

RECORDS AND RECOLLECTIONS

1889-1934

BY

J. H. M. ROBSON

Edited, with an Introduction, by

J. M. Gullick

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INTRODUCTION

John Henry Matthews Robson was born in England on 8 May 1870, the eldest son of Rev. Dr Robson of Guildford. He first arrived in Kuala Lumpur at the end of 1889, after a brief period as a management trainee on a Ceylon tea estate.¹ For the next half century, Robson lived and worked as a government official, a newspaper editor, a businessman, and a prominent figure in public affairs in Selangor. In 1942, he was interned in Singapore, where he died on 20 July 1945 'after ailing for the last three years'.²

During his seven years (1890–6) in the Selangor civil service, Robson held a sequence of district posts. During his time in Kuala Langat, he had the opportunity of observing the daily routine of Sultan Abdul Samad, and came to know the ruler, then approaching 90.³ His last post before his retirement from the civil service was District Officer, Kuala Lumpur, and in that capacity he had charge of the state Registry of Titles. If he had pursued this career, he would undoubtedly have risen higher, and might well have become a Resident.

However, his flair and his inclination for journalism were becoming apparent. A selection of the articles which he had contributed to the *Singapore Free Press* was reprinted in 1894.⁴ At this stage, Robson had not yet found his touch. The construction of stereotypes, such as 'the Chinese

¹ Appendix II/1.

² T. P. M. Lewis, *Changi, the Lost Years: A Malayan Diary 1941–1945*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Historical Society, 1984, p. 261.

³ Appendix II/3.

⁴ J. H. M. Robson, *People in a Native State*, Singapore: Singapore Free Press, 1894.

Towkay', etc., produced rather stilted results, whereas Robson's talent was better suited to bringing to the printed page a picture of individuals, with all their peculiar oddities. His study of the Malay policeman, reprinted here,⁵ is one of the better ones.

Meanwhile, the need for a news medium of some sort in Selangor was becoming apparent. In 1892, Robson was one of a group of enthusiasts who founded the *Selangor Journal*, a fortnightly magazine intended to be 'a mirror of the times'. In addition to local news and gossip, it provided a modicum of historical and general reading. The journal was printed on the government press, the first in Selangor, imported in 1890. Until then, the government had sent its notices, etc. to be printed in the official *Straits Settlements Gazette*. John Russell, the new 'Government Printer', was a professional—he had worked for *The Illustrated London News* before his arrival in Selangor. Although his plant was far from satisfactory, Russell had spare capacity which could not be filled by local commercial work. Robson's friend and colleague, Walter Skeat, proposed to Ernest Birch, then acting as Resident, that the journal be produced on the government press 'to supply a want, to fill a gap'. Birch, and his successors, W. H. Treacher and J. P. Rodger, 'gave the scheme every encouragement and assistance' in the teeth of 'the general prediction [of] a short existence [for] this venture of amateurs in journalism'.⁶ Although Russell did the general editing of the Journal, he acknowledged that it had owed much to Skeat, Travers, and Robson—'a valued and frequent contributor'—and other local contributors, writing on topics as varied as planting methods and racing news. How much

⁵ Appendix II/2.

⁶ J. Russell, 'A Valediction', *SJ*, 5, 1897, pp. 432-4.

Robson wrote is difficult to determine, since—unlike some other contributors—he did not append his initials or a transparent *nom de plume* to what he wrote. It is reasonable to suppose that Robson learnt from Russell the practical skills of editing a periodical and getting it out on time. If so, it was an invaluable apprenticeship.

In Chapter 6 of this book, Robson tells how, in 1896, he founded, with the minimum of resources, the *Malay Mail*, as a daily newspaper. He had valuable advice and help from the experienced journalists who edited the Singapore newspapers. But he grappled single-handed with reporting for, editing and producing a newspaper. His preliminary account (p. 170) of several short-lived newspapers which appeared in Selangor and Perak in his time illustrates the inherent difficulty and risk of such enterprises. It seems that one of the lessons which Robson was quick to grasp was that he needed the support of a regular readership, especially businessmen with their advertising, and must reflect rather than antagonize their views. 'Insufficient revenue to cover expenses' would end the life of a newspaper 'no matter how ably [it] is edited' (p. 171).

