25 millions. Since that time the coconut industry has been an important diversification in Malayan agriculture.

If South America destroyed Malaya's young coffee industry, she also ultimately proved to be Malaya's salvation by providing the seeds of *Hevea brasiliensis* which has transformed the landscape of Malaya and revolutionized her economy. Few agricultural crops in the history of mankind have been as spectacular as cultivated rubber has been in economic opportunity. It was an opportunity that came perhaps once in a thousand years: 'As the rubber industry was one of the greatest achievements of Western colonial enterprise, so it was one of the last. The political and economic conditions which made such a vast undertaking possible have passed away. . . .'[30]

The successful introduction of rubber into Malaya as a commercial crop depended on a combination of many complex factors. The latter part of the nineteenth century, which witnessed the European scramble for underdeveloped countries, was a period when scientists and civil servants were ever on the lookout for new agricultural products which could be a source of economic power for their own metropolitan Government. Equally important were enterprising businessmen 'responsive to the goad of misfortune and the magnet of opportunity', and merchants who had acquired 'experience in world-wide commerce and in primary production in the tropics, and established merchant firms with prestige gained in the colonial territories and connections with highly organised capital markets at home'.[31] The large plantations which required thousands of cheap labourers would not have been possible but for the fact that at the crucial stage of starting the industry the flow of immigrants from China and India was not only unrestricted but actually assisted by the Government. A stable and financially sound Government, an ever expanding system of communication by road and rail, a currency as reliable as gold and a handful of men with a vision

were some of the decisive factors in the establishment of the rubber industry in Malaya.

The Marquess of Salisbury, then Secretary of State for India, has been credited with the initiation of rubber growing in the British Empire. At the instance of Salisbury, Sir Joseph Hooker, the Director of Kew Gardens, London, arranged in 1873 for a certain James Collins (afterwards Government Botanist in Singapore) to obtain seeds of Para rubber from Brazil.The seeds were duly obtained and sent back to Kew where about a dozen plants were raised. Six of these plants were sent to Calcutta but they died as the climate there did not suit them.

At this stage Hooker commissioned Henry Wickham, a traveller and planter in Central America, to take some seeds back to England. After a series of happy coincidences some 70,000 seeds arrived in Liverpool on 14th June 1876. Only 4 per cent of the 70,000 seeds germinated when planted. Of about 2,800 plants raised at Kew, over 1,000 were sent to Ceylon. In August 1876 about fifty plants were sent to the newly founded Botanic Gardens in Singapore, but all the plants died on the way. In the following year two more cases of plants were sent to Singapore, from which a number were sent to Sir Hugh Low, then Resident of Perak. Coming from a distinguished family of botanists, Sir Hugh Low during his long years of service in Sarawak had spent much time studying the flora of Borneo, and when he arrived in Perak in 1877, one of the first things he did was to start an experimental garden at the Residency where all kinds of plants and trees were tried out. Seven rubber plants arrived safely in Kuala Kangsar where they were carefully planted in the Residency gardens at Sir Hugh Low's direction. These trees, together with those planted in Singapore, were the parents of the millions of trees which were subsequently planted in the estates in the Malay Peninsula.[2]

From 1882 the Para trees planted at Kuala Kangsar began to seed and the seeds were sent to Singapore, Java, Ceylon and India. Experiments were made to try out the Para trees on various types of soil. They were planted in Taiping, Parit Buntar, Tapah, Batu Gajah, Kinta and Sitiawan on waste mining land, on rich alluvium, on sandy soil with a high salt content and in swamps: the plants were found to thrive under all conditions. When the hardiness of the Para tree was established, experiments began

with planting them in rows or groups and with the best method of tapping the latex. In 1888 it happened that a man of imagination and great firmness of purpose, Henry Ridley, was appointed Director of the Botanic Gardens, Singapore. The biggest obstacle to growing rubber on a large scale was the lack of knowledge of the most economic method of tapping the trees. Encouraged by Sir Joseph Hooker of Kew Gardens, Ridley devoted himself whole-heartedly to the business of launching the rubber industry. Soon after his arrival in Singapore, he began experiments with tapping both in Singapore and at the Residency Gardens in Kuala Kangsar. At last in 1897 he devised the 'herring bone' method of tapping by which latex was obtained without damaging too much the bast of the tree. This removed one of the obstacles to large scale rubber cultivation.[33]

Ridley had the zeal of a salesman convinced of the soundness of the product he was anxious to sell. He went about the country to persuade sceptical planters to take up the new crop. He had the habit of stuffing seeds into the pockets of planters, begging them to make a trial planting. Amongst planters he earned the soubriquet of 'Mad Ridley' or 'Rubber Ridley'.[34] As late as 1893 his importunities were met by rebuffs from planters, one of whom, an ardent believer in coffee, brushed Ridley off with the statement that he had plenty of Para trees and they were of no use.[35] Although it was Government policy to encourage planters to take up land for agriculture, the Governor, Sir Charles Mitchell of the 'economic soul', was singularly unenterprising. In a fit of impatience the Governor ordered Ridley to stop growing 'exotic' plants and, to test Ridley's claims that these trees produced rubber, Mitchell (according to Ridley) sent Dyak climbers up some of the rubber trees planted near the Residency to look for rubber and when they descended empty-handed he had the trees destroyed and triumphantly announced in the Government Gazette that the Para trees did not produce rubber.[36]

Rubber planting had no attractions so long as coffee fetched a good price. The world demand for rubber before the invention of the motor-car could be supplied from wild rubber. The discovery of extensive areas producing *Landolphias* and *Funtumias* in Africa kept the price of rubber down, but at the same time it was clear that this supply, mainly from *Landolphias* which were destroyed in taking the rubber, could not last for more than a

few years. When this source of supply was cut off, wild rubber would be insufficient to meet world demand, and the supply from South America was showing signs of decreasing.[37]

In the Federated Malay States large-scale planting did not take place until 1896 or 1897 when the falling price of coffee forced planters to inter-plant their estates with rubber. The depression of the coffee market coincided with the rise of the motor-car industry. Amongst the European pioneers in the rubber industry were two brothers by the name of Kindersley who, in 1896, planted the first rubber estate in Malaya with seeds obtained from Ridley. In the Straits Settlements Tan Chay Yan, a Chinese planter in Malacca, was the first to grow rubber systematically.[38]

When the future of coffee looked as dark as the beverage, planters in desperation turned to rubber. It was the hour of triumph for Ridley. In 1898 the Government experimental gardens in Perak sold 32,000 seeds and nearly 60,000 seedlings. At the turn of the century the Selangor Planters' Association ventured to predict: 'We think there can be no doubt that a paying future is before the industry, and that ultimately the Malay Peninsula will oust Brazil from her present position as the premier rubber-producing country of the world. This is a bold forecast, but not an unreasonable one.'[39]

At the experimental stage the rubber planted was not all the Para variety (*Hevea brasiliensis*); Rambong (*Ficus elastica*), Castilloa and Caera rubber were also grown. Castilloa requires well-drained hilly regions, and Caera thrives only on sandy soil. Rambong and Para require continuous rainfall all through the year. The Malayan soil and climate were therefore best suited to Rambong and Para, but since the yield of Rambong was irregular its cultivation was abandoned and Para became the sole plantation rubber. By 1902 land under rubber was approximately 16,000 acres. Three years later there were more than 100,000 acres, and by 1909 nearly 200,000 acres.

ACRES UNDER RUBBER CULTIVATION IN THE F.M.S.

	1907	1908	1909
Perak	46,167	56,706	68,278
Selangor	61,552	82,246	93,853
Negri Sembilan	17,656	27,305	31,945
Pahang	860	1,791	2,877
Total	126,235	168,048	196,953

PRODUCTS UNDER CULTIVATION IN THE F.M.S.

	1907	1908	1909
	Acres	*Acres*	*Acres*
Coconuts	112,560	118,697	123,815
Rubber	126,235	168,048	196,953
Coffee	10,833	8,431	5,885
Rice	107,143	no data	no data
Other crops	12,135	24,546	26,736
Total	368,906	319,722	353,389

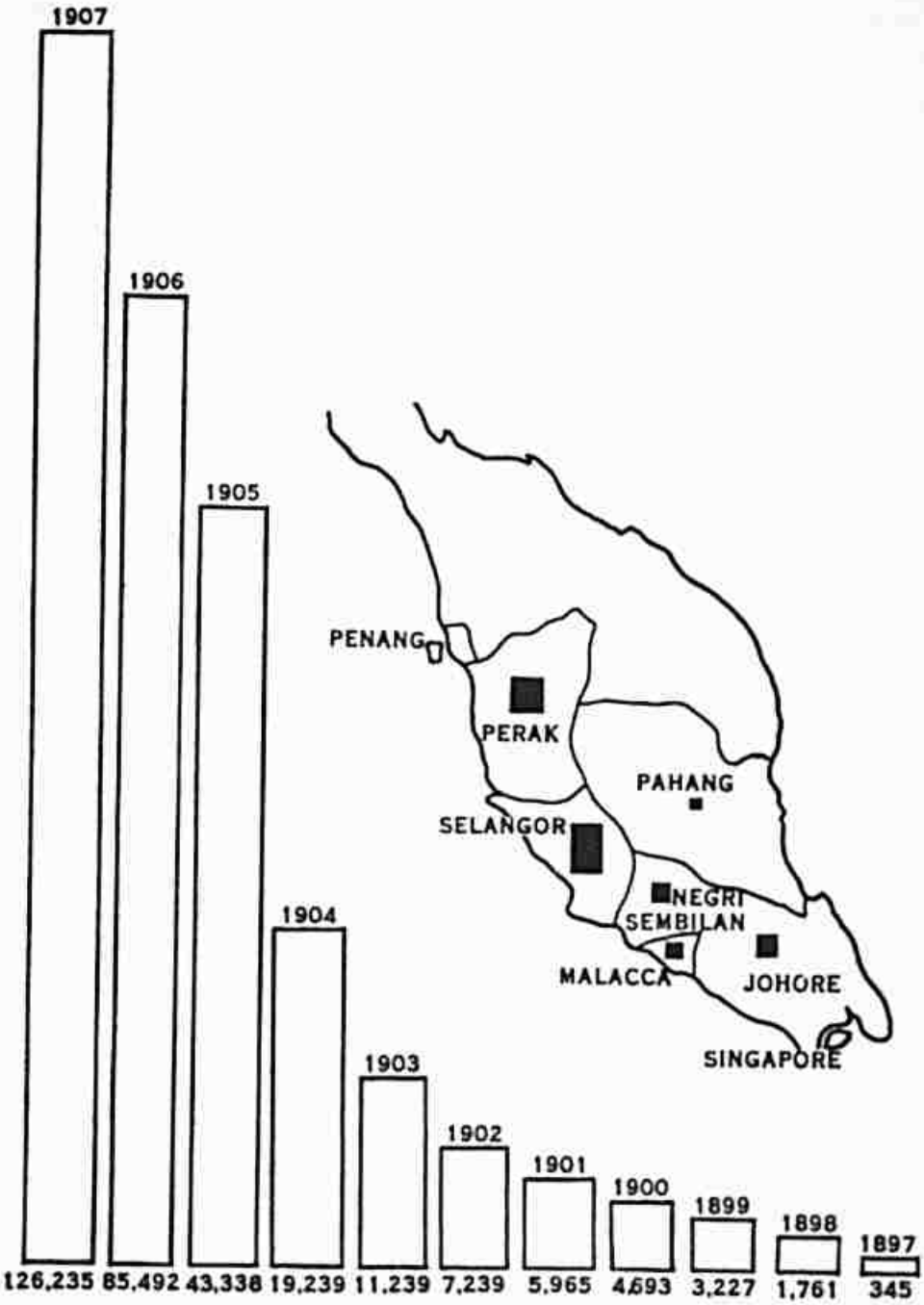
The first consignment of cultivated rubber arrived in London in 1900: 327 lbs. of Para rubber fetched 3*s.* 10*d.* per lb., and 23 lbs. of scrap rubber were sold at 2*s.* 6*d.* per lb. In 1905 Government revenue from rubber exported (1½ per cent *ad valorem* but from 1906 2½ per cent) was $8,508.

RUBBER EXPORTS

Year	*Tons*	*Export Duty (in $)*
1906	432	50,023
1907	905	97,752
1908	1,402	113,981
1909	2,698	360,055

The experience with coffee cultivation gave rise to fears of over-production of rubber just when the boom had set in. As the average price of rubber for 1906 was over 5*s.* a pound and the cost of putting dry rubber on the market was between 1*s.* and 1*s.* 3*d.* per lb., the profits were thought to be too good to last.

At the turn of the century the world's supply of rubber was made up of 63 per cent from South America, 34 per cent from Africa and 3 per cent from Asia. Malaya's contribution in 1906 was a mere ½ per cent. It was estimated that the United Kingdom in 1907 used some £25 millions worth of rubber. Apart from Britain's priority for Empire products, it was important to ensure a stable supply, and in this the cultivated rubber had the advantage over the wild variety. There was really no such thing as a virgin forest of wild rubber in the Amazon jungles. It was the difficulty of finding the right tree in the right place that made the collection of wild rubber a far more uncertain source of profit than the skilled cultivation of trees planted in an orderly arrangement.[40]



RELATIVE AREAS OF RUBBER PLANTED IN MALAYA IN 1907

When cultivated rubber was first brought on the market there were marked differences in price between plantation rubber and Para rubber from South America. Thus the valuations of the early sample lots of plantation rubber sent to London were lower than they should have been, mainly because the valuers were under the impression that they were merely the improved form of wild jungle rubber and did not realize that they were cultivated Para rubber.[41] But manufacturers found that the Para rubber from South America had greater vulcanization speed and was more uniform in its qualities. To determine whether the differences were a result of changed environmental conditions or were purely a matter of processing, both Brazilian and plantation rubber were subjected to exhaustive tests as to their physical, chemical and technological properties in specially-built laboratories in Holland and in England. The investigations proved that the environmental conditions prevailing in South-East Asia were not responsible for the differences in quality. There were no differences in their intrinsic properties, but the differing methods of processing used for the plantation and Brazilian products were the cause of the differences.[42]

About the same time that these facts were known, organic catalysts were discovered, by means of which any desired vulcanization speed could be given to the rubber. Moreover, the minute quantities added did not alter rubber properties as had the inorganic catalysts used previously. Thus plantation rubber became the more desirable of the two products owing to its higher purity and lower subsequent loss during processsing. The discovery of organic catalysts together with plentiful cheap labour enabled plantation rubber to win an overwhelming proportion of the world market within a very short period.[43]

With the rapid expansion of the motor-car industry which demanded a regular supply of rubber, vast prospects were opened to plantation rubber. One major problem that planters had to face was that, since the rubber trees took an average of seven years to mature before tapping could begin, the supply was highly inelastic. Consequently the price of rubber rose steeply from about 4*s.* a lb. in the beginning of the century to over 12*s.* in 1910 at the peak of the boom. The average cost of bringing an acre of rubber into bearing was £23; seven years after planting an annual output of 250 lbs. an acre could be expected, and after

10 years 375 lbs. an acre. At current prices, a highly profitable field of investment was opened up. The Petaling Rubber Estates Syndicate, floated in 1903 with an issued capital of £22,500, paid a dividend of 45 per cent in 1908, and 325 per cent in 1910.[44]

Capital invested in rubber came from the United Kingdom, India and Malaya itself. By 1907 there were 52 sterling companies managing 81 estates at a subscribed capital of £2,516,834 with 153,000 acres of land alienated and 36,000 acres planted. Another group of 14 companies controlling 12 estates had a total capital of Rs.5,375,000 with 16,500 acres of land alienated and 5,500 planted. There were 31 Malayan companies managing 38 estates at a capital of over $2½ millions with 56,000 acres of land alienated and 13,000 acres planted.[45]

At the end of 1907 the rubber acreage in the Malay Peninsula increased by 46 per cent to a total of 179,227 acres. The number of trees planted was estimated at 27,558,400. The output of dry rubber increased by 144 per cent and 1,017 tons were exported, as against 417 tons in 1906.

RUBBER STATISTICS, F.M.S., 1907[46]

	Selangor	*Perak*	*N. Sembilan*	*Pahang*	*Total*
No. of estates	124	114	34	15	287
Acreage in possession	194,183	141,032	59,631	17,364	412,210
Acreage planted up to Dec. 1907	61,552	46,167	17,656	860	126,235
Acreage planted during 1907	19,135	16,050	4,945	193	40,743
No. of trees up to Dec. 1907	9,648,093	6,648,957	3,165,388	166,590	19,628,957

RUBBER STATISTICS, MALAYA, 1907

	F.M.S.	*S.S. & Kedah*	*Johore*	*Total*
No. of estates	287	65	13	365
Acreage in possession	412,210	116,549	96,849	625,608
Acreage planted up to Dec. 1907	126,235	42,866	10,126	179,227
Acreage planted during 1907	40,473	9,344	5,764	55,581
No. of trees, Dec. 1907	19,628,957	6,787,216	1,142,196	27,558,369

The Federated Malay States at the end of 1907 had a total of 126,235 acres of rubber. The output of dry rubber in 1906 was

459 tons, and in 1907 it was 885 tons, an increase of 93 per cent.

The merchant houses of Singapore, which hitherto had been concerned mainly with trade, now had a unique opportunity of taking part in the development of a primary industry in the Malay States. As established and trusted institutions whose commercial connexions linked them with the great capital markets of the East and West, these merchant houses were able to call upon the resources of capitalists in London and Shanghai to finance the new industry and thus they became the links between the rubber plantations in Malaya and the investors overseas. It was soon clear to those interested in rubber that to obtain the maximum profits estates must be worked under larger and larger economic units. This gave rise to the practice of individual planters or small proprietary companies enlisting the support of one of the Straits merchant houses in floating a new company in London 'with an enlarged capitalisation made up partly of proprietor's shares, partly of the investments of the merchant house itself, and partly of the subscriptions of the public or London financial houses'.[47] Two of these merchant houses were Guthrie and Harrisons & Crosfield, which in addition to supplying capital to estates often acted as secretaries to companies floated in London and provided technical advice through the medium of visiting agents.[48] Thus British capital investment began to revolutionize the economy of Malaya more than thirty years after the establishment of British control in the Malay States.

The establishment of joint stock companies controlling agricultural plantations run by paid managers for the benefit of absentee shareholders was not the aim of the Government, whose policy had always been in favour of the growth of a resident community of planters and farmers, both European and Asian. From 1904, however, there was a definite bias in favour of European planters for whose benefit Sir John Anderson gave 6,000 free tickets annually for the recruitment of Tamil immigrant labour. At the same time the Governor set up a loan fund to assist in maintaining existing cultivation on those plantations which had run out of funds, since to allow such estates to close down would injure both the Government and the rubber industry as a whole. Private financiers who advanced loans to planters usually charged interest from 9 per cent to 12 per cent or even more, and in some special cases Residents in Selangor and Perak

had made loans to planters from State funds. While approving the principle that the State should assist *bona fide* planters, Sir John Anderson thought that the power to do so should be properly regulated, and he approved an arrangement whereby advances to a total limit of $500,000 should be made on first mortgage of estates at 6 per cent with an addition of ½ per cent to cover the costs of administration and inspection.[49]

Contrary to expectation, there was no rush for that half million dollars. This was partly because planters did not think that the Governor was in earnest when he said the money was there for the asking, provided they gave good security, and partly because some planters preferred to get their loans from the merchant houses in Singapore. Some privately owned estates were turned into public companies, with the British public holding most of the shares. But when funds were not so readily available in London or Singapore, planters finally called on the Government's $500,000, and in a short time the Government had advanced a total of $1,500,000 to planters. The question then arose whether the Government was to continue as a money-lender and where it was to stop. It had to consider carefully the fact that the loans were to a large extent going, not to those who could be described as resident planters, the class of planters which the Government wished to see settled in the country, but to those who took up planting as a speculation and wanted a loan to save the speculation until they were able to place it on the market at a profit. Since it was no function of the Government to assist speculation of this kind, it decided to restrict loans to those for whom they were intended, the resident planters.[50]

To assist Malay farmers a similar loan fund, on a smaller scale, was set up by the Government in 1908. The amount set aside in each State was not to exceed $25,000. Ordinarily no loan might exceed $500 and the total amount lent to any one farmer at any time should not exceed $1,000. The rate of interest charged was ½ per cent per month and the term for loans was not to exceed three years. Repayment of principal and interest would be made by thirty-six monthly instalments of $3.13 for every $100, paid regularly and consecutively. The success of the fund varied in the States according to the character of the local farmers and, to some extent, the point of view of the District Officer. A total of 202 farmers in three States received loans during 1908: Perak

advanced $19,627, Negri Sembilan $15,629 and Selangor $2,500. No loans were made in Pahang.[51]

Within the limits approved for each State and subject to rules drawn up for their guidance, the loans were authorized by Residents mainly for agricultural purposes, such as irrigation, purchase of cattle, seed and implements, cutting drains, building houses and generally for the improvement of land. No specific encouragement was given to Malay farmers to take up rubber cultivation, for experience with the coffee industry in Selangor had shown that Malay farmers who had little or no capital could not undertake an enterprise which required clearing the forest, planting the crop and waiting a period of years before the harvest was gathered. As rubber required a wait of seven years after planting for the first tapping to be made, only those with a substantial capital could undertake its cultivation. The era of smallholders was yet to come.

At the close of the first decade of the twentieth century the foundations of a great new industry had been laid. The endless possibilities of the economic uses of rubber, the rapidly expanding motor-car industry, the ideal climatic conditions which few other countries in the world could offer the Para tree, and the whole political and economic milieu of the time, ensured the future prosperity of the rubber industry which in turn greatly assisted the development of the country.

TIN MINING

One of the special objects of the Residential system was 'to initiate a sound system of taxation, with the consequent development of the country, and the supervision and collection of the revenue so as to ensure the receipt of funds necessary to carry out the principal engagements of the Government and to pay for the cost of the British officers and whatever establishments may be necessary to support them'.[52] With the assumption of political control the British took over the liabilities of the States: the debts of the Viceroy of Selangor incurred during the civil war in that State; the cost of the Sungei Ujong War; and the cost of the punitive expedition in Perak after the murder of Birch, the last amounting to $715,474. Apart from having to pay off these war debts, the British Residents had to raise money for the Civil List, the general charges of administration and allowances for a long

list of Malay chiefs and *penghulus*, all of which made the Residents' early days 'a perpetual nightmare, a ceaseless struggle to make bricks without straw'.[53]

The nightmare soon gave place to a dream come true: the success of British rule in Malaya was due almost entirely to a thriving tin industry. From the export duty on tin the Government derived the bulk of its revenue to pay for the Civil List and general administrative charges, for an expensive road and railway system, for schools and medical services, and for numerous other public works which made for stable and efficient government.

For centuries Malaya had produced tin and gold, the latter metal giving the country the name of the Golden Chersonese. Malacca had a tin coinage when d'Albuquerque conquered it in 1511, but as the Portuguese were interested mainly in spices and the propagation of the Christian faith, they paid little attention to tin. The Dutch who ousted the Portuguese from Malacca in 1641 were slightly more enterprising; but although they set up trading stations at the mouths of the Perak and Selangor Rivers to collect tin, they made little attempt at controlling the actual mining of the metal which, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, was done mainly by Malay miners.

In the course of the nineteenth century when the country was subjected more and more to civil war, the production of tin declined. Amidst the general anarchy prevailing the Malays found little incentive to produce any tin which might be seized by their rivals or enemies, and the Malay mining industry gradually died out. When tin was discovered in Larut in the 1840's Chinese labourers were imported to work the mines and soon they assumed virtual control of tin production. By the middle of the century hundreds of Chinese were braving disease and the unknown terrors of the Malayan jungle to search for tin in the interior of Perak and Selangor. Taiping and Kuala Lumpur became the centres of intensive mining activities.

After a promising start the tin industry was caught up in the toils of civil strife, and the quarrels amongst the Chinese miners and the feuds amongst the Malay chiefs became entangled with one another. The subsequent wars of attrition devastated the country and destroyed most of the mines. But even at the peak of the civil war in 1872 Larut had an annual output of 1,700 tons

of tin valued at £70,000 at prices then prevailing. Kuala Lumpur in the same period produced about 2,000 tons per annum worth about £80,000. Output in Sungei Ujong and Kinta was estimated at 1,000 tons per annum each.[54]

Shortly after the Pangkor Engagement the Larut mines were reopened, and in 1876 Larut alone provided more than three-quarters of the total revenue of Perak, which amounted to $273,043.[55] About the same time the mines in Selangor were re-established and Kuala Lumpur was rebuilt by Capitan Yap Ah Loy, the ally of the Viceroy of Selangor who with him had fought against their Chinese and Malay enemies.[56] The administrative centre of Selangor had been in the royal township of Klang, but as Kuala Lumpur became more important the British in 1880 moved the Residency to Yap Ah Loy's shanty town.

As the price of tin rose sharply around 1880, more Chinese poured into Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan, and tin production increased correspondingly. Government revenue from the three States in 1875 amounted to 408,356 Mexican dollars, or about £81,000. Ten years later it was $2,208,709 and Government expenditure amounted to $2,261,954.[57] War debts incurred by Perak were completely settled by 1883.

Until the 1880's tin production in Malaya was purely a Chinese monopoly, although of the 978 mines registered in 1890 in Perak covering more than 16,000 acres, 233 were held in traditional fashion by Malay chiefs who leased their mines to the Chinese on the tribute system.[58] The earliest Europeans to break this monopoly were the French who in 1882 started operations in Kinta.[59] In 1884 Sir Hugh Low reported that British capitalists, with the exception of a few enterprising merchants from Shanghai, had 'done little or nothing in Perak; a feeble commencement only being yet apparent on the part of two concessionaries from Australia' (one of which was the Melbourne Tin Mining Company), to whom large grants of mining land were given. Swettenham himself complained that British capitalists 'declined to risk even small sums in the Malay States till years after the enterprise and industry of the Chinese had established and developed the mines'.[60] Nothing much was heard about the Australian concession in Kinta and it may be presumed that it failed. The French company, mentioned earlier, was more successful and later became the Société des Etains de Kinta. Two British miners,

Messrs. Pike and Osborne, started a company in Gopeng (Kinta) in 1892 for a syndicate of Cornwall miners; the company later became known as the Gopeng Consolidated Limited. (Osborne was later joined by W.R.H. Chappel, forming the leading firm of mining and consulting engineers in Malaya—Osborne and Chappel.) On the whole, European companies started before 1910 failed because they were weighted down by the cost of a European staff, expensive equipment and heavy payments to promoters. The reasons for the European miner's lack of success are best explained by Swettenham himself:

> European mining is done by companies, and company's money is almost like government money. It is not of too much account because it seems to belong to no one in particular and is given by Providence for the support of deserving expert and often travelled individuals. Several of these are necessary to start a European mining venture and they are mostly engaged long before they are wanted. There is the manager and the sub-manager, the accountant, the engineer, the smelter. . . . Machinery is bought, houses are built, in fact the capital of the company is spent . . . and then—if ever things get so far—some Chinese are employed on wages or contract, the former for choice, to remove the overburden. After possibly a series of great hardships to the staff and disasters to the company, it is found that the tin raised is infinitesimal in value when compared with the rate of expenditure, and that the longer the work goes on the greater will be the losses. This is usually discovered when the paid-up capital is all but exhausted. The company is wound up and the State gets a bad name with investors, and the only people who really enjoy themselves are the neighbouring Chinese who buy the mine and the plant for an old song and make several large fortunes out of working on their own ridiculous and primitive methods.[61]

Faulty prospecting was one of the reasons for European failure in tin mining. One of the advantages the Chinese enjoyed was the employment of a Malay *pawang* or medicine man, who had the gift of detecting tin deposits as a water diviner has for finding water. The Malay *pawang's* method of prospecting was a superstitious game which was earnestly played by the equally superstitious Chinese. As tin ore was widespread the *pawang* was generally safe in his predictions; when he failed he could point out to his Chinese clients that they must have violated the rules

of mining or offended some spirit.[62] Being extremely practical, Chinese miners generally proceeded cautiously even when tin was found; until they were fairly certain of the extensive nature of the ore deposits they would set up only temporary wooden shacks for their living quarters. Another advantage the Chinese had over European miners was their reliance on simple, primitive mining equipment, on manual labour, and a capacity for hard sustained work. In small mines the Chinese used the *changkul* for cutting and removing the overburden, the *lanchut* or wash-box in which the ore was concentrated by washing, and the chain-pump worked either by a water-wheel or by a labourer on a treadmill. The whole equipment, which could be taken apart and reassembled with relative ease, cost very little compared with the heavy and expensive machinery used by European miners.[63]

When tin ore deposits had been located and ascertained to be an economic proposition, the forest was cleared, usually by Malays or aborigines on contract; living quarters were built and supplies brought in to the site. Most of the Chinese mines in the early days started with very limited capital. Under the prevailing system of financing the mines, an advancer or promoter, usually a trader or merchant who could advance money and food supplies, would make an agreement with the miner who had found some tin deposits. The miner then got together his labourers whom he employed on contract or on a tribute basis whereby the labourers paid the miner a certain percentage of the tin ore produced. Accounts were usually made up every six months when the tin was smelted. If the mine failed, another advancer would be found, and perhaps another. If the mine eventually succeeded, the expenditure of the last advancer was first settled, then the debt to the previous advancer, and finally the man who originally supplied the funds to open the mine. The disposal of further profits was a matter of arrangement amongst the parties, but local custom demanded that the man who eventually made the mine pay should receive the most consideration.[64] Enterprising labourers who had had some experience of mining and had saved up their earnings on the tribute system, would often club together to take out a mining licence, valid for twelve months and renewable, and work on a co-operative system. Such labourers would fossick in worked out or abandoned mines. If they were successful, they took out a mining lease, usually for twenty-one

years and renewable, and operated a mine in the ordinary manner. Not a few Chinese made their fortunes by starting as fossickers in abandoned mines.

While Chinese miners were successful with primitive methods and equipment, they were not slow to seize on any mechanical gadget that would improve their own time-tested routine. When they bought over abandoned European mines the Chinese would combine traditional methods with modern Western mining equipment. For example, flooding in open-cast mines was a serious problem for Chinese miners, but after 1877 when the steam-engine and the centrifugal pump were first introduced into Perak, they were able to work their mines at greater depths.[65]

An improvement on the traditional method of concentrating ore by washing was introduced about 1890, when short wash-boxes called *lanchut kechil* came into general use. Before the end of 1890 they were hardly known. Formerly the washbox was thirty feet long and could be used only with a considerable head of water. A six-inch pump could keep only two boxes going and, as a consequence, only land in the vicinity of large streams of water, or in which the owners could afford steam or water-power pumps, could be worked. A substantial capital was required to open a mine and the only part of the soil worth washing usually lay under ten or fifteen feet of overburden. The *lanchut kechil* changed all this. The box itself was about eight feet long and cost about $4. It could be put up wherever there was a pool of water instead of the previous practice of relying on large quantities of flowing water. With the *lanchut kechil* the pool of water could be used over and over again, and consequently large tracts of land which were hitherto considered uneconomical to work were brought under production.[66]

Messrs. Pike and Osborne, of the Gopeng Consolidated, were the first Europeans to introduce hydraulic mining in Malaya. In 1893 at a cost of about $50,000 they piped water six and a half miles from the Kampar River to the concession which consisted of 300 acres of hill land. The tin-bearing soil was worked by hydraulic monitors which washed down the hill at the rate of 400 cubic yards a day. When this method proved successful, hydraulic mining and gravel pumping were soon adopted by Chinese miners.

Although Chinese and European miners employed different

methods in operating their mines, they suffered a common disadvantage in lacking sufficient capital, but in the case of many early European mines failures were brought about by mismanagement rather than by the actual shortage of capital. There was a case of a European mine with a capital of $400,000. It had a pipeline with eight monitors that cost $280,000 and a lease of 556 acres of land supposed to be capable of producing 1.90 *katties* of tin to the cubic yard, and another tract of land only about a quarter worked out. The company was allowed to go into liquidation for lack of another $100,000 which could have been raised amongst shareholders had sufficient notice been given.[67]

Chinese mines generally suffered from actual shortage of money. The depression between 1889 and 1891 was caused partly by the shortage of cash available to keep the mines open, and a dislocation of the industry was averted only by generous loans from the Government. The decreased tin production between 1896 and 1899 was again partly caused by the scarcity of ready money, the condition originally brought about by a fall in the price of tin. Many of the Chinese miners relied on the Chettiars to finance their operations. The Chettiars themselves would borrow from Western banks so that interest ultimately charged would be at least twice as high as the normal bank rates. Since the Western banks would not consider as good security the Chinese miners' property, the miners often had no choice but to go to the Chettiars whose reputation as money-lenders stood high amongst Western bankers. The periodic shortage of ready money may be attributed to three main factors: the remittance annually of large sums of money by Chinese mine-owners and labourers to their relatives in China; the country's reliance on a silver currency which had to be imported from abroad and over which the Government had virtually no control; and the rapid expansion of the field of investment. When the rubber boom began in 1904-5 the complaint on all sides was the want of capital—capital obtainable at a reasonable rate of interest, or capital that investors would be prepared to speculate with in reasonably sound mining ventures. The Senior Warden of Mines declared in 1905 that mines developed and worked on borrowed capital from Chettiars meant an industry that was on sand and ready to collapse when the price of tin fell.[68] In 1907 when the price of tin fell to the lowest point of $57.75 per *pikul*, the tin industry

was faced with another crisis brought about by the chronic shortage of ready money.

> That the fall in the price would to a certain extent disorganise the industry was clear; but the disorganisation that did occur would not have happened had money on ordinary reasonable terms been forthcoming. Money was not forthcoming, and the financial crisis that originated in America, and made itself felt even in the Federated Malay States, resulted in pressure being brought to bear upon those whose mining operations were being continued and extended on borrowed capital.[69]

When the new Malayan currency had hardly been stabilized, there was little hope of any financial assistance from the Government who had no definite policy of giving loans to miners, although in the past W.E. Maxwell, as Resident of Selangor, had assisted miners with State funds to tide them over a bad period; consequently in 1907 the whole mining industry was disorganized. In Selangor alone nearly 50 per cent of the mines were idle at the end of the year.[70] The *Malay Mail* urged the Government to assist the mining industry as it had the rubber industry: 'Speaking generally, it is not the duty of the representatives of the public to use that public's funds for the benefit of the individual; but the matter assumes a different aspect when a large collection of those individuals have built up a staple national industry, the decline of which would be a serious blow to the nation's resources.'[71] The problems of a primary industry whose prosperity fluctuated with the world's demand were thus increasing as Malaya's economy was drawn closer and closer to that of the Western world, and the policy of *laissez-faire* was changing to one in which increasing State control and intervention were inevitable. The violent fluctuations in the price of tin pointed the way to the establishment of international control over tin production.

Between 1892 and 1908 only eleven European companies were floated, one of which was the Australian Austral Malay Tin Limited, formed in 1908. The majority of European mines were opened between 1911 and 1929; this being so, the part played by the agency houses of the Straits before 1910 was negligible. When their activities were extended to cover the mining industry they were not as dominating as in the rubber industry. Eventually,

however, such firms as Guthrie, Sime Darby, and Harrisons and Crosfield, which had preponderant interests in the plantations, became managing agents of most European mines. But in general the European mining industry was managed by mining specialists, an example of which is Osborne and Chappel. This company had started as a mining concern but had later extended its activities to become mining and consulting engineers. In their capacity as an agency house, Osborne and Chappel had substantial financial interests in the companies under their management. While the policies in the rubber industry were directed from the headquarters of the companies registered in London, the management of European mines, because of the nature of the industry, was largely left to the discretion of individual mine managers.[72]

Although Chinese mines were responsible for the bulk of Malaya's tin exports until 1929, the smelting industry was monopolized by a European firm from a very early stage of the tin industry. While the Chinese had been able to adopt the less expensive Western mining techniques, they failed to do the same with smelting which called for heavy financial and technical resources. The Straits Trading Company moved into a field of enterprise which invited no competition from the Chinese. One of the founders, Hermann Muhlinghaus, who had had extensive business experience in Ceylon, the West Indies and Singapore, saw a unique opportunity for a smelting industry when he visited the Malay States in the early 1880's.[73] In partnership with James Sword, Muhlinghaus started business in an *atap* shophouse in Kuala Lumpur. Soon they expanded their business to cover Perak and Negri Sembilan. In 1885 Muhlinghaus & Company (as it was then known) erected a small reverbatory furnace at Teluk Anson for smelting low-grade ores. Two years later the firm was converted into a limited company as the Straits Trading Company with its head office in Singapore, starting with a capital of $150,000. Shortly afterwards it built the smelting works at Pulau Brani, off Singapore Island, and in 1902 the Company erected a second smelting plant at Butterworth in Province Wellesley. The Straits Trading Company smelted tin not only from Malaya but also from Australia and all other countries in the East.[74] The appearance of Sword and Muhlinghaus on the scene of the mining industry brought an important change to the Chinese

system of financing the mines: they offered money or kind in exchange for tin ore won by small-scale Chinese miners to whom a quick change from ore to cash was vital for keeping their mines in operation. In the early days the activities of the Straits Trading Company included banking and opium and other commodities required by Chinese miners. The initial capital of the Company came from Gilfillan, Wood & Company, the Singapore merchants (of whom James Sword was a partner), and the Chartered Bank. The only competition came from the Eastern Smelting Company. This was originally founded in Penang in 1897 by a Chinese merchant named Lee Chin Ho, but in 1907 it became a public company with predominantly Chinese directors; two years later the company passed from Chinese to European ownership.[75]

From the time the Residential system was established, Government policy was framed to protect and nurse the tin industry. As all the States depended upon the tin mines for their revenue, everything was done to provide regulations to govern the tin industry and to supply the miners with the means of transport. One of the first undertakings of the Government was to clear the navigable rivers of fallen timber which had accumulated over the centuries. Cart roads were cut through virgin forests to join the tin mines with the rivers. All available State revenues were devoted to the construction of railways to link mining centres with the ports. The Taiping-Port Weld line of about eight miles was opened in 1885, and the Kuala Lumpur-Klang line of twenty-two miles was open to traffic in 1886. Another line from Teluk Anson to Ipoh, the new mining centre in Kinta, was completed in 1895. Railway communication was important not only for the export of tin and tin ore but also for the import of foodstuffs and mining equipment. It provided cheap and efficient transport for vast numbers of Chinese labourers who annually entered and left the Malay States. Thus the tin mines financed the railways which in return provided life-lines for the industry. 'In all the early days,' declared Swettenham, 'it was Chinese energy and industry which supplied the funds to begin the construction of roads and public works and to pay for all the other costs of administration.'[76]

Before Federation the tin mines had operated under regulations passed from time to time by the State Governments under which Inspectors of Mines supervised the industry. The amalgamation of the Land and Mines Departments in 1890 was a valuable

reform, but it was not until January 1896 that the first Mining Code came into operation. Under this Code all mining matters were left to two Federal officers, the Wardens of Mines, under whom were several Inspectors of Mines whose duties were clearly defined, giving them wide powers by which they could control mining methods and prevent wasteful mining.[77]

Perhaps the most important rule laid down in connexion with land matters of any kind was that the Government should have absolute control of all sources of water supply. The acquisition of land, whether for planting or mining, did not give the lessee any rights whatever in regard to water. As most of the rich tin mines were in large valleys drained by one or two rivers, it was extremely important that miners at the head of a valley should not monopolize the water supply at the expense of those at the tail of the valley. Government inspectors saw to it that the supply of water was fairly apportioned to prevent any dispute that might otherwise arise in times of drought.[78]

The systematic development of the mining industry required an accurate and rapid survey of land, and a trigonometrical survey was therefore started in Perak soon after the establishment of the Residential system. Surveys were later extended to the other States. The initial cost of surveying was heavy in thickly-forested land, but in the long run it was amply justified, for the surveys made it possible for leases to be accurately demarcated, besides providing valuable information about mineral deposits.[79]

The reliance on manpower to work the tin mines meant that right from the start a steady, continuous supply of immigrant labour was essential to maintain the tin industry. As the number of Chinese female immigrants was small, the natural increase of the labour population was negligible. Apart from the losses due to the return to China annually of thousands of migrants, death caused by tropical and other diseases took a heavy toll of lives. From time to time the Government had taken steps to facilitate immigration and had even subsidized migrant ships, but the bulk of the mining labourers were recruited by the Chinese themselves. The volume of immigration, however, was determined not by the facilities provided by the Government, though they were important, but by the demand for labour in the mines, which in turn was dictated by the price of tin. Consequently

immigration statistics at the time tended to follow the fluctuations in the market price of tin. Tin production reached a peak in 1895, but between 1896 and 1899 exports declined from 48,210 tons to 38,354 tons, although the price had risen slowly from an average of £59.17*s*.9*d*. per ton in 1896 to £123.6*s*.6*d*. in 1899.[80] The initial fall in the price of tin was the cause of the general exodus of Chinese labourers, and the shortage of labour accounted for the decreased production. The following figures show the relation between the migration of labour in the Federated Malay States and tin production.[81]

Year	*Immigration*	*Emigration*	*Balance*	*Production in tons*	*Tin price*
1895	96,895	65,691	31,204	48,210	no data
1896	74,376	64,779	9,579	46,510	£ 59.17*s*.9*d*.
1897	52,916	58,338	−5,422	42,393	no data
1898	53,765	50,548	3,217	39,570	£ 71. 4*s*.1*d*.
1899	84,043	51,610	32,433	38,354	£123. 6*s*.6*d*.
1900	107,188	65,859	41,329	42,444	£133.11*s*.6*d*.

The annual difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants does not, of course, give the real total labour force available for the mining industry. Although after 1900 an increasing number of Indians, Malays, and Javanese was employed in the mines, it was negligible compared with the number of Chinese labourers.

CHINESE LABOUR IN THE TIN MINING INDUSTRY OF THE F.M.S.[82]

1903	186,337
1904	192,669
1905	209,014
1906	212,660
1907	231,368
1908	195,081
1909	181,445

European miners and some Government officials used to allege that a very large proportion of tin was lost in the primitive Chinese method of washing the tin-bearing soil. Much of this, however, was recovered by scores of women and children who

washed for tin in the old heaps of tailings in the mines. This was done with a *dulang*, a shallow circular wooden pan. Tin ore was concentrated by swirling the *dulang* round with water, the lighter particles of sand and gravel bring thrown out, leaving the ore concentrated in the centre of the *dulang*. When the '*dulang* women', as they were called, first appeared on the scene they were much maligned creatures, often being accused of pilfering tin-bearing soil raised from the mine but not yet washed. If the mine was a large one and the *kapala*, or supervisor, was kind-hearted, a lenient view might be taken of any such pilfering. But generally the *dulang* washers worked on tailings in abandoned mines and in the streams close to the mines. From a social aspect this small loss of tin was really a blessing in disguise, for it gave hundreds of Chinese women an opportunity to earn an honest living.[83] When *dulang* washing first started around the turn of the century, it was not considered sufficiently important to regularize this occupation, but from 1907 *dulang* washers had to get a special pass which gave them the permission of the Senior Warden of Mines to wash for tin amongst tailings and debris in mines and water courses on State land and on alienated land with the consent of the occupier. The *dulang* pass also enabled the person to sell the ore to any dealer licensed under the Mineral Ores Enactment.[84] In 1908 a total of 8,278 passes were issued, and the amount of ore thus recovered was quite considerable. In 1927, for example, 7,536 passes were issued and in that year the average weight of ore won by each holder of a *dulang* pass was roughly 600 lbs. and the total amount of ore recovered was 34,446 *pikuls* or 2,050 tons.[85] These were the gleaners and great was their harvest.

Before the appointment of a Federal Geologist in 1903, the exact extent of Malaya's tin deposits was never known and pessimists, arguing from the fact that tin was a wasting asset, predicted its early exhaustion. Swettenham was one of the few who did not share that view, and it was largely due to his optimism that the expensive Malayan railway was built.