By 1902, Robson's 'newspaper enterprise' was sufficiently well established and it had been converted to a limited company. He might, like Jennings in Ipoh with the *Times of Malaya* (p. 170), have continued to give all his working time and energy to editing and managing his newspaper. Instead, however, he employed a sequence of professional journalists for the day-to-day work, and was able to widen his own opportunities. He continued, nonetheless, to act as managing director of the limited company which he had formed to take over his newspaper, and was an influence on its editorial policy, as well as an occasional contributor. He also found useful business associates in the Hampshire brothers, both at

board meetings and as links with one of the major agency houses (Boustead & Co.) (p. 174).

Having instituted these arrangements, Robson, for a decade, busied himself as 'local real estate agent' of Loke Yew, managing the towkay's extensive properties in Kuala Lumpur (p. 33). This association enabled Robson to write one of the best passages (pp. 31–35) of his book. It ended with the death of Loke Yew in 1917. The control of Loke Yew's vast estate then passed—Robson makes no reference to this—to Choo Kia Peng, as executor. Robson's references to Kia Peng, with whom he served as unofficial member of the Federal Council in the 1920s, are polite—'always helpful and never obstructive' (p. 157). But neither Robson, nor Kia Peng in his autobiography, give the impression that they were close associates and friends.

In his second term (1920–6) as a member of the Federal Council, Robson, in typical fashion, managed to remain on good terms with Guillemard while supporting George Maxwell. Robson, and the other British businessmen on the council, concentrated their efforts on opposition to Guillemard's proposal to deprive the FMS Government of a dominant Chief Secretary. This post they regarded as a bulwark against the threat of undue intervention in its affairs by a Singapore-based High Commissioner. Yet, in retrospect, Robson doubted whether 'what appeared to be a successful fight at the time' had yielded more than a five-year delay (p. 147). His honest realism is one of his attractive characteristics.

An incidental consequence of Robson's council membership in the 1920s was the friendship of Raja Chulan, the only Malay unofficial member at that time. Raja Chulan expressed the general support of the Malay ruling class for Guillemard's decentralization scheme since it promised to restore to the

state governments some of their lost power. But differences of viewpoint did not mar their mutual regard (p. 58).

With the reconstitution of the Federal Council in 1927, Robson's extended membership came to an end. He was now 56, and decided to retire to England. Here he remained for a couple of years. But he soon tired of inactivity in England and separation from his newspaper and other interests in Kuala Lumpur. So he returned to live there until, as it turned out, the tide of war swept him away to internment in early 1942.

When he wrote his *Records and Recollections* in 1934, Robson's purpose was evidently to provide a younger generation with a selection of interesting reminiscences of distant 'old times', using material which had appeared in the *Malay Mail*. Except for the long passage on the decentralization controversy of the 1920s, he writes mainly of people and events of the period up to 1920. He may have paraphrased, and amplified, passages which he himself had contributed to the *Malay Mail*, but he acknowledges that his account of the riots (Chapter 7) is taken more or less verbatim from the newspaper—and some of it is written in journalese quite alien to Robson's style.

One should not look for a comprehensive and organized account of his life and times from 1889 to 1934. Nonetheless, there are one or two notable reticences which offer clues to episodes in Robson's experience which he had particular reasons for ignoring, or at least playing down.

In contrast to his chapter on his nine years (1909–12 and 1920–6) as a member of the Federal Council, Robson says almost nothing of the campaign for the improvement and long-term town planning of Kuala Lumpur at the beginning of the last century, in which he was prominent. He merely commends the ideas of Tickell and regrets that they were

rejected as 'in advance of their times' (p. 18). Tickell had passed like a meteor across the municipal sky in 1903–4, but Robson had then taken up the cause, both in the columns of the *Malay Mail* and as an unofficial member (c. 1906–7) of the Sanitary Board, the forum of public discussion. A valuable selection of this contemporary material, more especially from the *Malay Mail*, has recently been reprinted,⁷ and a shorter passage is included here⁸ to fill a gap and show Robson on the warpath. Although nothing came of the campaign at the time, the post-war period, in which Robson wrote, had seen the introduction of town planning in 1920, and serious if inconclusive discussion of converting the Sanitary Board to an autonomous municipality.⁹ It might have been expected that Robson would comment on these topics, and so a possible explanation is suggested of why he did not.

The objection to the schemes of Tickell and Robson was that, if adopted as a long-term programme, they would (as recognized in the opening statement at p. 252) commit the state government, and ultimately the tax and rate-paying public (whose support the newspaper needed), to improvements entailing substantial expense in future years when unpredictable state revenues might have declined. On this issue, Robson, following Tickell,¹⁰ was drawn into conflict with H. C. Belfield, the Resident (1902–10). They had been colleagues in the civil service (up to 1896), and seem to have remained on friendly terms. As an example, when Belfield

⁷ Khoo Kay Kim (ed.), *Kuala Lumpur: The Formative Years*, Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing, 1996.

⁸ Appendix II/4.

⁹ J. M. Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur 1857–1939*, MBRAS Monograph No. 29, 2000, p. 250.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

decided that he must learn to drive a car, he turned to Robson, as a leading expert, for tuition (p. 99). In the public debate on town improvements, Robson on his side deplored the regular rejection of well-constructed proposals, but conceded that the Resident, though not infallible, was entitled to an 'opinion of his own'.¹¹ When Walter Makepeace, Robson's friend and mentor, wrote an article on the Malayan press in 1908, it included this statement: '[A]lthough the *Malay Mail* gives free criticism of the Government, the leading officials have always given the journal their support and maintained friendly relations with the gentlemen responsible for its production.'¹² It is an unusual comment, which suggests that Robson may have briefed Makepeace to rebut a prevalent belief that he and Belfield had quarrelled. Another point to note is that Robson makes very few references in this book to Belfield, and one of them is a jibe at an unnamed Resident whom some readers would readily identify as Belfield (p. 107 and note (1)). It may have been a prickly relationship and (in 1934) best forgotten.

Whether from temperamental inclination or commercial prudence, Robson was uncomfortable with public controversy. As examples we have '*Naught set down in malice*' on the title page, and the 'clashing of dominant personalities' (p. 62). His friend Ward-Jackson, secretary of the planters' association, was 'a strong hater with a very pronounced combative element in his mental make-up' for which Robson half apologizes with the comment—'yet withal he is very human' (p. 21).

¹¹ *Malay Mail*, 9 March 1903, quoted by Khoo, *Kuala Lumpur*, p. 34.

¹² A. Wright and H. A. Cartwright (eds.), *Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources*, London: Lloyds Greater Britain Publishing Co., 1908, p. 263.

In keeping with his policy of avoiding sharp and open controversy, Robson skirts round the most contentious social issue of his time, namely, the changing attitude and outlook of the European community during the half century of Robson's residence in Kuala Lumpur. In 1891, two years after Robson's arrival, the European population of the state of Selangor was only 190, with men greatly outnumbering women. This pioneer generation was itself rather mixed, ranging from the lordly Rodger, with his 'grand manner' (p. 40), and Eric Macfadyen, destined to become 'a City magnate' (p. 20), to some distinctly rougher types. Yet they were all (or could be) members of the Selangor Club, and so Arthur Keyser (of the royal 'Marlborough House set') first called it the 'Spotted Dog' (p. 44). It was also a club open to Malaysians, if they wished to join, and Thambusamy Pillay, for one, was a prominent and popular member (p. 54). It was this which led Robson to assert (p. 54)—with some exaggeration—that in the 1890s 'racial distinctions were unknown'.