> I have often said publicly that there is no cause for anxiety on this account [exhaustion of tin deposits] and I see no reason to change that opinion now. There are, no doubt, still untouched and undiscovered, immense areas of alluvial tin deposits, and there must be, in many places, as yet unexplored, underground tin lodes, such as

those being worked in the Ulu Bernam, Jelebu, Kinta, and by the Pahang Corporation at Kuantan. We have everywhere exhaustless supplies of water, for washing and hydraulicing [*sic*] purposes and, so long as we have China to draw upon for labour, and the wages are paid in silver, I do not think there is any need to fear for the future of tin mining in the Malay States.[56]

But Swettenham and others who swore by tin were unduly optimistic about the resources of Pahang. Reasoning by analogy, they maintained that if the west coast of Malaya was so rich in alluvial tin deposits, the east coast, or at any rate Pahang, must have equally rich deposits. On this assumption an expensive trunk road was build from Selangor to Ulu Pahang. But there was no reason for believing that Ulu Pahang possessed great mineral wealth. In fact, Ulu Pahang was on the same footing as Borneo, a country whose reputation for vast mineral resources began to disappear as soon as explorations were started. By 1907 those who had believed in Pahang's untapped mineral wealth were totally disenchanted. So far as mining was concerned there was no justification for the expenditure on roads and railways; when the reputedly rich but inaccessible lands were opened up the promised wealth still remained hidden in the ground, except around the once-condemned Belat district on the east coast where the Gambong valley was worked with satisfactory results, but the deposits were not extensive and production could not be expected to last very long.[57]

In the world production of tin Australia had been taking the lead up to 1882. In 1881 Australia's output was 12,817 tons; Malaya 11,399 tons; the United Kingdom 8,616 tons; and the Dutch East Indies 7,934 tons. By 1883 Malaya's output had jumped to 26,957 tons.[58] Measured against the world's production of tin, Malaya's output is impressive, considering the fact that it was produced mainly by manual labour.

Up to the end of the nineteenth century the Government derived its main source of revenue from the tin industry. The duty on tin had been high at first and as it was fixed it pressed hard on miners when the market price of tin was low. After federation in 1896 the duty was adjusted on a sliding scale in proportion to the market value of tin.[59] Although the revenue from export duty on tin in relation to the total revenue of the

Federated Malay States started to decline from 1901, its absolute value remained fairly constant.

COMPARATIVE OUTPUT OF TIN[90]

Year	*World Production in tons*	*Malayan Production in tons*	*Malayan percentage*
1898	78,600	41,167	52.3
1899	76,100	38,960	51.1
1900	85,400	43,111	50.4
1901	92,900	47,475	51.1
1902	88,700	47,258	53.2
1903	93,900	50,842	54.1
1904	95,600	51,733	54.1
1905	98,900	50,991	51.5
1906	102,500	48,672	47.4
1907	101,600	48,474	46.7
1908	108,700	50,868	43.9
1909	115,400	50,754	39.4

TOTAL REVENUE OF THE F.M.S. AND RECEIPTS FROM THE EXPORT DUTY ON TIN[91]

Year	*Revenue* $	*Duty on Tin* $	*Percentage of Tin Duty to Revenue*
1898	9,364,467	3,210,699	34.2
1899	13,486,410	6,181,542	45.8
1900	15,609,807	7,050,382	45.1
1901	17,541,507	6,968,183	39.7
1902	20,550,543	8,438,775	41.0
1903	22,672,567	9,590,505	42.3
1904	22,255,269	8,814,688	39.6
1905	23,964,593	9,249,627	38.5
1906	27,223,476	10,036,798	36.8
1907	28,793,745	9,395,825	32.6
1908	24,623,325	7,285,864	29.5
1909	25,246,863	7,155,124	28.3

The decline in the percentage of tin duty in relation to total revenue was due to the increase of revenue from other sources: trade, railways, land, agricultural products and rubber. The first substantial revenue from the export duty on rubber was $50,023

in 1906; in 1909 it was $360,055. This was a healthy development for it showed that Malaya was depending less on tin for revenue and was broadening the base of her economy.

NOTES

1 A.R. Selangor for 1884, C.4959, p. 38.
2 *Ibid.* p. 39.
3 A.R. Pahang for 1891, C. 6858, p. 90.
4 *Ibid.*
5 *Ibid.*
6 *Ibid.* p. 91.
7 A.R. Perak for 1889, C. 5884, p. 44.
8 A.R. Perak for 1891, C. 6858, p. 14.
9 A.R. Selangor for 1891, C. 6858, p. 42.
10 E.W. Birch was the son of J.W.W. Birch, the first British Resident of Perak, who was murdered in 1875.
11 A.R. Perak for 1896, C. 8661, p. 18.
12 A.R. Perak for 1895, C. 8257, p. 22.
13 Resident-General's Report for 1896, C. 8861, p.7.
14 A.R. Perak for 1906, Cd. 3741, p. 37.
15 A.R., F.M.S. for 1891, C. 6858.
16 Allen and Donnithorne, *Western Enterprise in Indonesia and Malaya*, p. 107.
17 W. Ukers. 'All about Coffee', pp. 141, 173.
18 *Ibid.* p. 279.
19 A.R. Selangor for 1889, C. 5884, p. 43.
20 A.R. Selangor for 1895, C. 8257, p. 35.
21 *Ibid.* p. 44
22 Ukers, *op. cit.* p. 458.
23 *Ibid.* pp. 457-8.
24 Resident-General's Report for 1897, C. 9108, p. 5.
25 Resident-General's Report for 1898, C. 9524, p. 5.
26 Resident-General's Report for 1900, Cd. 815, p. 13.
27 A.R. Selangor for 1896, C. 8661, p. 59.
28 Resident-General's Report for 1905, Cd. 3186, p. 9.
29 Resident-General's Report for 1908, Cd. 4722, p. 8.
30 Allen and Donnithorne, *op. cit.* p. 107.
31 *Ibid.* p. 106.
32 E. Macfadyen, *Rubber Planting in Malaya*, pp. 12-17.
33 Allen and Donnithorne, *op. cit.* p. 109.
34 *Ibid.* p. 110.
35 O. Marks, 'The Pioneers of Rubber Planting in British Malaya', *British Malaya*, February 1927, p. 282.
36 Allen and Donnithorne, *op. cit.* p. 110.
37 Macfadyen, *op. cit.* p. 22.
38 *Ibid.*
39 A.R., F.M.S. for 1901, Cd. 1297, p. 7.

40 *Straits Budget*, 2nd May 1907.
41 H.N. Ridley, *The Story of the Rubber Industry in Malaya*, p. 26.
42 M.J. Dijkman, *Hevea: Thirty Years of Research in the Far East.*
43 *Ibid.*
44 Allen and Donnithorne, *op. cit.* p. 111.
45 *Straits Budget*, 2nd May 1907.
46 Report of the Director of Agriculture, Departmental Reports, F.M.S., 1907.
47 Allen and Donnithorne, *op. cit.* p. 112.
48 *Ibid.* pp. 112-13.
49 Governor Anderson's Report to the Secretary of State, 1904, Cd. 2777, p. 4.
50 Sir John Anderson's speech at the Agricultural Show at Kuala Lumpur, *Malay Mail*, 11th August 1908.
51 Resident-General's Report for 1908, Cd. 4722, p. 17.
52 Swettenham, *British Malaya*, p. 224.
53 *Ibid.* p. 225.
54 Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, pp. 5-6.
55 Sadka, 'The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877', *J.M.B.R.A.S.*, November 1954, p. 29.
56 Yap Ah Loy, a native of Kwangtung Province, arrived in Malacca in 1854 at the age of seventeen, and started life as a labourer, shop assistant, camp cook and contractor. He arrived in Kuala Lumpur in 1862 and soon after became the Capitan China. As he belonged to the Hai San Society whose stronghold was Kuala Lumpur, Yap Ah Loy automatically assumed the leadership of that Society. The civil war in Kuala Lumpur, like the one in Larut, was mainly between the Ghee Hins and the Hai Sans with Malay chiefs taking sides. For a comprehensive biography of Yap Ah Loy see S.M. Middlebrook, *J.M.B.R.A.S.*, Part 2, Vol. XXIV, 1951; and J.M. Gullick, *The Story of Early Kuala Lumpur.*
57 Swettenham, *op. cit.* p. 222.
58 'Mining in Malaya', *British Malaya*, June 1926.
59 Swettenham, *op. cit.* p. 262.
60 *Ibid.*
61 *About Perak*, p. 34; quoted by Allen and Donnithorne, *Western Enterprise in Indonesia and Malaya*, p. 151.
62 According to Malay superstition, both gold and tin had souls. The gold soul had the form of a deer, and the tin soul that of a buffalo, and they could move about in the ground, taking the ore with them. Gold and tin ore were believed to be alive; they could grow and reproduce themselves. A mine must be opened with due ceremony and the soul of the tin ore dealt with gently. J.B. Scrivenor, Government Geologist of the F.M.S. gives an amusing account of the superstitions surrounding tin mining:

'Boots and umbrellas could not be taken into a mine. Raw cotton, black coats, hides, earthenware, glass, limes, coconut-husk and

weapons were likewise prohibited. Bathing, chopping wood, quarrelling and gambling in the mine were not allowed, the last two being excellent moral restrictions. The most curious rules, however, were that a miner must wear trousers, but that he must not wear and go to work on the mine in anybody else's trousers. The insistence on trousers is explained by the possibility of the tin ore being upset by the comparative immodesty of a Malay *sarong* or a Chinese bathing-slip, both of which reveal more of the nether anatomy than trousers, particularly the Chinese bathing-slip; but it is difficult to understand why any tin ore, pleochroic, blushing in many colours or not, should worry about the ownership of a miner's trousers as long as he had them on.' *A Sketch of Malayan Mining*, p. 6.

63 Scrivenor, *op. cit.* pp. 18-19.
64 Swettenham, *British Malaya*, pp. 234-5.
65 L.L. Fermor, *Report upon the Mining Industry of Malaya*, p. 23.
66 A.R. Perak for 1891, C. 6858, pp. 15-16.
67 *Singapore Free Press*, 20th October 1903.
68 Report of the Senior Warden of Mines, F.M.S.; Resident-General's Report for 1907.
69 *Ibid.*
70 *Ibid.*
71 *Malay Mail*, 20th July 1908.
72 Allen and Donnithorne, *op. cit.* pp. 157-8.
73 *Ibid.* pp. 158-9.
74 'Tin Mining in Malaya', *British Malaya*, May and June 1926.
75 Allen and Donnithorne, *op. cit.* pp. 158-60.
76 *British Malaya*, p. 222.
77 'British Malaya,' June 1926.
78 Swettenham, *op. cit.* p. 235.
79 Allen and Donnithorne, *op. cit.* p. 155.
80 Wong Lin-Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, pp. 563-4.
81 Adapted from Wong Lin-Ken, *op. cit.* pp. 563-4, 802; Fermor, *op. cit.* p. 76.
82 Annual Reports, F.M.S.
83 Resident-General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1902.
84 Report of the Senior Warden of Mines; Annual Reports F.M.S. for 1907.
85 Scrivenor, *op. cit.* p. 30.
86 Resident-General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1898.
87 Report of the Senior Warden of Mines, 1907.
88 Fermor, *op. cit.* p. 71.
89 Swettenham, *op. cit.* p. 236.
90 Adapted from Fermor, *op. cit.* pp. 72-3.
91 Adapted from Fermor, *op. cit.* p 88.

5

RAILWAYS

In an era of horse-carriages and bullock-carts running on unmetalled roads which required constant and careful maintenance if they were not to be swept away by violent tropical storms or reclaimed by the insidious jungle, railway communication was vital to the development of the Malay States. Administration was difficult when a dispatch from Singapore might take weeks to reach Taiping or Kuala Lumpur. In the early days of the Residential system, a letter from the Governor to a Resident would be sent first by boat to one of the ports on the west coast of the Peninsula, thence by runners or bullock-cart to the administrative centre: Taiping was separated from Port Weld by at least ten miles of swamp and thick jungle, and the journey of twenty-two miles from Klang to Kuala Lumpur was equally difficult and tedious. Yet the primary reason for building the first railways was economic rather than administrative or political, although they served the latter purpose at the same time.

The Port Weld-Taiping line of eight miles, open to traffic in June 1885, was meant to serve first and foremost the tin industry of Larut. It was the most expensive eight miles of railway track to be paid for entirely out of State revenue. While the Port Weld line was under construction the Selangor Government decided to build a railway from its mining centre Kuala Lumpur to the port and royal township of Klang, a distance of twenty-two miles through swampy country with a considerable bridge over the Klang River.[1] So essential was this line to the development of the

State that the Government decided to borrow $200,000 from Perak and $100,000 from the Colony. Both these sums were repaid by 1899. As soon as the railway was opened to traffic in September 1886, 'the receipts so far exceeded the working expenses that the line earned a profit equal to 25 per cent on the capital expended. It may be questioned whether that record has ever been equalled in railway history'.[2]

A railway was much needed to connect Seremban with Port Dickson, but since Negri Sembilan was not as prosperous as Perak and Selangor it could not undertake the construction of the line. A concession was therefore given to a private syndicate, the Sungei Ujong Railway Company, which built the railway of more than twenty-four miles at a cost of £192,500. It was opened to traffic in July 1891. In 1908 it was bought over by the Federated Malay States Government.

Thus far these short stretches of railway were feeders to the main waterway down the Straits of Malacca. The markets where the Malay States' produce was sold were at Singapore and Penang, and it was from these places that all classes and nationalities in the Malay States were supplied with food, clothing, mining equipment, necessaries and luxuries. Several lines of steamers ran up and down the Straits of Malacca, calling at Port Weld, Teluk Anson, Klang and Port Dickson, and the railways were constructed in order to put the mining centres in direct communication with the seaports; in fact, to bring 'wheel' and 'keel' together.[3]

After 1884, when tin production in Larut started to decline, Kinta in Perak assumed greater importance, but the nearest port, Teluk Anson, was sixty miles away. In 1893 a railway to join Ipoh with Teluk Anson was started; two years later it was open for through traffic. The lines of communication in the Malay States did something more than merely enabling the miner to get his rice cheaply and transport his produce to a market at particularly low rates: the railways yielded a large and direct revenue. The Perak State Railway, for example, between 1885 and 1902 inclusive had a net earning of $3,291,433; and the net earning of the Selangor State Railway, between 1887 and 1902 inclusive, amounted to $5,180,609. Between 1903 (when the two State Railways were amalgamated to form the F.M.S. Railways) and 1905 the revenue from railways was over $5 millions. Roads and rail-

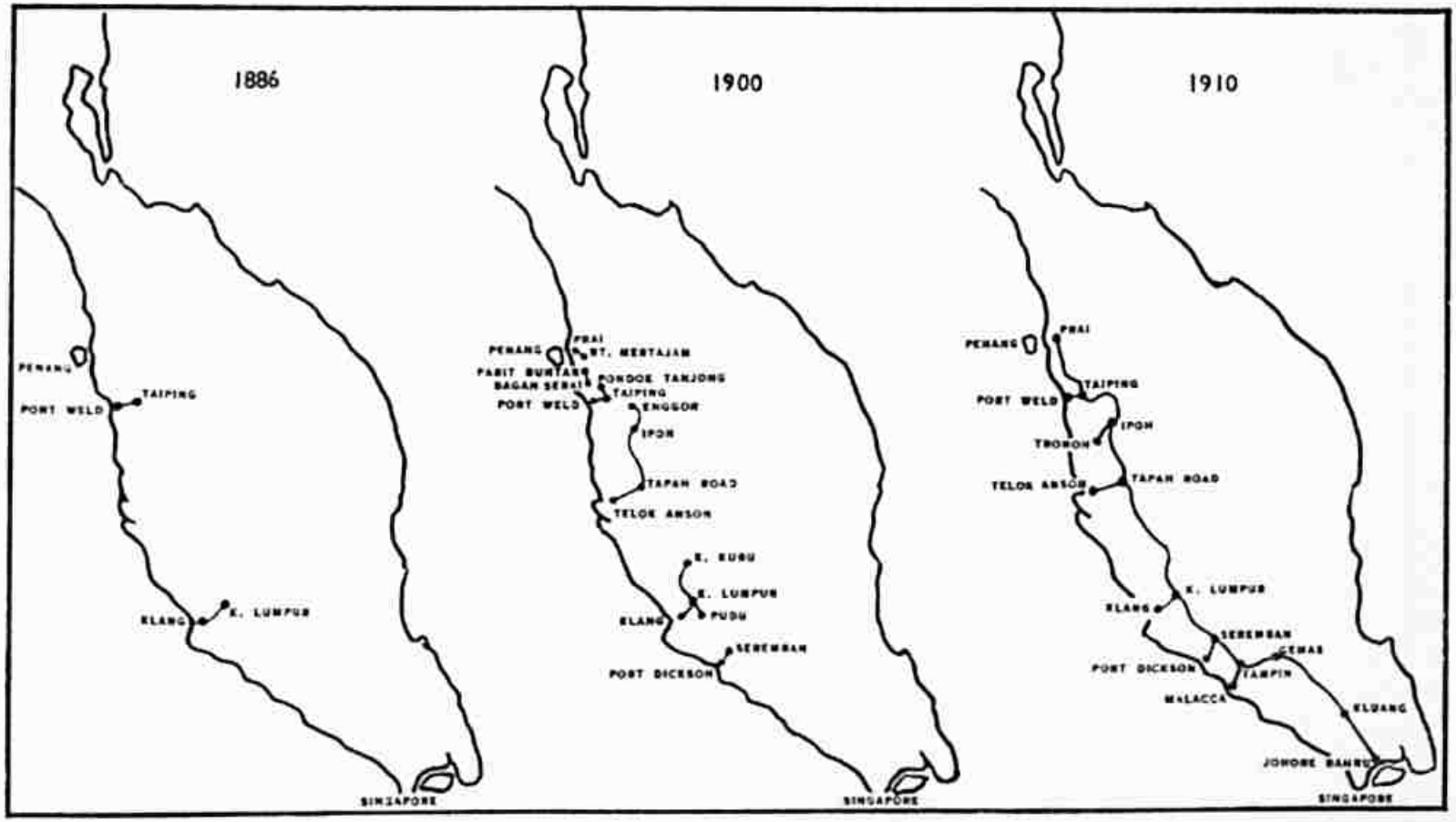
ways, besides being indirect sources of revenue, opened up potential agricultural areas of the country and prepared the way for the establishment of the rubber industry.

In giving his approval to the Federation scheme in December 1895, the Secretary of State declared: 'I hope to find that in the future the work of constructing highways and railways, along or across the Peninsula, will be pursued not merely with a view to profit and development of particular districts, but upon comprehensive principles, and with a preference of such works as are capable of future extension to meet future needs.'[4] Accordingly while Swettenham was on leave in England prior to his taking up the post of Resident-General of the new Federation, Chamberlain took the opportunity of ascertaining his views on railway extension in the Malay Peninsula.

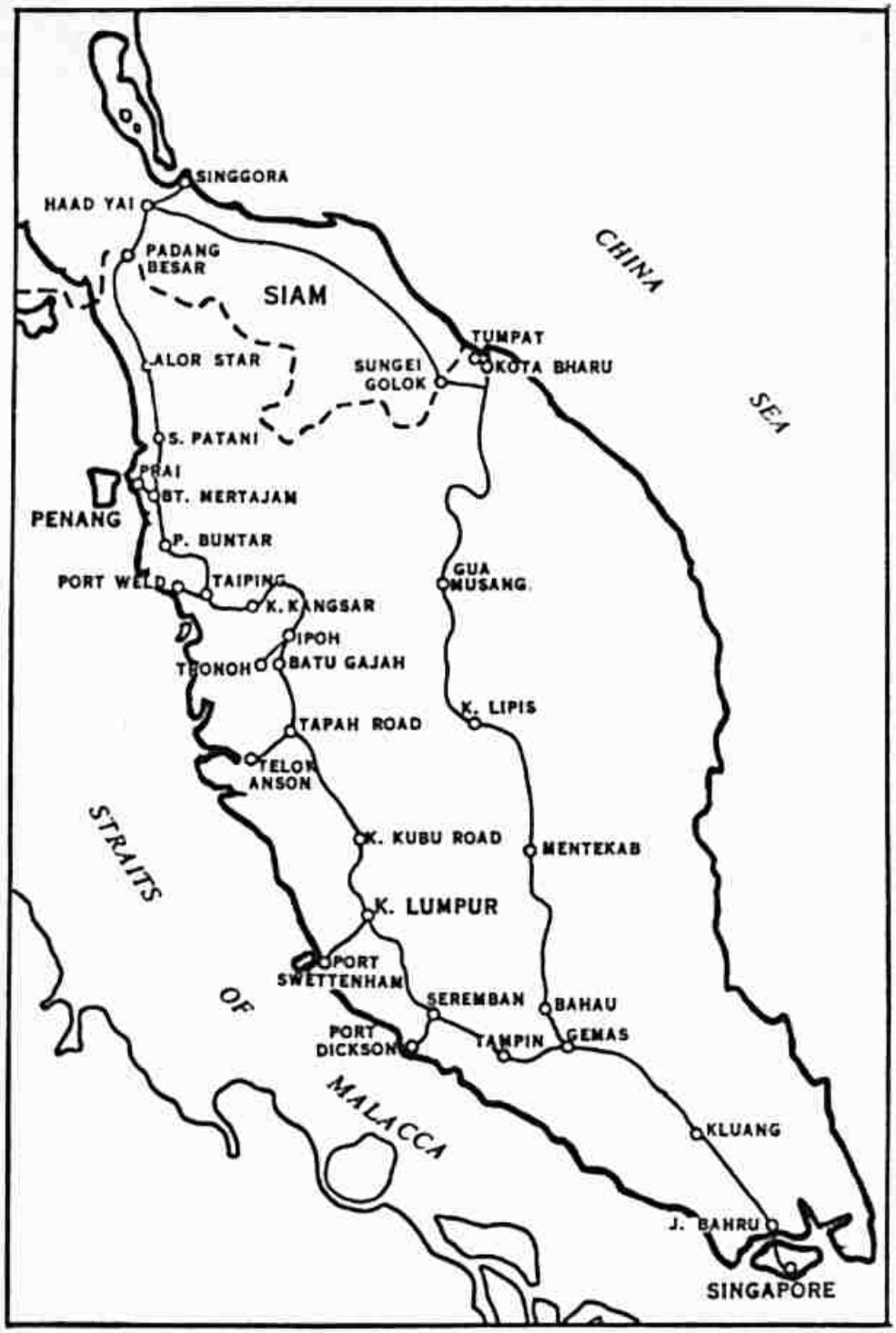
In February 1896 Swettenham submitted to the Secretary of State a memorandum on railway development, and a lengthy correspondence between Sir Charles Mitchell and Chamberlain followed. Its interest here lies in the light it throws on the care and deliberation with which the development of Malaya was planned by the British. Both Swettenham and Chamberlain were ardent believers in railways as an instrument of national development and as a means of knitting together the widely dispersed Empire. At a time when Imperial Federation was in the air, colonial administrators had a vision of a system of railways starting in Australia constructed across the island-continent to Darwin, the nearest point to Singapore, and a central line from the southernmost tip of the Malay Peninsula to Burma, from where the railway would be connected to the great Indian Empire. It was in this spirit that the Malay Peninsula railway was planned.

Up to 1895 Perak and Selangor possessed short strips of railway in various parts of the States. A short line linked Kuala Lumpur with Sungei Besi, a rich mining field, and another line was extended from Kuala Lumpur to Kuala Kubu at the base of the hill road to Pahang. The Kuala Lumpur-Klang railway had been extended a further ten miles to give direct access to the sea at Port Swettenham. In Perak the Teluk Anson-Ipoh railway was being extended in a north-westerly direction, the goal being Taiping.

Swettenham suggested that the construction of the line from



RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT IN 1886, 1900 AND 1910



RAILWAY COMMUNICATIONS TODAY

Taiping to Prai (opposite Penang) should be leased to a private company so that Perak's funds could be used to develop railways within the State and thus avoid the administrative difficulty of building a railway in strictly colonial territory through Province Wellesley. A provisional concession was indeed given to Messrs. Kerr Stuart & Company of London, but it turned out to be abortive as Chamberlain afterwards decided that the line should be constructed by the Federation.

Swettenham's plan for railway development had two main objects. The first was to join the Perak and Selangor systems by a line that would traverse valuable but practically undeveloped country across which the State Governments were constructing a first-class cart road. Besides opening good agricultural land and gold and tin mining areas, the line when completed would give through railway traffic from Prai in the north to the Klang Straits in Selangor and connect up with the road to Pahang via Kuala Kubu.

The second object was a railway from a point on the mountain road where it entered on the plains on the Pahang side to Kuala Lipis, the administrative capital of Pahang. This line would be of great service to the existing mines at Raub, Tras, Punjom and the neighbourhood and would encourage the development of the richest known mining district in Pahang, capable of future extensions from both ends of the line. Swettenham also suggested a line from Prai through Kedah to Singgora in Siamese territory on the east coast of the Peninsula. 'The line is one which has few engineering difficulties,' said Swettenham, 'and if British influence were to replace that of Siam in the northern part of the Peninsula, this line, which might without difficulty be made to join on to the Burma system, should not be lost sight of.'[5] Fortunately for the Malay States, the early railways were all of a standard metre gauge, the weight of the rails being 60 lbs. to the yard. When the Johore Railway was built it was increased to 80 lbs., and a high standard of excellence was maintained right from the start: no gradient was steeper than 1 in 300, and no curve more severe than fifteen chains radius. On such foundations the subsequent railway development was comparatively easy.

Chamberlain heartily approved Swettenham's recommendations, with the additional suggestion of a line from the southern terminus of the Selangor railway at or near Cheras to join the

Sungei Ujong railway at Seremban. This would give through railway connexion from Prai to Port Dickson in the vicinity of Malacca. Chamberlain also suggested that the line from Prai to the Perak border might be undertaken by the Colony Government if Perak's funds were tied up in other railway developments. The most important suggestion to come from the Colonial Office, however, was that of a line, much talked about, but not mentioned by Swettenham, across the island of Singapore and the Straits of Johore. 'The construction of this line,' said Chamberlain, 'is clearly only a question of time and it is worth considering whether the time should not be shortened, and direct communication between the town of Singapore and the mainland be established at a comparatively early date.'[6]

In his talks with Chamberlain, Swettenham assured him that the current revenues of the Malay States were sufficient without any immediate need for borrowing to enable them to undertake the construction of the proposed lines of railway. All that remained was for the Colony Government to build the railways within its territory, i.e. in Province Wellesley and across Singapore Island. Sir Charles Mitchell, however, did not believe that the Government was justified in spending a substantial portion of its revenue on a railway which had no guarantee of success. To this Chamberlain replied that he saw no reason why if a railway project promised favourable returns the Colony Government should hesitate to lay out money on it. He added, 'It is difficult to suppose that, if reasonable prudence be exercised, railway enterprise in these growing countries will not prove remunerative, and the financial position of the Colony seems to me in spite of comparatively straitened circumstances for two or three years past to be exceedingly sound. The return of Assets and Liabilities which accompanied the last estimates despatch showed a prospective balance . . . of nearly $800,000; and a sum of from $1,000,000 to $1,100,000 which is owing from the Negri Sembilan and Pahang is hardly likely to be outstanding for many years more.'[7] Chamberlain advised that if ready money was required to meet capital expenditure on railway development there was no reason why a loan should not be raised. If it was desirable, from the viewpoint of the expansion of trade and commerce or of political expediency, to quicken the obvious and natural development of the Colony and the Malay Peninsula, it would

be unwise to hesitate to borrow for the purpose. The Secretary of State assured the Governor that an active railway policy which was followed up consistently with business-like common sense would in the Malay Peninsula as elsewhere in the British Empire have his hearty support.[8]

The administration of the Straits Settlements during Sir Charles Mitchell's governorship was characterized by a stringent economy, for Mitchell arrived at a time when the finances of the Colony were at a low ebb. The decline in Government revenue was partly caused by the fall in the dollar exchange with all its consequences. Against this general background of trade depression, Mitchell did not share the enthusiasm of Swettenham and Chamberlain for railway development. Commenting on Swettenham's memorandum, the Governor said that it was by no means sure 'the postulate that railways develop a new country is entirely and at all times true'. He quoted the example of Natal where, as Governor, he had seen the competition of ox-wagons undermine the success of the railways, which were saved from ruin only by the opportune development of the Witwatersrand goldfields.[9]

From his experience in Natal, Mitchell inferred that the construction of railways in a new country depended upon (a) available resources of the country, and (b) the natural traffic advantages already given by roads, rivers or other means of communication. But he conceded the point that the construction of 'even unremunerative railways' might be of great advantage to the Colony if such railways could be undertaken without imposing the burden of debt upon a new community.

Railways in the Malay States depended on the prosperity of the mining industry. The Taiping-Port Weld line had paid well when Larut was at its peak in tin production, and even after the decline of Larut the railway still paid well on account of the remaining mines in the neighbourhood of Taiping, except for the burden of maintaining the line from Taiping to Ulu Sepatang, the construction of which was undertaken in the belief, which proved unfounded, that rich tin mines existed in Selama. On paper Swettenham's scheme appeared very attractive, and if it was considered merely on the basis of administrative efficiency and general public convenience, there was nothing to be argued against it. 'But when I regard the financial aspect of the subject,' said Mitchell, 'and this aspect is, to my mind, the all-important

one, I have grave misgivings as to the policy of hastening beyond the present system of expending all available balances in gradually extending the lines of railway in the direction indicated in Mr. Swettenham's map.' Continuing his argument, the Governor said firmly:

> I cannot lose sight of the fact that a network of waterways and a system of good roads, combined with very cheap and available labour and materials for utilising both, will sorely handicap a railway as soon as the line of that railway leaves the points beyond which it will not be used for heavy traffic, which . . . naturally finds its way by the cheapest line of communication to and from the port of shipment.[10]

Sir Charles Mitchell had strong objections to the raising of loans for either the Colony or the Malay States, which were in the fortunate position of owing no money outside their own boundaries and were helping each other as fortune favoured each. 'The line of sea traffic to the East may be diverted,' said Mitchell, probably bearing in mind the French proposal of cutting a canal at the isthmus of Kra, which would then shorten the sea journey from Europe to the Far East, by-passing the Malay Peninsula; 'tin may soon—as it must eventually—give out; agricultural development may not be very successful, and the difficulties in which the States and the Colony would in either of the two first mentioned events find themselves involved, would be intensified to the verge of bankruptcy if outside debts had been incurred. Moreover, the appetite for loans grows with the eating; money easily acquired is easily consumed, and sinking funds are not always respected but are often the victims of the first pressure of financial difficulty.'[11]

On the question of raising a loan of $500,000, Sir Charles would offer no objection except the condition that it should be on the security of the Malay States and not partly on that of the Straits Settlements, as suggested by Swettenham. 'I think it very desirable,' said he, 'that a clear line should be drawn between the responsibilities of each. . . .' He thought that it would be a good advertisement for the credit-worthiness of the Malay States if the Federation could raise such a loan in London's financial market on its own merits.[12] The motive for such solicitude was really a desire to wash his hands of Federation affairs. With characteristic

caution the Governor had been unduly pessimistic about the future of Malaya, for as it turned out his fears were unfounded.

Both Chamberlain and Swettenham were determined to overrule Mitchell's objections, and the latter reluctantly gave in. Late in 1896 the Secretary of State officially sanctioned the scheme for railway extensions necessary to link up all the existing lines in Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan. The total cost was estimated at £1,000,000 half of which was to be raised by loan and the other half from Federal revenues. This was the most important step taken for the development of the country following the Federation proposals. Obviously pleased with the way the Colonial Office had supported him in the railway scheme, Swettenham declared, 'It is doubtful whether anything could confer such benefits on this country and its people as the raising of this loan and the devotion of so large a sum to railway construction.'[13]

It was clear to Swettenham that the development of Malaya depended on the provision of quick and efficient transport and communication, at least within the Federation, and the sooner the railways were built the faster would be the rate of development. Swettenham's reasons for the £500,000 railway loan were cogent and economically sound:

> Malay Railways are still in their infancy, and in spite of their healthy appearance they grow but very slowly. The explanation is that, though they are urgently wanted, though they pay better than almost any other railways, and are built at a comparatively low cost, they have to be constructed out of current revenue. I doubt that has been the experience of any other country that can pretend to progress. In fifteen years the Malay States have made and equipped 150 miles of metre-gauge railways; that is, an average of ten miles per annum, and the total cost was roughly seven million dollars. Last year [1895] the receipts amounted to $1,228,000 and, after deducting expenses, the interest on capital is estimated at seven per cent. This rate of progress is pitiably low, but we cannot hope to maintain it if our aspirations are to be confined to construction out of current revenue. By Federation the States have taken over a debt of over a million dollars, due by Pahang to the Colony; they have paid the interest at 4 per cent up to date, and are liable for this charge in the future. They have raised an expensive regiment of soldiers for service, in possible eventualities, in the Colony; they have undertaken to develop the resources of Pahang and they have increased their

annual expenses by strengthening executive and judicial departments, at a cost to be shared by all the States. Under these circumstances there will be no funds with which to extend the railway system, unless by means of a loan. The principal, if not the only, objections to the raising of a loan seem to rest on the alleged uncertainty of the extent of the tin deposits, and the possible failure of the planting enterprises. It seems to me that those arguments would have had greater weight fifteen years ago than now. On the other hand there are many good reasons why a loan should be raised for railway extension. We have several short lines of railway that, for the sake of economy in working, and for reasons of policy in bettering communications, ought to be joined up. There are promising extensions that should be made, and that are comprised in a well considered scheme, the value of which is not questioned. Then we have good security, good prospects generally, and a good record from the past to show what railways in the Peninsula may be expected to earn. These conditions will help us to raise money at a low rate of interest, and I doubt whether there is any direction in which it could be spent with greater certainty of worthily fulfilling our mission in Malaya.[14]

From 1898 an extensive programme of railway development was pushed forward in Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Province Wellesley, despite the gloom cast over the whole country by the slump of the coffee industry. By the end of 1901, 224 miles of railways were open to traffic. The average cost per mile of construction and equipment of the open lines was estimated at $75,754. This included the cost of constructing wharves, piers, buildings, sidings and the purchase of land at various ports. Port Swettenham, opened in September 1901 and declared to be 'the most commodious and best equipped port in the Peninsula', cost a total of $1,108,791.[15]

To feed and supplement the railways an attempt was made by a private syndicate to form a motor transport service in 1901, with a Government subsidy for the mail and goods service between Selangor and Pahang. Unfortunately the type of vehicle adopted for the purpose proved unsuitable and operations were suspended. In Negri Sembilan the mail services still had to depend on bullock-carts. A gharry service between Kuala Kubu and Raub passing through the Gap at 2,700 feet above sea level was 'most satisfactory' and the mail service between Raub and the neighbouring stations was carried by 'bullock omnibus'.[16] In

1903 the Pahang-Selangor motor service, subsidized by both State Governments, was opened under the management of a Frenchman named Kester and was pronounced 'an unqualified success'. The journey of about ninety miles between Kuala Kubu and Kuala Lipis, which used to be long and tedious, was reduced to little more than a short pleasure trip, with the cars travelling at the dangerous speed of about fourteen miles per hour.[17] Following this a full-scale bus service between Selangor and Pahang was inaugurated under Government supervision in September 1907, with such vehicles as 18 h.p. Milnes-Daimler and Thornycroft charabancs. This service was run at a loss.

Through railway communication from Prai to Seremban, a distance of 288 miles, was officially opened in July 1903, when all the Malay chiefs and the Sultan of Perak were conveyed by special train from Kuala Kangsar to the Federal capital Kuala Lumpur for the Durbar. By the end of 1903, 340 miles of railways were completed.[18] The opening in April 1903 of the section between Kajang (Selangor) and Seremban, a distance of twenty-nine miles through very difficult country, was hailed as a significant achievement, furnishing 'one more link in the chain which we, as Englishmen, are convinced must, sooner or later, connect the capital of the Colony with our great Indian Empire'.[19]

The importance of railway connexion between Singapore and Penang was so self-evident that it was taken for granted the railway would be built through the quasi-independent State of Johore. In the Federated Malay States where the British controlled the purse strings there was no question of the Sultans agreeing to the construction of the central railway. In the person of the Sultan of Johore the British came up against a difficulty which they had not anticipated. Like his father before him, the young Sultan Ibrahim, who succeeded to the Johore sultanate in 1895, was extremely jealous and proud of his independence. Any hint of interference from the British with his internal affairs was resented and drove the young Sultan to impetuous action. Swettenham, an imperious and masterful personality whose toughness was disguised by the outward urbanity of a polished diplomat, found to his dismay that negotiating with Sultan Ibrahim on the Johore Railway was infinitely more difficult than the problem of cutting a railway through swamp and jungle. At one stage of the negotiations when it appeared that the Sultan's

intransigence would ruin Swettenham's master plan, the Governor threatened to invoke Article Three of the 1885 Agreement with Johore, whereby the British Government had the right to appoint an Agent to reside in the Sultan's Court, and thus bring the State into line with the others under British control.

The main difficulty with Johore was finance. In 1899 Swettenham had proposed that the last stretch of railway through this State should be built for it by the Federated Malay States Government at 2 per cent interest on the capital outlay, but the offer was not taken up. In 1901 the Colonial Office pressed the Sultan's Advisory Board in London for an early reply, which was duly issued in August the same year. Sir Robert Herbert, Chairman of the Sultan's Advisory Board, declared that 'after a very careful examination' of the proposals of the Federated Malay States Government, the advisers of the Sultan in London were obliged to inform His Highness that the conditions and obligations of the Johore Railway Scheme would involve a greater direct burden on the public revenue than the State could properly undertake at the time; and therefore, while the terms of the offer were recognized as being very liberal, the Sultan regretted that he was unable to accept it. However, the Sultan wished to assure the British Government that he had 'always felt a strong desire' to construct that portion of the main line of railway which would run through Johore, but as 'a part of a larger scheme for the development of the State'. For this reason the Advisory Board had been asked by the Sultan to consider whether it might not be possible to achieve this object 'under different financial arrangements'.[20]

Before the expansion of the rubber industry Johore, which had very poor stanniferous deposits, was almost as backward as Pahang. Private capitalists found no inducement to undertake the construction of the railway unless on a good guarantee from the Johore Government, and no private company could give the same favourable terms as those offered by the Federated Malay States Government. Even if the line was constructed it was unlikely to pay for many years to come as its importance would lie only in providing through transport from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur. Since Johore could not afford even the small guarantee asked for by the Federated Malay States Government, Swettenham was in near despair: 'Under these circumstances,' he wrote

to the Colonial Office, 'I cannot see any likelihood of the construction of the last link in the main trunk line from Penang to Singapore.'[21]

Swettenham suspected that Sultan Ibrahim was under the thumb of various 'interested people' both in Johore and in England. The Sultan, declared Swettenham,

> is a young man with little experience and no knowledge of affairs, but he is no doubt personally anxious to remain free from any form of control. His officers and his European advisers are likely to encourage him because they think it is their interest to do so. If the Railway were constructed by the F.M S. Government there would be no commission or other form of profit for either European financiers, contractors and merchants or for native officials. I fear that this very bright fact, coupled with the desire to avoid all Government enquiry into or interference with the affairs of Johore is the real cause of the refusal to accept an offer which every one admits is extremely favourable to the Native States.[22]

Further, Swettenham believed that Johore's independence was maintained 'to the great disadvantage of all those Chinese and other foreigners' who had made such prosperity as the State enjoyed. He then suggested that the Colonial Office might invoke the 1885 Agreement, and firmly declared, 'I think he [Sultan Ibrahim] should be pressed to accept and at once.'[23]

Swettenham had obtained first-hand information from the Sultan's chief native officer, Permangku Rajah, the Dato Mentri of Johore, about the intrigue behind the scenes in the Sultan's Court. The Dato Mentri told Swettenham that when the Sultan explained the Federated Malay States Government's offer to his State Council, all its members had urged him to accept it. But the Sultan said he would 'think about it'. According to Swettenham, the Dato Mentri said that the Sultan was influenced by the advice of interested Europeans, 'lawyers, merchants and others who could make nothing out of the Railway if constructed by the Government', and that he and others were 'jealous of the F.M.S. and did not like the idea of the Railway being constructed and owned by the F.M.S.'. There were indeed grounds for suspecting the Sultan's motives, for while Swettenham fumed in Singapore Sultan Ibrahim had quietly on his own been negotiating with Messrs. Pauling & Company as contractors and Messrs. Barry &

Leslie as engineers in connexion with the proposed railway.

The Colonial Office was not inclined to go to the extreme of forcing the Sultan to accept Swettenham's proposals. 'I do not consider,' said Chamberlain, 'that His Majesty's Government would be justified in insisting upon the adoption, by the Sultan of Johore, of any particular policy with regard to the proposed railways, unless Imperial interests were directly or indirectly involved, which hardly appears to be the case, but the Sultan may rightly be advised to adopt whatever course appears to be most conductive to the interests not only of Johore but also of the Federated Malay States and of the Colony.'[24] But when it became known that Sultan Ibrahim was bent on having his own way, the Colonial Office took a stronger line of action. Sir Charles Lucas, writing to Sir Robert Herbert, Chairman of the Sultan's Advisory Board in London, declared:

> Mr. Chamberlain cannot pretend to be satisfied with the course which His Highness the Sultan has adopted in this matter, which is neither in the interests of Johore, nor in those of the Malay Peninsula as a whole. In the circumstances he is not prepared to give any countenance to the Sultan's plan . . . and the High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States will be instructed to inform His Highness that, as he has taken the serious step of refusing to co-operate with the Federated Malay States in a railway enterprise for the benefit alike of Johore, of the Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlements in such manner as the Secretary of State and the High Commissioner thought best, he must not expect co-operation on the lines which he has, against the best advice, laid down for himself.[25]

In the meantime Swettenham had had second thoughts about his original offer to Johore. As the projected railways would bring in a large number of Chinese labourers and increase Johore's revenues by stimulating the growth of agriculture, mining and other operations, Swettenham proposed that the Federated Malay States Government should provide only *half* the total sum required for the railway at 4 per cent. In view of this sudden change the Sultan's Advisory Board could not advise Johore to accept the new offer which would place a much more severe strain on the State's resources. Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, an ex-Governor of the Straits Settlements who had joined the Advisory Board, explained to the Colonial Office that should the

Johore Government undertake to provide the interest on the railway loan it would have 'to reduce everything to starvation point and keep it at that point'. The Sultan of Johore, declared Sir Cecil Smith, 'could not maintain in an efficient state the public institutions. His roads would get into a terrible state of disrepair—this means a great deal in a tropical country—and no sort of development could possibly be undertaken even of the simplest character. This would continue for . . . six years which is the length of time that Sir Frank Swettenham estimates that it would take to complete the line.'[26]

Negotiations dragged on for another two years. The Colonial Office suggested that as Johore could afford to pay at the most 3 per cent interest on the capital, the Federated Malay States Government should provide the whole sum of about £1,250,000 and instead of imposing on Johore a contribution to a Sinking Fund, the better course would be for them to stipulate that they should receive a share in the profits of the section and any sums so received should be deducted from the capital advanced by them. This would have the advantage of giving the Federated Malay States grounds for claiming the practical control of the working of the railway, while leaving the nominal control in the hands of the Johore Government if the Sultan attached any importance to that point. Whatever course of action was taken, it was most important to prevent the syndicate with whom the Sultan had been negotiating, from obtaining a footing in Johore. Should they do so, it was practically certain that, however much the railway concession might be fenced round with conditions, the syndicate 'would pander to the Sultan's extravagance with the result that his affairs would become hopelessly involved and His Majesty's Government would be compelled to intervene'. It would then probably be found that the syndicate had obtained from the Sultan 'concessions and privileges which would make it impossible for the F.M.S. to recover the control of this terminal section of their trunk line except at an extravagant cost'.[27]

Chamberlain was losing patience over the whole protracted affair. He gave orders to Swettenham to press the Sultan to accept the modified proposals, and added, 'Should he hesitate to act promptly in accordance with this recommendation, you should... point out as clearly as possible that, unless he accepts, as his father was in the habit of accepting, the advice of His Majesty's

Government in a matter of this importance, steps will be taken to put in force the provisions of Article 3 of the Agreement of the 11th December 1885 by the appointment of a British Officer to reside at his capital."[28]

There is no record of the interview between Swettenham and Sultan Ibrahim, but the former delivered the Secretary of State's ultimatum and the latter capitulated: the Johore Railway Convention was officially signed in July 1904 in London. The detailed terms are unknown, but it was agreed that the railway would be constructed by Government of the Federated Malay States to whom the Johore Government would pay interest on the capital cost. The railway would be formally owned by the State of Johore, while a joint board of control, composed of officials from Johore and the Federated Malay States, would manage the line.