However, 'social life was almost entirely controlled by the local official world' (p. 9), though 'irrespective of race'. It was, therefore, the changes among officials at the beginning of the twentieth century which led to a rapid change in the Edwardian period. The creation of the Federated Malay States in 1896 had coincided with a new system of recruitment by competitive examination to the unified FMS Civil Service. The new generation of bureaucrats came flooding in to staff a much expanded bureaucracy, and, as soon as personal finances and government rules permitted, they married wives drawn from the same British middle class as themselves. They believed that 'prestige' was the essential buttress of European superiority (and the right to rule over lesser breeds). Hence, a new lifestyle of strict observance of social conventions was protected by excluding those, whether

European or Asian, who did not conform, or—worse still—challenged or apparently undermined their 'prestige'. Robson was not the only old timer who disliked such behaviour. Diplomatically, he chose to voice that criticism by quoting (p. 15) the words of Swettenham, the Grand Old Man of colonial rule. This rebuke—it should be noted—was directed at official arrogance and intolerance in dealing with other Europeans who were not in the government service.

Robson's remarks on European relations with Asians in the 1890s quoted above are no more than oblique criticism of the different behaviour in the early twentieth century. But the message, however much muted, was clear. In his long and sympathetic passage (pp. 31–35) on Loke Yew, Robson makes no reference whatever to the towkay's prominent role in sometimes acrimonious Asian protests against racial discrimination. Yet, the leading academic study devotes an entire chapter to this topic.¹³ There is further evidence in Robson's treatment of the trial in 1911, on a charge of murder, of Ethel Proudlock. Butcher quotes the contemporary *Malay Mail* reports at length, and a recent study may overstate the problem,¹⁴ but brings out the unpleasant reactions to the suspicions of adultery and, worse still, Eurasian 'passing for white', which turned European opinion against the accused woman. Somerset Maugham later exacerbated the affair by making it the basis of his famous short story, 'The Letter', but Robson makes no mention of Maugham's visit to Kuala Lumpur just after the war, which many of his readers remembered with resentment. Robson confines his reference (p. 70)

¹³ J. G. Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880–1941: The Social History of a British Community in Colonial South-East Asia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979, Ch. 5.

¹⁴ E. Lawlor, *Murder on the Verandah: Love and Betrayal in British Malaya*, London: HarperCollins, 1999.

to this *cause célèbre* of his time to a couple of sentences in a passage on murder cases

In 1934, Robson was addressing a readership which was retreating from such painful episodes and attitudes, though slowly (the Lake Club did not admit Asian members until compelled to do so in 1952 by General Templer).¹⁵ But there may also be personal reasons to explain why Robson preferred to avoid or play down such matters.

The imbalance of the sexes among Europeans in the 1890s led many of the men to find Asian partners. These were often Malay women whose first marriages within their own community had ended with death or divorce. In Malay society, still traditional in its ways, the status of *janda* (widow or divorcée) was unenviable. Their families did not exert themselves to marry them off to a second Malay husband—and class distinctions, or a reputation for barrenness, sometimes made it difficult—nor did they always concern themselves with their breaches of etiquette or morality. The women were left to find their own solutions. Butcher concludes that the acquiescence or objections of the woman's relatives determined whether or not she could enter into an informal partnership with a European man—but implies that such arrangements were not infrequent.¹⁶ Robson had read the story—perhaps romanticized—of Bruce Lockhart's affair with a *janda* of good family, since Robson includes Lockhart's book¹⁷ in his *Malayan Bibliography* (p. 213). But Robson simply does not refer to such relationships at all. Again, in a passage (p. 26) on his friend, Charlton Maxwell, Robson

¹⁵ D. J. M. Tate, *The Lake Club 1890–1990*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 112–15.

¹⁶ Butcher, *The British in Malaya*, p. 213.

¹⁷ R. B. Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, London: Putnam, 1933, Ch. 1.

does not mention that Maxwell had married a Malay wife. In the majority of cases, however, it did not suit one or both partners to enter into a marriage. They were content to enjoy a companionship, which could be stable and enduring, if it was at least tolerated by their respective communities.