Work on the Johore Railway actually started in March 1904. It was by far the most difficult railway to build as there were no road or other communications except twenty miles of partly metalled road out of Johore Bharu. A thick wall of equatorial forest had to be cut through from Gemas (border town between Johore and Negri Sembilan) and heavy rains brought wave after wave of sickness amongst the labourers. When the Johore Railway was completed in July 1909, there was direct rail connexion from Singapore to Penang, except for the ferry crossings over the Johore Straits and between Prai and Georgetown; for in 1902 the Colony Government started the construction of a railway from Singapore town to Kranji, directly opposite Johore Bharu. The Singapore Railway was bought over by the Federated Malay States Government in 1913. Work on the Singapore causeway started at the end of 1919 and was open to traffic at the end of 1923.[29]

The total capital expenditure on Malayan railways up to 1909 was $46,066,565 and the aggregate net profits earned from 1885 to the end of 1909 amounted to $19,641,813, equivalent to 42.63 per cent of the capital outlay. The total mileage open to traffic in 1909 was nearly 470 miles.[30]

At the time of the Pangkor Engagement there were no roads in the Malay States, but between 1881 and 1910 1,728 miles of roads of various classes were constructed. The cost of building this road system varied from time to time with the price of labour and the difficulty of the country traversed, but the average

cost was estimated at $25,000 per mile, and the average cost of maintenance per mile was $1,300. Originally metalled roads were made twelve feet wide, but with the advent of the motor-car this was widened considerably with ample reserve width three or four times the metalled width.[21]

The development of road and railway communication throughout the western States of Malaya stimulated the growth of towns and villages and generally of large urban centres unknown before British intervention. Originally built to serve the tin industry the railways served not only strategic or administrative purposes but also the rubber industry which was to dominate the world's supply of this raw material and give Malaya wealth and prestige undreamed of. Although the tin industry provided the original capital for the construction of railways, it was Swettenham's faith in the future and his vision of developing the untapped agricultural wealth of the country that were responsible for the bold but judicious investment of all available public revenue of the Malay States in a system of communication which brought about an economic revolution and placed Malaya in the mainstream of world commercial development.

NOTES

1 Swettenham, *British Malaya*, p. 240.
2 *Ibid.*
3 Memorandum on Malay Railways, 17th February 1896, enclosure to a letter from Chamberlain to Mitchell, 17th March 1896, COD.
4 Chamberlain to Mitchell, 27th December 1896; COD.
5 Memorandum on Malay Railways.
6 Chamberlain to Mitchell, 27th December 1896.
7 *Ibid.*
8 *Ibid.*
9 Mitchell to Chamberlain, 24th June 1896, GD. The following is a summary of Mitchell's dispatch.
10 *Ibid.*
11 *Ibid.*
12 *Ibid.*
13 Resident-General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1897, p. 7.
14 Resident-General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1896.
15 Resident-General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1901.
16 *Ibid.*
17 Departmental Report on Communications, 1903.
18 Resident-General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1903.
19 *Malay Mail*, 3rd April 1903.

20 Sir Robert G.W. Herbert to the Under-Secretary of State, 17th August 1901, COD.
21 Swettenham to the Colonial Office, 26th September 1901, GD/C.
22 *Ibid.*
23 *Ibid.*
24 Chamberlain to Swettenham, 14th February 1902, COD.
25 Sir Charles Lucas to Sir Robert Herbert, 10th June 1902, COD.
26 Sir Cecil C. Smith to the Under Secretary of State, 5th September 1902, COD.
27 Chamberlain to Swettenham, 17th October 1902, COD.
28 *Ibid.*
29 *Fifty Years of Railways in Malaya, passim.*
30 Annual Report on Railways, 1909.
31 Report on the Roads and Railways of the Federated Malay States, 1932.

6

HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

ONE of the first tasks of the British administrator after the establishment of the Residential system was to set up medical and health facilities which, like schools, roads and railways, had not existed before. At first the object was to provide for Government employees in the administrative centres. The first Government hospital in the Malay States was started in 1878 in Taiping. Built on the side of a hill in a commanding position, the hospital provided accommodation for fifty patients in the care of an apothecary but it had no surgical or other instruments. A similar hospital was opened at about the same time in Selangor, and between the two hospitals there was accommodation for 100 patients. The first budgets were necessarily small as other more urgent requirements of the administration had priority over hospitals. Perak in 1877 spent $2,132 on medical facilities out of a total expenditure of $292,711. Selangor's medical expenditure for the same year was just over $1,000.[1]

After the initial difficulties of the Residential system, hospitals were better organized. From 1880 qualified medical practitioners were engaged from the United Kingdom; apothecaries, dressers and hospital attendants were brought in from India and Ceylon. In 1884 Sir Cecil Smith, when visiting the Malay States, was able to report that the hospital in Kuala Lumpur was 'in as good order as any in the Colony'. The following year when the Governor visited Taiping he found that the hospitals were 'in admirable order, especially the Yeng Wah Hospital for paupers'. This was

an extension of the original Government hospital under the care of a Dr. Wright and had accommodation for as many as 900 at one time. The Yeng Wah Hospital, like many others which were to spring up in all the mining centres, was at first financed by a tax of one dollar on every Chinese male.[2]

Medical centres were opened in Tanjong Malim, Batu Gajah, Gopeng, Krian and Kuala Kangsar after 1884. The General Hospital in Kuala Lumpur was extended and a new hospital was built at Klang. Selangor's expenditure on hospitals in 1884 amounted to $10,170.[3] In Perak the total cost of hospitals and medical establishments for 1885 amounted to $66,765.[4] As the country was opened up for tin mining, the incidence of disease and sickness rose correspondingly. In 1891 the Kuala Lumpur Pauper Hospital had a daily average number of 362 patients, the annual running costs of this hospital alone amounted to $35,714. For the same year the Tan Tock Seng Hospital in Singapore treated a daily average of 547 patients and the cost for the year was $39,204.[5] In 1895 the Tai Wah Hospital in Kuala Lumpur was opened; it was financed by subscriptions amongst the Chinese, by a tax on brothel registration fees, and by an extra weighing charge on tin of one cent per *pikul*. The fund was managed by Government officials, including the Capitan China, and seven leading Chinese citizens. The Tai Wah Hospital scheme was first suggested in 1893 with the object of providing accommodation for indigent Chinese suffering from 'incurable' diseases and giving them a free passage back to China as recommended by the Medical Department. In addition to this, the Capitan China, Yap Kuan Seng, and other Chinese miners put up a private hospital at Pudu. Towkay Loke Yew built a small hospital at Serendah, managed by the Government Medical Department, and Towkay Loh Chin Keng of Sepang paid the cost of a dispenser at the Government hospital at that station. All the hospitals dispensed Western medical treatment, with the exception of the Tung Shin Hospital in Kuala Lumpur, endowed by private subscription under the management of Capitan Yap Kuan Seng. It provided an outdoor dispensary where Chinese patients received medical treatment from their own herbalists. Similar institutions were set up in Perak which, in 1893, spent $158,181 on hospitals and medical welfare.[6]

On the eve of federation, medical services had expanded con-

siderably over the Malay States: Perak had 15 hospitals, Selangor 14, Negri Sembilan 3 and Pahang 2. In 1896 the Perak State Surgeon, Dr. Wright, introduced travelling dispensaries to serve the outlying districts, and in Pahang floating dispensaries began to be used on the rivers. Villagers were thus saved the trouble of a visit to the fixed hospitals which served mainly an urban population. Yearly as mining and other enterprises progressed and new land opened up, medicine and treatment were brought within easy reach of persons living in the rural areas and the travelling dispensaries made it possible for them to obtain help at an early stage of sickness. Not only was this a boon to the people in the tin mines and *kampongs* but it also benefited the Government directly by helping to decrease the necessity for the more expensive indoor treatment. At the turn of the century hospitals were opened in the sugar plantations in Perak, and by 1908 tin mines and rubber estates had been persuaded by the Government to run thirty-seven hospitals for their employees. As early as 1892 Perak had a Sanitary Board and in 1899 W.E. Maxwell proposed their adoption in all the States. The Federated Government finally established a Health Department in 1911.

A difficult problem of hospital administration was that of getting trained staff to run the rapidly expanding medical service. Doctors recruited from the United Kingdom had to be replaced every three or four years when they left either permanently or on leave. In some cases doctors had to perform duties other than those purely medical. Medical staff was sometimes depleted by sickness and disease. Ignorance of the cause and cure of malaria was so widespread then that even doctors succumbed to the attacks of the mosquito and either died while still on service or were invalided back to the United Kingdom.[7]

One of the most serious diseases at the time was beri-beri. Between 1883 and 1884 Perak had 22,258 cases of this disease, the highest incidence being in Larut, with a total of 2,917 deaths.[8] The Chinese seemed particularly prone to beri-beri which killed thousands of labourers in the mines from the time the tin industry began, but until hospitals were properly organized no attention was drawn to the disease. An epidemic of beri-beri in 1880 forced the Government to take steps to deal with this vicious killer. The death rate at the Yeng Wah Hospital in Taiping was well over 40 per cent of cases admitted for treatment,

while thousands died before reaching the doors of the hospital. Lack of co-operation from Chinese labourers and mine-owners, who often turned to the hospital only as a last resort, increased the number of deaths from beri-beri. In any case, since the cause was not known, no definite cure could be prescribed for victims of the disease. The surgeon in charge of the Pauper Hospital in Kuala Lumpur complained:

> Patients make their way to hospital only when the diseases from which they suffer have exhausted local skill, while the journey they have to make further exhausts their strength. Fifty-four patients died within 24 hours of admission, and nineteen in the admission ward waiting to be formally admitted.[9]

In the absence of any specific cure for beri-beri, the death rate from the disease continued to be appallingly high. The poor water supplies in certain areas in Perak frequently brought about outbreaks of cholera, of which there was an epidemic in 1885, when several European officials and about 300 Malay villagers died.[10] Construction and improvement of waterworks in the main townships improved health conditions and eventually freed the towns from this scourge.

The largest number of hospital patients was made up of Chinese who, however, regarded the hospital more as the traditional 'dying house' than as a place where a cure of disease and sickness might be effected. The Malays, on the other hand, were conspicuous by their absence. As the hospitals were full of pork-eating infidels, no Malay could be induced to enter such a place for medical treatment, even if it was a case of life and death; the furthest they could be persuaded to go was to be treated as out-patients. 'If a Malay thinks he is going to be kept in hospital,' reported the Resident of Negri Sembilan, 'he will not apply for medicine as an outdoor patient and will prefer to remain in his own house and be treated by a Malay doctor on simple herbs, together with a judicious supply of still simpler incantations.' Elsewhere the same Resident said, 'I can so well understand the struggle that goes on in a Malay's mind before he arrives at the decision to apply for treatment at a hospital or dispensary ... something must be given even if it is only Eno's Fruit Salts, or a coloured water, as I cannot conceive a greater disappointment

to the applicant, after days of making up his mind, than to be told that no medicine can be given him.'[11]

In organizing the health and medical services of the country, doctors and administrators had the dual task of combating disease and ill-health and breaking down the wall of superstition and prejudice which often made it difficult if not impossible to treat successfully Malay, Chinese and Indian patients. The Malays had their scruples about entering a hospital where the food was not prepared according to Muslim custom; the Chinese often did not report cases of beri-beri until the disease was at an advanced stage when complications would have arisen. Later, when health authorities found that there was a definite connexion between beri-beri and diet, the Chinese labourers in the mines resented any suggestions that they might vary their staple food of rice and salt fish, and refused to co-operate with the Government. When malaria spread like wildfire in the rubber plantations, Indian labourers could not be induced to sleep under mosquito nets or take quinine, and Malay villagers were apt to misinterpret the enlarged diagrams of mosquitos in the campaign to teach the people the life-cycle of the malaria-carrying insect so that they could eradicate breeding grounds.

The work of establishing, expanding and improving the health and medical services in Malaya was powerfully assisted by the foundation of the Institute for Medical Research in Kuala Lumpur. The stimulus given to medical research came partly from local conditions in Malaya, and partly from development in other parts of the world. In the closing years of the nineteenth century the Colonial Office was fortunate to have as the Secretary of State a man of foresight, compassion and imagination. 'In none of his many-sided activities did Chamberlain discharge . . . the statesman's function more successfully than in the field of Tropical Medicine. Indeed, when the final account comes to be drawn, it may well be judged that he did here his greatest service to humanity.'[12]

Towards the end of 1897, largely through the interest taken in the matter by Dr. Patrick Manson,[13] Medical Adviser to the Colonial Office, Chamberlain's attention was drawn to the importance of scientific inquiry into the cause of malaria and of special education in tropical medicine for medical officers serving in the Crown Colonies.[14] To achieve the second of the two objects,

Chamberlain decided it was necessary:

> that a special school in tropical medicine should be established, where officers, newly appointed to the medical services of the Colonies and Protectorates, might be given systematic instruction with special facilities for clinical study, before leaving England to take up their appointments, and where doctors already in the service might, when on leave, have opportunities of bringing their professional knowledge up to date.[15]

Further, all the leading medical schools in the United Kingdom should be invited to give a greater prominence than hitherto in their schemes of study of tropical medicine, and medical reports from the tropical Colonies and Protectorates should be drawn together to form a common pool of knowledge on the most successful methods of preventing or curing tropical diseases.[16]

When Chamberlain assumed the post of Secretary of State for the Colonies, the 'dark problem' of Empire-building in the tropics constantly interfered with administration. 'Malaria, black-water fever, yellow fever, and other afflictions brought death, sickness and debility, at an appalling rate, to the Empire's officials and traders, as to the hapless natives. Sudden burials, repeated invalidings, and chronic enfeeblement made regular administration difficult and continuous policy impossible. There was a grim but familiar story of a despatch sent from a West African territory to the Colonial Office. Before it reached that quarter, the secretary who drafted it, the clerk who copied it, and the Governor who signed it, were all dead.'[17]

In deciding to found a school of tropical medicine, Chamberlain had the ready co-operation of the Albert Dock branch of the Seamen's Hospital in London. Treating seamen-patients from all parts of the world, the Seamen's Hospital offered a unique opportunity for the study of tropical diseases almost, as it were, on the doorstep of the Colonial Office. The Seamen's Hospital Committee had drawn up plans for the enlargement of the Hospital, but if teaching facilities were added, the school buildings would cost approximately £3,500, with six students in residence, and £1,100 per annum for maintenance. The Committee suggested that students other than those sent by the Colonial Office be also admitted.[18]

After some months of negotiations, the Treasury was at last

persuaded to grant the princely sum of half the amount required for the school, the balance to be provided jointly by the Colonies and Protectorates. The sum fell far short of the requirements of the school, and Chamberlain had insisted on the endowment of travelling scholarships to widen the range of research into tropical diseases. He personally took the lead in launching an appeal for funds. At the festival dinner of the Seamen's Hospital Society, attended by leading men in shipping and commercial interests connected with the Empire, Chamberlain captured the imagination of the British public with this fervent appeal:

> The man who shall successfully grapple with the foe of humanity and find the cure for malaria, for the fevers desolating our colonies and dependencies in many tropical countries, and shall make the tropics liveable for white men—who shall reduce the risk of disease to something like an ordinary average—will do more for the world, more for the British Empire, than the man who adds a new province to the wide dominions of the Queen. All those who co-operate in securing this result, whether by their personal service or by some pecuniary sacrifice, will be entitled to share the honour and to add their names to the golden record of the benefactors of mankind.[19]

Chamberlain's speech effectively loosened the purse-strings of his audience, for on that occasion alone about £12,000 was raised. The London School of Tropical Medicine was formally inaugurated in October 1899. Chamberlain's appeal to all the Colonies and Protectorates was met by a generous response, many giving more than the sums asked for. The Straits Settlements and Malay States together gave nearly £1,000 though they were asked for only £650. The effect of Chamberlain's policy was that all medical schools in the United Kingdom were stimulated to devote greater attention to tropical diseases. The Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine was a direct result of Chamberlain's initiative, although it was founded by private means. Soon the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Queen's College, Belfast, had all extended their facilities for the study of tropical medicine.[20]

Not satisfied with the mere founding of the London School of Tropical Medicine, Chamberlain sought the co-operation of the Royal Society in the fight against tropical diseases in general. Chamberlain suggested to Lord Lister, President of the Royal Society, that scientific experts should investigate on the spot 'the

origin, transmission, and the possible preventives and remedies of tropical diseases, especially of such deadly forms of sickness as the malarial and blackwater fevers prevalent on the West African Coast', and that the experts should be appointed by the Royal Society and take instructions from it.[21] The result of this was the formation of a Malaria Committee. Two research scientists were to be appointed by the Royal Society and one (from the Colonial Medical Service) by the Secretary of State. Thus at the time of the foundation of the London School of Tropical Medicine, active steps had been taken to study malaria and information about the disease obtained from India, Africa, the Middle East and Malaya was made available to all the Colonies and Protectorates.

Malaya's contribution to the world of scientific knowledge on tropical diseases, particularly malaria and beri-beri, must be seen against this broad background of imperial policy initiated by Chamberlain. 'In the forward march of Man,' wrote Julian Amery, 'the statesman's part is principally executive. Others, by mediation or research, open new horizons to the human race. His duty is to assess the worth of their successive discoveries, and to find the means, among the mass of competing claims, to put them into practice.' This passage, written in reference to Chamberlain's contribution to the eradication of disease in the Empire, may well apply to Sir Frank Swettenham for his part in the founding of the Institute for Medical Research in Kuala Lumpur. While Chamberlain's policy was stirring the hearts and minds of medical men in the United Kingdom, Swettenham as Resident-General of the Federated Malay States defined the Government's policy in these words:

> These States have prospered exceedingly and I cannot imagine any better use to which some of our means may be devoted than a scientific and sustained research into the causes and if possible the means of preventing and curing such scourges as beri-beri and all forms of malarial fever. . . . I am so satisfied that we are neglecting our opportunities that I have recommended the establishment of a pathological institute to be placed under the direction of a medical man who has been specially trained for the work under one of the great pathologists. Such an institution would be of the greatest use to our surgeons, and, in the hands of a capable man, might prove of incalculable benefit to humanity.[22]

Beri-beri was decimating one of the most valuable sections of Malaya's population, the Chinese miners. Tropical fevers were taking a heavy toll of labourers building the roads and railways which were to link together all the towns of Malaya. Dysentery and other lesser-known diseases were posing a grave problem to health authorities. There is no doubt that the Malayan research centre sprang from Chamberlain's enthusiasm and acceptance of the responsibility for health and medical welfare in dependent territories. In his speeches in London he appealed particularly on behalf of administrators and expatriates but it has been kindly said that this was to ensure the support of the British tax-payer, for Chamberlain realized that benefit for the local population would surely follow. This general move in the direction of medical research initiated by the Colonial Office was symptomatic of the change in colonial administration from a policy of *laissez-faire* to one of welfare and efficiency.

Swettenham first made the request for a Pathological Institute in 1898. He was probably influenced by the mounting menace of beri-beri and the almost complete lack of knowledge of the cause of that disease. The Malay States initially contributed $5,000 and the Straits Settlements an equal sum in 1899, but the Institute was thereafter financed by the Federated Malay States Government alone. A Director was appointed by the Colonial Office in 1899 and the Institute opened in 1901. A year later the name was changed to the present Institute for Medical Research.

The first director and organizer of the new Institute was Dr. Hamilton Wright, an American graduate of McGill University who was pathologist at the London School of Tropical Medicine. Acting on the suggestion of W.H. Treacher, the then Resident-General, who held that the Director of the Institute should not be a permanent official, the Government appointed Wright for a term of three years, the idea being that every few years a man 'fresh from the schools of Europe or America' should take over the organization of the Institute.[21]

A sum of $8,500 was voted for the building and equipment, but there was no clear idea as to what form the Institute should take, or what the pathologist should undertake to do. The sum provided was enough to do a useful, though limited, amount of work; but it was clear that at the end of Dr. Wright's engagement such work would have to stop unless some provision was made

for the future. Dr. Wright persuaded Swettenham that it would be wise to provide for more workers than just the Director and for up-to-date equipment so that the Institute would serve the State Medical Services as well. Accordingly the original plan for the Institute was redesigned by the State Engineer with the provision of a refrigerating plant. The total cost amounted to $20,000.[24]

During the first year Dr. Wright was engaged in training native assistants in clinical and post-mortem observation on beri-beri and malaria, in studying the hygienic conditions of the various peoples of the Malay States and in making an estimate of the professional needs of the members of the State medical services. Although medical officers were willing to undertake research work, they had neither the special training nor the time to assist Dr. Wright at the Institute. Voluntary assistants were not forthcoming and he found himself at the end of the first year 'working alone over a vast field of unsolved medical problems'.[25]

Medical officers in the Malay States Service were dissatisfied at the lack of opportunities to train themselves in modern methods of clinical and post-mortem examination of diseases which caused the high death rates in hospitals. They could get long leave only once every six or seven years. Dr. Wright suggested a scheme whereby three European assistants to the Director should be appointed, and that one of them should act as relief officer to take over a medical district to enable the district surgeons to enter the Institute in rotation for three or four months' training. After considerable paper discussion between the Governor and the Colonial Office, the Secretary of State in May 1901 approved the appointment of two assistants. This was an important step in the direction of making the Institute a permanent establishment.[26] When the main building of the Institute was ready for use in early 1901 and the necessary equipment installed, Dr. Wright advised the Resident-General to open the doors of the Institute to all scientific workers, irrespective of nationality, to make use of its facilities. As a result of this open invitation, the Institute received several distinguished research scientists from different parts of the world, amongst whom were Dr. H.E. Durham, leader of the School of Tropical Medicine Beri-Beri Commission, and Dr. Carougeau, a veterinary expert of the

Pasteur Institute, Saigon, who helped to solve the problems of the Malayan cattle disease erroneously called 'rinderpest', which in reality was found to be *Septicaemia haemorrhagica*.[27]

Some time during 1901 the Resident-General approved Dr. Wright's proposal that the higher (presumably the Queen's Scholarship) class boys graduating from the Victoria Institution in Kuala Lumpur should be admitted to the Institute for preliminary medical training prior to their education in Hong Kong or Madras to qualify as physicians and surgeons. Dr. Wright took under his wing 'two bright youths', one Chinese and the other Tamil, for training, voicing the hope that they would be 'the head of a long stream of native boys who will ultimately join the clinical staff as capable Medical Officers'. The final step towards insuring the permanency of the Institute was taken in February 1902 when, at the recommendation of Dr. Wright, negotiations were opened with the London School of Tropical Medicine for the affiliation of the Institute with that School. Shortly afterwards Sir Francis Lovell, representing the London School of Tropical Medicine, arrived in Singapore and the High Commissioner, Sir Frank Swettenham, offered him the Headship of the Institute 'as a gift to that School'. It was accepted and an agreement reached soon after provided for the appointment of the Medical Superintendant of the London School to succeed Dr. Hamilton Wright.[28]

Three years' unceasing work in the humid climate of Malaya cost Wright his health, but when he finally left in February 1903 his mission to organize a medical research centre was accomplished. It was on the advice of Wright that the research centre became more than the 'one-man Institute' which Swettenham admitted 'we always intended to create' but which would 'never give us any useful return for the money we have spent on it'.[29]

During his term in Malaya, Wright devoted himself to the study of the twin scourges of malaria and beri-beri. The notes compiled by him on beri-beri were the only source of information on the subject for many years in the medical world. 'He made the first systematic studies of the malaria parasites in Malaya, describing the species found and showing that they were not distinctive varieties peculiar to Malaya but the same in form and behaviour as the species found in Europe. In the wards of the hospitals he studied malarial fevers, and his epidemiolo-

gical observations in many parts of Malaya . . . bring to us the first coherent picture of the malaria problems of the country.[30]

The successor to Dr. Hamilton Wright was Dr. C.W. Daniels, Superintendent of the London School of Tropical Medicine, appointed under the scheme agreed to with the London School. A protégé of Sir Patrick Manson, Daniels arrived in Malaya after having achieved important research work in British Guiana, Nyasaland (with the Royal Commission on blackwater fever) and India, whither he was sent by Manson to confirm Ross's work on the mosquito transmission of malaria.[31] In his research work, Daniels was assisted by Dr. H.E. Durham, leader of the Beri-Beri Commission, and Dr. Wu Lien-Teh,[32] a Queen's Scholar who had distinguished himself at Cambridge and had undertaken important research work in Europe.

Daniels continued the work on beri-beri started by Wright, and made an exhaustive study of the mosquitoes found in Malaya, bringing 'exact knowledge where before there had been ignorance or confusion'. He prepared the ground for the revolutionary methods of mosquito control introduced by Malcolm Watson in Klang and other parts of Selangor.[33] Inspired, no doubt, in the first instance by Chamberlain's policy, Daniels 'saw the scientific study of tropical disease on the wide canvas of the colonial empire, with the great teaching schools in the United Kingdom as the centre, and a Colonial or Imperial Research Service as a necessary corollary'.[34] Soon after he arrived in Malaya in 1903, Daniels wrote:

> Many difficulties would be avoided if the authorities at the Colonial Office could see their way to the formation of a special Colonial or Imperial Service for the work of such institutes, paid either from a general fund or by contribution from a group of colonies. The members would then wherever stationed or employed, retain continuity of service, whilst a wider and more practical experience would then be gained. Such a service could be recruited from members of the medical services of the colonies, directly from the Schools of Tropical Medicine or elsewhere, and members of the service might, if necessary, be lent to the teaching staff of a school and paid by that school or employed in the rare cases where an expedition or commission was really required.[35]

From its inception the Institute had had a great deal of inde-

pendence. Although the Director was personally responsible to the Resident-General, he had the freedom to organize his department and to conduct research into whatever medical or scientific problem he thought warranted expert attention. This is in the spirit of all scientific inquiry. Much against his own personal views Swettenham as Resident-General and later as High Commissioner had bowed to the wishes of Hamilton Wright who was given sole responsibility in conducting research and general administration of the Institute. Soon after the arrival of Sir John Anderson as Governor the Institute was faced with a crisis. Judging from his various administrative and constitutional reforms during his term of office, Anderson appears to have had a passion for co-ordination and control from the top of the administrative pyramid. Any Government department that was not directly under his personal control was viewed with suspicion and disfavour. Anderson decided to reorganize the Institute. He apparently considered it a luxury which the Malay States could do without. Medical and scientific research is such that even after years of unceasing work results may not be forthcoming, but that in itself does not invalidate the research. Anderson, trained as a lawyer, had a curiously utilitarian mind for he judged the value of any public undertaking purely on its practical and tangible results which could be applied directly by the administrator. Perhaps this is excusable when his responsibility lay in producing the maximum development in the country at the minimum cost. The balance sheet rather than the spirit of inquiry moved the High Commissioner to write in August 1904 to the Colonial Office, suggesting the closing down of the Institute in Kuala Lumpur as a purely scientific research centre. Instead of being run by its Director, the Institute would be relegated to the position of one of the branches of the Medical Department, and instead of spending more money on research into human diseases, it would henceforth place greater emphasis on the diseases of economic plants and animals.[36]

Anderson's suggestions, if carried out, would so emasculate the medical research side of the Institute that its chances of doing good work would be reduced to a minimum. The proposals were regarded by Sir Patrick Manson as 'distinctly retrograde', and if implemented, would 'go far to check a movement of greatest promise and usefulness'.[37]

The brains behind Chamberlain's policy on tropical medicine and research, Manson had regarded the Kuala Lumpur Institute as 'the first instalment of a system of Crown Colony laboratories designed to throw light on tropical diseases and thereby and in other ways directly and indirectly benefit the colonies concerned'. Appealing for the continuation of the policy initiated by Chamberlain, Manson declared:

> Apart from humanitarian considerations the Colonial Office had come to recognise the fact that a main difficulty in the successful working of our tropical colonies lay in the health factor, that deaths, invalidings and inefficiency from local diseases burdened the revenues, interfered with continuity of administration, repressed the energy of the population and diverted funds which otherwise might have been invested profitably in remunerative public works.
>
> Moreover it was felt, I understand, that Great Britain in the matter of colonial medicine was not abreast of the times and that she was in this respect ignoring the responsibilities [which] the extent and value of her tropical possessions imposed upon her.

Manson deplored the fact that an undue proportion of the great discoveries of modern times in tropical medicine had been made by scientists of other countries. For example, the vibrio of cholera was discovered by a German, the bacillus of leprosy by a Norwegian, the plasmodium of malaria by a Frenchman, the bacilli of plague and dysentery by a Japanese, the transmitting agency of yellow fever by an American, the parasite of tropical anaemia by an Italian, and so on. So far ahead of Great Britain were the continental pathologists and epidemiologists that on several occasions when some important problem in human or animal disease had cropped up in the Colonies, foreign scientists had to be employed for its solution. It was with a view to correcting this 'not very creditable state of affairs' that the Schools of Tropical Medicine were established and the scheme of Colonial Research Laboratories formulated. The former had proved a great success, and there was every reason to believe that the latter would be equally so 'if planned and carried through on sound lines'. The combined scheme should commend itself to anyone who recognized 'the importance of the health factor in colonial development and the prestige to the nation'.[38]

Manson was appalled at the prospect of some shortsighted

public administrator wrecking this elaborate scheme to benefit not only the Empire but also mankind in general. The Kuala Lumpur Institute's research work, which was its primary and fundamental object, had been subordinated to utilitarian purposes such as water analysis and other duties ordinarily performed by a health officer. Although the Institute's buildings were planned on 'an extravagant scale', they could be fully utilized by expanding the activities of research to include a bacteriologist, entomologist, mycologist and chemist. In Manson's opinion,

> Dr. Daniels should have been put almost exclusively on research work and employed in public health work only as a consultant. He ought to have been put in a position to continue Dr. Hamilton Wright's investigations into the cause and nature of beri-beri and all his other work subordinated to this. To enable him to do this full notes of Dr. Wright's results and investigations ought to have been placed at his disposal and, in future, if the research side of the laboratory is to be continued, some arrangements should be made that will enable the incoming director to pick up the thread and continue the work of the outgoing director without serious interruption.
>
> The results of the investigations carried on at the laboratory should be regarded and treated as the property of the Government and should be forthcoming at once when called for.

Manson regretted the High Commissioner's proposal to discontinue the practice of having an independent Director for the Institute. With reference to Anderson's intention of giving priority to research into 'the diseases and interests of plants and animals,' Manson declared, 'Neither from a sentimental point of view nor from an economic point of view does this seem to be right, for surely the interests of the human population should take precedence of those of the lower animals and plants. The life and health of the official, the farmer, the mechanic and labourer are a much more valuable state asset than any number of cattle or acres of plants.'

Anderson's proposal to place the direction of the Institute in the hands of a committee, if carried out, would not 'conduce to harmony and efficiency' for there would be 'too many masters'. Nor would it be wise to hand it over to the Chief Medical Officer

whose time and energies were fully occupied by his own special administrative work and duties. In one of his reports Dr. Daniels had said that better opportunities for the study of tropical diseases than exist in Kuala Lumpur were to be found in the West Indies and Egypt, places which had the further advantage of being nearer to England. Anderson was apparently influenced by this 'unfortunate and not quite accurate observation' in arriving at his proposal to suppress the purely medical research work of the Institute. Manson argued that although certain tropical diseases might be advantageously studied in Egypt, the West Indies or Africa, Kuala Lumpur offered unique opportunities for the study of at least two diseases: beri-beri and sprue, the one affecting Chinese labourers, the other Europeans in the Far East and Malaya. It was superfluous to dwell on the economic boon that would accrue to the Malay States when the cause and cure of these diseases were discovered. In medical research of this nature, the prestige of the British Empire was at stake. It would be 'an infinite pity' should the efforts started by Hamilton Wright to elucidate the problems of beri-beri be abandoned 'and left perhaps for some continental or Japanese pathologist to solve'.

Anderson had proposed that from time to time 'a highly trained and qualified scientist' might be employed to undertake 'special investigations' in the Malay States. The answer to this was that such men were difficult to find, and even if found, highly trained scientists would not throw up their investigations and regular work in England for temporary and perhaps hazardous work in the tropics unless for very high pay. One of the objects of establishing tropical research laboratories was the training of a band of skilled and experienced investigators who would be always available for such special investigation. Such a project would be far more efficient and, in the long run, less expensive than the 'policy of panic' contemplated by the High Commissioner. The existence of research centres in the Colonies would raise the standard of the Colonial Medical Service as a whole and stimulate individual doctors and surgeons to observe and think, apart from the advantages to the local population. Further it would make it easier to publish any important life-saving discoveries in medicine soon after they were made. Manson pointed out that twenty years elapsed before the discovery of the malarial parasite was properly understood in British Colonies which

suffered from malaria, and twice that time before the cause and efficient treatment of the common but very disabling and frequently fatal disease, ankylostomiasis. 'Scandals of this sort,' cried Manson, 'would be obviated by the establishment of institutions whose business it would be to keep abreast of current discovery and see that it was at once made known and acted upon.'

The High Commissioner's remarks that 'the treatment and solution of the novel problems of public health must take precedence of special research' merely showed his ignorance of the proper function and aim of medical research, for what could be more important than the scourges of beri-beri and malaria to public health? If so wealthy a Government as that of the Federated Malay States were to abandon medical research work at the outset of a scheme which embraced the whole British Empire, it would be setting a poor example to less prosperous Colonies. Manson closed his appeal for better support for medical research in tropical diseases with these words:

> If the result in this instant does not appear to be commensurate with the expenditure, it should be borne in mind that the investigations the laboratory has concerned itself with are most difficult—that their solution has hitherto baffled medical science and that it is unreasonable to expect they will be brought to a successful issue in a few months. Of their ultimate solution I do not entertain the slightest doubt and moreover I believe that the scheme of Colonial laboratories is the most appropriate machinery for attaining this end.

The Secretary of State, Lord Lyttelton, fully endorsed the views of Sir Patrick Manson and urged Sir John Anderson to continue the policy originally formulated for the Institute for Medical Research, but the High Commissioner was adamant that the Institute should be reformed. It was probably at this time that the close liaison between the London School of Tropical Medicine and the Institute in Kuala Lumpur was severed. Dr. Henry Fraser, who succeeded Daniels as Director in 1906, was appointed not by a committee of the London School but directly by the Colonial Office, and the Institute itself ceased to exist as an independent body, responsible directly to the Resident-General, and became a branch of the Federal Medical Department.[29]

Beri-beri was a most serious menace to the tin industry for more than three decades. The disease reached its peak of devasta-

tion in 1896 when nearly 12,000 cases were admitted into State hospitals, and in 1904 it was third in the order of death rate in the Federated Malay States with an average mortality of 15 per cent.[40] The name of the disease is derived from a Singalese word meaning 'weakness', and the disease consists of progressive muscular weakness, dropsy and heart-failure. It particularly affected the Chinese working in the tin mines.

The first hint at the cause of the disease came in 1879-80, when there was first an outbreak at the Taiping gaol, followed soon after by an epidemic among the Chinese miners. At this time the Government military apothecary in Taiping thought the gaol diet of white rice and salt was not nutritious enough and lowered resistance to the agent of beri-beri. At any rate a complete change of diet was introduced at the gaol, which checked the outbreak and induced the State Governments to adopt it in Selangor and Negri Sembilan gaols with equal success. It was not possible, however, to persuade Chinese miners to do likewise.

Eijkman in 1890 had discovered experimental beri-beri in fowls which had been fed on rice from which the pericarp had been removed. The addition of the same pericarp to the rice cured them. Eijkman's important discovery was unfortunately submerged in the rising tide of medical interest in bacteriology.[41]

Various reasons were given for the cause of beri-beri. In 1879 Sir Hugh Low thought it might be caused by exposure to the cold night winds in the Taiping gaol, and a high wall was subsequently built as a wind-break to protect the prisoners. Ten years later it was suggested that the disease was caused by mining labourers working barefoot in water, and as a preventive, labourers were urged to wear boots and woollen socks. One doctor thought that the hot tropical sun had something to do with the upsets in the nervous system observable in beri-beri victims. In 1895 it was believed that 'poisoned gases' released as a result of opening a new mine were responsible for beri-beri, and a sanatorium was built at Port Dickson by the sea for patients from Negri Sembilan and Selangor.

William Braddon, State Surgeon of Negri Sembilan, in 1893 had noticed that Malays and Tamils were immune from beri-beri even in the worst areas. He continued researches and in 1900 put forward the theory that the disease was due to a poison in the white polished rice not present in parboiled or *kampong* rice

prepared by the Malays themselves. But despite these early pointers (Eijkman's discovery was not known till many years later) to a dietary cause, research was directed to looking for an organism such as had recently been found in the case of many other diseases—typhoid, tuberculosis, cholera and plague—and it was not until Dr. Henry Fraser's time at the Institute for Medical Research that Braddon's theory was tested.

Both Hamilton Wright and C.W. Daniels had been pursuing the blind lead of the infection theory, and Braddon himself went astray with his rice-toxin theory.[42] Looking for this toxic principle in food, all the early researchers were 'in the position of a man hunting in a dark cellar for a black cat that wasn't there'.[43] When Fraser took over the directorship of the Institute, he had on his staff a chemist and an entomologist. With Dr. A. Stanton, who had joined the Institute in May 1907, and Dr. W. Fletcher, a medical officer in the Civil Service, Fraser set out to experiment with the two forms of polished and unpolished rice. The result of the Durian Tipus experiment was decisive. A party of 300 Javanese labourers employed in road construction in Negri Sembilan was divided into two groups, one of which was given Indian parboiled rice and the other ordinary white rice. Eighty-seven days later beri-beri broke out amongst those labourers fed on white rice and continued until Indian parboiled rice was substituted. There was no outbreak amongst those fed on Indian parboiled rice. This was a striking proof of Braddon's theory that beri-beri was intimately connected with the eating of white polished rice. Braddon, however, persisted in his belief in a poison in the white rice.[44] Between 1907 and 1910 Fraser and Stanton conducted a series of exhaustive tests on various samples of rice, but they failed to isolate a poison. This led them to consider the possibility of some nutritional defect in the diet. At this point they turned to animal experiments, taking the lead from Eijkman and Grijns who had observed experimental beri-beri in fowls fed on white rice. Their research was now bearing fruit, for they established beyond doubt that the disease was caused by the presence or absence of rice polishings. Although Fraser and Stanton failed to isolate the vital substance in rice polishings which could prevent beri-beri, their findings were sufficiently important for the Government to take steps in the direction of eradicating the disease. It accordingly prohibited the use of white

rice in all Government institutions but did not prohibit the sale of white rice, as food riots were feared should a ban be imposed. By 1918 an extract of rice polishings was produced and in 1926 the anti-neuritic factors, later called Vitamin B1 and Vitamin B2, were isolated.[45]

Malaria for centuries had been the main cause of death, disease, disablement, and social and economic stagnation in some of the most fertile regions of the earth. Until Ross's discovery in 1897 in India, the cause of the disease was thought to be the miasmata arising from swampy land, literally *mala aria*.[46] The mystery of Angkor Wat may be related to the anopheles mosquito; the decline of the power of the Indo-Malay kingdoms of Sri Vijaya and Majapahit may have been brought about by endemic malaria. Chronic malaria amongst the Malays may account for the absence of any significant development in native agriculture amongst a people whose traditional livelihood had been closely related to the cultivation of swamp rice. The first contact with malaria of an 'unsalted' or unprepared community is always disastrous, with the parasite and the human host in violent disharmony. The early pioneers in tin mining in Malaya paid a heavy price for daring to venture into a primeval forest where no human host had existed before. In 1857 a party of eighty-seven Chinese miners poled their way up the winding Klang River to an area where modern Kuala Lumpur stands and there started to dig for tin. Within a month of their arrival all but eighteen of the men were dead, the survivors retiring from this unknown terror.[47] Over the years the malarial parasite and the human host may arrive at an equilibrium, 'to an endemic balance with the community maintaining a social integrity at the price of a constant burden of sickness'.[48] It is impossible to minimize the social, economic and political importance of a disease which killed or enfeebled administrators and labourers, farmers and miners, Governors and the governed.

Malaria was a nameless dread in Penang for decades after its foundation in 1786. Two army surgeons stationed there in the early part of the nineteenth century described the ravages of 'Pinang Fever' in these words:

Fever is observed to bear the large proportion of one-third of the whole number of ascertained causes of death among the adult resi-

dents. This island has long been noted for the very fatal form in which the disease presents itself. So insidious was its approach—scarcely one attacked with it recovering—that it was dreaded by medical men and others as a new and undescribed affection, totally irremediable and distinguished from all other fevers by its uniformly fatal issue. . . .[49]

Between 1805 and 1830 twenty European civil servants died, half of them directly because of fevers. Raffles in 1808 was sent to convalesce in Malacca after illness contracted in Penang where 'the climate had proved fatal to two Governors, all the council, and many of the settlers'.[50]

In the Malay States malaria appeared in isolated areas when the jungle was opened for mining, and since general sickness then was complicated by dysentery and beri-beri, little attention was paid to the 'fevers' which carried off hundreds of mining labourers. Before Ross's discovery the fevers of the Malayan jungle were accepted with fatalistic resignation as the price for working in the tropics. Where the tin industry had its immediate scourge of beri-beri, the rubber plantations for years lay under the evil cloud of malaria which darkened the early history of the rubber industry as more and more land was brought under cultivation. The conquest, or at any rate the control, of malaria was vital to the plantation industry.

Sir Patrick Manson, a graduate of Aberdeen University who had worked for 24 years in China, was the first man to prove the relationship between insects and tropical diseases when, in 1877, he showed that the filaria which caused elephantiasis was carried by the culex mosquito.[51] In 1880 a young medical officer named Alphonse Laveran in the French Army stationed in Algeria discovered the malarial parasite in the blood corpuscles.[52] In 1894 Manson met a young Indian Army doctor named Ronald Ross, and showed him the malaria parasite in the blood. Italian scientists in the meanwhile had confirmed Laveran's discovery. Manson himself believed that the life-cycle of the parasite could be completed only in the body of some suctorial insect. Ross returned to India with these vital clues from Manson, and in August 1897, he triumphantly tracked down the malarial parasite in the stomach of the anopheles mosquito which, as proved in 1898 by the Italian scientist Giovanni Grassi, was the only genus capable of transmitting malaria. Conclusive evidence was sup-

plied in 1900 by Manson himself who experimented with infected mosquitoes on his own son.[53]

Ross's discovery, however, was treated by the medical world 'with undisguised incredulity; when his work was confirmed, it was said to be interesting, but valueless.[54]

Recognition of the importance of Ross's work came later; the immediate result of Ross's discovery supplied the vital clue to the problem of malarial control and opened a new era in tropical medicine, since it stimulated the search for insect hosts of yellow fever, plague and many other diseases. Thus when the Kuala Lumpur Institute for Medical Research was opened in 1900 the cause of malaria was known to the medical world, but medical authorities were 'either so astounded, so incredulous, or so fatalistic, that no real attempt was made to utilise the new knowledge until 1901. The honour of being the first in the Empire, and perhaps in the world, to use it successfully belongs to the Government of the Federated Malay States'.[55]

The man who made practical use of the knowledge from Ross's discovery was Malcolm Watson, a young medical officer in the service of the Malay States. While doctors and research workers like Daniels, Braddon, Stanton and Fraser were trying to solve the mystery of beri-beri, Watson was attracted by the problem of malarial control.

> It appeared to me that ward after ward might be built to accommodate the increasing number of patients without any very substantial advantage to the community; for only a small fraction of the sick would ever come to hospital; or, if they came, could be accommodated in the hospital, however much it was likely to be extended. It was clear to me that, even at the risk of being accused of neglecting my patients and 'wasting my time on research', it was my duty to spend some of my time in studying the disease outside of the wards, and to make some attempt to prevent people from getting the disease.[56]

Watson accordingly set out to discover where the malaria cases came from, and to mark out on a plan the breeding places of anopheles mosquitoes. At this point Watson was faced with the choice of forcing quinine on the population, or implementing the Italian method of screening houses and using mosquito nets, or applying Ross's recommendation, extensively applied in West Africa, for mosquito reduction. Anything that held water—wells,

ditches, swamps, tin-cans, coconut shells—teemed with larvae, and mosquitoes multiplied by the million. Watson could not rely on the active co-operation of the local inhabitants, particularly Chinese labourers, who would resist any attempt to enforce the use of quinine. The compulsory use of mosquito nets was impossible, and financial reasons precluded the screening of all houses. The large area of swamp in Klang (where Watson was working) prohibited the use of oil or petrol as a temporary eradicator. Watson finally decided that draining the swamps around Klang was the only answer to a most difficult problem.[57]

Watson proposed to the Government that Klang town should be drained to test the new mosquito theory. A sum of $30,000 was voted for the project which was undertaken by the Sanitary Board. The result was a miracle: within a couple of years 'malaria had ceased to be of any practical consequence'.[58]

Port Swettenham was opened in September 1901, and Government servants and labourers were transferred there from Klang. Before the year was out 118 of the 176 Government servants went down with fever; malaria had struck with unprecedented force and virulence. The High Commissioner ordered the closure of the Port, and a Commission which included Hamilton Wright and Watson was appointed to advise the Government. The lesson of Klang was applied to Port Swettenham, and an area of about 100 acres was drained and bunded to keep out sea water. Within six weeks Port Swettenham was re-opened and work proceeded as if malaria had never existed there.[59]

Following these two astounding successes in mosquito control, which cost the Government a total of $80,000, the death rate in the hospitals at Klang and Port Swettenham declined steeply.

DEATHS IN HOSPITALS AT KLANG AND PORT SWETTENHAM[60]

	1900	*1901*	*1902*	*1903*	*1904*	*1905*
Fever	259	368	59	46	48	45
Other diseases	215	214	85	69	74	68
Total	474	582	144	115	122	113

Watson was at first puzzled by the corresponding decrease in the number of deaths from diseases other than malaria. On a little reflection, the answer flashed on him. In his hospital work he had found that many of his patients harboured malaria parasites without actually showing the symptoms of malignant malaria,

but the parasites in the blood had lowered their resistance to other kinds of illness, such as dysentery. This led him to conclude that the elimination of malaria in a community not only prevented deaths that were recognizably due to malaria, but it also saved the lives of many who succumbed to diseases that were really the unrecognized consequences of malaria. The significance of these conclusions was impressed upon the Government and managers of rubber plantations where industrial efficiency could be, and was, seriously affected directly and indirectly by malaria. From the experience of Klang and Port Swettenham, Watson advised the Federal Government to drain the Kapar area of Klang district, and after an inquiry, the Government voted the sum of $110,000 for a drainage scheme which freed a further 24,000 acres of land from malaria.[61]

The measures taken to control malaria at Klang and Port Swettenham were quite empirical with a strong element of pure fluke, for at that time it was not known which species of Anopheles carried malaria or what their habits were. It happened that the mosquitoes which caused malaria at Klang and Port Swettenham were *A. 'umbrosus'* which bred in stagnant pools in the forest, and the draining or elimination of such pools removed *A. 'umbrosus'*. Had Watson applied the same methods, as he did later, in the hilly districts, he would have met with disaster, for *A. maculatus* would thrive under conditions which eliminated *A. 'umbrosus'*.[62] However, the lessons learnt from Klang and Port Swettenham were sufficiently conclusive for Watson to apply the same methods of control in other districts under similar conditions. Two simple rules were laid down: human habitations should be built at least half a mile from any jungle pool or swamp, and jungle should be felled and pools drained for a similar distance. The reason for this is that *A. 'umbrosus'* cannot fly for more than half a mile. By observing these rules new rubber estates of thousands of acres were opened without the suffering caused by attacks of malaria.[63]

Watson now felt that he should devote all his time to the study of the problem of malaria control. Accordingly in 1907 he resigned from Government service and became medical adviser to the rubber estates which were then mushrooming all over Selangor as well as the other States. Watson's resignation from Government service was a reflection on the official policy with regard

to full-time medical research. Fortunately planters and managing directors of rubber estates had been convinced of the importance of malarial control to the rubber industry, and they willingly paid for his services and co-operated with him in whatever experiments he proposed to make. The results of these experiments conferred a boon not only on the rubber estates concerned but on the country as a whole. Had it been left to the Institute for Medical Research to conduct investigations, the economic development of Malaya might well have suffered a severe setback.

When malaria appeared to be finally under control, the disease reared its ugly head in an apparently more virulent form. Around 1909 an outburst of malaria spread to estates in hilly regions which had hitherto been thought to be the healthiest. The disease appeared where it was least expected. Death rates which averaged 150 leapt to 400 and 500 when labourers arrived at a newly-opened district. European planters and Government officials as well as labourers went down with fever. Public works no less than private estates were often brought to the verge of a standstill. The persistence of malaria in hill land was due to the appearance of *A. maculatus,* which breeds in clear springs and fast-flowing streams. Watson decided to attack the problem at the root; the elimination of mosquitoes. He found that unless the composition of the water in these hill streams could be altered in such a way as to make it impossible for *A. maculatus* to breed, the only way to get rid of the insects was to put the streams underground in pipes. The crucial experiment was carried out on Seafield Estate, near Klang. The managing directors of the company voted a sum of £3,000 for the project. Draining these streams was a costly and difficult job. Work started in 1911, and when it was completed in 1918, malaria was brought under control.[64]

The discovery of *A. maculatus* for a while threatened to undo all the work done to control *A. 'umbrosus'*. The latter was eliminated when the jungle was cleared and stagnant pools drained, but the former bred and thrived in streams when the jungle was cleared. It appeared as if Nature was playing a grisly practical joke on Man, for if he cleared the jungle *A. maculatus* would appear; if he left the jungle alone, *A. 'umbrosus'* would spread havoc. Ultimately it was found that as the habits of the two species of Anopheles were different, varying methods of

control had to be applied. By not clearing the jungle around hilly streams *A. maculatus* could be suppressed. But this was discovered only at great cost and inconvenience to the Government.

Between 1904 and 1910 more than 81,294 cases of malaria were reported in the hospitals of the Federated Malay States. From 1911 malaria was sweeping the country in frightening waves of epidemic; the number of malaria cases for that year alone was 21,404. One of the worst spots was the exclusive official residential area around Federal Hill in Kuala Lumpur. Until 1906 the area was free from malaria, but when jungle clearing started, sickness spread amongst Government officials, some of whom refused to live in the area until malaria could be brought under control. The formation of the Malaria Advisory Board in 1911 was an important step in bringing malaria under control in the Kuala Lumpur area. Under the management of the Board a system of sub-soil drainage and oiling was introduced and malaria was finally brought under reasonable control in town and country, on flat land and on hilly plantations.[65]

Significantly beri-beri and malaria were intimately connected with the rise and development of the tin and rubber industries which gave Malaya its wealth and prosperity and provided employment for thousands of immigrant Chinese and Indians and a small number of Malaysians. Although the final discovery of the cause of beri-beri was made long after the close of the period under study, the work done by Stanton and Fraser, not to mention Braddon, Daniels and Hamilton Wright, removed the current misconceptions about the nature of the disease and prepared the way for its final solution. The successful control of malaria through the work of Malcolm Watson facilitated the establishment, at a lower cost in terms of human lives than would otherwise have been the case, of the rubber industry which was to prove Malaya's economic, social and political salvation.

NOTES

1 Papers relating to the Protected Malay States, C. 2410, 1879, pp. 19, 29.
2 *Ibid.* C. 4958, pp. 5-10.
3 *Ibid.* pp. 25-7.
4 *Ibid.* p. 89.
5 A.R., F.M.S. for 1891, C. 6858, p. 31.
6 A.R., F.M.S. for 1893, C. 7546, pp. 13, 27.
7 A.R., F.M.S. for 1891, C. 6858, p. 29.
8 A.R., F.M.S. for 1884, C. 4958, p. 25.

9 A.R., F.M.S. for 1891, C. 6858, p. 30.
10 A.R., F.M.S. for 1884, C. 4958, p. 88.
11 S. Vethavanam, *Medical Work in the Malay States, 1874-1914*, academic exercise for the degree of B.A. Hons., University of Malaya, pp. 12-13.
12 J. Amery, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, Vol. 4, *1901-1903*, p. 222.
13 Sir Patrick Manson (1844-1922) was a graduate of Aberdeen University. He spent 24 years in China, first in Formosa, then in Amoy and Hong Kong where in 1877 he established the fact that elephantiasis and other lesions were caused by filaria and transmitted by the culex mosquito. (D. Guthrie, *History of Medicine*, pp. 157-8.) In July 1897, on the recommendation of Lord Lister, President of the Royal Society, Manson was appointed Medical Adviser to the Colonial Office. Thus began the fruitful association between Manson and Chamberlain, 'the man who had the knowledge to suggest, and the man who had the power to act'. One of Manson's students was Ronald Ross, who was then researching into the causes of malaria. Ross kept Manson fully informed of the progress of the momentous experiment carried out at Secunderabad. Manson for years had deplored the lack of all facilities for the study of tropical medicine, and when Ross finally established the connexion between malaria and the mosquito, Manson was spurred on to action. The result was the establishment of the London School of Tropical Medicine, where he worked till his death. (J. Amery, *op. cit.* pp. 224-6.)
14 Correspondence on the 'Establishment of Schools of Tropical Medicine', containing Chamberlain's circular dispatch of 28th May 1903, to the Governors of all Colonies, Cd. 1598.
15 *Ibid.* p. 3.
16 *Ibid.*
17 Amery, *op. cit.* pp. 222-3.
18 Correspondence on the Establishment of Schools of Tropical Medicine, Cd. 1598, p. 4.
19 Amery, *op. cit.* p. 227.
20 *Ibid.* p. 229.
21 Correspondence on the Establishment of Schools of Tropical Medicine, Chamberlain to Lord Lister, 6th July 1898.
22 *The Institute for Medical Research, 1900-1950*, by various authors, pp. 37-8.
23 *Ibid.* p. 39.
24 Correspondence on the Establishment of Schools of Tropical Medicine, Report on the I.M.R. for 1902 by Dr. Hamilton Wright, Cd. 1598,
25 *Ibid.*
26 *Ibid.*
27 *Ibid.*
28 *Ibid.*
29 Swettenham to the Colonial Office, 30th May 1901, GD/C.
30 *The Institute for Medical Research, 1900-1950*, p. 40.

31 *Ibid.* p. 42.

32 Dr. Wu Lien-Teh (Ngoh Lean Tuck), 1879-1960. Wu Lien-Teh's parents were immigrants from Kwangtung who had settled and prospered in Penang. His father was a goldsmith and his mother was a resourceful woman who was given at birth the inauspicious name of Choy-Fan, meaning 'Causing Worry'. Wu was educated at the Penang Free School and won the coveted Queen's Scholarship in 1896. He proceeded to Cambridge where in 1902 he qualified in medicine with the highest honours. He was elected to the Emmanuel College Research Studentship and studied under Ronald Ross at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine; under Karl Fraenkel at the Bacteriological Institute of Halle (Germany); and under Elie Metchnikoff at the Pasteur Institute of Paris. When his research studentship was renewed in 1903, Wu was advised by the Colonial Office to join the voluntary staff in the newly-established Institute for Medical Research in Kuala Lumpur, where he worked for a year (1903-4) under Dr. C.W. Daniels whom he had met at the Seamen's Hospital in London. After leaving the I.M.R. he practised for a while in Penang; in 1907 he left for China where he played an outstanding part in controlling the disastrous outbreak of bubonic plague in Manchuria and Northern China in 1910-11 and became the first Director of the Manchurian Plague Prevention Service. From 1931-7 he was Inspector-General of the National Quarantine Service of China. He represented China at a number of International Conferences, notably the Plague Conference in Mukden (1911), the Opium Conferences at the Hague (1912-13), and was an expert adviser to the League of Nations. For his service to humanity he was decorated by the governments of China, France and Russia and received honours from the Tokyo Imperial University and Johns Hopkins University. Recognition and honours from the British Government were conspicuous by their absence. Dr. Wu once told the writer that one of the reasons why he left Malaya for service in China was that the Government in Malaya did not give him a position of responsibility commensurate with his qualifications and wide experience in research. His was not an isolated case, for the Civil Service being closed to non-Europeans and non-Malays, there was no chance for anyone, even with the highest academic qualifications, to serve the Malayan Government in a fitting capacity. Dr. Wu returned to Malaya before the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941 and set up private practice in Ipoh, Perak. He died in Penang in the early part of 1960. (See *Plague Fighter*, by Wu Lien-Teh, Cambridge, 1959; and *The Institute for Medical Research, 1900-1950*, p. 44.)

33 *The Institute for Medical Research, 1900-1950*, p. 43.

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*

36 The original dispatch by Sir John Anderson to the Secretary of State unfortunately is not available. The following account of the proposed changes in the organisation of the I.M.R. is based on a lengthy

memorandum by Sir Patrick Manson who was asked by the Secretary of State to comment on the High Commissioner's dispatch. Anderson's views are deduced from quotations and references in Manson's memorandum, dated 28th September 1904.

37 Sir Patrick Manson to the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 28th September 1904, C.O.D.
38 *Ibid.*
39 *The Institute for Medical Research, 1900-1950*, p. 49.
40 Resident-General's Report for 1904, p. 6.
41 M. Watson, *Rural Sanitation in the Tropics*, p. 37.
42 *The Institute for Medical Research, 1900-1950*, p. 50.
43 *Ibid.* p. 98.
44 *Ibid.* p. 50.
45 *Ibid.* Chapter II, *passim.*
46 Amery, *op. cit.* p. 225.
47 See J.M. Gullick, *The Story of Early Kuala Lumpur*, Chapter I.
48 *The Institute for Medical Research, 1900-1950*, p. 146.
49 *Ibid.* p. 128.
50 *Ibid.*
51 D. Guthrie, *op. cit.* p. 357.
52 *Ibid.* p. 358.
53 *Ibid.*
54 M. Watson, 'Twenty-Five Years of Malarial Control in the Malay Peninsula', *British Malaya*, January 1927.
55 *Ibid.*
56 Watson, *Rural Sanitation in the Tropics*, pp. 6-7.
57 *Ibid.* p. 8.
58 *Ibid.*
59 *The Institute for Medical Research, 1900-1950*, pp. 158-9.
60 Watson, *Rural Sanitation in the Tropics*, p. 10.
61 *Ibid.* pp. 10-11.
62 *The Institute for Medical Research, 1900-1950*, p. 159.
63 Watson, *Rural Sanitation in the Tropics*, p. 12.
64 *Ibid.* pp. 13-19.
65 *The Institute for Medical Research, 1900-1950*, pp. 160-4.

7

EDUCATION

THE BEGINNINGS OF A SCHOOL SYSTEM

At the time of British intervention in Malaya, the principle that it was the duty of the State to educate its citizens was widely accepted in Europe; England signified her acceptance of this responsibility by passing the Elementary Education Bill of 1870. In the Malay States, however, the primary duties of the Residents during the first decade of British rule were to maintain law and order, to systematize the State finances and to create an honest administration out of the chaos that had existed before. Thus the initiation of a system of education had to wait till the more urgent administrative and social services, such as roads, railways and bridges, government offices and residencies, hospitals and health centres, had been provided for. In the absence of any well-developed indigenous system of Malay education, the task for the administrator was doubly difficult: he had not only to build schools of a modern type but also to create a need for secular education.

In the more populous villages, Muslim religious teachers disseminated a little of their own knowledge of the Koran amongst the faithful. According to an official report, these voluntary religious teachers would teach

> day after day long passages of the Koran in the Arabic, which they do not understand, and with the most patient efforts to impart the correct pronunciation, intonation and phraseology, although they cannot either read or write in their own Jawi character or, indeed, in any other, the names of their pupils in their classes.[1]

There are similarities of teaching aims and methods between this and the Burmese system where native education was centred round the monasteries under the direction of Buddhist clerics. But defective as they were, Buddhist and Islamic religious instruction could be regarded as part of an education in the older sense, teaching the way of life which, though limited in worldly outlook, was infinite in time. The aim of teaching the Buddhist child 'to look on life as a period of probation in a universal scheme of things' had its parallel in the religious education of the Malays, who probably were less troubled by the fear of death and the hereafter than the infidels who settled in the country. But such instruction 'did not encourage the intellect to criticize the social and religious foundations of society'[2] and the other-worldly outlook inculcated by native religious teachers fitted ill with the material scheme of things created by the British.

The first official mention of education in Perak was made in Sir Hugh Low's report for 1878, when he wrote: 'This is a new establishment instituted in the hope of inducing a desire for education amongst the children of the Rajas and others at Sayong.' This was the keynote of educational administration for the following decade. Until the development of communications by road and rail put the rural Malays in touch with the centres of administration and economic activity, it was almost impossible to organize schools for them. Indeed when schools were first made available the Malays, distrustful of the new-fangled secular education introduced by the white man, refused to send their children to school. Time and again the British administrator, with all the good intentions in the world, would find that he had created something for which there was no demand. Like the idea of a hospital, the school in the modern sense was something alien to the Malay mind, and breaking down the prejudice against secular instruction was not least amongst the problems of the administrator and educationist.

Had the population of the country been purely Malay, the question of education would have been relatively simple, but the presence of large numbers of Chinese and a growing number of Indians greatly complicated matters. For many years the population in Selangor had a higher proportion of immigrant Chinese than Malays, and the census taken in 1901 showed that the Chinese also outnumbered the Malays in Perak. The total Chinese

population in the Federated Malay States in 1901 amounted to 303,000 while the Malay portion numbered only 10,000 more than this.[3]

Amongst the Malays, the child element was quite normal in relation to the total population of the race and was widely scattered throughout the country. On the other hand, the vast majority of the Chinese and Indians were adults, and because of the shifting nature of the immigrant population, the number of children was abnormally small. In Selangor, for example, the 1901 census showed that in a total of 110,000 Chinese only 7.7 per cent were females of all ages and about 7.5 per cent children of both sexes below fifteen years of age. In Perak, out of a total of 149,375 Chinese only 6,208 were below fifteen years of age; and in an Indian population of 34,710 only 4,408. It was estimated that in 1901 there were in the Federated Malay States about 70,000 children of school-going age, but only 9,000 of them attended any recognized school.[4]

A characteristic of the period was the rise of townships: Taiping, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur and Seremban were important centres of mining and commerce, besides being the administrative capitals of the State Governments, With the growth of an urban, settled population, which consisted mainly of Chinese and Indians, the provision of basic schooling became an urgent administrative matter.

As in everything else that made for law, order and material progress, the initiative in education had to be taken by the Resident and the British officers acting under him.[5] The first properly organized schools were two or three Government English schools in Perak and Selangor between 1883 and 1885.[6] These were followed by vernacular schools in the same places, but the spread of Malay schools could only reach the more distant districts as roads were made to establish communication. English schools, as a rule, were confined to the larger towns. In the early years in almost every case the initiative in starting schools was taken by the Government which paid for the buildings and supervised the work of the schools. Christian Missions which had been established in the Straits Settlements extended their educational work in the Malay States as conditions appeared more settled. Towards the end of the century when the Mission schools were proving more successful than their Government counterparts,

the Mission authorities were invited in the case of some of the English schools to take them over and administer them, but this offer was not extended to include the vernacular schools for Malay children.

As education was part of the manifold duties of the Resident, schools under the Government were badly managed. Spreading education amongst the rural Malays was difficult enough, but the absence of a separate Education Department with its own officers made supervision of schools a serious problem. It was held that the vernacular school under its native master, if not kept fairly constantly under European supervision, might be inculcating in its actual practice habits that were 'quite the reverse of those of diligence, punctuality, cleanliness and care', whatever its ethical theories with respect to them might be. While a good school could be 'the most powerful human means of training the intelligence and forming character', a badly-managed school might become 'a hotbed of idleness, dissimulation, dishonesty and every evil habit'.[7]

In almost every report, the Residents complained of the reluctance of parents to send their children to school, and the indifference of the children themselves was an obstacle to progress. Part of the trouble lay in the absence of any special officer whose sole duty would be to foster the cause of education, to find out the defects of such system as existed, to overcome the prejudices of parents and encourage teachers, and generally make his special charge all those educational matters which devolved on no one in particular.

To overcome the reluctance of Malay parents to send their children to school, the Selangor State Government passed a law in June 1891, making it compulsory for Malay boys aged between seven and fourteen to attend school, if there was one within a radius of two miles of the children's homes. Parents and guardians responsible for their children's schooling were liable to a penalty of five dollars or simple imprisonment not exceeding fourteen days in default of payment, if they failed to send their children to school without any reasonable excuse for such non-attendance.

In 1900 a similar law was passed for the whole of Negri Sembilan, although it is reported that Sungei Ujong in Negri Sembilan was the true pioneer of compulsory education for Malay boys. W.F.B. Paul, British Resident in Sungei Ujong from 1881 to

1893, had opened three Malay schools in his district in 1884, but two years later he described them as 'complete failures', and by 1887 the average attendance of the three schools had dropped to 40 and they were in danger of closing down entirely. In this predicament the Sungei Ujong State Council passed regulations apparently making school attendance compulsory. No official records exist to prove this, but G. Sutcliffe writing in 1955 in *Malayan Historical Journal* deals with the subject in an unofficial manner.

After the passage of these laws, school attendance in Selangor and Negri Sembilan showed a marked improvement, and in 1901 it was suggested that attendance should be be made compulsory for all the federated States. The main objection to this, however, was that it would not be easy to enforce the law where Malay girls were concerned, for by custom and tradition Malay women then lived a very secluded life, and forcing Malay girls to go to school might be construed as a violation of Malay custom and religion. The proposal was accordingly shelved.

Pahang and Perak refrained from compulsion for different reasons. In the former State it was exceedingly difficult to organize and staff schools because of the lack of a well-developed system of roads and communications and because it was the poorest of the four states. A law for compulsory school attendance would have created more problems than the Government could deal with, and wisely it allowed education to take its natural course. Perak, right from the beginning, had been the pioneer of education in the Malay States, and throughout the early years of development it had provided the largest number of schools for Malay children. In terms of absolute figures, Perak had an average of more than three times the number of children attending school, compared with the other States. It had the distinction also of being the first to set up a Department of Education with a formal Inspector of Schools. It was not till 1916 that Perak passed *The School Attendance Enactment* (similar to those in Selangor and Negri Sembilan) making school attendance for Malay boys compulsory.

It is important to note here that free and compulsory primary education for Malay boys had its beginning in 1891, possibly earlier in Sungei Ujong. From the administrative point of view the individual States seemed to enjoy a certain degree of auto-

nomy in educational matters, although a Federal Inspector of Schools was appointed in 1897. The post of Federal Inspector was, however, abolished in 1906, and the Departments of Education of the Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlements were amalgamated under one Director of Education, and the first man to hold that post was Mr. J.B. Elcum. In the Straits Settlements the Director of Public Instruction (as he was then called) had long had effective control over the whole educational system of the Colony. The Federal Inspector in the Federated Malay States, on the other hand, was merely an inspecting officer who interfered as little as possible in local State administration. Soon after his appointment, Elcum suggested that the new Director of Education should have the same powers in the Federated Malay States as in the Colony, and such powers should be clearly defined. Apparently an enactment was passed in 1907, defining the powers of the Director of Education, but the exact terms are not known. We may, however, assume that from 1907 the State Education Departments began to lose gradually that autonomy which they had enjoyed for about two decades before the Federal Department assumed complete control over education, a feature of educational administration which has been retained to this day.

By 1890 education had become sufficiently important to warrant the appointment of Inspectors of Schools in Perak and Selangor. H.B. Collinge was appointed to Perak and at the end of the year the Resident was able to report that the result of Collinge's 'zealous exertions' had been such that the cause of education had been 'materially advanced' and the prospects for the future were 'decidedly hopeful'.[8] The Resident of Selangor, W.E. Maxwell, had at the same time obtained the services of the Rev. F.W. Haines to supervise some of the schools of the State and to teach English to the children of the Rajas as well as to the Sultan and the Heir-Presumptive. As most of the vernacular and some of the English schools were purely Government institutions built, maintained and staffed by the Government, the Inspector was in each State *ex officio* their manager also.

While education was not the responsibility of any special department, expenditure on it was meagre, haphazard and probably wasted. The cost of education to the Perak Government in 1887 was $1,452 and in the following year it was even less.[9]

After the appointment of an Inspector of Schools, education received more careful attention and Government expenditure was increased. Again taking Perak as an example, the State in 1893 spent $12.95, equivalent to £1.6*s.od.*, per head of school population. The English Board School expenditure at the same period was £1. 3*s.* 0*d.* per head.[10]

EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION IN PERAK

	1890	*1891*	*1892*	*1893*
Scholars	1,524	2,780	2,893	3,358
Expenditure	$23,968	$32,066	$39,299	$42,716

The big difference in expenditure between 1887 and 1893 may be attributed to the capital outlay on school buildings, equipment and salaries for an increased staff. By 1891 there were 60 schools in Perak, of which 9 were English. Of the English schools 7 were Government institutions and 2 were Catholic Missionary. The rest were Malay vernacular schools.[11]

Although it would have been easy to double the school enrolment by doubling expenditure, Swettenham was against moving too fast. 'What we spend on education at present,' he said, 'is too small a proportion of our revenue, but until the railways under construction are completed, I fear we cannot greatly increase the expenditure on other services. After next year [1893], however, there will be funds available, and education should have a first call upon them.'[12]

In educational matters Government's first duty was naturally towards Malay children. This policy was substantially unaltered where vernacular education was concerned until after the First World War, although in 1891 it was considered desirable that the Chinese who formed 'so important an element of the settled and of the moving population in the Straits and the Native States, should acquire a knowledge of English'.[13] Catholic Missionaries were the first to move into the field of Tamil vernacular education. They chose to work in the Krian district of Perak where the sugar plantations employed a large number of Tamil labourers.

The leading English school in Perak during the last decade of the nineteenth century was the Government Central School in Taiping, opened in 1883 and renamed King Edward VII School in 1901. In 1895 an English school was opened in Ipoh

by an Englishman, the Rev. W.E. Horley, under the auspices of the American Methodist Episcopal Mission, and by a special concession, it was given a Government grant right from the start. This school was subsequently named the Anglo-Chinese School, to honour the local Chinese who gave generously to the foundation and extension of the school. Subsequently many other English schools started by the Methodist Mission in other parts of the country were also called Anglo-Chinese Schools, with the addition of the name of the district or town.

In 1895 Perak had 10 English schools, 84 Malay schools, and 2 Tamil schools. Out of a total school population of 4,258 children, 534 including 70 Malays were in English schools. The English schools were: Taiping Central; Taiping Girls; Anglo-Tamil, Taiping; Anglo-Chinese—Kamunting, Kuala Kangsar, Parit Buntar and Teluk Anson; Methodist Mission, Ipoh; French Mission, Bagan Serai and Taiping. Except for the last three, all were Government schools.[14] In Selangor the largest Government English school was the Victoria Institution—destined to be the largest and best-equipped school in the Federated Malay States and a showplace of the Government—which was the outcome in the first place of a desire (prompted from the wings by the Resident) of His Highness the late Sultan Abdul Samad of Selangor and the chief native inhabitants of Kuala Lumpur to erect a memorial of the late Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and this was willingly carried into effect by the Government.[15]

Although the number of Malay schools was much larger than that of English schools, atttendance in the former was very poor in the beginning. The cause was rightly traced to the lack of any religious instruction, and the Inspector of Schools for Perak decided to introduce the teaching of the Koran in 1891, after which there was a substantial increase in attendance. The teaching of the Koran consisted of the pupils learning to read the Arabic scripts by rote, 'without comprehending their signification'. This was regarded as a preliminary to further instruction at the adult stage by religious teachers who would expound the doctrines of the Prophet to those who wished to learn.[16]

In secular instruction Malay children were taught reading and writing in their own language, 'a little arithmetic and geography, and habits of discipline, obedience and cleanliness'. That, as far as the authorities were concerned, sufficed for the ordinary

Malay child. The Resident of Perak declared that those who required an English education could 'obtain it at the Central School in Taiping, or in the institutions of the Colony'.[17]

Primary eduction in the Malay States was well under way when the Federation was inaugurated. In Perak a total of 97 Government schools and 3 private institutions with State assistance were under Government inspection.

	Boys' Schools	*Girls' Schools*
English	9	1
Malay	81	7
Tamil	1	1
Enrolment	4,247	244

Up to 1896 the results of Malay vernacular education were reported to be: 118 clerks and orderlies; 2,070 padi planters or farmers; 2,177 variously employed as shopkeepers and labourers; and about 1,000 were not accounted for.[18]

In Selangor, which had a total of 28 vernacular schools, the Victoria Institution was the largest and most important English school with a total enrolment of 224 pupils, while the Anglo-Chinese School in Klang, a feeder school for the Victoria Institution, had 20 boys. One English girls' school supplied a long-felt need and appeared to be much appreciated but it was so badly managed that the Government was glad to hand it over to the Methodist Mission, which then employed two American women missionaries to take charge of the school.

Negri Sembilan had 19 schools and an average enrolment of 869. In Pahang there were only 3 schools at Pekan, Temerloh and Pulau Tawar. Hugh Clifford, the Resident, reported:

> I regard the education of the natives of this State as a matter of very great importance, and I should like to see vernacular schools started in all the principal villages. The effect of education on the Malay is, undoubtedly, to make him at once a more law-abiding and a more useful member of society; and the extraordinary ignorance of the Pahang natives, as compared with the people of the western seaboard, makes the duty of education all the more imperative in our case. Unfortunately, in this as in many other things, the Government is necessarily hampered by financial considerations, but I hope next year to be able to open schools at Chenor, Langgar and Budu, which will be a first step towards effecting our object.

Malay parents, it must be remembered, do not willingly send their children to a distant school, and if the people are to be educated, this can only be done by opening schools in the most populous villages at places where they will be readily accessible to a large number of children.[19]

The following year Clifford said, 'I regret I have to note that at Temerloh the parents have shown a strong disinclination to suffer their children to be educated.'[20] Similar opposition was experienced when schools were first opened in Ulu Pahang, but by persistence and gentle pressure on the headmen of the villages, schools were gradually being accepted. The indifference of parents might have been due to the lack of any provision for religious instruction and their reluctance to lose the household services of their children. Conditions were hardly more satisfactory in Negri Sembilan where the Resident reported that the teachers were incompetent, buildings utterly unsuitable, and equipment inadequate, and in no State was the supervision of a Federal Inspector of Schools more required than there.[21]

The need for a Federal officer to be responsible for education in all the States was voiced by the Residents when the Federation scheme was discussed by them. Hitherto education in each State had been the responsibility of the State Government, and educational policy depended upon the interest in education of the officer placed in charge of the department, while the expenditure on schools was conditioned by the amount of money available from the State Treasury. Furthermore, as each State had its own Education Code, there was no uniformity of policy in education as in many other matters.

Reports on education from the Malay States struck a responsive chord in Chamberlain who in June 1896 asked Sir Charles Mitchell whether he would favour a proposal to invite 'some competent authority on Education to visit the Malay Peninsula and report on the educational wants of the Colony and the Native States'. The Governor replied that the principal work requiring attention in the Colony and the Native States was that of organization of the work in vernacular schools, for he considered that vernacular eduction was, and would continue for many years to be, 'rudimentary and confined within very narrow limits'. This being so he thought the country would not derive any benefit

commensurate with the cost from the visit of an educational specialist. However, acting on the suggestion of the Resident-General, the Governor recommended the appointment of a Federal Inspector of Schools for the Federated Malay States and specially asked for an officer 'acquainted with the habits of mind of Eastern peoples'.[22]

The Secretary of State complied with the request, and in 1898 a Federal Inspector was appointed and became in practice the director of public instruction for all the Malay States. He was assisted by a State Inspector, two European Assistant Inspectors and five Native Visiting Teachers in Perak; in Selangor a State Inspector and two Native Visiting Teachers; and in Negri Sembilan a State Inspector and one Native Visiting Teacher. For many years no Inspector was appointed in Pahang where schools were too few and widely scattered to justify the appointment of such an officer. Schools in the States were visited and examined, as far as possible, by the Federal Inspector.[23]

One of the first tasks of the Federal Inspector was to draw up an Education Code for all the States. This was not introduced until 1899. The separate State Codes in operation differed considerably *inter se* with respect to the scope and amount of work required and the grants that could be earned under them, but they had one important feature in common, the system of 'payment by results'. This pernicious system originated in England in the middle of the nineteenth century, and its application in Malaya had the same unfortunate results as in the schools in England.

When it was first introduced in England it was argued that Government grants should be made not in reference to the number of children in the school or the percentage of attendance, but on the basis of 'attainment' or 'results'. This was made on the belief that 'if the amount were proportioned to the amount of education realized in the school', the scheme would act as 'a stimulus which would operate very strongly indeed towards raising the character of education'.[24] The attitude behind this idea was that education was 'a commodity which, like cotton or sugar, could be weighed and paid for, when a bargain had been struck'.[25]

The principle of 'payment by results' was incorporated in the English Education Code of 1862, and the effect of its application

to English schools was far-reaching and mischievous, for the curriculum had to be reduced to the three R's; the status of teachers was lowered since there was no need to employ well-educated schoolteachers. Grants to schools were reduced, and schools which, on account of their poverty, required more generous aid, in fact earned smaller grants, which in turn condemned the schools to move in a vicious circle of poverty and inefficiency. It encouraged the neglect of intelligent children and the reduction of all pupils to the level of lowest capacity in a given school or class. It put a premium on 'cramming' and gave moral support to the false idea that the three R's were the all-important rudiments of education.[26] The application of this principle in the schools in Malaya produced identical results.

The system of 'payment by results' had been abandoned in England since 1887 when it was condemned as 'discouraging all intellectual training, offering incentive to teachers simply to work from mercenary motives, leading naturally to cramming and over-pressure, being only a partial guarantee to the State of the child's learning, making examination the sole end and object of all teaching'.[27] But schools in the Colony and the Malay States had to labour under this system until its official abolition in 1899. The iniquity of 'payment by results' was recognized by individual educationists and administrators, but the time lag between reform in England and reorganization in Malaya was inevitable, for much depended upon the receptivity of local administrators to new and progressive ideas. Originality was not a distinguishing mark of the Education Department in the pioneering days of public instruction.

In 1895 a new Education Code, 'modelled on the general lines of the latest English Code', was drawn up for Selangor by B.E. Shaw, headmaster of the Victoria Institution. The new deal for education was announced in the Government Gazette in the beginning of 1896. The objects of the new Code were:

> To ensure a more thorough and intelligent knowledge of the elementary subjects; to encourage the teaching of drawing, recitation, physical exercises and elementary science; to give teachers full liberty to classify scholars according to their attainments and abilities, and thus remove any temptation to neglect the dull and backward, or unduly press forward the promising scholars; to impress upon managers, by means of a special grant, for discipline and

organization, the importance of training the characters, the manners, and the habits of the scholars; to discourage a superficial and pretentious pursuit of higher studies by limiting the number of specific subjects for which payment can be obtained; to give teachers more freedom in the selection of books, the methods of teaching and the organization of their schools by removing all unnecessary restrictions; to give greater financial stability to efficient schools; and to lighten the anxiety of managers, teachers and scholars by discontinuing the system of payment by results of individual examination.[28]

This served as a model for the new Federal Education Code which officially came into operation in 1899. Meanwhile under the new deal the responsibilities of teachers and inspectors were very much increased but, at the same time, their work had become more interesting and less liable to degenerate into mere routine. Commented a newspaper: 'Education is now looked upon as a science, not as an employment to be taken up as a *pis-aller;* if it be said that skilled workmen will be required to carry out the scheme, we can only answer that economy in this department is the most false economy of any to our experience. . . .'[29]

Briefly stated, the chief aims of the Education Code of 1899 were:

(a) To make the grants to schools dependent on general efficiency rather than on individual passes.

(b) To encourage Missionary and other philanthropic bodies to undertake the work of education in English schools by liberal examination grants and by building grants.

(c) To emphasize the importance of teaching English by making 'English vocabulary and composition' one of the 'elementary subjects' with reading, writing, and arithmetic, and strengthening it further by making 'English grammar and construction' a class subject to be taken with it.

(d) To establish a system of grants to aid in the preparation of pupil-teachers, and to encourage by grants the preparation of native boys who showed any capacity for the Cambridge School Certificate examinations.[30]

Except for minor amendments in 1904 and 1906, this Code remained in force until 1908 when it was considerably revised.

VERNACULAR EDUCATION

Before the appointment of a Federal Inspector of Schools in 1898, the aims of education in Perak and Selangor were somewhat conflicting. In the latter State the Resident, W.E. Maxwell, had shown a definite bias for English education; in Perak Swettenham declared:

> The one danger to be guarded against is to teach English indiscriminately. It could not be well taught except in a few schools, and I do not think it is at all advisable to attempt to give to the children of an agricultural population an indifferent knowledge of a language that to all but the very few would only unfit them for the duties of life and make them discontented with anything like manual labour. At present the large majority of Malay boys and girls have little or no opportunity of learning their own language, and if the Government undertakes to teach them this, the Koran, and something about figures and geography, (especially of the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago), this knowledge and the habits of industry, punctuality and obedience that they will gain by regular attendance at school, will be of material advantage to them and assist them to earn a livelihood in any vocation, while they will be likely to prove better citizens and more useful members of the community than if imbued with a smattering of English ideas which they would find could not be realised.[21]

This policy was approved by the Colonial Office, for Lord Knutsford, the Secretary of State, declared, 'However desirable it may be, and undoubtedly is, to encourage the study of English, especially as Mr. Maxwell has done, in the case of the sons of the leading men in each State, the main business of the Government is to educate children in their own language.'[22]

The principle of giving public instruction in a child's mother tongue is, of course, educationally sound, but the soundness of the education depends on the content and aims of the instruction given in school. Swettenham was right about the difficulties of teaching English to a population whose own language had nothing in common with a European tongue, but his assumptions were false and the motives for teaching the Malays their own language were questionable. Unlike the Orientalists in India, Swettenham held no high ideals of preserving Malay culture or even of keeping out Western influence altogether; his aims for

Malay vernacular education were mundane, negative and utilitarian. The idea that instruction might include a form of mental discipline did not enter his thoughts. Certainly he believed in discipline, but in a form which had nothing to do with the training of the mind: it was the discipline cherished by authoritarians—'habits of industry, punctuality and obedience'. Neither the content of Malay vernacular instruction nor the organization of Malay schools as a whole was such that a reasonable standard of education could be expected.

As to Swettenham's belief that vernacular instruction would be 'of material advantage' to the Malays and that it would 'assist them to earn a livelihood in any vocation', subsequent events proved it to be wishful thinking. While on the one hand the Government's declared policy was to train the Malays for the administrative service, on the other the clerical services in Government departments were filled almost entirely by Tamils from Ceylon and India and by those who had acquired 'a smattering of English ideas' in the local English schools. The Malay's ignorance of English automatically disqualified him for employment as a clerk in the Government service or commercial firms. The only dignified vocation for a Malay educated in his own language was teaching at a monthly salary of twenty dollars.

The Governor, Sir Cecil Smith, declared in 1893 that education of Malays for employment in the administration had been kept in view 'as a cardinal feature in the Government of the States' and that this policy had 'met with a considerable measure of success'. Throughout the States an increasing number of Malays with 'hereditary and customary claims to office' were being trained and were 'helping themselves to take an active and responsible share' in the Government. 'The importance of the policy referred to,' said the Governor, 'whether as regards our simple duty towards the protected states or as regards the expediency of doing all that is feasible to make the natives have the greatest interest in the welfare of their own country, cannot be overrated.'[33]

When the really responsible part of the administration was carried on in English, how could this aim of giving the Malays a greater share in the government of the country be reconciled with the declared policy of educating the Malays in their own language? One conclusion is that by 'education' Sir Cecil Smith meant the training of *penghulus* in village management and the

grooming of a few members of the aristocracy for minor posts in district administration. For the majority of Malays, vernacular education was designed to lead them back to the padi field or to swell the ranks of manual labourers. In the words of Arthur Mayhew:

> Those who urge that a child should learn only what is useful are usually those who want a perpetual supply of cheap labour. They hope that a child who learns only to dig or hoe will never want to do anything else. It is not the business of the schools to feed the labour market....[34]

Undoubtedly Swettenham's educational policy for the Malays was conditioned by the current demand for manual labour, and education for 'the lower orders' was considered only from the utilitarian point of view of making them amenable to authority. Swettenham's views did not change, for in 1897 he declared:

> Not that the subject [education] has been neglected, but it is a question how far we are justified in giving to our native population an education which unfits them for manual labour and gives them a smattering of knowledge that may only make them discontented with their lot in life, while it fails to supply them with new careers or even to qualify them to compete successfully for subordinate Government posts.[35]

This is a direct contradiction of what he had said seven years earlier. The problem was obviously serious, but rather than tackle it realistically by reviewing educational policy and aims, the Government chose to ignore it and the Malays were allowed to languish in the backwaters of educational progress for the next two decades.

In the year of the Federation the four Malay States had a total of about 130 Malay vernacular schools, with Perak, the richest State, providing the largest number. In 1898 the Resident-General declared that these vernacular schools could be extended 'at any time as our funds permit', adding:

> They are very good institutions, very useful, and they are appreciated. They do not attempt too much, but if they succeed in imparting the knowledge they profess to teach, that is all that is

required of them, and probably as much as is good for the children who attend them.[36]

But in the same report the Resident-General admitted that teaching in the vernacular schools in Selangor was 'poor'. The State had three Malay Girls' Schools, 'but only the one at Bandar Langat under the personal influence and encouragement of the Sultan, made any progress'.[37]

John Rodger, the Resident of Selangor, in addressing the annual meeting of the Victoria Institution in December 1896, stressed 'the desirability of inducing Malay boys to avail themselves of the educational opportunities now offered them'.[38] The Resident could not understand why the Malays had not flocked to the doors of the State's premier school. The main reason for this, said the *Malay Mail*, was that the language of the school was English and 'not one Malay boy in five thousand' had ever learnt a word of English. Besides, the Koran was not taught in the school; no inducements were offered to the boys at vernacular schools either to attend regularly or to be diligent when they did attend. As long as there were vernacular schools in Kuala Lumpur, the Malay community was not interested in the Victoria Institution.[39]

By 1900 vernacular education had expanded to include 159 boys' and 12 girls' schools, all of which except 3, were intended, for Malay children. Perak supported one Tamil vernacular and Selangor two Chinese schools. The enrolment for boys was 6,260 and for girls 234. Classes were held in the morning from eight till twelve for secular subjects; a Koran teacher was employed to give religious instruction wherever Malay parents so desired. Seventy-five per cent of the schools in Perak and Selangor were supplied with Koran teachers, but in Pahang and Negri Sembilan where there was no demand for them, no religious instruction was given in the schools. Vernacular education was free except for books and other school requirements which the pupils had to pay for. The question was raised whether a small fee should not be charged as there was 'a great tendency amongst a native (as amongst a white) population to value at nothing what costs them nothing'.[40]

A special tutor went to teach English to the children of Pahang Rajas, but as there was no inducement to learn the language,

the project failed. At Temerloh, school attendance was 'very poor'. Hugh Clifford was disappointed with the response of the Pahang Malays to the Government's efforts to provide schools for their children. 'So set are the parents of that district against the education of their children,' said the Resident, 'that I propose during the current year to remove the school from Kuala Semantan, where the people will not make use of it, to Bentong, where it is much needed.'[41] The High Commissioner reported to the Colonial Office in 1902 that out of 70,000 children of school-going age, only 9,000 attended any recognized school, adding:

> It is a fact that education has no attraction for Malay parents, or Malay children, who might contribute by far the largest number of scholars. The Government offers every reasonable encouragement and there is even a law in force in Selangor and Negri Sembilan for compelling the attendance of children who live within a fair distance from a school.[42]

The arrival of R.J. Wilkinson in 1903 as the Federal Inspector of Schools opened a new chapter in Malay education. He was one of the few scholar-administrators who had made the Malay language and education his special study. Under his direction the Education Department introduced important reforms in educational policy. By preparing and publishing a number of textbooks of Malay literature, Wilkinson gave some intellectual content to the training of Malay teachers. In sounding the trumpet of reform the Resident-General, William Treacher, declared:

> I prophesy that a new era is opening for the Malay race in the Peninsula, and that, provided Government generously supports and wisely encourages Mr. Wilkinson's efforts, we shall in due time train up a generation of young Malays equipped for and capable of fairly holding their own in the competition with the Europeans, Chinese and Indians who now virtually monopolise the commercial, industrial and administrative activities of this country.
>
> I am confident that the Government can assist in bringing about that result, and if it can, it is obviously the bounden duty of a rich Government, controlled by a protecting European Power, to see to it that the proper measures are taken.[43]

A primary obstacle to the modernization of Malay vernacular

education was the absence of a well-developed written language. Before their conversion to Islam the Malays probably had a primitive script of their own, but at the time of their conversion it was speedily abandoned in favour of the script introduced by Arab and other Muslim missionaries. During the 1890's the commercial and social importance of *rumi*, or the roman script, was recognized by Europeans who could, with diligence and perseverance, learn Malay much more quickly in the roman than in the Arabic script. But there were no competent scholars at the time to attempt a language reform until Wilkinson's appointment as Federal Inspector of Schools. At his recommendation the Government decided to extend the use of romanized Malay and to publish classical Malay literature in *rumi*, working out a phonetic system of reproducing Malay sounds in the language.

Accordingly in 1904 the Government appointed a Committee, consisting of H.C. Belfield, D.G. Campbell and R.J. Wilkinson, to consider and report upon the romanizing of the Malay language. A report was duly drawn up and a list of Malay words (spelt according to a system recommended by the Committee) was prepared by Wilkinson. The system was approved and adopted as quickly as possible. In the preface to the list, Wilkinson summarized the recommendations of the Committee as follows:

(i) That simplicity in Romanising should be aimed at, and that special type and accents should be avoided as far as possible;
(ii) That spelling should rest on a phonetic basis, the 'average pronunciation of the Malays' being taken as a standard;
(iii) That in words derived from foreign languages using the Roman script, the foreign spelling should be adhered to;
(iv) That in the spelling of words from languages that do not use the Roman script, the Malay pronunciation should be taken as a guide; and that where that pronunciation varies, the form closest to the etymology should be accepted;
(v) That Malay compounds (such as *demikian*) should be written in full and not abbreviated;
(vi) That derivative forms should be spelt as derivatives and not according to strict phonetics—e.g. *menyabelah* (from *sa-belah*) not *menyebelah*.