Asian wives did not at that time usually accompany their husbands to social gatherings in which the latter met their own kind, and the partners of European men kept in the background when male visitors came to the house, and did not go with their men to social occasions in clubs, etc. Some of these unions produced children, for whom the father accepted responsibility in upbringing and education.

Robson's Will lends support to reports that he himself had such a partnership to which two children, a daughter and a son, were born. Understandably, he does not refer to this situation—if it existed—in this book, but he is also very reticent about his household arrangements, saying (p. 7) merely that he built a brick house on Weld's Hill, which was 'my home for more than a quarter of a century' (p. 7). At this stage in his successful career, Robson was too well established to submit to social ostracism by a less tolerant younger European generation, but he seems to have made his own decision to keep clear of those who might disapprove of his lifestyle, and to find his friends among the planters, businessmen and other 'old timers' to whom it was familiar and acceptable.

There is some evidence pointing to that conclusion. Robson's book contains references, many of them no more than the name, to about 250 individuals (v.i. 'Index'). With the notable exception of Andrew Caldecott (p. 28), the list does not include any of the younger men recruited to the civil service at the beginning of the twentieth century, although some had by 1934 risen to senior positions.

Caldecott, first president of the Kuala Lumpur Rotary Club, was—like Robson—a builder of inter-ethnic bridges.¹⁸ Robson's references to dinner parties, etc. (pp. 72 and 75) suggest that he sought masculine rather than mixed gender society. Understandably, there are few references to European women (except conventional compliments to the wives of senior officials, for example, Lady Maxwell at p. 153). One senses that Robson found more congenial company in the slightly unconventional ladies such as Mrs Nutt (p. 121) and Mrs Zacharias (p. 17) rather than the arbiters of conventional good taste in Kuala Lumpur society of the Edwardian period.

When, in 1926, Robson decided to retire to England, his domestic partnership had ended—possibly by the death of his partner—and his children were growing up. Then Robson married for the first time. His wife was the widow of his friend Harry Syers. When Syers died in 1897, he left his wife in straitened circumstances to bring up three children (p. 39). She had returned to England, and—so far as is known—had never returned to Malaya, although she came of a local family.¹⁹ By the 1920s her children had grown up; she and Robson were well into middle age and perhaps rather lonely. At all events, they married and lived together in Kuala Lumpur until her death in 1937 from heart failure. Robson dedicates his book to her, but makes no other reference in it to her, though the announcement of her death in the July 1937 issue of the monthly magazine *Malaya* pays tribute to her (perhaps from Robson himself) as 'a most kindly, charitable, thoughtful and gracious personality'.

¹⁸ R. Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya: The Malayan Civil Service and Its Predecessors 1867-1942*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981, p. 308.

¹⁹ J. M. Gullick, *Glimpses of Selangor 1860-1898*, MBRAS Monograph No. 25, 1993, p. 83.

In his last years in Kuala Lumpur, Robson's main interest continued to be the *Malay Mail*, but he left the editorial routine to F. L. Jones who had been with him since 1912 (p. 173). It was at this period that Patrick Morrah began his Malayan career as a staff reporter. Morrah told the editor of this reprint that he rarely saw Robson or the other directors, Olympian figures at the top of the pile. In the opening paragraph of this Introduction, sufficient has been said of the sad end of Robson's life in internment.

When a copy of this rare book became available by the generosity of the late Ray Parker, the Society decided to publish a reprint of *Records and Recollections* as a valuable source of historical detail. It was found preferable, for various reasons, to reset the text rather than produce a facsimile reprint. Every effort has been made to give the reader the exact text of the original, including the occasional lapses of punctuation or spelling—'Charleton' Maxwell at p. 26 (with the incorrect intrusive 'e') is an example, and 'Rathbone' without (a second 'r') (p. 47) is another. The additional material in the Appendices has presented some problems of transcription. It is hoped that the limited annotation will offer the reader information of some relevant facts and sources. Robson's 'Malayan Bibliography' (pp. 205-14) is the list as Robson compiled it, including some bibliographic deficiencies and idiosyncracies. It is tempting to suppose that it is a list of Robson's own personal collection of books on Malaya. In view of the large number of references in the book to individuals and events, an index seemed a useful addition.