This language reform gave publications by the Government a

consistency and uniformity for the whole Federated Malay States where there were important differences in regional dialects between the northern part of the Peninsula (due perhaps to Siamese influence) and the southern part where Minangkabau and Javanese influence was very marked. The political hegemony of the four Malay States was thus strengthened by an official written language, apart from English. Although the Arabic script remained an important part of the Malay language, the roman script facilitated the teaching of the language in the written form.

The most significant step taken by Wilkinson was the decision to open a residential school, organized along the lines of the great English Public Schools, for the sons of Sultans and Rajas. The project was enthusiastically supported by the Sultans of Perak and Pahang and by all the Residents. It was believed that if the scheme was carried into effect, it would solve the problem of recruiting Malays for the Civil Service and enable them 'to take their proper place in the development of the industrial, commercial and agricultural interests of their country'.[44]

The Malay Residential School at Kuala Kangsar was opened in January 1905 with William Hargreaves as Headmaster. At first it was decided that the school should be restricted to the Raja class but more liberal views prevailed and commoners were admitted as well; out of the initial enrolment of seventy-nine only twenty-six had any connexion with Malay royalty. Boarders were divided into three classes according to the fees paid. Ten of the students were boarding with the Headmaster—the son of Sultan of Perak, 'two or three relatives' of the Sultan of Selangor, two brothers of the Yang di Pertuan of Negri Sembilan, a son of the late Raja Muda of Perak, and a son of the Raja Muda of Selangor. 'The healthy tone of the school,' reported the Inspector of Schools, Perak, 'and the manliness and *esprit de corps* of the boys show that an excellent moral influence has been at work.'[45] The cost per student in an average attendance of sixty-seven was $290. This expenditure, which included maintenance allowances of boarders but not the cost of buildings, could 'hardly in the circumstances be regarded as excessive'. The average cost per head in the ordinary vernacular schools was about $15.[46]

At the end of the year the Headmaster reported that Malay boys 'if properly handled, form admirable material' and could be induced to work hard and successfully.[47] In a letter to William

Treacher, who had taken a personal interest in the school, Wilkinson wrote: 'I have just concluded my examination of the Kuala Kangsar Residential School.... The success of the school has exceeded my wildest hopes. I gave the boys the stiffest examination I have ever set in the Federated Malay States, yet 21 boys, including six Rajas, passed with flying colours. They all get seventh standard certificates and are, of course, qualified for Government service....'[48] In his official report Wilkinson, summarizing the change in the policy for Malay education, quoted Lord Curzon in India:

> We desire to raise up a vigorous and intelligent race of young men who will be in touch with modern progress but not out of touch with old traditions; who will be liberally educated but not educated out of sympathy with their own families and people; who will be manly and not effeminate, strong minded but not strong willed, acknowledging a duty to others instead of being a law into themselves, and who will be fit to do something in the world instead of settling down into fops or spendthrifts or drones.[49]

The decision to establish a residential school which would give an Anglo-Malay education to Malay boys was an admission that the purely Malay vernacular school had failed to produce the desired results. In the problem of Malay education there could be no compromise between a policy of educational progress and one of preservation. Wilkinson grasped the significance of the problem when he brought out the conflict of change and conservation in the aims and organization of the Art School at Kuala Kangsar.

The idea of an Art School to revive and preserve the old decaying Malay handicrafts first originated from the Curator of the Taiping Museum, Leonard Wray. It was enthusiastically taken up by a few European residents in Taiping; the Sultan was appointed chairman of the local committee, and the Art School was established in the shadow of the royal palace at Kuala Kangsar. Teachers were employed and children were taught the various Malay handicrafts.

Wilkinson saw that the Art School raised several economic questions, since the decay of Malay handicrafts was assumed to have been the result of trade conditions. How far was the Art School to overcome what appeared to be an economic law? To

begin with, the School had to suffer from the fact that it really owed its existence to 'two quite irreconcilable ideas'. There was the 'scientific or ethnological idea' which expected it to perpetuate old methods regardless of their industrial efficiency. There was the economic interest which insisted that an industry should be self-supporting if it was to be taught as an industry at all. A good illustration was the case of pottery made at the Art School. Industrially and artistically the work could have been better done with a wheel, but the pottery so made would have been condemned as not distinctively Malay, and much of its value (as a curio) and its interest would have been lost. The two ideals were plainly incompatible. The directors of the Art School had two alternatives: either to recognize the fact that what the School produced were merely curios which could have only a limited sale on the market, or to discard the crude industrial methods of the ancient Malay.[50]

The problem of the Art School was very similar to that of the Malay Agricultural Settlement in Kuala Lumpur: both epitomized the dilemma of British educational policy for Malay schools. The appointment of R.J. Wilkinson as Federal Inspector of Schools was the most hopeful sign for education in Malaya as a whole, but after his departure in 1906 Malay education in particular lapsed into stereotyped lines.

Government policy, however, was aimed at expanding the Malay vernacular school system. In 1904 the Federated Malay States had a total of 232 schools for 10,919 Malay children.[51] Even in the most backward of the States—Pahang—the number of pupils attending Malay schools was greater than in 'all the Government Chinese or Tamil vernacular schools in the Straits and Malay States combined'.[52] In the most advanced of the States—Perak—the number of Malay pupils was ten times as great. As school attendance in Perak was not compulsory and no rewards were offered for proficiency in Malay as there were for proficiency in English, it was claimed that the figures indicated 'a certain feeling of confidence in education for its own sake, and certainly no native race shows this confidence except the Malays'.[53]

Wilkinson found that 'a remarkable feature' about the Malay student was his readiness to continue or resume his studies after leaving school. He quoted the example of some of the Malay

teachers trained at the Malacca Training College. 'In England this would be nothing remarkable,' said Wilkinson, 'but to anyone acquainted with the aversion that the average clerk of Chinese or Tamil descent displays to studies of any sort, this racial contrast is very striking.' But from a teacher's point of view, the Malay boy was 'an extremely unsatisfactory student'.

> The economic conditions under which the Malays have always lived and the variety of their sources of livelihood make them to some extent versatile, but do not teach persistence or punctuality. Besides, when a man's needs are few and are easily satisfied, he is apt to attach undue importance to social and domestic events. The Malay boy, with his unpunctuality and his tendency to absent himself from school for days in order to attend the wedding of a distant relative or to wait upon a sick aunt, is naturally the despair of an English teacher fresh from Europe.[54]

Female education made very slow progress. In 1900 there were twelve schools for girls in Perak and Selangor with a total enrolment of 234. There were no schools for girls in the other States. The great difficulty was not to get little girls to attend school but to keep them there when they were just beginning to learn, as it was the custom of the Malays to keep their girls as secluded as possible from that age until they were married.[55] Malay parents were suspicious of girls' schools when they were first established:

> They thought a knowledge of reading and writing would promote love-letters and intrigue, they were nervous about allowing their girls to traverse streets or paths unaccompanied, the mothers disliked losing the services of their daughters and the self-satisfied parents thought that they could pick up cookery and needlework as well at home as in school.[56]

To break down parental prejudice, the influence of village chiefs and even that of the Sultan very often had to be invoked. At Bandar, for example, the Sultan of Selangor helped to introduce a bullock-cart service, suitably shielded from the prying eyes of males, to convey Malay girls to and from school, and this helped to keep them at school till a later age than usual. Sometimes the influence of an old and respected teacher was sufficient to keep older girls, and even young married ones, at school to learn the three R's and some handicrafts.[57]

A big obstacle to the expansion of female education was the fact that amongst the Malays (as amongst the other races) the woman was held in an inferior position, although in reality her 'inferiority' was much less marked in the Malay States than in other Muslim countries. But however much the *penghulus* might profess their desire for the education of their daughters, it was questionable whether they really had at heart even an academic faith in the advantages or the utility of female education.[58]

Malay vernacular education provided for only four years' schooling. Children were taught simple arithmetic for the first three years, and, in the fourth year, Malayan weights and measures. In 'composition' they were required to write a few lines in roman or Arabic script describing some animal on which object lessons had been given with a picture or diagram. Later they were expected to reproduce in roman or Arabic script the gist of a short and simple story 'read through twice'. Some geography of the world in general and South-East Asia in particular was also taught.[59]

It was considered that this curriculum would be

> sufficient for the ordinary requirements of Malay boys, who will become bullock-wagon drivers, padi-growers, fishermen, etc., and enables them by the time they have passed the fourth standard to read or write the simple literature of their tongue either in Jawi or Roman character, to keep accounts if they become small shopkeepers, and to work simple problems in the money currency, weights and measures of their country.[60]

Until 1898 the Malay States had no scheme for the training of Malay school teachers. In that year a training centre was opened in Taiping, supported by Perak and Selangor only. It trained no more than half a dozen teachers, and closed down in 1900 when a new training college, supported by the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, was opened in Malacca under a European head. The college had about fifty students in training; they were fed, clothed and boarded free of all expense to themselves.[61] The college, however, did not gain the confidence of the Inspectors of Schools in Perak and Selangor and boys were not encouraged to join it. The training of Malay teachers developed along stereotyped and alien lines until the

work of R.O. Winstedt established the modern training college at Tanjong Malim in 1922.

Salaries paid to teachers in vernacular schools varied from $15 per month to $25 for head teachers, with quarters provided. Assistants received from $8 to $10 a month, and pupil-teachers $4 to $7.50. Only a few teachers in the large vernacular schools were paid $25 a month; the majority of male teachers earned an average of $20 a month. Female teachers received an average of $15.[62]

On the whole the Government paid very little attention to non-Malay vernacular education. The official attitude was that, since the Chinese and Tamils were regarded as birds of passage who would return to their native countries when they had accumulated enough money, it was not practicable to extend Chinese and Tamil vernacular education. On the other hand, if it was seriously undertaken, enormous difficulties would crop up. It would have been necessary to provide at least two or three different kinds of instructors for the three main dialects of Chinese spoken in the Malay States: Cantonese, Kheh and Hokkien, another for Tamils and perhaps another for Bengalis. The provision of such schools at the same time,

> by strengthening rather than breaking down the barriers of race, would hinder rather than help these alien races from having any commercial or other intercourse with each other, by preventing them from learning the vernacular of the country of their adoption, and the medium by which such intercourse can be maintained, and would be committing the fatal error of tending to keep them aliens, and encouraging them in the idea that China or India is their home.[63]

The Resident-General, however, was in favour of making an exception in the case of Tamils, the object being to induce them to settle down in the country and thus provide a readily available source of labour. At the Conference of Residents in 1902 it was decided that facilities should be given to the children of Tamil immigrants to acquire a knowledge of their vernacular tongue 'with the object of making the Federated Malay States, from the point of view of the Indian immigrant, an outlying portion of India, like Ceylon'.[64] Steps were then taken to open schools in Taiping and Parit Buntar, the two main centres of Tamil population.

ENGLISH EDUCATION

In 1896 Perak had 9 English schools for boys and only 1 for girls; Selangor had 2 boys' schools and 1 for girls. The remaining States had no English schools. Two years after Federation the Resident-General reported, 'What we want is a few schools where English will be as thoroughly taught as possible; where, in fact, the language of the school will be English, and the object of the education the employment of the boys in places where a knowledge of English is a necessity. Some of these schools we have already, and we know how to supply whatever is wanting.'[65]

At the turn of the century English schools in the Federated Malay States numbered 24 of which as many as 6 were for girls (4 in Perak and 2 in Selangor), with an average enrolment of 298. The boys' schools had a total of 1,331 students. These figures, though small, were gratifying, for they showed an increase of 28.4 per cent in the boys' schools in two years and 246 per cent in girls' schools.[66] This staggering increase in the enrolment in girls' schools was due mainly to the work of the Christian Mission in Taiping, Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur.

School fees were charged in all the English schools except a few of the smallest and least important supported by the Government. By Article Three of the 1899 Code, fees might not exceed $3 per month in any Grant-in-Aid school, but, in general, fees varied between 25 cents in the lower and $1 per month in the higher standards. The fees paid formed only a fraction of the actual working expenses of any of the English schools where European teachers were employed. The grants on examination results, although given on a liberal scale, did not really cover the expenses of these schools. Special maintenance and salary grants were made, but the Mission schools had to make up the difference from their own funds. The Victoria Institution was the only school in the Federated Malay States to be supported by a municipal rate of 1 per cent on house rents within the town, which realized $4,000 annually.[67]

The cost of maintaining English schools varied greatly with the standard of the school and quality of the teachers. Where European expatriate teachers were employed, as in most of the important schools, the cost was relatively high. The Victoria Institution in 1901 was assessed for a salary grant of $21,245 per annum which, with its education rate on house rents, gave it an

income of over $25,000 from Government sources. At the time there were 500 students in the school, and assuming that the grant was sufficient until the school reached 600, the cost per head to the State was over $40 per annum. The cost per head of the Central School, Taiping, was about $26, but as the school was under-staffed its cost of maintenance was expected to increase when new teachers were employed.[68]

In 1902 there were 218 schools of all sizes and standards in the Federated Malay States and of this number 200 were Government vernacular Malay schools; 5 were Government English and 13 were English Grant-in-Aid schools run by the Missions. Out of the total school population of 10,740 the vernacular schools claimed 8,718 pupils and the English schools 2,022. Government expenditure on education for that year totalled $223,209 of which $32,806 was given as assistance to the Mission schools. Government revenue for the same year was $20,550,543 and expenditure was $15,986,247. The expenditure on education was thus less than 1½ per cent of total Government spending.[69]

The exact extent of the liability of the Government in the matter of providing public instruction was never clearly defined or regulated. While the Government tacitly or expressly admitted the claim of every boy to receive elementary instruction in the vernacular of the country, it would never allow that a boy could insist on being given instruction in any subject he might choose to be educated in, no matter how expensive it might be to teach it. The cost of establishing efficient English schools by the Government in all parts of the country would be prohibitive. Since the inhabitants of the large towns, where the best equipped English schools were found, sent their children to these schools, the Federal Inspector of Schools suggested that they must be made to pay more for the costly instruction which they asked for their children, unless they were to be regarded as a privileged class. Under existing conditions the expenditure on English schools was considered disproportionately high.

As matters now stand, the classes best able to pay for the education of their children are precisely those who draw most from the public funds, and the schools attended by the comparatively wealthy are the most clamorous in their demands on the revenue. The gross cost of educating a boy in Malay or Tamil is about $14 a year; in English

(relatively inefficient as our best schools are) it may amount to $60 or $70. As no school ordinarily levies more than $20 a year in school fees, and as most of them charge far less, it is obvious that the children of the well-to-do get much more than their fair share of the Government expenditure on education.[70]

But how were fees to be adjusted? That was the great difficulty. The income of parents varied considerably. It was only right that well-to-do parents should contribute materially to their children's education, but a hard and fast school fee would tend to bring hardship to those who could not afford it. On the other hand, a sliding scale, owing to the competition between schools, was unworkable. Wilkinson suggested that the best solution to the problem would be to apply the principle of a municipal rate (as in Kuala Lumpur) to all the important towns in the Federated Malay States, but if this was done, care had to be taken to ensure that the pupils who would benefit by the rates levied should be, as far as possible, the children of the rate-payers. 'Nothing could be more unsatisfactory,' said Wilkinson, 'than a system under which the money of the Government and that of the ratepayers is spent on aliens who come to deprive the people of the country of their opportunities of employment.'[71]

Municipal rates would solve the problem of finance and make the best schools 'self-supporting and independent of denominational or other special assistance'. An efficient school could, roughly speaking, count on a minimum revenue of about $15 per head from the regular Government grant, $15 from the proposed municipal rate, and $25 from school fees. With great care and economy this sum could be made to suffice.[72]

Wilkinson's desire to see English schools freed from the dependence on funds from some of the Christian Missions did not mean that he was on principle against the educational work of these bodies; what he wished to see was the abolition of the cumbrous system of making grants to Mission schools which still had to bear the main financial burden of educational work. But the crux of the matter was not really finance as such. If English schools were made independent of 'denominational assistance' it would mean that the Government would have to take over the responsibility of organizing and running all English schools, a responsibility which it was not prepared to shoulder.

Although the current cost of English schools was 'disproportionate' it was still cheaper to let the Missions run their own English schools than to manage them directly through the Education Department. It was for this reason that the Lady Treacher Girls' School in Taiping and the Government English Girls' School in Kuala Lumpur were handed over to the Methodist Mission. This was the main reason why Wilkinson's proposal of a municipal rate for all the chief towns in the country was not adopted by the Government, which continued to follow its *laissez-faire* policy where English education was concerned. An important statement of Government policy was contained in the Resident-General's report for 1903. Apart from the decision to establish a residential English school for Malays in Kuala Kangsar (referred to in the section under Vernacular Education) and to extend the use of romanized Malay, the Government proposed to:

(a) Improve the courses in Government and Government-aided schools, especially in commercial and technical training and efficient teaching of the English language;
(b) Encourage the educational work of missionary and other charitable organizations;
(c) Interest the general public in education by the appointment of citizens on boards of management;
(d) Establish central English school libraries with the aim of encouraging reading among the boys and of supplying educational literature to teachers.[11]

Had Wilkinson remained at the helm of the Education Department, with the support of Treacher, the proposals under (a), (c) and (d) might have taken shape and form, but as soon as they left the scene (Treacher retired at the end of 1903, and Wilkinson left the Federated Malay States in 1906) they were pigeon-holed and forgotten, except for the proposal concerning missionary work which was followed because it was expedient to do so.

A major reorganization of the Education Department took place at the end of 1906, when the post of Federal Inspector of Schools was amalgamated with that of Director of Public Instruction for the Straits Settlements. J.B. Elcum, who held the latter post in Singapore, was appointed as Director of Education for the Colony and the Federated Malay States. At the time of the

amalgamation no attempt was made to define the duties of the Director in the Malay States. The Director of Public Instruction had had effective control over the whole educational system in the Colony. The Federal Inspector of Schools, on the other hand, had been merely an Inspecting Officer who interfered as little as possible in local administration. It was essential that the Director of Education should have the same powers in the Federated Malay States as in the Colony, and J.B. Elcum suggested that such power should be given to him and clearly defined. Until that was done it was difficult for him in many instances to know precisely what powers he could exercise in the Federated Malay States and to get the necessary information for the proper performance of his duties. The State Inspectors of Schools had hitherto been cadets in the Civil Service with no special training in educational work, and they were liable, like all other members of the Civil Service, to be moved about frequently. Since the Director of Education could not be given the control of the movements of such officers, Elcum suggested that in future only professional schoolmasters should be appointed as Inspectors of Schools.[74] The suggestion was adopted and the change created a permanent inspectorate, though it was not until Pahang got an Inspector in 1913 that every State in the Federation had its own local Inspector of Schools.[75]

As both English and vernacular Malay schools grew in number and efficiency, the work of the Education Department became heavier and more specialized. A revised Education Code was introduced at the end of 1904, embodying a number of alterations and improvements which experience had shown to be desirable. Schools were to be divided into three classes: English, Anglo-Vernacular and Vernacular according to their medium of instruction. The payment of grants to aided schools would be based on the number of boys actually presented for examination instead of on the average attendance. The 1904 Code aimed at 'treating all schools alike and recognizing no difference as to rewards for efficiency'. Supplementary 'maintenance' grants were to be continued to certain schools, but the Education Department urged economy with the hope that schools might ultimately be made independent of this form of special assistance.[76] In 1906 a further revision of the Code authorized a principal grant for every pupil not over ten years of age presented for examination in an infant

class, a step 'designed to weed out over-age pupils and provide money for efficient teachers capable of giving a good groundwork'.[77] In 1908 a new Education Code was introduced. Under the heading of 'General Conditions' the Code stated:

> All reasonable care must be taken to educate the pupils in habits of punctuality, good manners, cleanliness and neatness, and to impress on them the importance of cheerful obedience to duty, and of honour and truthfulness.[78]

In place of the formal annual inspections, surprise visits were introduced, the aim being to keep schools 'on their toes' all the time instead of the artificial atmosphere of efficiency and order which was often specially put on for the annual inspection. Grants were based entirely on average attendance and varied according to the grade in which a school was placed. The most important point was that a uniform educational system was prescribed for the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States.[79]

Instruction in English schools started with two years in the infant class and seven years in the elementary up to Standard Seven. Although the curriculum approximated to that of an elementary school in England, it represented, for all except the very few who continued their studies for the Cambridge Local Examination, a 'higher' education in itself to the pupils attending school. Only the larger English schools provided instruction up to the Seventh Standard; the smaller schools stopped at Standard Three or Four, and unless pupils could be drafted off to the larger schools, their instruction, particularly in English, was of little practical use to them.[80]

Apart from the 'elementary' subjects of the three R's pupils had to take 'class subjects' which included English Grammar, Geography, object lessons in Elementary Science, Drawing, English History and, for girls, Home Science (dignified by the term 'Economy') and Needlework.[81]

The orientation of these English schools may be judged from the syllabus for English History. For Standards One and Two: 'Twenty biographies or important events in English History from the landing of the Romans to Henry VII.' For Standards Three and Four: 'Thirty biographies or important events in

English history from A.D. 1066 to A.D. 1487.' For Standards Five to Seven pupils had to study 'the most important events and persons' from the Tudor to the Hanoverian period, 'with special reference to the acquisition of colonies and dependencies by England, with dates'.[82] This was subsequently altered to include the history of the British Empire from 1492 to 1784. As the study stopped short of the acquisition of Penang, Ceylon, Hong Kong and Singapore, pupils in school missed the opportunity to study the history of that part of the world which concerned them most.

'Specific' subjects included Algebra, Euclid, Mensuration, Latin, French or German, Book-keeping, Principles of Agriculture, Hygiene, Botany, Malay, Chinese, Drawing, Mechanics, Animal Physiology, Chemistry, Physics and English Literature. All these subjects were taught in three stages from Standards Five to Seven. The study of English Literature was mainly confined to poetry; poems from 1,500 lines to 2,400 lines were studied. 'Words and allusions to be understood; striking passages of about 100 lines to be learnt by heart'. Alternatively, 'the study of 1,000 lines of simple classic prose, words to be understood and 50 lines learnt by heart'.[83]

The study of 'simple classic prose' was based on material not later than Addison's *Spectator*. Obviously this subject was studied purely from the point of view of a pupil to whom English was the mother tongue. In preparing for the examination, attention was paid to the history of the language rather than to the acquisition of a working knowledge of modern English. The result of such a course was the ridiculously stilted, highly Latinate English that local clerks wrote and spoke.

Examining clerks for promotion to the Senior Grade of the Clerical Service was an important part of the work of the Education Department, and the Federal Inspector of Schools urged that it should 'ultimately become the real test of the efficiency of our educational system' in that it was a practical test of the use made of instruction received at school. The examination of clerks, said Wilkinson, was 'the most depressing feature of my departmental work'. Not one in thirty who presented themselves for examination showed that he had 'acquired any taste for reading or any educative interest in life'.[84] Was it any wonder when the study of literature was confined to seventeenth and eighteenth century English poetry and prose? It is questionable

whether English boys from a working class background, depressed by generations of poverty, would acquire the same degree of culture as Wilkinson seemed to expect of Chinese and Indian boys whose parents were indentured labourers, if they were fed for three years on Chinese history from the Han dynasty to the Manchu period and Chinese classical literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

According to the Federal Inspector of Schools, there were two distinct groups for whom technical instruction was required: (a) those who had passed Standard Seven in an English school, and (b) those who had received their schooling in the Malay vernacular. For the first group, instruction in civil, electrical and mechanical engineering and surveying should be given; for the second, instruction in agriculture, metal work and carpentry. It would be necessary to start a technical college with a skilled European instructor for the first group, but until the current demand for clerks and shop assistants was satisfied, the technical school was out of the question.[85]

To encourage technical education the State Governments of Perak and Selangor in 1899 voted $3,000 and $2,000 respectively towards the provision of small grants to enable boys from English schools to undergo a course of apprenticeship in the workshops connected with the Public Works and Railway Departments. State Inspectors of Schools selected candidates after they had passed Standard Six or Seven, and the apprentices were given a small bonus of $5 a month, apart from whatever wages they would get as apprentices. This system meant that only boys reasonably fluent in English were selected 'as the cry from each Government Department' was for boys who could speak English.[86] But the Government was competing with commercial firms which offered wages from $20 to $25 a month to boys who had barely passed Standard Seven, so that it was hardly surprising that in 1902 only eight boys from Selangor applied for these apprenticeships, although between the two States a total of eighty apprenticeships could have been given.[87]

Nevertheless the Education Department persevered with technical instruction. One of the first schools to begin commercial teaching was the Anglo-Chinese School in Ipoh where pupils

received instruction in typing, shorthand and telegraphy. Substantial support for technical education came from some Chinese miners in Kuala Lumpur; Towkay Loke Yew alone subscribed $30,000.[88] Early in 1906 an instructor in engineering arrived from England and the Treacher Technical School was opened in Kuala Lumpur. At the end of the year the Resident-General reported:

> I regret to say that so far, through no fault of the Instructor, the school has not been a success. The instruction has been confined almost entirely to Public Works Department and Railway apprentices. These youths have not been required to pass any qualifying examination, and the majority have not been fitted for specialised technical instruction. A large part of the Instructor's time has had to be given to elementary instruction which the pupils should have acquired before coming to him. They have, moreover, had to attend their offices for the greater part of their time and have to attend the school only for an hour or two at a time, once or twice a week, as they could be spared. It has thus been necessary to form a large number of very small classes. The Instructor's time has been fully occupied, but each youth has received but very little instruction. Under the present system only apprentices employed in Kuala Lumpur have been able to attend the school.[89]

An entrance examination introduced the following year secured better quality students who were given time off from their offices to attend classes in the school, but the demand for apprentices by the Public Works Department and the Railway Department was not sufficient to fill the school. Although sixty-one candidates presented themselves for the entrance examination, the P.W.D. asked for only six apprentices and the Railways none. The school therefore started in 1907 with only six students; at the beginning of 1909 only twenty-five boys were under training in different departments.

Clearly there were very few avenues of employment for boys with a technical education, and the experience of the Treacher Technical School had shown that technical instruction of whatever kind and however simple could not be given with any hope of its bearing fruit except in pupils who had acquired the basic instruction in the relevant subjects during their elementary schooling. Since the country was developing in the direction of

commerce, the demand was not for technical assistants but for clerks, book-keepers, typists and shop assistants who were absorbed into banks and business houses as fast as the schools could produce them.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Cambridge Local Examinations awarding the Junior and Senior Cambridge School Certificates were first instituted in 1891 in the Straits Settlements, and towards the end of the century attempts were made in English schools in the Federated Malay States to prepare boys for the examinations. Since the tests were essentially academic, there was a strong tendency to 'cram' the boys and to concentrate on a few bright students at the expense of the rest of the class. The 1902 Education Commission, appointed to investigate the system of education in the Colony, suggested that instead of the Cambridge examinations, there should be local examinations which offered local certificates, and that subjects should be chosen for their practical use to boys in the Colony. But the Commission agreed that these Cambridge examinations had definitely contributed to the improvement of the standard of education. Moreover, the advantage of the Cambridge School Certificate was that it was recognized outside Malaya and was specially useful in the selection of candidates for the Queen's Scholarships.[90] Certain modifications were made in the syllabus in the course of the years, and both the Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlements continued to support the Cambridge Local Examinations.

The Queen's Scholarships were founded in 1885 by Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, then Governor of the Straits Settlements. The objects were to allow promising boys an opportunity for completing their studies in England, and to encourage a number of boys to remain in school and acquire 'a really useful education'. To discover how far these objects had been fulfilled formed part of the investigations of the 1902 Education Commission, which reported:

> The time may come when it may be desirable to have a local University, but at present we consider that there is no need for such an institution. We are satisfied, however, that there are in the principal schools . . . a certain number of boys of exceptional ability, who

if the opportunity were offered would gain distinguished honours at any University, and the question arises whether it is expedient that these boys should out of Colonial funds be offered a chance of a University career. Failing the endowment of a local College or University there is much to be said in favour of continuing the Queen's Scholarships, which offer a University course to the two best boys of the year. Those who object to this use of public funds contend that in order to win these valuable prizes for the prestige of the school, too much attention is given to cramming the best boys in subjects which, except for the Scholarship holders, will not be useful in their future career, while too little attention is paid to imparting a sound English education to the bulk of boys.[91]

The Commission thought it would be 'a grave mistake' to abolish the Queen's Scholarships, but those who were opposed to them argued that it was wrong on principle for the Government to spend some $30,000 annually to enable ten students to have a university career in England while secondary and technical education was 'starved' in order to meet this expenditure.[92] The Governor, Sir John Anderson, was also against the continuation of these Scholarships. Reporting to the Colonial Office, he declared:

As one English University Scholarship is offered for competition every year by the Government of the Federated Malay States, I am of opinion that it is not desirable to offer in future more than one in the Colony. I am convinced that far better results for the community could be attained if the money now spent on these scholarships were devoted to improving the average standard of English Education...[93]

The Straits Settlements Government discontinued the scholarships in 1910, but restored them in 1923. In the Federated Malay States the scholarships, first introduced in 1901, were suspended in 1911 and were not restored until 1931, giving, like the Straits Settlements, two annually, but restricting one to Malays.[94]

About the turn of the century suggestions were made for the foundation of a medical school in Singapore, but for various reasons the Governor gave no encouragement to the idea. The 1902 Education Commission was generally in favour of a medical school to serve local needs, although it received strong evidence or representations opposing the scheme.

The Commission much regret the evidence before them, as they feel the great advantage which would accrue to the Colony and the Native States by the introduction of a system of training which would produce, out of local material, men better qualified to supply the demand for Assistant Surgeons and general practitioners among the native population and the poorer inhabitants. The introduction of this would pave the way to limiting practice to men who had attained the necessary qualifications.[85]

In 1904 a memorial praying for the establishment of a medical school was met with a ready and most favourable consideration by the Governor who, in response, offered to start the school, provided the Chinese would subscribe $71,000 and also take part in the management of the institution. With the help of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, a campaign for funds was launched and more than $80,000 was raised. The Governor then offered the buildings formerly used for a female lunatic asylum and provided a skeleton staff to start off the school. One of the prime movers of the scheme was Tan Jiak Kim who gave generously to the fund. At the formal opening ceremony on the 4th of October, the Governor, referring to Tan Jiak Kim, declared: 'It is not only the munificent gift which he gave personally but the enthusiasm and energy which he threw into the work to enlist the sympathy and find his way into the pockets of his fellow Chinese that it is largely—almost entirely—due to him that we see this institution started. . . .'[86]

The Medical School was opened with twenty-two students, of whom nine were Chinese, one European and the rest were Eurasians, Tamils and Singalese. In 1912 the name was changed to 'King Edward VII Medical School' in recognition of the contribution from the Committee of the King Edward VII Memorial Fund. The name was further changed to 'College of Medicine' in 1921. From the start a full five-year course was given and in 1916 the diploma was recognized by the British General Medical Council as a complete registrable qualification entitling its holder to practise in any part of the Empire.

GRANTS-IN-AID AND TEACHER TRAINING

Before the introduction of the 1899 Education Code schools were divided into two main categories: the first, schools financed

and managed by the Education Department; the second, those controlled by the Missions which received grants awarded on individual passes. The 1899 Code awarded grants on the basis of the average attendance of children in schools, the number presented for examinations, and the general standard of efficiency. There were also minor grants for discipline and organization and for passes in special subjects in the higher standards. The Education Commission of 1902 in general praised the Code, but suggested that the following changes should be made:

(a) That the system of training pupil-teachers should be improved and their number restricted.
(b) That grants to schools should be differentiated according to the grade of school, and that better schools should receive a higher grant and inferior schools a correspondingly lower grant.[97]

A revised Code introduced in September 1902[98] awarded grants to English schools controlled by the Missions under the following heads:

(a) A Principal Grant of $10, $14 or $16 for every pupil actually presented for examination in Standards V to VII inclusive; and of $5, $7 or $8 for every pupil presented for examination in Standards I to IV inclusive.
(b) A Grant for Discipline and Organization of $1, $1.50 or $2 for every pupil in attendance at the schools.
(c) A Grant of $5 for each pass in a Special Subject in all schools and of $3 for each pass in Needlework in girls' schools.

The grants under (a) and (b) depended on the report of the Inspector of Schools, and the highest grant in (a) could not be paid unless the teacher in charge of the classes above Standard IV held a teaching certificate from the Education Department.

A further revision of the Code was made in 1904, the main object being to treat all schools alike with regard to grants for efficiency. In fact, for the next two decades the key-word in grants-in-aid was *Efficiency*. This was really a modification of the idea of payment by results and was to work similar mischief in the whole school system in the country. In the absence of an *efficient* system of teacher-training, the badly staffed school could not earn the higher grants, and when the school's income was

low, it could not afford to employ better qualified teachers who were necessary for the improvement of the standard of teaching and thus the efficiency of the school. It was the problem of the hen and the egg: badly staffed schools were more or less condemned to move in a vicious circle with no possibility of financial assistance from the Government to break out of the rut they were in. The system 'blocked improvement by denying funds for advancement from one grade to another and conversely in the event of a school being inefficient, deprived it of the means of recovery'; it offered a direct inducement to the schools 'to pass and admit pupils into the higher standards who were not properly qualified, and to retain them there to the detriment of the other pupils'.[29]

The root cause of the trouble was the shortage of well-qualified local teachers. While a training college for Malay teachers had been established in Malacca since 1900 to serve both the Colony and the Federated Malay States, no facilities were provided for the training of English school teachers, except under the pupil-teacher system. Any boy who had passed Standard VI was eligible as a pupil-teacher on the recommendation of the headmaster of a school. The pupil-teacher, usually aged fourteen or fifteen years, was to be trained by the headmaster; he received in addition to his pupil-teacher's work not less than two hours ordinary school work daily. At the end of the first year's course, he sat for an examination. On his passing this, the school received a grant of $100 as an encouragement for this kind of work and a reward for the trouble taken by the headmaster in the training of his pupil-teacher. This course of training extended over a minimum period of three years. On the student's passing the second and third year's examination, the school received further grants of $150 and $200 respectively.

This system was full of abuses. Young, intelligent but indigent boys were often exploited to do the work of a fully qualified teacher. More often than not the headmaster was either too lazy or too busy to supervise the work and studies of the pupil-teacher, who was thrown into a class of children not much younger than himself. Many, of course, fell by the wayside, either in sheer despair or in response to better prospects in commercial firms which offered higher salaries than could be got as a teacher.

The 1899 Code prescribed that the number of pupils in an

average attendance should not exceed an *average* of forty pupils to one teacher or two pupil-teachers. The Education Commission of 1902 strongly urged that the rule should be altered so that the number of pupils in an average attendance should not exceed forty pupils to one teacher, and two pupil-teachers should not be counted as one teacher as they should be allowed to teach only under supervision.[100]

The salary scale for teachers was partly the cause and partly the effect of the poor quality of teachers. About the turn of the century the salaries for local teachers, as distinct from expatriate European teachers, ranged from $30 to $80 or $90 a month, depending on their qualifications and teaching experience. These were teachers in the better grade schools giving instruction up to Standard Seven. The average teacher trained under the pupil-teacher system received much lower pay, for at the height of his career he would get no more than $40 a month. European teachers not connected with any Mission received a starting salary of $180 a month, besides having their passage to and from England paid and leave with full pay. Headmasters and principal assistant-teachers in all the important English schools, whether Government or Mission, were British in both boys' and girls' schools. Where they were professional teachers *and not connected with any Mission*, the salaries offered were generally high enough to induce them to come out from England.[101] But since the decline in the value of the silver dollar the majority of European teachers were far from satisfied with the relatively liberal salary scheme, making it increasingly difficult for the Government to recruit professional teachers from England. The 1902 Education Commission reported that the Straits Settlements had unfortunately acquired 'a bad name in the English scholastic world' which was likely to survive for many years. This applied to the general conditions of service in the Straits Settlements as well as the Federated Malay States.

The employment of expatriate teachers involved a great delay when they were recruited in England, and cost much more than the actual salaries paid to them. It was clear that if local teachers could be trained to take their place the country would save a great deal of money. Moreover, fresh arrivals from England were found to be 'actually inferior to good local teachers for the teaching of the lower standards' where a knowledge of the verna-

cular was considered essential, and for all the work of the seven standards in the elementary schools there was no reason why locally trained men should not do admirably. But the poor quality of the local teachers in nearly all the English schools was 'one of the most serious blots on our educational system'.[102]

Because of the shortage of teachers, it was generally thought that anyone who could read and write English, however badly, was competent to teach it in the lower standards where the amount of instruction was small. Consequently the material of which local teachers were made was often bad, and the practice grew up of offering ridiculously low salaries to such teachers. The initial salary of local teachers in most of the aided schools varied from about $10 to about $20 a month, and the prospects were such that boys of intelligence and initiative shunned the profession. Most of the local teachers were thus schoolboys who could get nothing else to do since their knowledge of the English language and their general education were of the poorest quality. Many indeed regarded teaching merely as a springboard to something better in the commercial world.[103]

The idea of a training college for teachers was first put forward in November 1901 by the Director of Public Instruction of the Colony, but unfortunately the Government made the implementation of this scheme depend on the reduction of grants-in-aid to the Mission schools. The Government thought that the money thus saved would be sufficient to pay for the training college. The Mission schools were asked to limit their instruction to Standard VII thereby cutting out the preparation of boys for the Cambridge School Certificate examinations and reducing the amounts they had been able to earn. They were further required to put into their schools a larger sum from Mission funds than they had done formerly. Both the Methodist and the Catholic Missions refused to support this scheme and a training school without their support was useless. Explaining the position of the Methodist Mission to the President of the 1902 Royal Commission on Education, Bishop Frank W. Warne declared:

Since the beginning of our educational work in 1885 we have established 17 schools in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States. We now have upon our rolls more than 3,100 students. We believe in education. We believe that intelligent men and women

make more useful and loyal citizens.... We are grateful for the substantial aid given us by the Government in the form of Grants-in-aid and Building grants. We have been glad to serve the interests of the Government and of the Community in general by doing what we could to prepare young men and women for service in Government, Mercantile and Home vocations. We are in hearty sympathy with every effort to increase the efficiency of the schools... and to provide facilities for more advanced education....

In order for us to remain in this work our schools must largely be self-supporting. We are now putting large sums of money into this work in the form of teachers' salaries, that is, our teachers are voluntarily receiving a salary which is perhaps not more than half what Government is paying teachers of equal ability for like service. This fact will be revealed by an examination of the records of the Education Department.

In other words, we are doing the work at much less cost than Government or private individuals can do it. It will be impossible for us to maintain our schools if the present conditions are materially altered.... Should such restrictions be imposed upon us as will render us unable to carry on our schools as now financed we fear we shall be compelled, much to our regret, to retire from this kind of primary educational work... since the grade of men needed for our school work will not come to our schools for primary work alone.[184]

Financially the position of the Catholic Mission schools was similar to that of the Methodist Mission. Until the reforms of the grants-in-aid system in 1922, the official attitude towards the Missions was not one of fairness or generosity. This can be seen in a moment in the subsidies granted to Government schools and those to schools under Mission management; it was not a matter of hundreds but of thousands of dollars annually. At the same time the Government expected the same high standards of efficiency from the Mission schools as from the State-endowed. The Government was content that the Missions should educate and educate well hundreds of its citizens at an insignificant cost to itself; at the same time it financed heavily a few institutions whose results were little better if any than those of the Mission schools.[185]

Although the overriding consideration of the Government at the time was the question of finance, the fundamental factor in educational policy was the State's refusal to accept complete responsibility for education, except in the sphere of Malay vernac-

ular schooling. Its attempts to economize, as in the case of the teachers' training college, were discreditable to a wealthy Government and showed a lack of faith in education as a vital force in the development of the country. The fantastic expense of employing European teachers from England was compensated by exploiting the willingness of missionary teachers, many of whom were university trained, to give their services for nothing, or less than market rate. Where the local population was concerned, education was to be bought at the lowest possible price, and Government policy gave moral support to the survival of the cheapest.

All previous attempts at teacher-training having failed, an English expatriate teacher named Howard Tyte, employed at the Victoria Institution, introduced Normal classes in January 1905 to train some of the more promising teachers already employed in the schools. For a start he had six students from the Victoria Institution and the Methodist Boys' School in Kuala Lumpur. Although Tyte was able to give only part-time instruction, it was a vast improvement on the old pupil-teacher system. It was an immediate success. The following year it was expanded, and so enthusiastic was the Director of Education that he decided the scheme should be introduced in all the chief centres of schooling both in the Colony and the Malay States.[106] Under this system teachers-in-training received instruction in the principles of education, English literature and handicrafts; they attended lectures after school hours. Normal classes became the standard system of teacher-training for nearly half a century, and while it cost the Government practically nothing, it supplied the bulk of teachers for all Government and Mission English schools in the country.

A revised Education Code was introduced in 1908 whereby grants to English schools were increased slightly, but should the grants together with the amount received in school fees exceed the total expenditure as shown in the school's statement of accounts, the grants would be reduced by the amount of the excess. *Efficiency* was again stressed as the prerequisite for receiving a grant, and whether a school was efficient or not depended entirely on the Inspector of Schools. However, the question of efficiency or otherwise applied only to the higher standards and secondary classes. The privileges of the new Code

were not extended to new schools unless they could show that they were needed and had a reasonable chance of being successful.

A first grade grant was awarded only when the teaching staff was 'sufficient and properly qualified'. Local teachers were not considered efficient unless they held Normal certificates or had been certified as 'competent' by the Director of Education. Graduates of the Universities of the United Kingdom, certificated English teachers and members of religious orders 'especially devoted to teaching' (provided they were of English-speaking descent) would be considered as qualified. Graduates of other Universities and members of religious orders (if their mother tongue was not English) would also be considered as qualified if they were 'thoroughly acquainted with the English tongue'.[107]

By 1907 the leading English schools were concentrated in the main towns of Taiping, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur and Seremban. They served mainly the new urban classes composed predominantly of Chinese and Indians whose outlook tended to become superficially westernized according to how much western culture they had absorbed in the English schools.

The total expenditure on English schools and the cost to the Government of the principal schools in 1907 are shown in the following tables.

The Federated Malay States in 1907 had a total of 310 schools, of which those listed on page 270 were the most important. Enrolled in all the English schools were 2,915 boys and 126 girls. About 290 vernacular schools had a total enrolment of 11,128 pupils. The total expenditure on education for 1907 was $301,662, nearly 50 per cent of which was on English schools.

EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION IN THE F.M.S. 1907[108]

(excluding the cost of buildings)

Federal	$ 32,697.48
Perak	121,525.43
Selangor	93,793.75
Negri Sembilan	43,025.25
Pahang	10,620.70
Total	$301,662.61

EXPENDITURE ON ENGLISH SCHOOLS, 1907[109]

	Average Enrolment	Average Attendance	Government Allowance	School Fees	Private Income	Expenditure	Cost of each pupil in average attendance: Total	Cost of each pupil in average attendance: Government share
PERAK								
King Edward VII School	466	426	$13,215.00	$ 6,836.00	$ 627.88	$21,213.00	$49.80	$31.00
Convent, Taiping	146	122	$ 1,397.00	$ 500.00	$ 10.00	$ 5,490.00	$38.66	$11.45
Treacher Girls' School	63	56	$ 527.00	$ 508.00	$1,349.83	$ 2,591.83	$46.28	$ 9.41
Ipoh Boys' School	521	471	$ 5,938.00	$ 7,622.50	$2,388.00	$16,226.73	$34.45	$12.60
Ipoh Girls' School	28	21	$ 205.00	$ 280.00	no data	$ 470.50	$22.40	$ 9.76
Convent, Ipoh	71	61	$ 855.00	$ 700.00	$ 450.00	$ 3,100.00	$50.82	$14.00
Government School, Kuala Kangsar	70	60	$ 1,173.00	$ 380.00	no data	$ 1,173.00	$19.55	$13.21
SELANGOR								
Victoria Institution	572	536	$34,511.55*	$11,455.00	$2,354.68	$42,811.00	$79.87	$64.38
Methodist Boys' School	400	361	$ 2,956.00	$ 4,780.66	$2,534.13	$12,370.62	$34.26	$ 8.19
St. John's Institution	293	260	$ 2,768.00	$ 3,171.76	$3,424.07	$17,393.19	$66.89	$10.64
Convent, Kuala Lumpur	168	163	$ 1,226.00	$ 825.00	$1,344.00	$ 8,746.00	$53.65	$ 7.52
Methodist Girls' School	110	91	$ 742.00	$ 1,034.25	$1,580.59	$ 3,503.13	$38.49	$ 8.15
NEGRI SEMBILAN								
St. Paul's School	175	152	$ 2,000.00	$ 1,858.88	no data	$ 4,077.00	$26.82	$13.15
Convent, Seremban	88	78	$ 670.00	$ 500.00	$1,298.50	$ 2,579.00	$33.06	$ 8.59

* *This includes the Municipal Rate of* $18,761.55.