The Appendices have been added to supplement Robson's reminiscences giving priority to worthwhile material which has not already been reprinted in modern times. There is, of course, an abundance of material in the *Malay Mail* which *might* be by Robson, but as most of it is

unsigned, it is always uncertain—at all events from the early years of the twentieth century—whether it was written by Robson or one of the journalists whom he employed from 1902 onwards.

There are few sources on Robson except his own writing, and on personal matters he was a very private man. Among his merits was an empathy with congenial associates such as Loke Yew, Thambusamy Pillay and Raja Chulan, among others, an intelligent and constructive interest in public affairs and in past history, and moderation in argument. As a source, he is informative and reliable.

J. M. Gullick

Records and Recollections

(1889—1934)

BY

J. H. M. ROBSON

"Naught set down in malice"

Printed & Published by
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1934

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DEDICATED

TO

MY WIFE

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.			
It Seems So Long Ago	1
CHAPTER II.			
Personalities of the Past	31
CHAPTER III.			
Events and Happenings	...	...	63
CHAPTER IV.			
Federal Council	...	...	105
CHAPTER V.			
Pahang Disturbances	...	...	158
CHAPTER VI.			
Newspaper Enterprise	...	...	168
CHAPTER VII.			
Kuala Lumpur Riots	...	...	183
MALAYAN BIBLIOGRAPHY	...	...	205
<i>APPENDICES</i>	...	...	215
<i>REFERENCES</i>	...	...	261
<i>GLOSSARY</i>	...	...	265
<i>INDEX</i>	...	...	267

Italicized items, as well as the footnotes, have been added to the reprint, and are not part of Robson's original (but the asterisked notes at pp. 164 and 184 are Robson's).

FOREWORD

Some of the records and recollections which go to make up this volume have already appeared in the *Malay Mail* and other local publications. They are now presented in book form at the request of Mr. F. W. Palmer, V.C. The story of the Tauchang Riots, which appears in diary form at the end of the book, was written at the time by local reporters.

I am indebted to Mr. C. Ward-Jackson for valuable literary advice and to Mr. F. L. Jones for his kind assistance in seeing the book through the press.

J. H. M. Robson

Kuala Lumpur, F.M.S.,

February, 1934

PLATES

	Facing page
1. H.H. Sultan Sir Suleiman Ala'idin Shah, G.C.M.G.	1
2. His Excellency, Mr. Andrew Caldecott, C.M.G., C.B.E.	9
3. C. Ward-Jackson	21
4. The late Dr. Loke Yew, C.M.G.	31
5. The late J. A. Russell	56
6. J. H. M. Robson, C.B.E.	66
7. Sir W. G. Maxwell, K.B.E., C.M.G.	151
8. The late Raja Sir Chulan bin Abdullah, K.B.E., C.M.G.	155
9. F. L. Jones	168





H.H. Sultan Sir Suleiman Ala'adin Shah, G.C.M.G.

CHAPTER I.

IT SEEMS SO LONG AGO.

IN 1889 that very able and courteous gentleman Sir Cecil Clementi Smith was Governor of the Straits Settlements. F. A. Swettenham was Resident of Perak, W. E. Maxwell, Resident of Selangor, W. B. F. Paul, Resident of Sungei Ujong, the Hon. Martin Lister, Superintendent of old Negri Sembilan, and J. P. Rodger was holding office as the first Resident of Pahang. All have passed to their rest except Sir Frank Swettenham, G.C.M.G., C.H., the founder and father of modern Malaya. One of Sir Cecil Clementi Smith's daughters married her father's A.D.C., the late Capt. Henry Talbot, who was wounded in the Pahang disturbances. Talbot finished his official career in Malaya as Commissioner of Police, F.M.S. Forty-four years ago Federation was still only a dream of the future. One spoke of the Colony or the Native States.

At that time there were no hotels for Europeans in Kuala Lumpur so, on arrival towards the end of 1889, I stayed at the then newly erected Rest House which still stands on the same site as a supplementary building of the Selangor Club.¹ I had my first tiffin there with a chatty P.W.D. man, who later on amassed a certain amount of wealth as a contractor for Government roads and buildings. I refer to the late W. Nicholas, father of our present State Engineer. On the day following my arrival the Rest House was taxed to capacity by the advent of four Australian surveyors for Government

¹ A reprint of a map which shows a number of the buildings to which Robson refers in this passage is in J. M. Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur 1857-1939*, MBRAS Monograph No. 29, 2000, p. 54.

Service. These gentlemen were the advance guard of many other Australian and New Zealand surveyors who came later.² Their names were:—John Wellford, George Stafford, Fred Irby and Walter Raymond.

Ambition is a well known word in the English language, yet I have only met two men in my life who actually talked of their intention to make their mark in the world. John Wellford was one and Jack Campbell, a District Officer, the other. Both died here in harness at a comparatively early age: Jack Campbell after ten years' service.³ Raymond ultimately became a professional jockey on the Malayan Turf, and finally retired to Australia with his wife who, I think, was a Miss Busswell—daughter of a Perak Police Officer. Irby did not stay many years in this country. George Stafford—brother of "Loo" who came later—put in long years of service, retired on pension and died when on a voyage to England. His grandson passed through Kuala Lumpur last year en route to England for his education.

Selangor when I first knew it was a very different sort of place from what it is to-day. There were only a few roads and the Selangor State Railway, constructed under the supervision of A. Spence-Moss, consisted of a line from Kuala Lumpur to Bukit Kuda on the Klang river. The bridge over the river and through connection to Klang was completed in 1900. The Kuala Lumpur Railway Station was on the site of the present P.W.D. offices.⁴ It was little more than a glorified

² The new Selangor Land Code, introduced by W. E. Maxwell (Resident 1889-92) required a cadastral survey, both in townships and in rural areas. See also Note 22 below.

³ Obituary in *SJ*, 1, 1892-3, p. 328. He was a brother of Douglas Campbell mentioned towards the end of this chapter. See also p. 231. His death led to Robson acting as District Officer, Klang (v. p. 233).

⁴ 'The present P.W.D. offices' of 1934 were, until recently, the Textile Museum at the corner of Lebuhr Pasar Besar.

shed. Communication with Kuala Selangor and Jugra was by launch from Klang, and goods for Kuala Kubu and Pahang were still going up river from Kuala Selangor. There was only a jungle track from Kuala Kubu to Raub. All transport was undertaken by Chinese coolies. *Barang* was hung from two ends of a pole which was carried on the shoulder of the coolie. They were wonderful fellows those transport coolies. They would each carry over a picul.

There was no electric light, no cold storage and no Dover stoves. Water was obtainable only from wells or the roofs of houses. Notes issued by the European banks in Singapore were in circulation, but Mexican and Japanese silver dollars were in more general use.⁵ In banks and offices these dollars were kept in wooden trays made to take an exact number of piles of twenty. Chinese cashiers were very clever at detecting bad coins by running the piles in little cascades from one hand to another

Roads and Buildings.

In 1889 the then newly erected Residency⁶ and a railway house at Seven Dials were the only brick-built European residences that I can remember. The Judge of that day, who was known as Chief Magistrate, the late Sir (then Mr.) H. Conway Belfield, lived in a wooden house with an *atap* roof. Houses for Europeans then being built had brick pillars, wooden walls and a roof of Chinese tiles. Some of these houses still exist in Kuala Lumpur on Tanglin Road near

⁵ A 'Japanese dollar or yen came into circulation in 1871'. See K. F. Cavenagh, *The Coins of Malaysia*, Adelaide: Mitchell Press, 1969, p. 20.