In 1902 there were about 200 vernacular schools and 18 English schools, 5 of which were Government and 13 Mission. The vernacular school population then was 8,718 while the English schools had a total of 2,022 pupils. Government expenditure on education in 1902 totalled $229,209, or slightly less than 1½ per cent of the total national expenditure.

In five years the number of schools had increased by 110, the majority being Malay vernacular. Although the absolute amount spent on education had increased in 1907, it was still about 1½ per cent of the total national expenditure of $20,225,993.

The table on page 270 shows that the heaviest grants were made to the two leading Government schools in the Federated Malay States—the Victoria Institution and the King Edward VII School. The total enrolment in the 14 schools listed was 3,171 and the Government schools were directly responsible for the education of 1,108 or about one-third of the total English school population. In other words the Government spent $64,024 on 1,108 pupils while Government grants to Mission schools, which catered for 2,063 pupils, amounted to only $20,357 or less than one-third the amount spent on Government institutions. The Mission schools had to make up the difference in their expenditure of $57,364 through school fees and their private Mission funds.

These figures show conclusively that, despite great financial handicaps, the Mission schools carried the main burden of English education in the Federated Malay States.

The total number of schools had risen from 285 in 1906 to 310 in 1907; the boys' average attendance from 12,726 to 14,350, and girls in average attendance from 1,459 to 1,721. The total number of pupils in average attendance increased from 14,185 to 16,071.

In the 14 English boys' school the average enrolment was 2,915 and the average attendance was 2,590, or 88.8 per cent. In the 8 English girls' schools the average enrolment was 726 and the average attendance was 632 or 87 per cent. In the three Anglo-Vernacular schools, the boys' average enrolment was 211 and the average attendance was 196, or 92.9 per cent.

Malay schools totalled 232 for boys and 34 for girls. The total enrolment was 14,774 (13,479 boys and 1,295 girls), and the average attendance was 10,996 for boys and 1,017 for girls.

AVERAGE ENROLMENT AND ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOLS OF THE F.M.S., 1907[110]

		English	Anglo-Vernacular	Tamil	Malay	Chinese	Total	
PERAK								
No. of Schools	(Boys	8	3	11	122	1	145)	183
	(Girls	4	—	2	31	1	38)	
Average Enrolment	(Boys	1,376	211	560	7,412	18	9,577)	11,195
	(Girls	308	—	81	1,218	11	1,618)	
Average Attendance	(Boys	1,197	196	445	5,961	14	7,813)	9,096
	(Girls	260	—	64	951	8	1,283)	
SELANGOR								
No. of Schools	(Boys	4	—	1	41	2	48)	53
	(Girls	3	—	—	2	—	5)	
Average Enrolment	(Boys	1,339	—	35	1,876	62	3,312)	3,688
	(Girls	330	—	—	46	—	376)	
Average Attendance	(Boys	1,220	—	26	1,608	53	2,907)	3,238
	(Girls	294	—	—	37	—	331)	
NEGRI SEMBILAN								
No. of Schools	(Boys	1	—	1	46	—	48)	50
	(Girls	1	—	—	1	—	2)	
Average Enrolment	(Boys	175	—	39	3,308	—	3,522)	3,641
	(Girls	88	—	—	31	—	119)	
Average Attendance	(Boys	152	—	30	2,858	—	3,040)	3,147
	(Girls	78	—	—	29	—	107)	
PAHANG								
No. of Schools	(Boys	1	—	—	23	—	24	
	(Girls	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Average Enrolment	(Boys	25	—	—	883	—	908	
	(Girls	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Average Attendance	(Boys	21	—	—	569	—	590	
	(Girls	—	—	—	—	—	—	

EDUCATION FOR DIVERSITY

After approximately three decades of educational development in the Federated Malay States, two distinct educational systems were evolved, one for vernacular Malay, the other for English schools.

The policy towards vernacular Malay education was determined largely by a feeling of solicitude for the Malays, but this solicitude was negative and educationally stultifying; its good

intentions misfired and the results were contrary to what the British expected. School instruction for the Malays was aimed at keeping them in the class in which they were born: since their fathers and forefathers worked on the land or were manual labourers, they were expected, like dutiful children, to follow in their fathers' footsteps. Any kind of instruction which 'unfitted them for manual labour' was frowned upon by officials who could not understand why natives who had had 'a smattering of English' detested manual labour. More specifically, vernacular Malay instruction aimed at the

> bestowal of an elementary education such as would enable the villager to keep his simple records and so protect himself against the petty swindlers who, in the mixed population of the Peninsula, were ever ready to prey upon his ignorance, and also to teach him much needed lessons of discipline, order and self-control.[111]

In this respect vernacular instruction in Malaya had one thing in common with that in Burma, a belief that natives given elementary instruction would escape the clutches of petty shopkeepers or money-lenders and become better cultivators of the soil. However, 'the man who knows how to write no longer makes his mark on the money-lender's promissory note; but he is just as ready to sign his name.'[112]

The problem of native farmers falling into debt indicated the symptom rather than the cause of some economic dislocation. With the coming of the British, the whole pattern of traditional Malay economy was subjected to a severe shock. The superstructure of a money economy was imposed on the closed native barter economy, whose doors indeed were prised open by the increased circulation of money. The pressure of Western material goods, which poured into the country in increasing volume as the country became wealthier, helped to destroy many native handicrafts and home industries and to undermine the traditional pattern of life in the rural areas. The new economic order established a demand for people willing to work for the foreigner, and disproportionately benefited such persons as compared with the independent craftsman and the peasant proprietor. Social values changed. The village craftsman no longer held a position of respect as of old. The effacing of old social landmarks brought

about a demoralization which, in the words of a Malay author, 'made worms out of dragons and dragons out of worms'.

The evil stemmed from the fact that, while the rest of the country was undergoing drastic changes, Malay agricultural production remained very much what it was before the British era. While the new urban society became richer and was provided with all the material comforts of civilization, the rural Malays remained in poverty. The Malays had a money economy thrust upon them, but they had little means of earning the same money to buy the goods which came with a money economy. While the British were consciously and deliberately creating a modern economic system consonant with world commercial development, the Malays were driven more and more into the backwoods of economic progress. No native village, however remote, escaped the ramifications of the new material order. Where the merchant-adventurer in Africa pushed his way into primitive tribal communities to barter for elephant tusks and animal skins, the itinerant Chinese merchant found his way into Malay *kampongs* where he set up shop to deal in salt fish and basic provisions. The Malay villager got into debt, not so much because the Chinese petty trader preyed on him, as because the farmer's needs—a piece of satin for his wife, a bead necklace for his daughter, or twenty pounds of sugar to make the cakes for his cousin's wedding—had increased beyond his ability to pay for them. Not accustomed to the real value of money, the Malay farmer was naturally feckless about balancing his income and expenditure. A whole season's rice crop might be pledged as security for the loan of a sum of money for a son's wedding. Fundamentally, rural poverty in Malaya could be traced to the poverty of the soil, inefficient agricultural implements, ignorance of scientific agriculture, and the absence of any Government body to advise and assist Malay farmers in rice production and marketing methods.

What did vernacular education give the Malays? Instruction was confined to four (later increased to five) years of school, where teachers were badly trained (if they were trained at all) and received a mere pittance which helped to demoralize them. The curriculum was restricted to the barest learning of the Malay language, a bit of the Koran, 'something about figures and geography...and the habits of industry, punctuality and obedience'. This was considered sufficient to equip them to compete with

the more aggressive Chinese and Indians whose labour and industry helped to create the new economic order. Vernacular education was designed to preserve the Malay's traditional way of life; never was there once any hint of what Lord Hailey was to say with reference to Africa, 'Education is, and is intended to be, an instrument of change'.[113]

As a result of the spread of English education large classes of petty officials were able to read and write, and thereby to perform their duties more efficiently—'the professional efficiency of the rank and file of administration is, after all, a vital feature in successful government'—but unfortunately there were also disappointing features about the condition of the Malays. R.J. Wilkinson admitted that 'no highly-educated class' had sprung up among them 'to lead them on to further improvement'. This would not have surprised the Federal Inspector of Schools if he had acquainted himself with the real nature of Malay vernacular education.

> The power to read and write does not seem to be accompanied by any desire to do so. The old literature is perishing, and nothing of value seems to be taking its place; indeed, the limited vocabulary acquired in the schools is insufficient to enable their pupils to read the ancient books. Some private inquiries addressed to about fifty vernacular school teachers elicited the fact that a large majority of them had never read any books except those used in their work or for devotional purposes, and that only three of them possessed more than a shillingsworth of literature in their private libraries.[114]

In the absence of a well-developed Malay vernacular and a dynamic body of literature, the child in a Malay school could not be introduced to a world of thought, of achievement and of conduct outside the immediate experience of his village and his own parents. The dazzling success of the country's economic development blinded British administrators to the need for educational progress for the Malays. Education entails growth, and 'growth means change, grafting, air, and sunlight from outside as well as native soil'; and the paradox is that a society that lacks change lacks the means of preservation.[115] Thus after more than thirty years of British rule, Malay vernacular education led the Malays nowhere. Worse than that, they found to their

bewilderment that their world had been changed by forces beyond their understanding and control; thriving townships had sprung up where a generation before the tiger or the elephant roamed undisturbed, and thousands of Indians and Chinese were carving for themselves a niche in a brave new world in which the rural Malay had little or no place.

English education was said to be 'unpractical, to make the people litigious and arrogant, to inspire a distaste for manual labour and technical work, and to create a class of literary malcontents' who were 'useless to their communities and a source of trouble to the Empire'.[116] If this was true, it was a serious indictment of the kind of education which came to the East as a result of Western rule.

Public instruction in Malaya was regarded more as an administrative than as a purely educational problem. Educational policy therefore was dictated by two main factors. First, the political or administrative consideration which held that a literate and docile population would be easier to govern; in schemes for social welfare, such as hospitals or mass inoculation against epidemics, the Government would have a better chance of securing their co-operation than if they were illiterate and hostile. Second, the economic demand for literate clerks to carry on the routine work in Government departments and Western commercial houses. To achieve both these ends the emphasis was on the teaching of the English language.

The orientation of English schools was naturally towards the West. English history and literature were taught from the point of view of English children; the very textbooks in use were those met with in London schools, so that 'the Malay or Chinese child, at two degrees distance from the equator, read tales of Christmas trees and robins playing in the snow'.[117] The style of Dr. Johnson and Addison was held up as a model to be copied by fledgling clerks and shop-assistants who at home probably spoke nothing but Cantonese or Hokkien, Tamil or Bengali. The waste of time and effort under such conditions must have been enormous. But the aims of English education were substantially the same as those in India, and Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education* might have been written with reference to Malaya: 'We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons,

Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.'[118]

While the demand was for English-literate clerks, English schools were popular; but those who attended them did so not because they wished to learn a way of life—'English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect'—but because they wanted to earn a living better than that of a manual labourer. A knowledge of English brought economic security and a certain measure of prestige; as a medium of instruction for the cultured and professional classes, its undoubted merits were leading its advocates 'to encroach upon the province of vernacular and industrial education through which alone the masses could be influenced'.[119]

Where Malay vernacular education resisted change, or at least hampered progress, English education was, and continued to be, an instrument of change. Parents who were themselves illiterate found that their children educated in English schools were cut adrift from their ancestral traditions, and old social and cultural values were rejected by the new generation. But because they were only superficially educated in a foreign language, they were unable, even had they so desired, to imbibe the finer points of Western thought and culture. Amongst the English educated, however, there appeared the promise of a synthesis of East and West, and in the plural society of Malaya, they began to show a common outlook cutting across race, colour and creed, and to speak an English *patois* that was distinctively Malayan in flavour. If their cultural roots did not sink deep in either Eastern or Western soil, they were compensated by an assured position in the economic order. The British in the East had hoped to transform Oriental society by education, and they succeeded in giving birth to a new society fathered, however, not by education but by economic forces; and this new society transformed the character of education.[120]

The two diverging Malay vernacular and English educational systems produced two distinct classes each culturally, intellectually and economically divorced from the other; one remained in rural poverty though compensated to a certain extent by having its cultural traditions free from the corroding influence of the West, the other became urbanized with a veneer of Western sophistication, culturally emasculated, but relatively well off by

material standards. Above all, a wide language gulf separated the two classes. It is here that charges against the British for planning to divide and rule gain their strongest support. The vernacular educated remained as a substratum of the new Malayan society; while the Malay aristocracy learned that their duty was to get on in the world created by the British, the mass of Malays remained untouched by Western culture and had no share in the enormous wealth produced by the country. Schemes for social welfare and extensions of communications and public utilities were designed to benefit the urban tax-paying classes; and as the towns grew more opulent, the rural areas by contrast slowly sank deeper into poverty and neglect. Beneath the surface calm and placidity of the rural Malay the fires of resentment and reaction against the British and immigrant races were smouldering.[121]

NOTES

1 *The System of Education in the Federated Malay States*, Federal Education Office, Kuala Lumpur, 1902; Special Reports on Educational Subjects, Cd. 2379 (1905), p. 4.
2 J.S. Furnivall, *Educational Progress in Southeast Asia*, pp. 13-15.
3 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, p. 4.
4 *Ibid.*
5 *Ibid.* p. 3.
6 'English' here means that the medium of instruction was English, and 'vernacular' means that the instruction was given in the home language of the children, such as Malay, Tamil or Cantonese.
7 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, p. 5.
8 A.R. Perak for 1890, C. 6576, p. 18.
9 A.R. Perak for 1889, C. 6222, p. 21.
10 A.R. Perak for 1893, C. 7546, p. 15.
11 Reports on the Protected Malay States for 1891, C. 6858, p. 23.
12 Reports on the Protected Malay States for 1892, C. 7228, p. 26.
13 Reports on the Protected Malay States for 1891, C. 6858, p. 23.
14 E.C. Hicks, *History of English Schools in Perak*, p. 4.
15 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, p. 5.
16 Reports on the Protected Malay States for 1891, C. 6858, p. 23.
17 *Ibid.* p. 24.
18 Education Report for 1896, Perak; Annual Reports.
19 Education Report for 1896, Pahang; Annual Reports.
20 A.R. Pahang for 1897, C. 9108.
21 A.R. Negri Sembilan for 1897, C. 9108.
22 Sir Charles Mitchell to Chamberlain, 18th August 1896, GD/C.
23 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, p. 6.
24 J.W. Adamson, *A History of Education*, p. 302.

25 *Ibid.* p. 303.
26 *Ibid.* pp. 303-8.
27 *Straits Budget*, 28th January 1896.
28 *Ibid.*
29 *Ibid.*
30 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, p. 6. The details of the Code may be seen in Appendix A.
31 A.R. Perak for 1890, C. 6576, p. 18.
32 Lord Knutsford to Sir Cecil Smith, 15th October 1891, C. 6576, p. 105.
33 Sir Cecil Smith to Lord Ripon, 2nd August 1893, C. 7288, p. 8.
34 A. Mayhew, *Education in the Colonial Empire*, p. 49.
35 Resident General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1897.
36 Resident-General's Report on the F.M.S. for 1898.
37 *Ibid.*
38 *Malay Mail*, 28th December 1896.
39 *Ibid.*
40 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, p. 8.
41 A.R. Pahang for 1898, C. 9524.
42 Reports on the F.M.S. for 1901, Cd. 1297, p. 4.
43 Resident-General's Report for 1903.
44 A.R., F.M.S. for 1904, Cd. 2777 (1905), p. 21.
45 A.R. Perak for 1905, Cd. 3168.
46 *Ibid.*
47 *Malay Mail*, 24th July 1907.
48 *Malay Mail*, 2nd April 1906.
49 A.R., F.M.S. for 1906, Cd. 3741 (1907), p. 35.
50 Education Report for the F.M.S. for 1903, Cd. 2243.
51 A.R., F.M.S. for 1904, Cd. 2777 (1905), p. 20.
52 *Ibid.*
53 *Ibid.*
54 *Ibid.*
55 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, p. 9.
56 Annual Report on Education (S.S. and F.M.S.), 1938, p. 20.
57 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, p. 9.
58 *Ibid.*
59 *Ibid.* Schedule V, Cd. 2379, p. 47.
60 *Ibid.* p. 9.
61 *Ibid.*
62 *Ibid.* p. 10.
63 *Ibid.* p. 11.
64 *Ibid.*
65 Resident-General's Report for 1898.
66 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, p. 12.
67 *Ibid.*
68 *Ibid.* p. 13.
69 Resident-General's Report for 1902.
70 Education Report for the F.M.S., 1903, Cd. 2243.

71 *Ibid.* Wilkinson's views reflected those held by Swettenham when the latter, addressing the Legislative Council of the Colony on 29th October 1901, declared that it was 'not quite right' that the Colony Government should spend public funds 'in educating to a high degree the children of aliens who were well able to pay for the education themselves'. He suggested that those Chinese who had made 'large fortunes' in the Colony should give more generously to the cause of Education since the Government had to look to the public interests in the way of large public works. Dr. Lim Boon Keng, the Chinese member of the Council who criticized Government expenditure on education, declared that as an unofficial member he might 'by continued talking' touch the official conscience 'if not with the ordinary whip, perhaps with the iron hook of the elephant driver'. To which the Governor retorted that his official conscience was not susceptible to the whip. (See *Straits Times*, 30th October 1901.)

72 Education Report for the F.M.S., 1903, Cd. 2243.

73 Resident-General's Report for 1903, Cd. 2243, p. 31.

74 *Malay Mail*, 24th July 1907.

75 Annual Report on Education (S.S. and F.M.S.), 1938, p. 8.

76 Education Report for 1904, Cd. 2777 (1905), p. 21.

77 Annual Report on Education (S.S. and F.M.S.), 1938, p. 9.

78 Straits Settlements Government Gazette, 1908.

79 Annual Report on Education (S.S. and F.M.S.), 1938, p. 9.

80 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, p. 13.

81 The syllabus discussed here is from the Education Code of 1899.

82 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Schedule II, Cd. 2379, p. 39.

83 *Ibid.* Schedule IV, Cd. 2379, pp. 42-6.

84 Resident-General's Report for 1903, Cd. 2243, p. 30.

85 Resident General's Report for 1899.

86 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, pp. 16-17.

87 *Ibid.*

88 Resident-General's Report for 1904. This sum given by Loke Yew was never used for technical instruction and remained in a bank for more than fifty years. In 1959 the original capital, with interest, amounted to more than $130,000. To this amount were added sums subscribed by his friends after Loke Yew died in 1917, to establish a monument to his memory. Subsequent donations by Loke Yew's sons, Loke Wan Tho and Loke Wan Yat, brought the total to $250,000. The board of trustees decided that from this fund awards would be given for the study of science, agriculture and engineering at the University of Malaya. *Straits Times*, 3rd October 1959.

89 A.R. Selangor for 1906, Cd. 3741.

90 Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the System of English Education in the Colony, Singapore, April 1902, p. 9.

91 *Ibid.*

92 This was mainly the opinion of Dr. W.C. Brown, Penang representative in the Legislative Council. His separate memorandum to the

1902 Education Commission is quoted in the *Straits Chinese Magazine*, Volume VIII, p. 23.

93 Sir John Anderson to the Secretary of State, 5th April 1905, GD/C. 39.

94 Annual Report on Education (S.S. and F.M.S.), 1938, p. 12.

95 Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the System of English Education in the Colony, p. 11.

96 *Straits Budget*, 5th October 1905.

97 Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the System of English Education in the Colony, pp. 4-7.

98 Straits Settlements Government Gazette, 1902.

99 Report of the Committee to investigate the working of the system of Grants-in-Aid in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, Singapore, 1922, p. 3.

100 Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the System of English Education in the Colony, p. 4.

101 *The System of Education in the F.M.S.*, Cd. 2379, p. 15. The emphasis is the writer's. The Government definitely discriminated against graduates of American colleges or universities. The Grants-in-Aid Commission of 1922 admitted that it was the Government's policy to give preference to *British* teachers in recruiting for the Education Service.

102 Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the System of English Education in the Colony, p. 4.

103 *Ibid.*

104 Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the System of English Education in the Colony, Appendix D.

105 *Malaysia Message*, January 1907, p. 30.

106 Education Report for 1906, Cd. 3741. See also *Malay Mail*, 24th July 1907.

107 Straits Settlements Government Gazette, 1908.

108 Report of the Director of Education [Mr. J.B. Elcum], Departmental Reports, F.M.S., 1907.

109 Education Report for 1907, Cd. 4471.

110 Report of the Director of Education [J.B. Elcum], Departmental Reports, F.M.S., 1907.

111 H.A. Wyndham, *Native Education*, pp. 210-11.

112 Furnivall, *op. cit.* p. 115.

113 Lord Hailey, *African Survey*, p. 1207.

114 R.J. Wilkinson, *The Education of Asiatics*, Special Reports, Cd. 835, 1902.

115 A. Mayhew, *op. cit.* p. 10.

116 *The Education of Asiatics.*

117 *Ibid.*

118 Macaulay, *Prose and Poetry*, selected by G.M. Young, p. 729.

119 *The Education of Asiatics.*

120 Furnivall, *op. cit.* pp. 47-8.

121 *The Education of Asiatics.*

CONCLUSION

It is certain that Britain would have intervened in the Malay States sooner or later even if Raja Abdullah had not personally appealed for British aid in his quarrel with the chiefs of Upper Perak. The British forward movement in the Malay Peninsula must be seen against the background of the European scramble for the underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa. Britain's greatest and most dangerous rival in Asia at the time was France whose ambitions in Siam were transparent; if Siam had fallen under the influence of France the Siamese-Malay States would have been taken over automatically by the French, and the political vacuum in the western Malay States would have drawn the tricolour over them. British diplomacy in the Malay Peninsula, as in Burma, was aimed at containing French expansionist movements; and to forestall a possible French move south of the Siamese border was therefore a strong motive for British intervention in the Malay States.

British capitalists were believed to have forced the hand of the British Government in abandoning the policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the Malay States. If this is true, it is curious that there was no immediate inrush of British capital to the Malay States soon after the establishment of the Residential system. The facts seem to suggest that *Chinese* capitalists in the Straits were the most clamorous for British intervention, and after the restoration of law and order they were the first to move into the open field of enterprise. The tin industry was a Chinese

monopoly up to the end of the century; European ascendancy in tin mining did not begin until the introduction of dredges in 1912—nearly forty years after Pangkor. British planters moved into the Malay States only after they were forced to leave Ceylon where their coffee plantations were destroyed by plant disease. The rise of the rubber industry was as unforeseen as it was fortunate for the future of the country.

Charges of British 'exploitation' of the country are usually based on an uncritical acceptance of the Leninist theory that capitalist investment in colonies inevitably leads to poverty and servitude.[1] Undoubtedly it was true in many cases during the halcyon days of *laissez-faire:* the sugar industry in Province Wellesley had its notorious chapter. But has the Leninist theory been generally borne out by facts in Malaya? The indenture system in Malaya, as in other colonial territories, had its evils, but the exploitation of indentured labour was committed more by the recruiting agents—both Indian and Chinese—than by employers of that form of labour. From 1880 Government intervention on behalf of labour was on the increase, although at the same time capital was given ample scope for its activities. By the end of the century the belief in the unrestricted freedom of private enterprise as the best means of promoting economic progress was giving way to a conviction that progress, social justice and public welfare could be assured only with State control over private enterprise. The outcome of this was 'the white man's burden' and the belief that an imperialist power had certain responsibilities towards its subject peoples. Hence the paternalism in British policy towards the Malays and to a lesser extent towards immigrant Chinese and Indian labour. A series of Government enactments protected immigrant labour, and pressure was exerted on employers to provide basic health and medical services for their employees. In the case of Chinese mining labourers, the Government took the initiative to provide hospitals and other forms of medical care for the sick and indigent, and Chinese capitalists were not slow in responding to the State's example of philanthropy. Many of the hospitals and schools were generously endowed by tin miners who had made their fortunes in the country.

While the Chinese were principally responsible for creating the wealth which paid for the initial development of the country's

communications, social services, public works and the administrative system, the subsequent expansion of the economy depended on the large injections of capital from Europe, mainly Britain. But the influx of foreign capital would not have come about if the Government had not far-sightedly invested every available dollar from public revenues in providing the essential public works and utilities and generally creating a favourable climate for overseas investment. There was, indeed, 'exploitation' if we take the term in its non-pejorative sense to mean making the best use of the country's resources. The Chinese 'exploited' the rich alluvial tin deposits; the Government 'exploited' the agricultural possibilities of the country by investing heavily in railways and roads; British capitalists 'exploited' the world demand for rubber by putting money in rubber plantations. In an underdeveloped country,

> a society which cannot by its own savings finance the progress it desires must strive to make itself credit-worthy and is most likely to succeed if it follows market opportunities along the path of comparative costs. Because its future prospects depend so much on present imports, it must look about for profitable export industries; it must also offer prospects of gain to people of enterprise—to its own people so far as possible, but if need be to foreigners also. It is better to have 'palm oil ruffians' to pioneer a thriving commerce than to have no economic pioneers at all.[2]

Professor Hancock makes no apology for this 'pure Adam Smith', but he admits that palm oil ruffians, if left to themselves, 'do some bad things and leave many good things undone'. His thesis would be open to grave objections if in the process of developing an export industry the palm oil ruffians should mulct the country of all its natural wealth without any proportionate gain to its natives. Wherever organized capital employs masses of workers, servile conditions have been and inevitably will be imposed on the wage-earning labourers, unless there is some control and vigilant intervention under public law.[3] In the Malay States labour conditions were under fairly close Government surveillance so that flagrant abuses never went unchecked; but the State protection of indentured labour was not a 'democratic domestic compulsion' as in English industrial legislation: it was 'a paternal and humanitarian compulsion' imposed by the circumspection of the Indian and British Governments.[4] The

setting up of the Tamil Immigration Fund in 1908, by which Indian labourers could travel to the Malay States at Government expense and sell their labour wherever they liked, was the most important and constructive step in the direction of outlawing indentured labour.

To what degree were Indian labourers 'exploited' in the rubber plantations? In terms of high profits for absentee shareholders and low wages for the labourers whose work produced the profits, the charge of 'exploitation' cannot be denied. In relative terms, although the wages were low, they compared favourably with the standard wages for unskilled manual labourers; further, Indian labourers and their families were provided with free passages from and to their home country, free quarters, medical attention and schooling for their children. If their economic condition left much to be desired, they were in fact much better off than in their villages at home. If absentee shareholders siphoned off enormous profits, the labourers, even with their low wages, had the hope of release from the vicious circle of poverty and starvation in times of famine in India. To have the choice of starvation at home or low wages on a rubber plantation was to rise one step higher towards a better living standard. That Indian immigrants on the whole were not too badly off may be seen in the amount of money remitted annually to India. In 1908 the number of postal orders issued by the Postal Department for payment in India was 34,873; the amount remitted was Rs. 2,264,230 (£150,949) giving an average of £4.6*s*.8*d*. for each order. Even allowing for the fact that these remittances came from all classes of Indians, the total sum sent to India indicated a certain measure of prosperity amongst Indians in Malaya.[5]

While few countries would accept its national development at *any* cost, Malaya has been fortunate in paying a comparatively low price for her development. The influx of foreign capital into Malaya ensured the growth of a thriving plantation industry which gave employment to thousands of unskilled labourers and encouraged the division of labour in town and village. As local internal trade expanded, public revenue increased and with it a capacity to borrow abroad. The consequent increased circulation of money was an important advance towards raising living standards. The Leninist contention that impoverishment would surely follow capitalist investment in colonies is not borne out by

facts in Malaya as in many other countries under a capitalist system. In 1930-1 the foreign debts of capital importing countries were: Canada $623 per head of population; Australia $592; New Zealand $555. These countries are not notorious for poverty. Real poverty is found in countries whose capital imports were low: British West Africa, $10 per head of population; India, $8.[6] These facts would suggest that much of the trouble in underdeveloped countries is that they did not even a generation ago import enough capital to develop their industries and social services, i.e. they were 'under-exploited'. A comparison of the Malay States on the west coast with those on the east coast will bear out this contention.

In the phenomenal prosperity of Malaya the people who gained most were those least sheltered from the operations of a *laissez-faire* economy. As the Chinese provided the bulk of the revenue of the country, so they supplied both the skilled and semi-skilled labour for all the secondary industries and businesses. Self-reliant and economically agressive, the Chinese were able to create an *imperium in imperio* for themselves whether the British Government looked to their welfare or not. The expansion of the economy opened up numerous avenues of employment, and while Europeans filled the higher ranks, the lower positions were taken by the Chinese and Indians.

The Malays were slow to respond to the new economic demands. The root cause of their backwardness was a mistaken educational policy for Malay vernacular education. British administrators grossly underestimated the capacity of the Malays to profit from an enlightened, progressive system of secular instruction. The belief was strongly held by Swettenham that education in English would 'unfit them for manual labour' and give them notions above their station. The idea that a native must be kept in his place, that he had a very definite place to be kept in, and that education tended to make him come out of that place or to desire to come out of it was universal throughout colonial territories.[7] The result was a philistine educational policy which led the Malays down a blind alley. British paternalism towards the Malays was stultifying and a disservice to the race. While the immigrant races scrambled for a place in the sun, the Malays were kept sheltered in the shade of the British umbrella. Thus educationally, socially, and economically the Chinese and

Indians took the flood and moved on to fortune while the Malays were left behind.

The greatest British legacy to Malaya is undoubtedly the rule of law, and with it a stable and honest government; but like Burma and Ceylon, Malaya has inherited a plural society. When the British encouraged the immigration of Chinese and Indians, their only concern was the supply of cheap labour for the twin industries of tin mining and rubber planting. They did not foresee the political problem of a society in which three groups of people would live side by side but separately within the same political unit.

> All the members of all the groups are subject alike to the economic process of natural selection by the survival of the cheapest, and all respond in greater or less degree to the economic motive, the desire for individual material advantage. But that is all they have in common. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and its own ideas and ways of life: the members of each group mix with those of other groups only in the market place, in buying and selling.[8]

The lack of organic unity in a plural society meant the absence of a common standard of welfare, and the tension between classes with conflicting economic interests was aggravated by a corresponding cleavage along racial lines. All these were bound to react on political stability, and since such a plural society could be held together only by pressure exerted from outside, the British laid themselves open to the familiar charge of divide and rule.[9] However, Malaya's plural society, like the growth of the rubber industry, was not planned: it happened. That is the price for the economic, social and political development of Malaya.

NOTES

1 W.K. Hancock, *Wealth of Colonies*, p. 15.
2 *Ibid.* p. 39.
3 Lord Olivier, *White Capital and Coloured Labour*, p. 101.
4 *Ibid.* p. 102.
5 Report on Emigration from India to the Crown Colonies and Protectorates, Cd. 5192 (1910), p. 38.
6 Hancock, *op. cit.* p. 16.
7 Lord Olivier, *op. cit.*, Chapter XVII.
8 Furnivall, *Some Problems of Tropical Economy*, (Fabian Colonial Essays, edited by Rita Hinden), pp. 167-8.
9 *Ibid.* p. 168.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PERAK, 1874

ENGAGEMENT ENTERED INTO BY THE CHIEFS OF PERAK AT PULO PANGKOR.

Dated 20th January, 1874.

Whereas, a state of anarchy exists in the Kingdom of Perak owing to the want of settled government in the Country, and no efficient power exists for the protection of the people and for securing to them the fruits of their industry, and,

Whereas, large numbers of Chinese are employed and large sums of money invested in Tin mining in Perak by British subjects and others residing in Her Majesty's Possessions, and the said mines and property are not adequately protected, and piracy, murder and arson are rife in the said country, whereby British trade and interests greatly suffer, and the peace and good order of the neighbouring British Settlements are sometimes menaced, and,

Whereas, certain Chiefs for the time being of the said Kingdom of Perak have stated their inability to cope with the present difficulties, and together with those interested in the industry of the country have requested assistance, and,

Whereas, Her Majesty's Government is bound by Treaty Stipulations to protect the said Kingdom and to assist its rulers, now,

His Excellency SIR ANDREW CLARKE, K.C.M.G., C.B., Governor of the Colony of the Straits Settlements, in compliance with the said request, and with a view of assisting the said rulers and of affecting a permanent settlement of affairs in Perak, has proposed the following Articles of arrangements as mutually beneficial to the Independent Rulers of Perak, their subjects, the subjects of Her Majesty, and others residing in or trading with Perak, that is to say:—

1. First.—That the Raja Muda Abdullah be recognised as the Sultan of Perak.

II. Second.—That the Rajah Bandahara Ismail, now Acting Sultan, be allowed to retain the title of Sultan Muda with a pension and a certain small Territory assigned to him.

III. Third.—That all the other nominations of great Officers made at the time the Rajah Bandahara Ismail received the regalia be confirmed.

IV. Fourth.—That the power given to the Orang Kayah Mantri over Larut by the late Sultan be confirmed.

V. Fifth.—That all Revenues be collected and all appointments made in the name of the Sultan.

IV. Sixth.—That the Sultan receive and provide a suitable residence for a British Officer to be called Resident, who shall be accredited to his Court, and whose advice must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay Religion and Custom.

VII. Seventh.—That the Governor of Larut shall have attached to him as Assistant Resident, a British Officer acting under the Resident of Perak, with similar power and subordinate only to the said Resident.

VIII. Eighth.—That the cost of these Residents with their Establishments be determined by the Government of the Straits Settlements and be a first charge on the Revenues of Perak.

IX. Ninth.—That a Civil list regulating the income to be received by the Sultan, by the Bandahara, by the Mantri, and by the other Officers be the next charge on the said Revenue.

X. Tenth.—That the collection and control of all Revenues and the general administration of the country be regulated under the advice of these Residents.

XI. Eleventh.—That the Treaty under which the Pulo Dinding and the islands of Pangkor were ceded to Great Britain having been misunderstood and it being desirable to re-adjust the same, so as to carry into effect the intention of the Framers thereof, it is hereby declared that the Boundaries of the said Territory so ceded shall be rectified as follows, that is to say:—

From Bukit Sigari, as laid down in the Chart Sheet No. 1 Straits of Malacca, a tracing of which is annexed, marked A, in a straight line to the sea, thence along the sea coast to the South, to Pulo Katta on the West, and from Pulo Katta a line running North East about five miles, and thence North to Bukit Sigari.

XII. Twelfth.—That the Southern watershed of the Krean River, that is to say, the portion of land draining into that River from the South be declared British Territory, as a rectification of the Southern Boundary of Province Wellesley. Such Boundary to be marked out

by Commissioners; one named by the Government of the Straits Settlements, and the other by the Sultan of Perak.

XIII. Thirteenth.—That on the cessation of the present disturbances in Perak and the re-establishment of peace and amity among the contending factions in that Country, immediate measures under the control and supervision of one or more British Officers shall be taken for restoring as far as practicable the occupation of the Mines, and the possession of Machinery, &c., as held previous to the commencement of these disturbances, and for the payment of compensation for damages, the decision of such officer or officers shall be final in such case.

XIV. Fourteenth.—The Mantri of Larut engages to acknowledge as a debt due by him to the Government of the Straits Settlements, the charges and expenses incurred by this investigation, as well as the charges and expenses to which the Colony of the Straits Settlements and Great Britain have been put or may be put by their efforts to secure the tranquility of Perak and the safety of trade.

The above Articles having been severally read and explained to the undersigned who having understood the same, have severally agreed to and accepted them as binding on them and their Heirs and Successors.

This done and concluded at Pulo Pangkor in the British Possessions, this Twentieth day of January, in the year of the Christian Era, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-four.

Executed before me,

ANDREW CLARKE,
Governor, Commander-in-Chief and Vice-Admiral
of the Straits Settlements.

Chop of the Sultan of Perak.
" Bandahara of Perak.
" Tumongong of Perak.
" Mantri of Perak.
" Shahbander of Perak.
" Rajah Mahkota of Perak.
" Laxamana of Perak.
" Datoh Sa'gor.

APPENDIX B

SLAVERY IN THE MALAY STATES OF PERAK AND SELANGOR

When the social history of Malaya comes to be written, the emancipation of slaves and the abolition of slavery as an institution amongst the Malays may be found to be as important as the emancipation of the serfs in Europe or that of American Negro slaves. It was one of the 'rescue services', as A. P. Thornton in *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies* puts it, of British imperialism. With the abolition of slavery, the British demolished one of the last strongholds of Malay feudal power. Thenceforth Malay commoners suddenly attained equal rights with the raja class in the eyes of British law. At the same time the Sultans, by a natural process of British administration, became constitutional rulers in practice, if not in theory.

Soon after the British arrived in Perak and Selangor, their attention was drawn to the problem of slavery amongst the Malays. Its solution in Selangor was relatively simple, partly because of the small Malay population and the number of slaves, partly because it was not complicated by political issues, and partly because, almost right from the start, the reigning Sultan gave the British Resident full support in abolishing it. In Perak, where it was estimated that there were about 3,000 slaves held by royalty and commoners alike, its abolition posed a severe political and administrative problem. We have seen how J. W. W. Birch's lack of patience and tact exacerbated the situation, and it was left to Hugh Low to free the slaves without causing a political upheaval.

For centuries Malay custom had accepted the enslavement of fellow Muslims, although the practice went against Islamic law. This 'custom' was probably reinforced by the fact that the principal slave-holders were royalty and territorial chiefs, and in a feudal society, where might was right, no redress was possible.

There were two main categories of slaves: those who were bought as slaves from overseas, and those enslaved through debt. In theory slave-debtors could buy their freedom on payment of their debt; in practice, however, slave-holders would find every excuse to keep their slaves in perpetual bondage as long as they were of some economic value. To make matters worse, husbands or wives, children and parents were often taken into bondage together with the slave-debtor. It is possible that this custom originally arose when the slave-debtor who was the main provider for his dependents had to take his family along with him into bondage, since they might otherwise not be cared for in his absence. What was originally a necessity became a 'custom'.

While some slaves lived in comparative comfort as retainers in a royal household with whatever privileges it had to offer, the majority of debt-slaves had to endure all kinds of drudgery and cruelties. Royal slaves, or *hamba raja*, were, according to official reports, generally vicious and parasitic, often preying on the helpless inhabitants of local *kampongs*, either on their own whims and fancies or on account of their capricious masters.

British Residents and their assistants were unanimous in their condemnation of slavery in the Malay States; but where Birch would, and did, actively assist slaves to escape, Hugh Low was against any such quixotic measures to solve a basically explosive problem. Low's attitude was conditioned by his desire to gain the friendship and trust of the Malay chiefs as the basis of his administration of Perak, and he wisely avoided any action that would alienate them. On 28th April 1877, less than a fortnight after his arrival in Kuala Kangsar to take up the reins of government, Low noted in his diary: 'There is and has been evidently a strong inclination at this Residency to protect runaway slaves which I have no intention of following. If I were here long enough I would undertake to abolish every form of slavery in a time with the consent of the chiefs and people, but I shall be of no use here if I do not first thoroughly acquire their confidence, and that cannot be done if my first acts be to show that I am determined

to prevent or to encourage the breach of [what] is at present so cherished an institution.'

Hugh Low maintained the principle, in which he had the support of the Governor, that all those who were slaves or slave-debtors on the day of his arrival as Resident of the State were to be considered legally in that position; but thenceforth no one could be enslaved, and slave-owners were required to free any slave on the payment of his debt. Slaves already in bondage would be freed if there was proof of ill-treatment. In the course of his career in Perak, Hugh Low worked out a scheme for the emancipation of slaves, a scheme which he diplomatically presented to the State Council to gain the support of the Regent of Perak, Raja Yusuf, (who was one of the chief slave-holders), and the territorial chiefs. He hoped that, if his plans were carried through, all slaves in the State would be freed before December 1884; in fact, his plans worked so well that they were emancipated before the end of 1883. The manumission of slaves in Perak was a social revolution that brought security and social justice to the Malays of the State.

The letters in this Appendix, taken from the official correspondence on slavery in the Malay States published and presented by Royal Command to both Houses of Parliament (C. 3285 and C. 3429 of 1882) are the main extant documents on the subject. True, the correspondence reflects only the views of British officials, but in the absence, so far as the author knows, of any contemporary Malay writings on the subject, its factual authenticity must be taken for granted. The intrinsic interest of the correspondence, however, is not so much the 'facts' of debt-slavery as the light it throws on the attitude of British officials, from the local Resident to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and on the complex machinery of British colonial administration.

Numbered for convenience, the correspondence is arranged in chronological order and, at the risk of repetition, the inclusion of reports by various officials is designed to give a fair cross-section of opinion. Those interested in following the official correspondence to its conclusion may refer to C. 4192 of 1884. Readers with no background knowledge of slavery in the Malay States may well begin with Letter 25 by W. E. Maxwell.

As far as possible the author has avoided making any alterations to the form and text of the correspondence. It will be found

that spelling is erratic and inconsistent, especially that of place names and Malay words. These have been left in their original archaic forms on the assumption that they are easily recognizable and in the belief that they evoke the elusive 'atmosphere' of the time. Where minor corrections have been necessary to restore the sense of the text, these have been placed in square brackets. Omissions of the original text, to avoid unnecessary repetition and minor details, are indicated by asterisks. The author's own comments are printed in italics.

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1. FRANK SWETTENHAM, ASSISTANT RESIDENT OF SELANGOR, TO THE SECRETARY FOR NATIVE STATES, SINGAPORE.

Langat, 30th June, 1875.

Sir,

When on board the Colonial Steamer *Pluto* last week, accompanying His Excellency the Governor in a tour to some of the Native States, His Excellency made inquiry of me with regard to the present state of debt-slavery in the Peninsula.

This was a subject so large and important as hardly to admit of thorough explanation in a conversation, I therefore asked His Excellency's leave to report upon it.

I now beg to give you a detailed account of the circumstances of debt-slavery as known to me personally.

In treating the question under its present condition,—I mean, under Malay rule,—it is necessary to consider the all-but slavery of the debtors, and the difficulty of making any arrangement between debtor and creditor, which while it frees the one will satisfy the other, and still be in keeping with the 'adat Melayu'* as interpreted in these States.

The relative positions of debtor and creditor in the Western States,

* Malay society professes to be governed by the 'Hukum Isharat' (the Divine law of the Koran), and the 'adat Melayu' (*lit.* Malay custom). This last, the 'adat Melayu', when originally drawn up was a just and equitable code, under which though occasionally severe punishments were given, yet in the main if acted upon might have fairly suited the people living under its influence. Successive Rajas in each Native State have so altered this code that the custom actually in force now bears but the vaguest resemblance to it. Every alteration made has been for the worse, leaving out the good and introducing bad 'adat', until now whatever is done by a Chief consulting only his own inclination is justified by him as 'adat Melayu'. The very few upright Chiefs now to be found, say there is no longer any 'adat Melayu', but that everything is done by 'adat suka hati', i.e. the custom by which a man can best suit his own purpose and inclination.

more especially in Perak, involve evils which are, I believe, quite unknown to Europeans, even those living as near as Singapore.

The evils to which I refer have hitherto been regarded as unavoidable, and a part of the ordinary relations between Rajas and subjects.

I may premise by saying that though the system of 'debt-slavery', as it has been called, exists to some extent in all the States, it is only seen in its worst light where a Raja or Chief is the creditor and a subject the debtor.

Few subjects in a Malay country are well off. The principal reason of this is, that as soon as a man or woman is known to be in possession of money, he or she would be robbed by the Raja; or the money would be borrowed with no intention of future payment, whether the subject wished to lend or not.

Thus, when a Ryot (or subject) is in want of money, he goes to his Raja or chief to lend it him, because he alone can do so. Either money or goods are then lent, and a certain time stipulated for payment. If at the expiry of that time the money is not paid, it is usual to await some time longer, say two or three or even six months.

Should payment not then be made, the debtor, if a single man, is taken into the creditor's house; he becomes one of his followers, and is bound to execute any order or do any work the Raja as creditor may demand, until the debt is paid, however long a time that may be.

During this time the Raja usually provides the debtor with food and clothing, but if the creditor gives him money, that money is added to the debt. Often, however, the Raja gives nothing, and the debtor has to find food and clothing as he can.

Should the debtor marry,—and the Raja will in all probability find him a wife,—then the debtor's wife, his children, his grandchildren, all become equally bound with himself to the payment of this debt.

Should the debtor be originally married, then not only he, but his wife and children, are taken into the Raja's house, and are his to order till the debt is paid.

Should the debtor be a woman, unmarried or a widow, the same course is taken, and whoever marries her becomes jointly responsible for the debt; and this goes on through generations—the children and grand-children of the debtor being held in the same bondage by the children and grand-children of the creditor.

Should at any time the debtor succeed in raising the amount of the debt and proffer it to the creditor, then it would be customary to accept it. If, however, a large family were in bondage for the debt, one whose numbers seemed to the Raja to add to his dignity, then he would probably refuse to accept payment, not absolutely, but would say 'wait', and the waiting might last for years.

Debtors once absorbed into the Raja's household are looked upon as his property, just as his bullocks or his goats, and those who alone would have power to interfere, look on and say nothing, because they do the same themselves.

In different States this debtor-bondage is carried to greater or less extremes, but in Perak the cruelties exercised towards debtors are even exclaimed against by Malays in other States.

Many Chiefs in Perak have a following principally composed of young men and girls, for the most part debtors.

The men are treated as I have already described—either food and clothes are found for them or not; they are usually found,—for the Raja's power and his pride consists in the number of arms-bearing followers he has at his beck and call; men, too, are useful to him in many other ways. Those who have grown old in their bondage, whether men or women, either for very shame the Raja provides for, or he compels their children to support them.

The men either (1) follow because they like it (a very small percentage indeed); or (2) they are debtors, or the children of debtors; or (3) they are real slaves from Sumatra or Abyssinia, or the children of slaves.

The girls are treated differently; they are either (1) slaves or the daughters of slaves; or (2) debtors, the daughters or grand-daughters of debtors; or (3) the Raja has simply taken them from their houses into his own house because he wanted them; or (4) they follow him for pleasure.

In Perak some of the Chiefs do not provide their girls with food or clothing, but they tell them to get these necessaries of life as they best can, i.e. by prostitution, for the labour of the debtor being the property of the creditor, prostitution is in this case a necessity and not a choice.

Each Raja in his own district claims the privilege of fining, either for a capital offence or for a trifling misdeed. Should then a man be fined and not pay the fine, he and his family, if he has one, are at once taken into debt-bondage, not to work out the fine, but to toil away their lives amidst blows and upbraidings, the daughters driven to prostitution, the sons to thieving, and even greater crimes.

This is no exaggerated statement, but the plain truth.

When the Raja gives nothing, neither food nor clothes, or when he is a passionate man and threatens to kill one or other of his followers for some trivial offence, or for no offence at all, it often happens that one will seek refuge in flight. If caught, though it may be said to be the received custom to inflict some slight punishment, yet that would not deter a Raja from punishing such an offence even with death should it seem good to him.

Only about two years ago, not 100 yards from where I write, Raja Kahar, the second son of Sultan Abdul Samat of Selangor, murdered three debtors for no reason but that he willed it.

[*It appears that three debtors, two girls and a boy, all aged under 20 years, belonging to the Sultan, ran away from the Sultan's house in Langat to a place called Teluk Panglima Garam, about two miles down the Langat river. When this was reported to Raja Kahar, he had them brought back to Langat where the boy was immediately stabbed to death, and the girls drowned in the river. The bodies were left on the muddy bank until their friends removed them. The Sultan was very angry with Raja Kahar at his high-handed action, and the latter, as a gesture of regret, presented the relatives of the dead boy and girls with winding sheets for wrapping up the corpses. Swettenham then goes on to cite a case of two female bond-debtors who were captured by Tunku Kudin's people during the civil war in Selangor and later given in marriage. Early in 1875 they were claimed back by their original master called Unku Haji.*]

Bond-debtors are handed about from one Raja to another without a thought of consulting them. If one runs away and is caught, it is at great risk of being put to death....

At present there are about 75 Selangor people, men, women and children, refugees from that district and owners of plantations there, all of them indebted to the Toh Bandar of Langat, who refuses to allow them to leave Langat until they have satisfied his claims, whilst they have no money to pay their debts, and are increasing them every month by borrowing more.

One of these Selangor people, a woman named Metia, came to me and told me that the Toh Bandar had arranged to move to [Kuala] Selangor with all his debtors. She said she owed him $56, and that for that debt she, her three children, her father and mother, were all bound to him.

She was a woman of about 35 years old, and seemed utterly miserable. The Toh Bandar, she said, was fairly good to them, but he hardly ever gave them food, clothes or money (I did not ask her how she got them, because I had been told it was done in the usual way); but his wife, she said, it was impossible to bear. Herself and her children, whilst made to do any work they could do, were abused and beaten, and were made to sleep in the Bandar's house to prevent their running away during the night.

She appeared to have been a debtor all her life, and told me much of the cruel way in which she had been treated.

Metia said she had asked every one she knew in Langat to pay her debt, but no one would do so. Here, she said, she could just exist, but in [Kuala] Selangor it would be impossible, and she begged me

with tears to pay her debt, and let her, her parents and children, be my servants, to cut wood and carry water, clear jungle and make paddy fields, to all of which she said she was accustomed.

These Raja-creditors would tell you smilingly that they knew by Mahomedan law the creditors can take and sell all their debtor's property for an overdue debt, and that then the debtor is free; but they never act on that principle.

Many men and women, however, daily incur debts, knowing well what lies before them in case of non-payment.

Malays, by their laws, are allowed to buy and sell slaves, and if, having for years lost sight of a slave, the owner finds him or her, he takes the slave with his wife and family if he has one, as his lawful property.

* * *

There is one other phase of debtor-bondage, and that a common one, where the father or mother places one or more of their children as security with the creditor for a debt; thus in reality selling their own flesh and blood into often a life-long bondage. If these children die in the creditor's hands, the parents supply their places by others, or the Raja, should he wish it, can at any time after the debt is due take the whole family into his house.

* * *

Another common practice in the States, more especially in Perak, is to capture, as you might wild beasts, the unoffending Jacoon women, and make them and their children slaves through generations.

* * *

I have already stated that the Raja looks to the number of his following as the gauge of his power, and other Rajas will respect and fear him accordingly. Thus he gets men into his service in this way, and is rather inclined to refuse payment should the debtor be so fortunate as to raise the requisite amount of his debt.

Almost the only chance the debtor has of raising this amount is by successful gambling. Of course it hardly ever happens that he is successful, but, like all gamblers, he always thinks he will be, and thus gambling becomes a mania with him, which he will gratify at all costs, caring little by what means he gets money for play so long as he does obtain it.

These are the general facts relating to the position of the Slave debtor, and these things which I have described, seemingly so difficult of belief, are done almost daily, looked upon by those who do them as a right divine; by the victims as a fate from which there is no reprieve.

To compel his followers to obey him implicitly, the Raja treats them with a severity which sometimes makes death the punishment of the slightest offence to him. These followers he thus holds to do whatever he bids them, even to the commission of the gravest crimes.

They again, having to provide themselves with food and clothes, and yet having to work for him, are led to prey on the defenceless population, from whom, in the name of their Raja-master, they extort whatever there is to get, and on whom they sometimes visit those cruelties which they have themselves already experienced.

This system of debt-bondage influences then the whole population, not slightly but deeply, in ways it is hardly possible to credit except when seen in a constant intercourse with all classes of Malay society.

The question at issue seems to be, how to deprive the Raja of this great power, an unscrupulous instrument in unscrupulous hands—how to free the debtors from their bondage, the women from lives of forced prostitution, the unoffending population from the robberies and murderous freaks of Rajahs and their bondsmen.

The evil is not nearly so great in Selangor: for one reason, the Malay population in Selangor is only 5% of that in Perak, and in that 5% there are but few Rajahs who can afford to keep followers, whilst it is not unlikely that such cases of cruel murder as I have instanced would again be attempted; and above all, the Sultan would, I believe, be ready to listen to any proposal for improving the condition of debtors in Selangor.

In Perak it is different; the debt-bondage is one of the chief customs—one of the 'pillars of the State'—an abuse jealously guarded by the Perak Rajahs and Chiefs, and especially by those who make the worst uses of it.

I have often discussed this question of debt-slavery with the Malays themselves, but they say they see no way under the rule of their Rajas to put down this curse of their country, with all the evils that follow in its train.

I have &c.

(Signed) Frank A. Swettenham,
H.B.M.'s Asst. Resident,
Selangor.

The Honourable,
The Secretary for Native States,
Singapore.

2. J. W. W. BIRCH TO THE SECRETARY FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS, SINGAPORE.

Residency, Bandar Bahru,
28th July, 1875.

Sir,

When His Excellency the Governor was in Penang on 22nd June last, he asked me for information respecting debt slavery in the States of the Malay Peninsula.

I have often intended to address you with reference to debt slavery as it exists in Perak, the State with which I am more especially acquainted, but I have delayed doing so, principally because, under Malayan rule, I am unable to suggest a remedy for the evils arising from this institution.

His Excellency having, however, desired me to furnish a full report upon the subject, I am now compelled to bring the matter specially to his notice, and to ask for some specific instructions as to the course of action the Governor would desire me to take when cases relating to debt slavery come to my knowledge.

Debt slavery has always existed in some form or other in all the Malayan States, but I believe that the system, as practised in Perak at the present time, involves evils and cruelties which are unknown to any but those who have actually lived in these States.

[*Birch goes on to explain conditions of debt slavery similar to those outlined by Swettenham.*]

* * *

Several instances have come before me of young girls desiring to sell themselves, and I will here ask reference to an extract from my journal of 4th February last, where a girl named Anjang made the following statement to me [at Batarabit]:

> Here a girl came off the steamer brought by a friend of hers, and offered to sell herself. I made her sit down, and got her story out of her. She was about 20 years old. Her father and mother lived with one Che Amin here. She says she was asked for 3 years ago by Che Amin, and her parents gave her. She does not know if they sold her. She got her food for some time, but at last was told to go out and prostitute herself, and clothe herself out of the proceeds. After a time—she is a good-looking girl—they ordered her out more regularly, and then desired her whenever she got money, to provide the curry for the whole house next day, and then they ordered fowls, fish, &c. At last she says it is more than she can bear. She has to draw water and cut firewood, and gets lots of beating, and she wants the $80 paid, and she will stay with anyone who will get her free. As far as her own account goes she has never received a penny. Che Amin's nephew, who is a boat-

man of mine, says her parents sold her for $60. I promised another time to talk to Che Amin and see if I could get her married. This is, I believe, a mild specimen of the woman slavery in Perak.

Some days ago this same girl Anjang and another named Manis living in the same house, ran away from their master Che Amin, and placed themselves as they supposed under the protection of our flag, by fleeing to the nearest police station. Che Amin, who is one of the pet advisers of the present Sultan, came in my absence to the Residency, and in the Sultan's name demanded the girls, when they were unfortunately given up. They were carried off, and I have credible information that they were beaten, put in irons, and for a time removed to a remote place. There is a rumour at this moment that Manis has been sold to a trader for $100, but I have been unable to trace it to my satisfaction, or I should have taken upon myself at once to act in the matter,—my detectives have now orders to find out where she is staying. Anjang still desires to sell herself for anything, but the owner Che Amin demands the whole debt, which he alleges to be due by the parents, viz, $70. [*Birch goes on to give two other instances of masters claiming back debt-slaves, the story similar to that given above.*]

It is my duty to state that I believe the statement made by Anjang . . . to be literally true as regards the position of most of the girls thus situated, whose parents, if alive, are debtors, or who as orphans are the children of parents who were debt-slaves.

Prostitution is, I believe, as a general rule, forced upon them, but in every case is encouraged by the creditor or master, and in the generality of cases half the earnings are taken by the wives and concubines of the creditor.

The numerous female nurses and servants in the Sultan's house are as much slaves as these debt-slaves, though generally acquired by force, for the Sultan has only to send his sword, *sundong*, or *kris* to any house where there exists a girl to whom he or any of his household has taken a fancy, and the parents are bound to give her up. In this way have most of the women in the Sultan's establishment been acquired. Each is treated as a slave, and dare not attempt to escape, while, if she marries, her husband and children will be slaves likewise. The nurses are fed, but get no clothes; the rest get neither clothes nor food. The whole of them, I believe, without any exception, are prostitutes, and support themselves; while it is rumoured that the Sultan's concubines often receive a portion of their earnings.

I would call attention to another practice by which men and women of the country of the Sakkais or wild people of the interior are captured after being hunted down, and are then sold, and made

slaves. These poor people, from what I have seen, are worse treated than any other slaves. This must be called a species of debt-slavery, as it is generally alleged that some money has been expended on them in food and in the scanty clothes they wear. They are, however, as a rule, badly fed, badly clothed and made to work hard. They have little or no chance of escape, and they know well that the Malay would be sure to ill-treat them if caught, and would not hesitate for a moment to kill them, while not the smallest notice would be taken of his doing so.

The relations between Ryot and Raja have certainly to some extent been ameliorated by the presence of a Resident in Perak. This is mainly due to the fact that by the intervention of the British Government the country is for the present enjoying comparative quiet. The Raja recognises that the ryot, knowing that this quiet owes its existence to such intervention, might appeal to the British representative for protection. That the ryots have so appealed I have already stated, and that they will still further appeal I feel certain.

Irrespective, however, of the fact that these unfortunate persons are afforded but few opportunities of making an appeal, or are unwilling to run the risk of doing so, I have no power, under the conditions of the Pangkor engagement, to interfere with anything concerning Malay custom, and therefore in the cases which have already been brought to my notice, I could do nothing but advise, leaving such advice to be accepted or not.

I feel certain, however, that the Sultan, if merely advised upon the question of debt-slavery, would take no steps to ameliorate the condition of the sufferers, and for these reasons I beg now for specific instructions as to the course I shall in future adopt.

[*Following this, Birch mentions briefly the barter and sale of slaves, Bataks imported from Sumatra.*]

* * *

In conclusion I must state my emphatic opinion that under no possible phase of Malayan rule in Perak can these evils and these cruelties be put an end to, or effectually dealt with.

I have &c.
(Signed) J. W. W. Birch,
Her Britannic Majesty's Resident,
Perak.

The Honourable,
The Secretary for Native States,
Singapore.

3. J. G. DAVIDSON, RESIDENT OF SELANGOR, TO THE SECRETARY FOR NATIVE STATES, SINGAPORE.

Klang, 23rd August, 1875.

Sir,

With reference to a Despatch from the Assistant Resident* to you, dated 30th June, on the subject of debt-bondage and slavery, I should be glad to receive some instructions for dealing with this difficult and delicate subject.

Before leaving Singapore to take up my appointment here, Sir Andrew Clarke verbally told me that no slavery could be permitted to exist in any state under British protection, and, deeming this a part of my instructions, I have hitherto endeavoured to act upon it.

I should state that I have seen very little of the evils set forth by the Assistant Resident in his letter, although I have heard a good deal about them in the Langat district. I believe that formerly Klang was nearly, but not quite so bad in respect of debt-bondage as Langat is described to be at present; but Tunku Dia Ooodin, on becoming possessed of the place, set his face resolutely against all kinds of slavery, and I have not known a case of slavery or bondage in the Klang district since I came here, nor would one be permitted to exist if it were known. [*A footnote at the bottom of the page, dated 16th October 1875, and initialled 'W.F.D.J'—Sir William Francis Drummond Jervois, then Governor of the Straits Settlements—explains that no doubt Tunku Dia Ooodin had used his influence against slavery, but there were other and weightier reasons for the absence of debt-slavery in Klang. That district had been the scene of civil strife for about seven years, and nearly the whole of the original population had fled. At the time of Davidson's writing, the majority of the inhabitants were male foreigners from Sumatra, Pahang and Kedah, and traders from the Straits Settlements. They were then just beginning to settle down in that district.*]

It is, however, different in the [Kuala] Selangor district where the people were formerly in the habit of purchasing Batak men and women from Sumatra as proper slaves, and where they still look upon slavery proper and debt-bondage as institutions of the country. There are not a great many of the old Selangor people at present in the [Kuala] Selangor district, and those who are there are mostly poor people; I have only met with one decided case of bondage there. This was three or four months ago when I redeemed a girl about 10 years old who had been mortgaged to a Pahang man by her uncle for $12 to pay a gambling debt. The Pahang man was about to return

* Frank Swettenham.

to his country and take the girl with him when the case was brought to my notice. I paid the debt to avoid a disturbance with an outsider. The uncle expressed great surprise on being told that the transaction was a very objectionable one, and said that formerly such cases were very common in [Kuala] Selangor.

It is specially with reference to the [Kuala] Selangor district that I am now asking for instructions, because I believe that Rajah Moosah's return there, and the now quiet state of the country, will bring back many of the former inhabitants; and I think this is a good time to strike a blow at the whole bondage system as heretofore practised in that district. From conversations which I have had with Rajah Moosah, I think that he could be persuaded to co-operate with me in putting down slavery of all kinds if he were told that such was the Governor's wish; and that if the old inhabitants were told, as they returned, that slavery of all kinds had been done away with, as a rule, they would settle down quietly under the new state of things; but it will be very different if they are allowed to return and get into their old ways in this respect. Of course there will be exceptions and no doubt some troublesome cases with the Rajahs, but the experiment appears to me to be well worth trying.

It would be a great point gained if Moosah could be got to view this subject in its proper light and act accordingly. His example, as the Sultan's heir, would necessarily have some effect, and he would be prepared to some extent to deal with the whole bondage question when he succeeds to the Sultanship, as he may be expected to do in the ordinary course of things.

I should add that the whole system of debt-bondage, as described by the Assistant Resident, is opposed to the Mohamedan religion and, I believe, the laws of this State. The reduction of Batak people (who do not possess the Mohamedan religion) into slavery is no doubt permitted by the Mohamedan religion and the custom of Malay countries, and, in respect of slavery, a child follows the condition of its mother; but it is against the principle of Mohamedan law and religion to permit a person born in a Mohamedan country and brought up in the Mohamedan faith to become a slave. So strong is the law in this respect that a Mohamedan may not even let himself to hire for a period which is likely to last his whole life.

The present system of debt-bondage seems to have arisen from the abuse of an old practice in Malay countries which authorised a creditor to take a debtor, who was unable to pay, into his service, and retain him until the debt was worked out by his labour (for which a reasonable allowance was made) or otherwise settled. Rajahs and other powerful people, however, set themselves above the law, and, as the Government of these States grew weaker, the law for the

protection of personal liberty could not be enforced and hence the present system.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) J. G. Davidson,
H.B.M.'s Resident,
Selangor.

The Honourable,
The Secretary for Native States,
Singapore.

4. FRANK A. SWETTENHAM, COLONIAL SECRETARY (FORMERLY SECRETARY FOR NATIVE STATES) SINGAPORE, TO THE BRITISH RESIDENTS OF PERAK AND SELANGOR.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Singapore. May 21st, 1878.

Sir,

His Excellency the Governor [Sir William C. F. Robinson] notices from the journals of Residents and their assistants that constant reference is made to cases of slave-debtors, and His Excellency desires me, therefore, to request that you will be good enough to furnish a report on this subject, stating how the matter of slave-debtors stands in Perak/Selangor, what steps have been taken regarding it, whether the question has been before the council, what public notices, if any, have been issued regarding it, what steps you propose to take, and generally His Excellency will be glad to be favoured with your views on this subject.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) F. A. Swettenham.

H.B.M.'s Residents,
Perak and Selangor.

[*Evidently the new Governor, Sir William Robinson, was not fully conversant with the complicated problem of debt-slavery. Although Swettenham could have explained, and probably did explain, the matter to the Governor, three years had passed since the first official reports were made. Birch had been murdered in November 1875, and apart from the fact that new Residents were then in charge of Perak and Selangor, it was probably felt that fresh reports were necessary for the administration of these States. It is probably correct to deduce from Swettenham's letter above that no official policy had been formulated for dealing with debt-slavery, despite J. G. Davidson's request for some instructions in his letter to the then Secretary for Native States, dated 23rd August, 1875. It would appear that individual Residents were left to deal with the matter at their own*

discretion. The following letters, though in part repeating the facts given in earlier letters, do indicate that some progress had been made towards a legal settlement of debt-slavery as many more cases were brought before the magistrate. In Perak, Hugh Low had worked out his own plans for the abolition of slavery.]

5. B. DOUGLAS, RESIDENT OF SELANGOR, TO THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, SINGAPORE.

British Resident's Office,
Klang, Selangor.
May 28th, 1878.

Sir,

* * *

In obedience to His Excellency's instructions, I have now the honour to report that, very shortly after I arrived at Langat, the following case of slave debtorship was brought under my notice.

A woman who had become indebted in the sum of $30 to a Langat man had worked as a slave for 30 years, and wished to be set free.

It was stated that she had been kindly treated, clothed, and fed, and she admitted it, but hearing that slavery was not authorised by law in the Straits Settlements, she wished to be brought before me with a view to obtaining her release.

Before taking any judicial action in the matter, I consulted His Highness the Sultan, who at once admitted that the Selangor laws did not acknowledge slavery in any shape, but he said it had become a custom, the slaves being treated as members of the different families with which they resided and worked: at the same time His Highness with great fairness and liberality stated it was his opinion that all slavery should be quietly dropped and ignored, that slave-debtors should have the opportunity of appealing to the magistrates, who should decide on the cases as they arose, thus-wise:—

A man's labour to be at the rate of $5 or $6 per month, according to his value, less a fair and reasonable amount for food and such clothing as may have been actually provided.

A woman's work to be calculated from $3 to $5 a month, less food and clothes.

Young people in proportion.

In old cases the creditor to give proof of the original debt, and the slave-debtor to give evidence as to the time he, or she, had been detained, and as to the amount claimed.

If the slave-debtor admitted the debt or proof was against him, the magistrate was to take into consideration the time the defendant had served, and if the claim had been satisfied by services rendered, the slave-debtor was to be released.

In case of a claim not having been so satisfied, the defendant to have the option of returning to render service to the plaintiff at such rate as the magistrate should decide, or accept judgment for the balance due, to be put in force in the usual manner. And this, as a rule, has now become the custom, and has been found to work well, the cases being very few; in all that relate to the Sultan, his sons, and his followers, the same system has been followed out. In thus adopting this course I have avoided any active interference with the customs of the country, the practice is now dying out, and under the Sultan's rule will never be revived, as His Highness is quite aware that to keep up such an objectionable system of oppression would stop immigrants from China and other eastern countries, who would of course be amenable to the custom if it was allowed to continue, or to be recognised as one of the institutions of the country.

I must confess I felt at the time I was treading on rather delicate ground, but the prompt and ready acquiescence of the Sultan in the matter at once relieved me from much anxiety, and enabled me, with the sanction of the ruler of the country, to sweep away a custom that was alike objectionable and illegal.

Thus the question of debt-slavery has not been brought before the council, and no public notice has been given of the abolition of the custom, except the public decisions in court, as I thought it more expedient to let it die out quietly than to make it appear the Residential system was in any way to change the old institutions of the country. I felt it wiser to rely on the decision of the Sultan, and by precedents under His Highness's ruling to establish a better state of things; and as what has been done appears sufficient, I would rather avoid taking any action that might give rise to discussion, or any objection to the wise and liberal policy of the Sultan.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) B. Douglas,
H.B.M.'s Resident,
Selangor.

The Honourable,
The Colonial Secretary,
Singapore.

Douglas's caution in dealing with debt-slavery in Selangor is an interesting parallel to Hugh Low's diplomatic handling of the matter in Perak and is undoubtedly the result of an important test case of the powers of the Resident, which had occurred only a few weeks before Douglas wrote the letter of May 28, 1878. As the result of this case was a definitive declaration for the first time by the Colonial Government of the powers and functions of British Res-

idents in the Malay States—a declaration that had far-reaching consequences in the whole sphere of government by 'advice'—it may not be irrelevant here to give some of the details of the case.

Early in 1878 Tunku Panglima Rajah, Penghulu of Kanchong (the district around the entrance to the Jugra river), and a member of the Selangor State Council, was arrested by a Mr. Newbronner, Collector and Magistrate of that district, for having offered to bribe him with $40 to determine a civil case in Tunku Panglima Rajah's favour. Douglas, as Resident of Selangor, endorsed Newbronner's action, and at the State Council held in Jugra, he had Tunku Panglima Rajah deposed from the Council and his monthly stipend of $50 reduced by half. When the matter was reported to the Governor, to whom the actions of Douglas and Newbronner appeared to betray a serious misconception of their positions in the State, Sir William Robinson brought the subject before his Executive Council, which unanimously considered the Resident's actions to be uncalled for and ultra vires, *and recommended that Douglas should be instructed to advise the Sultan of Selangor to reinstate Tunku Panglima Rajah as a member of the State Council. The Governor accordingly sent Douglas a severe rebuke. It was pointed out to him that if a European had been guilty of the conduct of Tunku Panglima Rajah, it would be reprehensible and even criminal, but it was regarded by Malays as a trivial one. Douglas was told not to lose sight of this consideration when dealing with Malays. Newbronner was right in reporting the matter, of course, but he might have confined himself to pointing out how unacceptable bribery was to ideas of British justice and that such a practice should not be repeated. In arresting a Malay chief of the rank of Tunku Panglima Rajah, Newbronner had acted 'indiscreetly, arbitrarily and altogether in excess of his authority'. Both Douglas and Newbronner were instructed to use 'that forbearance and regard for native ideas and customs which are essential on the part of officers who are placed in positions of trust in the native states' when dealing with Malays. Douglas's mistake was in taking the action that he did, when he might have waited, with perfect safety, for the Governor's instructions, for all nominations to the State Council had to be approved by the Governor and submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.**

The Secretary of State, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, however, while expressing his approval of the Governor's rebuke to Douglas, declared that he did not wish to censure the Resident for what he considered was 'an error of judgment on his part', for he fully recognized the delicacy of the task imposed on the Residents and was aware of the

* *See* C.2410 of 1879, pp. 4-5.

*fact that much must be left to their discretion on occasions when prompt and firm action was called for.**

The upshot of all this was the famous reminder to the Residents of Perak and Selangor that Her Majesty's Government defined the functions of the Resident to be the giving of 'influential and responsible advice' to the ruler, functions that were well understood in the East. Further, the Residents were not to interfere more frequently than was necessary with the minor details of Government; their special object should be the maintenance of peace and law, the initiation of a sound system of taxation, with the consequent development of the resources of the country, and the supervision of the collection of the revenue, so as to ensure the receipt of funds necessary to carry out the principal engagements of the Government and to pay for the cost of the British officers, and whatever establishments might be necessary to support them.†

The steps taken to solve the problem of slavery in the Malay States by the British Residents, and the close and careful scrutiny of the matter by both the Governor and the Secretary of State, should be seen against the light of this important declaration of policy.

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6. SIR HUGH LOW, RESIDENT OF PERAK, TO THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, SINGAPORE.

Durian Sebatang, [Lower Perak]
May 28th, 1878.

Sir,

* * *

When I first arrived in the country, in the month of April 1877, I found that one of the greatest causes of complaint against the then existing state of things arose from the natural reluctance of European officers employed in the country to assist attempts of the creditors of slave-debtors and owners of runaway slaves to obtain possession of what they considered their property.

I was told that several persons of one or the other class were living on the grounds of the Residency, and an impression prevailed that they were under the Resident's protection.

My instruction having been to look upon Perak as a native state ultimately to be governed by native rajas whom I am to endeavour to educate and advise, and the Pangkor engagement having provided against interference by the Resident with the religion or customs

* *See* C.3285 of 1882, p. 663.
† *See* C.2410 of 1879, p. 7.

of the country, I gave it to be understood, on the first case being brought to my notice, that I would not shelter refugees of this description, nor permit any person of either class to live on the Residency premises except with the permission of their masters, to be previously obtained.

Very early in my term of residence I consulted with the Raja Muda Yusuf, Raja Dris, the Datu Tumonggong Shaik Ma Taib, and many others of the principal people of Perak, the council at that time not having been appointed, and explained to them the views of Englishmen on the subject, and how abhorrent to our ideas of right and wrong was this state of servile subjection of our fellow creatures, enforcing what I said by all the familiar arguments, and proposed to them as follows:—

1st. That as Resident and a judge of the highest court in the country, I should not be called upon to interfere in any way to restore to their creditors or masters any of these persons who had deserted before my arrival in Perak.

2nd. That every person in Perak who was an acknowledged slave-debtor or a slave in actual possession of his master on the day of my arrival should be recognised as being legitimately in that position, and that the officers of justice and police should assist in preventing them from leaving their masters, except upon payment of their debts or redeeming themselves at a fair price.

3rd. That every master should be bound to receive the amount of debt or price if tendered, and allow the debtor or slave to go free.

4th. That no free person should on any pretence whatever after the day of my arrival be reduced to the condition of a slave or slave-debtor.

5th. That their masters, to be entitled to retain their enforced services, must treat them with kindness, clothe them and feed them, and

6th. That at some future time when the country became settled and prosperous, the State should redeem the debts of both classes upon terms which would have to be settled by the Council about to be appointed and the stigma of slavery be thus removed from the State, the accomplishment of such an object would, I assured them, redound greatly in civilized countries to the credit of its rulers.

The chiefs all agreed to this settlement of the difficulty and these arrangements have been acted upon from that day; they have never been embodied in a formal proclamation or public notice, but whenever the officers of districts have asked for instructions on the subject, they have been supplied to them in writing. Courts of justice have given decisions in accordance with them, and I have lost no opportunity as may be seen by my diaries of making them known

in my journeys through the State, and they are perfectly well understood and assented to throughout the whole country.

Had I at that time asked for the legalisation of repudiation of the claims against them by the debtors or unremunerated manumission of the slaves, it is certain that the country would not have attained the encouragingly peaceful stage it has now reached, and very doubtful whether we could have maintained our position in it without the aid of troops.

With a view to securing ultimately the fulfilment of the 6th of the above-mentioned provisions, I have at various times endeavoured to get the slaves and slave-debtors registered and columns having this purpose in view are inserted in the printed returns which are ordered to be kept by the Penghulus, but as yet I am unable to report any result from these endeavours.

The only person who has attempted to act in defiance of the arrangement is the Rajah Muda Yusuf. I advised him strongly to the contrary, and he grudgingly and unwillingly consented to be guided by my opinion which he asked for and obtained in writing.

I regret that I have very little more to suggest in addition to what has been already done for the amelioration of the condition of the classes under consideration.

In my opinion it would obviously be unjust to deprive the Perak Malays of a property to which by immemorial custom they have been entitled without fair compensation, the measures already taken have, I am sure, been very beneficial, and I think that the matter does not at present press for further action. The people are becoming accustomed to look upon this species of property which notwithstanding the regulations is constantly evading them, to be of diminishing value, and I believe the greater number of them would be glad to transfer their rights on moderate terms to the State.

The chief difficulty would be found in dealing with the provision of young girls and women employed in domestic offices.

I regret extremely that I am not able to give His Excellency the Governor any accurate estimate of the number of persons belonging to the two servile classes in Perak, the most well informed natives whom I have consulted on the subject have said that from [$60,000] to $80,000 would be sufficient compensation to be paid to their owners.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) Hugh Low,
Resident.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
Straits Settlements,
Singapore.

7. FROM THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, SINGAPORE, TO HUGH LOW, RESIDENT OF PERAK.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Singapore.
20th June, 1878.

* * *

Sir,

His Excellency desires me to enclose for your information copy of a report on the subject [debt-slavery] received from the Resident of Selangor, and I am to draw your particular attention to the plan hitherto satisfactorily adopted in Selangor of bringing debtor and creditor before a magistrate for examination into the circumstances and duration of their relationship as debtor and creditor, and then to compute, as nearly as possible upon a fixed scale, the labour of the one against the supplies and advances of the other, with a view to determining a period at which the debtor will free, or may have already freed, himself or herself, from the burden of a real or supposed debt.

His Excellency desires that you will make further inquiries on this very important subject of debt-slavery, and that you will consider whether a scheme similar to that adopted in Selangor might not now with advantage be prepared with a view to [its] being referred to His Excellency, and eventually placed before the Perak Council for their consideration.

While you will of course feel your way with much caution in this matter, His Excellency concurs in the opinion which you yourself evidently entertain, that if British officers are to be placed in native states to advise the Malays to adopt a better form of government such a question as debt-slavery, affecting as it does the most vital interests of a numerous class, is just one of those which ought not to be avoided on a ground of expediency, if any possible opportunity should present itself of safely putting an end to a system so demoralizing and injurious to the State.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) F. A. Swettenham,
Colonial Secretary,
Straits Settlements.

H.B.M.'s Resident,
Perak.

8. GOVERNOR SIR W. C. F. ROBINSON, K.C.M.G., TO THE RIGHT HON. SIR MICHAEL E. HICKS BEACH, BART., SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

Government House, Singapore.
July 29, 1878.

Sir,

My attention having lately been called by repeated references in the journals of the Residents to the system of Debt Slavery as practised in the protected States of the Peninsula, I now in fulfilment of the intimation contained in my despatch of the 1st July 1878, beg leave to submit copies of correspondence which has passed between the Residents and myself upon the subject. [*The copies of correspondence referred to here are the reports from the various Residents and Assistant Residents in this Appendix.*]

2. The question of debt-slavery, which I find was alluded to by Sir William Jervois in his despatch of 15th October 1875, is certainly a most difficult and important one. I am glad to say that favourable results have attended the steps taken in Selangor with a view to control, without undue precipitancy, the spread of this obnoxious custom; but in Perak, where the difficulties of coping with it are much greater, and a far larger proportion of the population influenced by it, both as creditors and debtors, it has not been possible for this Government, in its position as an adviser of the Native Ruler, to do much to alleviate the wretched condition of the slave-debtors.

3. I have not felt authorized to take any prominent action in this matter without first consulting you on the subject, and indeed it is difficult to see how this Government can move in it except by way of advice, but I have done what I could in instructing the Resident to influence the Government of Perak, if not for the suppression of the custom, at least for the alleviation of the condition of the debtors, and the accompanying reports from the Residents will acquaint you with the action thus far taken by the Governments to which they are accredited to control or put a stop to the practice.

4. I have transmitted to the Resident of Perak a copy of the Resident of Selangor's report, desiring Mr. Low to consider and ascertain whether the measures adopted with at least a measure of success in Selangor might not with advantage be submitted to the Perak Council for introduction into that State. His reply will be forwarded to you when received.

* * *

6. I do not propose to take further action in the [matter] pending the receipt of any instructions with which you may think proper to favour me. For my own part, I am of opinion that it would be un-

advisable, at any rate in Perak, to endeavour to put a sudden stop to the practice which, having now obtained for years in that State, notwithstanding that it is condemned by all rigid Mahomedans, is clung to by the chiefs who so largely benefit by its continuance.

7. To bring it now under some control, with a view to its gradual and final suppression, appears to me to be the course which most recommends itself for adoption.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) William C. F. Robinson.

The Right Honourable,
Sir. M. E. Hicks Beach, Bart.,
&c., &c.

9. THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES, SIR MICHAEL E. HICKS BEACH, TO THE GOVERNOR OF THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS, SIR WILLIAM C. F. ROBINSON.

Downing Street,
August 31, 1878.

Sir,

• • •

4. The letter which was addressed to the Residents by your desire, on the 17th May, appears to be both necessary and judicious in its terms, and I am glad to be able to add that I feel that I can rely on your keeping a watchful eye on the proceedings of the Residents, and taking care that they do not exceed their proper functions.

5. I find that you are in communication with Mr. Low as to slavery in the native States, and I shall be glad to receive a report from you on this important subject.

6. I wish to be fully and precisely informed what are the existing laws or customs in the several States with regard to it, and in what manner they are practically enforced; and to receive such suggestions as under the special circumstances of these States may appear to you to be judicious and practicable, with a view to secure the early alleviation of any specially prominent abuses, and the ultimate adoption of a social system consistent with those principles on which the general policy of this country on the subject is based.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) M. E. Hicks Beach.

Sir W. C. F. Robinson.

10. HUGH LOW, RESIDENT OF PERAK, TO COLONIAL SECRETARY, STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

Residency, Kwalla Kangsa.
December 14, 1878.

Sir,

In reference to your letter of the 20th June last, directing by command of His Excellency the Governor, my particular attention to the plan adopted in Selangor for the extinction of the claims against slave-debtors, by a valuation of their services to their creditors according to a fixed scale and directing me to consider whether a similar scheme might not now be prepared for reference to His Excellency with a view to its being afterwards submitted for the consideration of the Council of State,

1. I have the honour to state in reply that a copy of that letter and its enclosure was supplied to the Assistant Resident of Perak, and its contents communicated to the other magistrates with instructions on all occasions in which such cases should be brought before them to endeavour with the consent of the creditors to come to a settlement on such a basis.

2. The Toh Puan Halima, daughter of the exiled Laxamana of Perak and chief wife of the banished Mantri of the State, had invested most of her private money in advances of this description, which up to the time of British interference, was the favourite form of security, and she is now the largest claimant in the country for the repayment of her money. Another, Wan Teh Sapiah, has also claims of a like nature on several families, and both these ladies willingly undertook to accept of liquidation by such an arrangement.

3. In the former case it has, I am sorry to say, fallen through from the impossibility of inducing the debtors to work regularly and from very many of them, who are living in entire freedom in different parts of the country, declining to come into the arrangement though acknowledging their debts.

4. In many other cases the creditors from the first put forward the certainty of the failure of such a system from the above-mentioned cause, others have objected that they had no regular employment in which to place their debtors; others that they were utterly ruined by the events of recent years and that they would accede to the proposal if fairly carried out on the other part, provided the Government would advance money as the Native Rajahs did to enable them to open mines or gardens in which they could employ their debtors; nearly all have declared themselves willing, and even anxious to accept a just amount in payment of their debts, several suggesting that the state might conveniently undertake to do this, employing the labour in public works until the debtor should be free.

5. I cannot undertake to say what may have been the practice in former times in the treatment in Perak of this class of persons, but no case of cruelty or abnormal hardship has been brought to my notice since I came into the country. By far the larger number of the slave debtors live with their families apart and often at great distances from their masters enjoying all the fruits of their labour rendering occasional assistance to them when called upon to do so, which, in the majority of cases is of rare occurrence.

6. The circumstances of Perak would probably be found to differ from those of Selangor which I understand has a much smaller population, was governed by an enlightened ruler under the advice of British Residents who succeeded in introducing the present regulation immediately after the conquest of the district.

7. To introduce such a measure into Perak at the present time would in my opinion have a very disturbing effect, and although I do not think that it would lead to any extensive or organized armed resistance I am sure that it would so shake the confidence which has arisen between the European officers and principal people that years would be required to restore it.

8. I confess that I am not able to devote all my sympathy to the weaker class in this question. I concur with the principal natives that the introduction of a measure which formed no part of the original contract would practically amount to a confiscation of their property, the value of the labour of this class of persons being scarcely more than nominal, and I adhere to the opinion that the just and politic course is, as has been done, to prohibit any extension or renewal of the practice either of slave indebtedness or slavery to secure good treatment for the servile classes under penalty of enforced manumission; to reduce claims when they came before the magistrates to the minimum which justice to the creditor will permit; to await the increased means of freeing themselves which must develop for the poorer classes upon the extensive introduction of European capital in agricultural industries, and finally to purchase at a rate which, in consequence of the notorious discouragement with which every case is treated by the European officers and the courts, and the pressure of other influences, will in time be much diminished from what would probably be considered a fair equivalent.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) Hugh Low,
Resident.

The Honourable,
The Colonial Secretary,
Straits Settlements,
Singapore.

11. THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR M. E. HICKS BEACH, BART., TO THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

Downing Street,
March 5, 1879.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Sir W. Robinson's despatches of the 29th July, and 7th January last on the subject of debt-slavery in the native states.

2. The Resident of Selangor's report on the subject is satisfactory, and there appears to be every reason to hope that the policy which is being adopted in that State, with the concurrence of the native government, will result in no long time in the extinction of this barbarous custom.

3. In Perak the question would appear to be a more difficult one, and not to admit of so simple a solution as in Selangor, the different circumstances of the two States, the fact that the Malay population in Selangor is, as has been pointed out by Mr. Swettenham, only 5 per cent. of that in Perak, and the necessity of avoiding any measure, which may have an unsettling effect on the latter country, all combine to preclude the expectation that any immediate remedy can be found for this evil in Perak.

4. But while I approve of the steps which Mr. Low is taking with the view of gradually putting an end to the practice of slavery for debt, I would impress upon you that the utmost care should be exercised both by the Resident himself and also by his subordinate officers to prevent its application to any fresh case whether such case be that of an actual debtor, or of a child of slave parents.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) M. E. Hicks Beach.

The Officer Administering the Government.

Hugh Low's 2nd 'rule' in his proposal for the gradual abolition of slavery in Perak (see Letter 6) had unexpected repercussions on Chinese prostitutes in the State. Brought in from China or Hong Kong, they had to serve their term in brothels in the mining centres in the Malay States. It was common for Chinese women in desperate straits to sell themselves to procurers, but many more were sold by others to prostitution. Insofar as these women were the 'property' of local brothel keepers, they were a kind of debt-slave, and thus their position was similar to that of Malay female debt-slaves, many of whom, as has been pointed out, had to prostitute themselves to keep alive.

Conditions in the brothels were oppressive, and it was not uncommon for unco-operative females to be subjected to all kinds of

cruelty. The fortunate ones were bought out by wealthy miners as their concubines or wives. Normally these debt-slaves had to serve a term of three years in the brothels as part of their contract, after which they could have their freedom, but those who could not endure life in the brothels tried to abscond. In 1878 Hugh Low had to deal with such a case, and in his characteristic caution, he wrote to Singapore for specific instructions. Mr. Cecil Smith, then Colonial Secretary, recommended that a public notification should be issued by the Perak Government stating that neither slavery nor debt-slavery for purposes of prostitution should be allowed, and the Attorney General, Mr. Braddell, agreed with him.

To Hugh Low, however, this was not a realistic approach to the problem. It was argued that to be consistent with general policy on slavery, the Perak Government was at least tacitly committed to protect the 'property' of brothel keepers as much as that of Malay slave owners, on the understanding that, owing to a disparity of sexes in the mining towns, an organized system of female prostitution was the lesser of two evils. Feeling in favour of the system was so strong amongst the Chinese that serious difficulties might arise if the Government did not support the rights of brothel keepers. Thus, no action had been taken on the matter till the middle of 1880, when Sir Frederick Weld, the new Governor, reopened discussion on discovering that absconding Chinese prostitutes were caught by the police and, under magisterial direction, were returned to their brothel keepers to work out their debt by prostitution. Sir Frederick Weld must have felt that the Govenment could not possibly continue to give moral support to such a practice, for he considered that 'the law of nature, the law of civilization, and true policy all pointed in one direction', and he then instructed Hugh Low to issue a notice as originally recommended by Cecil Smith. Accordingly the following notice was issued:

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION

The Government having had under consideration that contracts of an immoral character are made in some parts of the State, by which women are kept in enforced servitude to the owners of brothels, it is hereby notified that such practices, being contrary to morality and to the laws of all civilized States, will not be countenanced by the Government, nor enforced in the courts, nor by the police or other authorities of Perak.

The law as regards contracts of this nature must be understood to be the same in all respects as that which prevails in Her Majesty's

Colony of the Straits Settlements, and all persons detained against their will are entitled to claim the protection of the magistrates.

(Signed) Hugh Low,
Resident, Perak.

Taiping,
9th July, 1880.

12. THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES, THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY, TO GOVERNOR SIR FREDERICK WELD.

Downing Street,
March 4, 1882.

Sir,

With reference to my predecessor's despatch of the 5th of March 1879 [*see Letter 11*] on the subject of debt-slavery in the Protected Native States, I request that you will procure and forward to me reports from the Residents showing what progress has been made towards the extinction of the custom since Sir Michael Hicks Beach wrote his despatch.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) Kimberley.

Sir F. A. Weld.

13. GOVERNOR SIR FREDERICK WELD TO THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY.

Government House, Singapore.
May 4, 1882.

My Lord,

In reply to your Lordship's Despatch of the 4th March, requesting me to forward to you reports from the Residents of the native states on the subject of debt-slavery, I now forward reports from the Residents of Perak and Sungei Ujong. I have not yet received one from the Resident of Selangor, but as I can myself reply to the question, it will be unnecessary to await it.

2. In Selangor slavery has been abolished for several years and is now unknown. The principle adopted in 1874 was to set the total term of work done against the original debt proved, which resulted in the almost immediate liberation of all the slaves. The only difficulty experienced was in the unwillingness of many of the slaves themselves to go and work for a living which involved greater exertion. It is, however, to be hoped that a more manly spirit is gradually spreading under British influence.

3. In Sungei Ujong, to use the Resident's words, the custom may

almost be said to be extinct as if it had never existed. It seems to have some years ago died a kind of natural death, instructions having been issued by the Governor of the Straits Settlements to discourage it by all possible means.

4. The case was different in Perak, as recognised by Sir M. Hicks Beach in his Despatch of 5th March 1879.... [*Sir Frederick Weld then quotes paragraphs 3 and 4 of Letter 11*].

5. I believe that this line of policy, having regard to the peace of the country and even at the time the interests of the majority of the slaves themselves, was the true one for Perak, and it has been steadily acted upon; cases of ill-treatment of slaves are rare, and immediate emancipation is the result when they are discovered. The number of slaves has decreased, their money value has greatly lessened, they themselves may presumably be considered more ready and fit for emancipation than they were some years ago, and the circumstances of the country itself are unquestionably more favourable to its success, whilst the holders of slaves are fast coming to see that it would be to their interest to set free the slave debtors on receiving a moderate compensation. At the same time the finances of the country are in such a state that such reasonable compensation will not be an undue burthen upon its resources.

6. On my arrival in the Colony I found that the system of debt-slavery in Chinese brothels in Perak had been under discussion, and I at once cut the knot by directing the Resident to notify in the most public manner that no woman could under any circumstances be detained for immoral purposes against her will in Perak, any more than in the Straits Settlements. Mr. Low loyally carried out my instructions, the apprehended disturbance amongst the Chinese did not take place, many women left brothels and settled down respectably, and the Resident received your Lordship's approval.

7. Soon after this occurred I was in Perak, and Mr. Low and I were of one mind in considering that the line of policy hitherto pursued in the general question of debt-slavery had been judicious, and that the time was approaching when final steps might be taken for the total abolition of slavery, on giving moderate compensation, which we considered, under all the circumstances of the case and country, should be given.

8. That time has now arrived, and some months ago it was decided that at the next meeting of the State Council of Perak, the question should be brought forward with a view to the abolition of debt-slavery during the ensuing year.

9. I have no doubt but that whilst hasty and violent measures a few years ago would have thrown back the progress of the people and country, and probably led to bloodshed, the object will be now

peaceably and quietly effected with the general consent of all parties concerned. The exact terms will be a matter for my consideration after proposals have been made to the State Council.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) Fred. A. Weld,
Governor.

The Right Hon.
the Earl of Kimberley,
&c., &c., &c.

14. HUGH LOW, RESIDENT OF PERAK, TO THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, SINGAPORE.

Teluk Anson,
April 26, 1882.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, calling upon me for information as to the progress made towards the extinction of debt-slavery in this State since 1879, for transmission to Her Majesty's Secretary of State.

2. In reply I have the honour to report that the policy explained in my letters to your predecessor, dated 28th May and 14th December 1878, [*Letters 6 and 10*] has been steadily pursued in Perak. All slave debtors who have appealed to the protection of the courts having their cases adjudicated upon on the most liberal terms consistent with justice to the creditors, and a considerable number having availed themselves of the facilities presented to them and bought up the claims upon them.

3. Further and more intimate knowledge of the people has confirmed the impression that whatever may have been the case in former times, cruelty to slaves or slave debtors has been very rare since the establishment of settled government, and in every instance in which such has come to my knowledge or to that of the British officers, manumission without compensation was carried out.

4. Three such cases have occurred in the families of two very high officers of State, and these, with one other case, are all the instances of cruelty which have been reported to me.

5. An attempt was made in 1879 to procure a census of the population through the chiefs of the village communities. Each of these chiefs recorded the name of every householder in his district, with the number of persons, distinguishing their sex and condition.

6. A total of 47,359 is thus arrived at for the free native Malay population. Of these 14,875 were males above, and 9,313 below, 16 years of age. The females numbered 14,761 and 8,410.

7. The number of slaves was returned as 1,670, of whom 775 were

males and 895 females. The slave debtors were respectively 728 and 652, giving a total of 1380; the two servile classes numbering, of both sexes, 3,050. I fear, however, that these numbers do not include all the bond population as His Highness the Regent and one or two others with extensive claims did not give in returns.

8. I regret to state that the attempt which, as reported in my letter of the 14th December, was liberally made by the Toh Puan Halimah, chief wife of the ex-Mantri of Perak, to facilitate the manumission of her slaves and debtors by working on the just claims against them on fair terms, was successful only to a very inconsiderable extent. The Malays of Perak are, as a rule, so adverse to and so unaccustomed to steady labour, and can so easily provide for their wants, that they altogether decline, except for short periods, to perform services of any nature even for high wages.

9. The opinion of those having claims upon the servile classes is now pretty general in favour of manumission upon equitable terms, and although a few old conservative families in such districts as Kinta would prefer to adhere to the former state of things, I have considered that the time has arrived when a general measure having this end in view may be taken into consideration in the hope of carrying it out completely in the year 1883.

10. His Excellency the Governor may have observed in the minutes of the March Session of the Council of State that the subject of manumission of slaves and debtors was brought to the notice of His Highness the Regent by the Resident, and that a meeting of the Council was appointed for the 15th May for the purpose of considering the terms on which such a measure should be based, and the manner in which it should be carried out.

11. My own idea is that a commission, consisting of one or two native chiefs and the principal European officer of each district, should be appointed to inquire, under written instructions, into the circumstances of each case, and award, subject to the approval of the Government, such compensation as may seem fair to both parties; that the money necessary to pay the amounts awarded shall be advanced by the Government; that the sum adjudged to be paid for manumission shall remain in all or in part, as may be determined in Council, a debt from the freedman to the State, which he shall be bound to repay by a deduction of a portion of his wages for labour on the public works of the country, which he must continue until his debt is cleared off, should he be unable or unwilling to raise the money by other means; that male relatives shall take upon them the obligations incurred for the freedom of female relations who may themselves be unable to pay; and that from the date of the completion of the measure every person in the State shall be absolutely

free, and slavery and bond indebtedness declared to be illegal institutions and for ever abolished.

12. I have formerly stated it as the opinion of the best informed natives that a sum varying from $60,000 to $80,000 would be sufficient to meet the necessary expenditure, but I fear that the larger amount would be insufficient, as it would be advisable to deal with an institution involving so great a change in the habits of, and loss to the people, with a certain measure of liberality.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) Hugh Low,
Resident.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
Straits Settlements.

15. W. F. B. PAUL, RESIDENT OF SUNGEI UJONG, TO THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, SINGAPORE.

Resident's Office,
Sungei Ujong. April 28, 1882.

Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 17th instant, calling for a report of the progress made towards the extinction of debt-slavery in the State of Sungei Ujong, I have the honour to inform you that it no longer exists, having been suppressed by Captain Murray a short time after his appointment as Resident.

2. The custom was not, so far as I can ascertain, abolished by proclamation, but all claims upon hereditary debtors were so strongly discouraged that it died a natural death. *Bona fide* claims were admitted, and in cases where there was a claim for a debt and a counter-claim for service on the part of the debtor and his family, a fair settlement was arrived at, and in the majority of cases it was found either that the debtor had by his service satisfied all claims or had only a small sum to pay to free himself.

3. Since my arrival here no attempt has been made to revive any claims of this sort, and although some (formerly) so-called debt-slaves and their families are living in the same village with their creditors, it is understood by all parties that no claims can be made either for service or money. In fact it may almost be said that the custom seems as extinct as if it had never existed.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) W. F. B. Paul.

16. THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY TO GOVERNOR SIR F. A. WELD.

Downing Street,
June 23, 1882.

Sir,

Her Majesty's Government have learnt with much satisfaction from your Despatch of the 4th of May last, that the measures adopted in Selangor for the extinction of debt slavery have been attended with complete success, and that in that State, as well as in Sungei Ujong, the practice is now unknown. I am sensible of the difficulties with which Mr. Low has had to contend in dealing with slavery in Perak, and appreciate the judicious manner in which he has prepared the way for its final abolition. I trust that nothing will occur to prevent the execution of the measures which you contemplate for this purpose in the ensuing year.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) Kimberley.

Sir F. A. Weld.

17. THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY TO GOVERNOR SIR F. A. WELD, K.C.M.G.

Downing Street, June 2, 1882.

Sir,

With reference to my Despatch of the 4th of March, I have the honour to enclose a copy of a letter which has been addressed to the editor of the 'London and China Telegraph' by Mr. James Innes on 'Slavery in Perak', and appeared in that journal on the 30th ultimo.

I shall be glad to have your observations on this communication at your early convenience.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) Kimberley.

Sir F. A. Weld.

'The London and China Telegraph', Tuesday, May 30, 1882.

SLAVERY IN PERAK

(To the Editor of the 'London and China Telegraph'.)

Sir,

I observe that in the House of Commons and elsewhere attention is being directed to the subject of debt slavery in Perak. Having lately been in the Perak Government service, I am in a position to testify to the fact that the debt slavery spoken of not only exists, but is approved of and practically encouraged by the English Resident of Perak, and by the Government of the Straits Settlements.

From the 8th of August 1878 to the 8th of August 1879, I was Acting Superintendent of Lower Perak. I had not long been in that position before I discovered, to my surprise, that in my character of magistrate I was expected to issue warrants for the recapture of runaway slaves, and to see those warrants carried out.

I inquired of other officials, and found that this had been done by my predecessor, and also by themselves, but always with great reluctance, and only in obedience to the express orders of the English Resident, Mr. Low. I found also on inquiry that such of these slaves as were women were generally impelled to run away through their hatred of the immoral life they were forced to lead for the pecuniary benefit of their masters or mistresses; that they often wished to marry and live respectably, but had no chance of doing so except by a successful escape; and that when returned to their masters they were always treated with great cruelty, being sometimes even tortured to death. This was done to deter others from following their example. I found that English officials had on several occasions paid money out of their own pockets to redeem these unfortunates, rather than return them to their masters.

I, of course, wished to obey my chief in all things lawful, but I felt that to carry out this part of his orders would be equivalent to aiding and abetting murder, or, in the case of young women, something even worse. I, therefore, after much consideration, refused.

As I left Perak more than two years ago, my information might be thought out of date, I therefore subjoin extracts from a letter just received from those parts:—

The debt slavery that exists in Perak is, I consider, worse than the slavery I have seen in Borneo, where the slaves are sold openly like sheep; in Borneo slaves are as a rule well treated, fed, clothed, and armed, and only occasionally killed for a serious fault. In Perak, from what I have seen, the slaves are badly fed and badly clothed. It seems strange that while slavery was so easily abolished in Selangor it should still be permitted in the adjoining State of Perak. I do not think that because the ruler of the latter State happens to be a slaveholder himself people should still continue to be deprived of their liberty for their whole lives. It amounts to that, for it is nearly an impossibility for a slave debtor to collect even twenty-five dollars, and if he do happen to become possessed of a few dollars by thrift or theft he is obliged to bury them, to prevent his master from stealing them.

The system of girl slavery in Perak is, perhaps, the most iniquitous form of all, as they in many instances are a profitable source of income to their mistresses. The abolition of slavery would of course check this evil, and the Inchis would have to seek an income in some

manner less objectionable, and more in accordance with the precepts of Islam.

Numbers of grey-haired men and women could be found in Perak still in debt slavery, but it would be useless to make inquiry on the spot. The slave debtors could tell a good deal if they only dared to do so; but now unfortunately they know that their masters have legally a recognised right of property in them for debt as strong as they had in days of yore under the infamous rule of their Rajahs, with the one exception that they cannot now legally be killed. So much for the so-called 'protection' afforded to the natives by the English Government.

I entirely agree with Sir. P. Benson Maxwell that slavery is not a necessary institution in any Malay State, but if discountenanced by the authorities will come to an end of itself, as is proved by Selangor, Sungei Ujong, and Sarawak. The slavery existing now in Sarawak is the mildest form of feudal power. It is doomed, and will, I have no doubt, come to an end very soon; if the British North Borneo Company adopt the same principle as Rajah Brooke there will be no disgraceful slavery in their territory.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) James Innes,
Lately Collector and Magistrate
at Langat, Selangor.

London, May 25.

18. GOVERNOR SIR F. A. WELD, K.C.M.G., TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY.

Thaiping, Perak, July 9, 1882.

My Lord,

In reply to your Lordship's Despatch of 2nd June 1882, I have the honour to transmit to you a report from Mr. Hugh Low, C.M.G., Resident of Perak, commenting upon the letter to the 'London and China Telegraph' newspaper, by Mr. James Innes on slavery in Perak, which you have enclosed to me, and also one addressed to the Resident by a most able and honest Malay prince, Rajah Idris, the Chief Justice of Perak, which was spontaneously written and may be unhesitatingly accepted as expressing his true opinion.

2. The statement that debt slavery is approved of and practically managed by the English Resident of Perak and by the Government of the Straits Settlements is not only directly opposed to fact, but evinces such unblushing disregard to fact, and is so completely disproved by the course of action steadily pursued both by the Resident and by myself and by the sure though gradual results of that action,

that it will be hardly necessary for me to do more than to request your Lordship to read the enclosed documents and my previous Despatches.

3. Since I have been Governor of the Straits Settlements the only case which has come to my knowledge (and your Lordship is aware that I devote much time and labour to native affairs by personal inspection and otherwise) in which a European officer in the Native States has been accused of favouring slavery, was in regard to Mr. Innes himself, who was censured, not groundlessly, by the Resident of Selangor for encouraging slavery, by allowing two boys to be handed over to a Selangor chief. I admit that I considered the censure somewhat harsh, and as the boys wished to remain I allowed them to do so, care being taken to warn the chief and their own friends that they were free and might leave at any time. This lenient view of Mr. Innes' conduct on that occasion may be the ground of that gentleman's present assertion that the Straits Government practically encourages slavery in Perak. I know no other possible.

4. Had Mr. Innes known that in Perak, where slavery, though in course of extinction, is not yet finally abolished, cases of ill-treatment still occurred, it was his duty, under orders from the Resident, immediately to set the victims free, if in his own district, and if not to report to his superior officer. But he never did so.

5. Mr. Innes has had full opportunity since my arrival of bringing such matters under my notice, but he has never done so, though he could have easily learned if he did not know what my immediate and decisive action would certainly have been, by what it was soon after my first arrival, in the case of the vexed question of Chinese brothel slavery at Thaiping.

6. With regard to the statement of Mr. Innes' correspondent, no officer of the Perak Government could have honestly written such a letter if he had read the written orders and instructions of his own superiors, and any officer who permitted such a state of things to exist, or believed them to exist without taking immediate steps to remedy the evil, would be instantly dismissed the service of the State.

7. It may not here be out of place to state—as the contrary has, I am informed, been authoritatively stated in England, though not by Mr. Innes—that debt slavery in any form has been abolished in Selangor and Sungei Ujong.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) Fred. A. Weld,
Governor.

The Right Honourable,
The Earl of Kimberley,
&c., &c., &c.

19. HUGH LOW, RESIDENT OF PERAK TO SIR FREDERICK WELD.

The Residency,
Kwala Kangsa, July 1, 1882.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the recipt of your Excellency's Minute of the 28th June on the Despatch of Her Majesty's Secretary of State of the 2nd June 1882, forwarding copy of a letter by Mr. James Innes on the subject of slavery and debt slavery in Perak, extracted from the 'London and China Telegraph' newspaper of the 30th May and calling for my remarks upon it.

2. I saw the letter of Mr. Innes in the 'Singapore Daily Times' of the 24th ultimo, which reached me on the 28th, and I at once drafted a letter to the present Superintendent of Lower Perak, calling upon him for a report and for full information on every point referred to in it.

3. The practice in regard to slavery and debt-slavery in Perak has been faithfully reported from time to time in my correspondence ... and the regulations which were made public on my first arrival have been carried out, and every year, as the country became more settled, has permitted these to be further modified in practice in favour of the servile classes.

4. It is quite true that Mr. Innes, when acting, in the absence of Mr. Paul, as Superintendent of Lower Perak, expressed to me his disinclination to carry out the regulations of the Government he served, but I do not remember or believe that any pressure was put upon him to do so.

5. I have never known, since I have been in the State, of any Malay woman being hired out by her master or mistress, or forced to prostitute herself for their profit, and neither Mr. Innes nor any other officer of this Government has ever brought such a case to my notice; that women of this class have been tortured to death, when recaptured after escape, is utterly incredible, and any such case brought to the notice of Government would have been dealt with as one of ordinary murder.

6. I have myself, as a Judge of the Supreme Court, on several occasions released without any compensation to their owners, slaves or slave debtors who have been treated with anything resembling cruelty.

A girl who was beaten with a Malacca cane by her owner, the greatest and most conservative Chief in Kinta, was thus freed in 1880, and two females belonging to his Highness the Regent were likewise emancipated without compensation. Many others during the years I have advised this Government have been dealt with in the same manner.

7. I have been more familiar with slavery and debt slavery in Borneo over a greater extent of territory than Mr. Innes' correspondent ever visited, and my experience is that in those parts of that country which have not been influenced by European intercourse these institutions are very much more abused than I have known them to be in Perak.

8. I have in former correspondence explained the circumstances under which, in my opinion, it would have been neither just, politic, nor possible in Perak to bring about the manumission of the servile classes in an arbitrary manner in the early years of my residence, and in the correspondence will be found reported the deterioration of the property of this kind which has taken place in consequence of the steady discouragement of the practice by the Government, and your Excellency is aware that for some time a measure has been under consideration by the Council of this State which it is hoped will bring about—if not in 1883, as I recommended and wished, at the latest in the following year—the manumission of every slave and slave debtor either at the cost of Government or on equitable terms.

9. I enclose in this a letter from His Highness Raja Idris, the Chief Justice of the State, who has sometime since freed without compensation all his own slaves or debtors and who happened to be with me on business this morning when I received your Excellency's Minute.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) Hugh Low.

His Excellency Sir F. A. Weld, K.C.M.G.,
&c., &c., &c.

20. TRANSLATION OF THE REMARKS OF RAJA IDRIS ON THE LETTER BY JAMES INNES, ESQ., WHICH APPEARED IN THE 'LONDON AND CHINA TELEGRAPH' OF THE 30TH MAY, 1882. ADDRESSED TO HUGH LOW, ESQ., C.M.G.

We inform our friend that on Saturday the 1st July we went to see our friend, about 9 a.m., when our friend read to us a letter by a gentleman named Innes, who acted formerly as Superintendent of Lower Perak, in which we noticed that he stated that the Perak people inflicted cruel treatment on their slaves and refused them food and clothing; also that the female slaves were allowed by their masters to prostitute themselves for the latters' profit.

Now, when we heard these remarks we were greatly surprised, for we have never heard that anything like what Mr. Innes mentions has happened: the masters do not go so far as to cause the death of their slaves or slave debtors. If any one even so much as beats his slave in the least, our friend is sure to cause him to be freed. For

instance, we remember some time ago a slave of his Highness the Regent was freed by our friend, and one belonging to a high chief in Kinta was treated in the same way without compensation of any sort being made; and this was the case also with slaves belonging to other people.

While we have presided over the court at Kwala Kangsa we have released many slaves and slave debtors in the same way in accordance with advice given us by our friend.

Moreover, on our friend's first arrival in Perak, our friend gave us all to understand that he wished to get all the slaves and slave debtors in the country liberated, and from that time up to the present the matter has been before the Council. As for ourself, we have concurred in our friend's view, and we have informed our friend that as far as we are concerned we have no objection.

We would add that a great many of the slaves and slave debtors have been freed by their masters; some on agreements to pay their debts by instalments, and others by payments outright mutually agreed upon, and the masters all know that they have no power to prevent this being done. If a slave wishes to purchase his liberty at a fair price, he must be released, and this we have constantly given the people to understand in court; as a result the slaves are coming to an understanding with their masters.

Moreover, we think that there are numbers of people who have come to the conclusion that there is no advantage gained in keeping their slaves, but as long as the question of their emancipation remains unsettled, there will be slaves in the country. The masters look after their slaves fairly well because they know that the orders of the Government which is advising the state of Perak are just.

That is what we wish to say, and we have very much confidence in the overshadowing protection of the Government.

(Signed) Raja Idris bin Iskunder.

July 1, 1882.

21. EXTRACT FROM THE ORIGINAL DIARY KEPT BY JAMES INNES, ESQ., WHEN ACTING AS SUPERINTENDENT OF LOWER PERAK. [*This was sent to the Earl of Kimberley by Sir Frederick Weld on August 8, 1882, as evidence of the real sentiments of Mr. Innes regarding the policy pursued by the Perak Government before he (Innes) learned that Hugh Low as well as the Resident of Selangor considered him to be an inefficient officer.*]

Thursday, December 26, 1878.

Mem. not to be copied. Slavery could not be done away with in Perak by a 'coup de main'. It would create a revolution. I do not think an

armed resistance, but an intense hatred leading to dangerous conspiracy against the English from slave owners, and after the first *possible* burst of gratitude from the freed, quite as great a hatred from them, because the slaves from their nature and the easiness of their masters and mistresses, are extraordinarily lazy, and now certainly could not earn fair wages enough to live upon if not fed and clothed by their owners.

If freed and their own masters, they would simply become paupers and thieves, and the women prostitutes; therefore as according to the present regulations there can be no new slaves made and no born slaves, the thing must die out, and the whole difficulty resolves itself into some *possibly* squeamish scruples of a few Englishmen who object to catch slaves and be called slave catchers. This being so it seems either that these Englishmen had better leave the Perak Government service, or if the Perak Government considers their services valuable enough to be retained, that some arrangement should be made to free them from this unpleasant part of their duty—a duty that they are seldom called upon to perform—the easiest plan would be simply to let all the slave cases be referred to Kwala Kangsa, settled there, and warrants *of arrest issued from thence.*

22. SIR FREDERICK WELD, K.C.M.G., TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY.

Government House, Singapore,
August 23, 1882.

My Lord,

In reference to previous correspondence, I have now to transmit to your Lordship the enclosed further papers and reports on the subject of debt slavery in Perak.

2. The three great difficulties in the way of rapid action are these. The want of efficient officers competent to conduct an examination into claims of ownership. The probability, unless a careful inquiry be made, of collusion between men representing themselves to be master and slave in order to obtain compensation. The necessity of providing for a large number of aged persons and helpless women and children who will be turned out of their homes without means of living, for it cannot be expected that if the able-bodied are taken away from the chiefs that they will consent to maintain those from whom they can expect to gain no advantage.

3. The State can now afford the necessary expense, now that the war debt [*the cost of sending troops to Perak following the murder of Birch in November, 1875, and maintaining them there till law and order had been restored*] is nearly paid off; and I think it far more

wise and just to go to that expense after having, so far as may be, reduced the number of claims by a preliminary inquiry than by simply declaring all slaves free, to cause great misery to numbers of slaves themselves, and much disturbance in the country.

4. I am fully impressed with the desirability of dealing definitely with the question at once, and I have frequently pressed that view on the Resident, who concurs with me. The precise line of action, however, he considers yet needs consideration, and further consultation with the State Council and leading men before he submits it finally to me. I trust, however, the notwithstanding the difficulties that I have indicated, an earlier period than December, 1884, named by Mr. Low, may see the final abolition of all slavery in Perak.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) Fred. A. Weld,
Governor.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Kimberley,
&c., &c., &c.

23. HUGH LOW TO SIR FREDERICK WELD, K.C.M.G.

July 28, 1882.

His Excellency the Governor,

This Minute of Mr. Maxwell's was given to me after the deliberations in Council which have been already submitted to your Excellency. It contains an exhaustive account of the institutions of slavery and slave indebtedness as practised in Perak, and deserves and will receive the careful attention of the Council of State.

One or two of the recommendations made in it are not in harmony with my declaration on first coming into the country. The chief of these is the promise I made that every person then remaining in the status of a slave or bond slave in the possession of his master should be taken to be legally in that condition until compensation should be made or he should be legally made free.

Adherence to my promise must of course be preserved, and it will dispose of much inquiry into claims which arose long ago, while it will secure liberty to a large number of persons who, taking advantage of the confusion existing during the military occupation, had left their owners or creditors and have since been living in freedom.

If it were possible I should prefer that this very embarrasing difficulty should be disposed of at once by the unconditional payment by Government of compensation according to a scale to be fixed. Cases of collusion would no doubt occur and make the policy much more costly to the State than the plan recommended by Mr. Maxwell, which resembles in its principal features that of all the

Native members of the Council; but I feel that it would in many instances be unfair not to give sufficient time for the better classes to make preparations for a measure which must cause a revolution in their domestic arrangements, but I will do all that is possible to force the measure to completion, so that no claim shall remain or be recognized against slaves or bond-holders after the 31st December 1884.

(Signed) Hugh Low,
Resident.

24. W. E. MAXWELL, ASSISTANT RESIDENT PERAK, TO HUGH LOW.

Taiping, May 27, 1882.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward for your consideration a minute embodying my views on the subject of slavery and debt-bondage in Perak.

It is unnecessary in this letter to say anything on the subject which I have treated at length in the minute enclosed: I desire, however, to state that the term of three years which I have inserted as the term at the expiration of which slavery should cease is merely tentative, and that I should have no objection to see the term reduced to two years.

It is, however, in my opinion necessary that a reasonably long term should be decided upon in order to prevent the fabrication of collusive claims which would certainly be brought forward, were it contemplated to free all slaves and compensate all slave owners forthwith.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) W. E. Maxwell,
Assistant Resident, Perak.

Her Britannic Majesty's Resident,
Perak.

25. MINUTE ON SLAVERY AMONG THE MALAYS IN THE STATE OF PERAK, BY W. E. MAXWELL, ASSISTANT RESIDENT, PERAK.

The institution of slavery as it exists among the Malays, in places where it has not been abolished by European influence, is a national custom which they have in common with other Indo-Chinese races, and it is a mistake to suppose that it is the offspring of Muhammadan law and religion, the introduction of which among the Malays is of comparatively modern date.

Muhammadan law has, however, largely influenced Malay custom respecting slavery, and Arabic terminology is noticeable in many

of the details incidental to the system. So far from being identical with the slavery lawful among Muslims in Egypt, Arabia, &c., the Malay institution is in some respects completely at variance with it, and in this particular, as in many others, there is a never-ending struggle between the *hukum adat*, the 'customary law' of the Malays, and the *hukum shara* or 'religious law' of the Koran. Muhammadan priests, who would sometimes seek, if they could, to enforce the latter are met by the plea that the practice denounced is lawful by Malay custom, and it is thus that debt-bondage, like opium-smoking, gambling, &c., is always defended.

Slaves (*hamba* and *kawan*) in Perak are of two classes:

(1) Slaves (*Abdi*)

(2) Debtors (*orang ber-utang*)

A slave *Abdi* is either: 1. A captive taken in war; 2. An infidel captured by force (e.g. a Battack of Sumatra or Sakei of the Peninsula); 3. A man-slayer (*yang bawah darah mati*), or other criminal who is unable to pay the price of blood, or other fine (*diyat*), and who surrenders (*hulur*) himself and family to the Raja as slaves; 4. The offspring of a female slave (except when the owner acknowledges himself to be the father).

Hulur.—The Raja's privilege of retaining as slaves all persons who have taken human life, and who throw themselves upon his protection, seems to be purely Malay. In other points the definition of the status of slave given above is in accordance with Muhammadan law.

Debt-bondage.—A debt-bondsman, although often called *hamba* (slave), is more correctly termed *kawan* (companion). He is a free man (*Mardahika*) as opposed to a slave (*Abdi*), though from his being obliged to serve his creditor in all kinds of menial employment, the two conditions are not always readily distinguishable.

The Kuran, Sale's translation, C.II—The institution of debt-bondage is a native Malay custom, and is wholly opposed to Muhammadan law, which is most lenient to debtors. 'If,' says the Kuran, 'there be any (debtor) under a difficulty (of paying his debt) let (his creditor) wait till it be easy (for him to do it); but if ye remit it as alms it will be better for you, if ye knew it. And fear the day wherein ye shall return unto God: then shall every soul be paid what it hath gained, and they shall not be treated unjustly.'

Pecuniary limit of fine.—Malay custom in Perak used to fix the value of a free man at $25 (100 *bidor*). Theoretically, a man could not be fined more than that sum, and was entitled to be released from bondage, on the tender of that sum, whatever might have been the nominal amount of the fine imposed by a Chief. In practice, however, in a state of society recognising no right but that of the strongest, the acknowledged existence of this custom has not pre-

vented the imposition of fines by Rajas and Chiefs far exceeding in amount the sum above named, and the retention in bondage of persons whose relations would willingly pay that sum for their release.

Slaves and debt-bondsmen in Perak before 1874.—The number of slaves and slave-bondsmen now in Perak is probably 3,000, about one sixteenth of the whole Malay population. Before the establishment of a settled Government, under the administration of British officers, this form of property was much more valuable than at present. Every raja and chief was accompanied, when he went abroad, and was served when at home, by numerous dependents, debt-bondsmen, and slaves, who lived in or near his house, and belonged to his household. If they misbehaved they might be beaten and tortured, and slaves (*abdi*) might be killed. If they ran away a regular scale of rewards, calculated accordance to distance, defined the payment to be made by their owner to any one capturing them. The ownership of a number of slaves and debt-bondsmen was a mark of a man of rank, wealth and influence, and the aggregate amount of capital represented by his debt-bondsmen often amounted to several thousand dollars. The desire to possess, as a dependent, some particular person, sometimes led to the invention of fictitious debts, and people were liable, with little hope of redress, to be dragged from their homes and taken to the house of some great man, nominally as security for some debt, of which, perhaps, they had never heard. No work that debt-bondsmen performed for their creditors and masters operated to lessen the debt. They served in his household, cultivated his fields, and worked in his mines; but such service was merely a necessary incident of their position and was not accepted in part payment. Sometimes the master fed and clothed them, but more often they had to supply themselves with all necessaries, notwithstanding that their labour was forfeited to the master's service.

The system of detaining persons in servitude as long as a debt for which they are liable is not discharged is very generally spread among the Malay races of the Archipelago. Through injustice and oppression it has been productive of peculiar hardship in Perak. Crawfurd, in 1820, noticed the custom in the following passage (History of the Indian Archipelago, Volume III, page 97:—

> 'If a debtor is unable to pay his creditor he is compelled to serve him until the debt be discharged, and he is then nearly in the condition of a slave. Every man has his fixed price, and if the debt exceed this, he either loses his liberty altogether or his family are compelled to serve the creditor along with him.

'The following two laws of Malacca have reference to this practice: If a man be in debt to such an amount as to exceed his estimated price in the country, then it shall be lawful for his creditor to punish him by stripes or abusive language; but after the manner of a free man, and *not* of a slave. If a man deflour a virgin that is his debtor, he shall be compelled either to marry her or forfeit the amount of the debt.

'This universal custom is more distinctly expressed in the laws of Sumatra, as collected by the officers of the British Government. When a debt, say these, becomes due, and the debtor is unable to pay his creditor, or has no effects to deposit, he shall himself, or his wife, or his children, live with the creditor as his bond-slave or slaves until redeemed by the payment of the debt.'

Among the Rawa Malays of Sumatra (many of whom are settled in Perak) it is, I am assured, customary to detain a debt bondsman for two years only. At the expiration of that time the debt, if not paid, is remitted as alms.

By Perak Malays, on the contrary, the National Customs, when favourable to the debtor, have been openly disregarded, and every kind of oppression has practised.

Notwithstanding the existence of a well-defined custom that the wife and children of a debtor should not be liable for his debt unless it were incurred with their knowledge, and that the widow of a debt bondsman should not be liable for more than a third of her husband's debt, it has gradually become usual for creditors to claim and enforce a right to hold the wife and family of a debtor in bondage for the full amount of any debt, both during his lifetime and after his death. This cannot be justified by law or custom.

The daughters of a debt bondsman, being in a manner the property of the creditor or master, were given in marriage by him, the dower (*isi Kawin or mas Kawin*) being paid to him. It seldom happens among Malays of the lower orders that the dower is paid at the time of marriage; the man, therefore, who married a woman from the house of her creditor usually became liable to the latter for the dower (say about $30), and was thus himself reduced to the condition of a slave bondsman.

No part of the dower was, however, credited to the original debtor towards the extinction of his debt. Thus, if a debt bondsman owing $100 had four daughters, all of whom were given in marriage by the creditor to men of his selection, the master would receive four dowers in cash, or would get four more debt bondsmen in lieu thereof, but the original of $100 would still remain. This monstrous injustice must

be of modern introduction, or there would be but few debt bondsmen among the population. It has been imitated from the analagous practice in the case of slaves (*abdi*) but it is an unjust and illegal innovation.

Another rule, which has, I believe, been frequently evaded in Perak, gave to any female debtor with whom her master cohabited an absolute right to the cancelment of her debt, and made the latter punishable by fine if he did not give her freedom (see s. 59 of the Malacca Code translated in Newbold's account of the Straits Settlements, Volume II, page 293).

In the district of Kinta, the most important mining district in old days before the discovery of the Larut Tin Fields, debts were swelled in amount by a species of compound interest hardly conceivable among a people who profess to regard usury as sinful. Debts were usually calculated in tin, and were nominally payable in months. Let it be supposed that a man in Kinta owed a *chara* of tin (equivalent in value on the spot to $30, more or less), if he did not pay in six months he was liable by local custom for a *chara* of tin at the *Penang price*, say three times its value at Kinta. The debt was then put down at three *charas*, and a further time of six months given. If still unpaid at the expiration of the second period, the debt was again increased by the difference between the local price and that of Penang, and so on indefinitely. The failure to pay a small debt in six months resulted commonly, therefore, in the reduction of the debtor to hopeless bondage for life.

Debt-bondsmen do not labour under the legal disabilities which in Mahomedan law are incidental to the condition of slave (*Abdi*), but they are to a certain extent the subject of contumely.

Slaves of the reigning family especially privileged.—The royal slaves (*hamba Raja*) or the slaves of the household of the reigning Sultan, were a special class regarding whom certain peculiar rules and customs were in force. To strike one of them wrongfully involved the penalty of death, and any person who enticed one away had to make good fourteen times his value.

Besides the slaves purchased or inherited by the Raja, those born in his household and those taken under his protection under the law of *hulur*, he became the master of a large number, (especially females) by a most iniquitous custom which permitted him to forcibly carry off all the young women of districts, where there was no influential Chief or family to resist such tyranny (e.g. Kampar, Sungkei, and Pulau Tiga), to become attendents in the royal household. A royal marriage or the birth of a child in the royal family was the signal for the despatch of messengers to drag from their

homes all the girls and young married women of suitable age to be found in the selected district. These, under the names of *dayang-dayang* (maid servants), *inang* and *pengasoh* (nurses) remained generally for life as the Raja's slaves. Those not already married and accompanied in bondage by their husbands, were seldom allowed to marry, and if permission was accorded their husbands partook their fate as royal slaves, while the dower (*isi kawin*) went to the Raja. Usually they led a life of prostitution with the knowledge and consent of the Raja and his household, and by their means a number of male attendants were always about the Court, and the importance of the Raja was thereby outwardly increased.

At the time that British political officers were sent to reside in Perak the whole of the system above described was in full force. During the eight years which have elapsed since then many causes have combined to render the slave laws practically much less oppressive, and the odious institutions of slavery and debt-bondage are now in a fair way to die a natural death in the course of a few years.

A large number of persons remain in a state of partial slavery it is true, but in many cases they remain in that condition through choice or are only slaves in name. The arrival of a British Resident in Perak was an encouragement to those anxious to do so to free themselves, and some of the earliest difficulties which the first Resident (Mr. Birch) had with the natives of the country had reference to certain runaway slaves whom he refused to return. Since the Perak campaign of 1875-6 the death and banishment of many influential Rajas and chiefs have given numbers of people their liberty, while such men of influence as have remained have generally been powerless to enforce the ancient laws against their slaves or to obtain their enforcement through the British officers employed in the State. Many of those inclined to do so, both slaves and debt-bondsmen, have left their masters and have assumed the status of free citizen without molestation, though they have been compelled in some instances to pay genuine debts proved in a court of law. In some cases where acts of oppression or ill-treatment have come to the notice of British officers, their influence has procured the release of sufferers.

Most of the owners of slaves and debtors have come to look upon them as a comparatively worthless kind of property. Since they can neither compel them by force to work nor punish them for disobedience or misbehaviour, the mere nominal ownership is of limited practical value. It is only in a few cases, where family pride and a clinging to old customs prompt some of the remaining Rajas and heads of families of Chiefs to retain as many personal adherents as they can, that the possession of slaves now bears any resemblance

to the old state of things. In some of these instances, notably in the case of Raja Muda Yusuf, the present Regent of Perak, there is no doubt that men and women have been and perhaps still are detained in the condition of slaves without any ground which would constitute a right, even under Malay customary law. There is, however, little harsh treatment and complaints are rare.

The possession of slaves and debtors is more common in the North than in the South of Perak, desertion being difficult in the more secluded districts. Most well-to-do men at Kota Lama and Chigar Galah own several.

Slaves now in Perak may be divided as follows:—

1. *Abdi*, i.e. Battack, Sakai, and Habshi (Abyssinian) slaves and their descendents.
2. *Hamba Raja*, or royal slaves, who have been seized by a Raja or have become *hulur* to the State.
3. Debtors who have themselves contracted the debt for which they have forfeited their liberty.
4. Debtors who have become so merely by marrying a female debtor and thus becoming liable to her master for her dower.
5. Such wives, children and descendents of debtors as are lawfully liable for the debt according to Malay custom.
6. Persons who are really neither slaves nor debtors, but who are detained or claimed on fictitious or unlawful grounds.

Slavery in Perak could be stamped out at once by the adoption of the Council of resolution founded on Sections II and IV of the Indian Act V of 1843 and providing first that 'no rights arising out of an alleged property in the person and services of another as a slave shall be enforced' by any authority in Perak, and, second, that 'any act which would be a penal offence if done to a free man shall be equally an offence if done to any person on the pretext of his being in a condition of slavery.'

But the rights of proprietors have to be considered. Slaves have in many cases been acquired under circumstances perfectly in accordance with the law and custom of the country, and many debtors are *bona fide* indebted for specific sums to the person by whom they are detained in servitude. It would be unjust to deprive proprietors without compensation of this species of property.

Any form of inquiry which would involve the examination of master and slave before a tribunal of some kind regarding the origin or legality of the servitude would be most unpopular to the upper classes, and I have no hesitation in saying that most Malays of good birth would rather release their slaves and lose their money than meet them on quasi-equal terms in a court of inquiry.

I believe that if it were resolved by the Council that any slave,

whether *Abdi* or debtor, might become free on payment to his owner of the sum of $25 (which is, as has been pointed out above, the price of a free-man according to Malay custom), a large proportion of the persons now in servitude would at once purchase their own liberty. They would be further stimulated to do so, if there were a provision authorising the Government to pay the sum and to require reimbursement by labour on some public work of utility.

There would still remain two classes of slaves to be dealt with, those unable to pay and those who ought not to be required to pay. The first of these classes would be further subdivided into those able to work and those unable to work. Those unable to pay but able to work should be entitled to claim their freedom on borrowing the redemption sum ($25) from Government, and giving an equivalent value in labour on public works. Those unable to pay or to work (aged persons and women and children) should be entitled to claim their freedom unconditionally after a specified time, say three years. Those who are unlawfully detained and who therefore cannot be required to pay anything should be entitled to claim their release at any time from a committee appointed to receive and investigate such applications.

After a time to be fixed by the Council, say three years, slavery should altogether cease, and all claims upon debt-bondsmen should lapse.

The provisions which I would propose to embody in an Order in Council dealing with this matter, are as follows:—

1. That all royal slaves (*hamba raja*) and other persons taken by force under the royal privileges, all persons who have been made slaves by a Raja for offences and all persons who have become *hulur* to the State shall be unconditionally free from the date of the Order in Council.
2. That, with respect to other persons now in the condition of slaves or debt-bondsmen, slavery and debt-bondage shall absolutely cease at the expiration of three years from the date of the Order in Council.
3. That no right to a slave or debtor shall be recognised which is subsequent in date to January 20, 1874 (the date of the Pangkor Treaty).
4. That at any time within the period of three years above mentioned any slave or debt-bondsman may claim and shall receive his freedom upon payment to Government on account of his master of the sum of $25.
5. That at any time within the said period it shall be lawful for the Government of the State to advance the said sum on account of any slave or debt-bondsman, and to set him free,

requiring of him labour of equivalent value upon public works of utility.

6. That a permanent Emancipation Committee be appointed for the period of three years above named, whose duties shall be to register all emancipated persons, to receive and apply all sums paid under Clause 4, to decide all disputed claims to slaves and debt-bondsmen, to decide all questions as to the sums or proportions of sums for which debt-bondsmen may be liable, to advance on behalf of Government the redemption sum for any slave or debt-bondsman, to allot work to any person for whom such redemption sum is advanced, and to issue certificates of emancipation to all persons entitled to them.
7. It shall be lawful for the Emancipation Committee to purchase at any time the freedom of any slave or debt-bondsman who shall be unable to pay or to work, by the payment of $25 on behalf of Government, to the person entitled to receive it.
8. The Emancipation Committee shall have power to require the production of any slave or debt-bondsman, and to summon any person whose evidence may be required in any inquiry, private or otherwise, into the circumstances attending the alleged servitude.
9. Any person for whom a redemption-sum has been paid by Government, and who neglects or refuses to perform the work allotted to him shall be liable to the punishment provided by section 492 of the Penal Code, for breaches of contract by immigrant labourers.
10. Any Act which would be a punishable offence if done to a freeman shall be equally an offence if done to any person freed under Clause I, or to any person emancipated under ss. 4, 5 and 7, or after the —— day of ———— 188 — (three years from the date of the order), to any person whomsoever on the pretext of his being in a condition of slavery.
11. After the expiration of three years from the date of the Order in Council, all debts due from debt-bondsmen shall be deemed to have lapsed and shall not be recoverable either from them, from any surety, or from Government.
12. The Emancipation Committee, in deciding upon the status of an alleged debt-bondsman who disputes his liability for any debt, shall be guided by the provisions of the '*Undang-undang Ka-raja-an*', the code of laws of the sovereignty, giving to them the construction most favourable to slaves and debtors.

Two codes of laws are known to the Perak Malays, though copies of them are extremely scarce among them, the '*Undang-undang Ka-raja-an*' or laws of the monarchy (or sovereignty), and the '*Undang-*

undang Manang Kaban; laws of Manang Kaban, sometimes called '*Undang-undang dua-belas*', the [twelve] laws.

The former collection professes to be 'the laws of Perak, Pahang and Johor', and contains many provisions identical with those of the Malacca code. In it I have found a number of regulations regarding slaves and debtors, which I have transliterated and translated.

Some are merely curious as showing from an authentic native source what was the condition of a slave in a Malay kingdom. Others may be of practical value to those entrusted with carrying out such measures for the abolition of slavery and debt-bondage as may be decided upon by the Council.

Nothing of value on the subject of slaves is to be found in the Manang Kaban laws.

I trust to be able shortly to send in the translation above mentioned as appendix to this Minute.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) W. E. Maxwell,
Assistant Resident, Perak.

Larut, May 27, 1882.

26. THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY TO SIR FREDERICK WELD, K.C.M.G.

Downing Street,
October 7, 1882.

Sir,

I have received and read with much interest your Despatch of the 23rd August and its enclosures, reporting steps which have been taken and are now being taken towards the abolition of slavery in Perak.

I am glad to observe that considerable progress has already been made in that direction, and I trust that the anticipation which you express of seeing the final abolition of all slavery in Perak before December 1884, may be fulfilled.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) Kimberley.

Sir F. A. Weld.

APPENDIX C

REGULATION V. OF 1891.

A REGULATION TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE OF MALAY CHILDREN AT GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS.

[13th June, 1891.]

J. P. RODGER,
Acting British Resident.

WHEREAS it is expedient to provide for the compulsory attendance of Malay Children at Government Vernacular Schools in the State: It is hereby enacted by His Highness the Sultan in Council, with the advice of the British Resident, as follows:— **Preamble.**

1. This Regulation may be cited as the "School Attendance Regulation, 1891." **Short title.**

2. From and after the date of the passing of this Regulation it shall be lawful for any District Officer to cause a written or printed notice to be served on the parent or guardian of any male Malay child living within his district, and being between the ages of seven and fourteen years, requiring such child to attend such Government vernacular school as may be in such notice specified, and on receipt of such notice the parent or guardian of any child so required to attend school shall be deemed to be lawfully responsible for the regular attendance of such child at the school so specified, for the hours during which such school may be open for the attendance of pupils. **Attendance notice to be served on parent or guardian.**

3. Any person so lawfully responsible for the attendance at school of any child shall, on proof before a Magistrate of such child's non-attendance as aforesaid, and in the absence of any reasonable excuse for such non-attendance, be liable to be convicted of an offence under this Regulation. **Parents or guardians liable to conviction for child's non-attendance.**

4. Any person so convicted shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five dollars for each offence, and to simple imprisonment not exceeding fourteen days in default of payment thereof. Penalty.

Provided always, that no person shall be liable to any penalty under this Regulation in respect of any child whose ordinary place of abode is situated at a greater distance than two miles from the school specified in the notice as aforesaid. Proviso.

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