⁶ H. S. Barlow, 'The Early History of the Residency, Kuala Lumpur', *JMBRAS*, 65(2), 1992.

Seven Dials.⁷ The Selangor Club was started in 1884. One at least of the original members, A. C. Norman of the P.W.D. is, I believe, still alive, although he left this country thirty years ago.⁸ The Club was housed in a small wooden building at the corner of the Padang near the bridge. Dr. Braddon was Hon. Secretary in 1889. The late A. R. Venning, State Treasurer, and later first Chairman of the Kuala Lumpur Sanitary Board, was often to be seen there playing billiards with his Chief Clerk.⁹

A. R. Venning was one of a small band of Europeans—mostly ex-coffee or ex-tea planters—who came over from Ceylon in the early days to seek their fortunes in the Malay States. (I was one of them myself). It was A. R. Venning who laid out the Public Gardens in Kuala Lumpur. When the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China first opened in Kuala Lumpur, under the late Bruce Webster, it occupied part of the upper floor of some old shop-houses in Market Street, where the business of the Straits Trading Company was carried on by the late Billie West. His memory is perpetuated in the residential area of Kuala Lumpur known as West's Folly. The Public Gardens were opened in 1889 and it was there that the first golf course was ultimately laid out. The first Race Course, on Rifle Range Road, was constructed

⁷ 'Seven Dials' was the junction in the Lake Gardens at which seven roads, one of them Tanglin Road, met.

⁸ A. C. Norman, A.R.I.B.A., served in the P.W.D. from 1883 to 1903, when persistent incompetence led to his enforced retirement. He designed the Selangor Club building of 1890, rebuilt in 1910 (see Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur*, Plate 20), and St Mary's (Cathedral) Church, also on Merdeka Square, and his name appears on the foundation stone of the Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad, though in fact he only contributed the ground plan. See J. M. Gullick, 'The Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad', *JMBRAS*, 65(1), 1992.

⁹ Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur*, index entries 'A. R. Venning'.

a year or two later. It was on State land and the Government refused to allow professional jockeys to participate at local race meetings. In consequence of this ruling private enterprise secured a lease of the site of the present Race Course on the Ampang Road and constructed a track there about 1895.

A Lost Chance.

The residential area of Kuala Lumpur was limited. It extended about two miles along the Ampang Road. The house now occupied by Chew Kam Chuan was the last building on that side of the road. Opposite was the property of the late John Klyne (a former Supt. P.W.D.) which consisted of a small wooden house surrounded by about sixty acres of land, partly planted with coconuts.¹⁰ In the early nineties the owner offered me the whole of the property for two thousand dollars. Having no money, I could not buy it. What he did get for it I do not know. But the following facts are interesting. About twenty years ago 43 acres of this very property were sold at the rate of \$1,500 an acre. Six years ago about 14 acres were sold at just under \$5,000 an acre. And four years ago over 3 acres of the 43 acres above mentioned changed hands at over \$11,000 an acre. No wonder that a part of the Ampang Road was designated "the golden mile."

Reverting to the residential area, as it existed over forty years ago, I may mention that the last house on the Damansara Road was somewhere near the entrance to the Public Gardens, and Seven Dials was adjoining the jungle. The Batu Road was mainly a residential area. There were a few shop-houses near the end of Java Street—then a very

¹⁰ The Klyne brothers (the other was the government apothecary) moved to Kuala Lumpur in 1880, when it became the state administrative capital. He was for many years commemorated in the name 'Klyne Street' (now Jalan Lekiu).

narrow thoroughfare. The first Sanitary Board office was in a shop-house in Ampang Street. The building on the hill overlooking the Padang, now occupied by the Commissioner of Police, then housed all Government officials and an incipient museum. There was a very small Protestant Church in Bluff Road where the late Mrs. Reyne's mother (Mrs. Burleigh) played the organ. The actual cost of this building (erected in 1887) was \$1,363. A small Convent existed near the site of the present Methodist Girls' School. In later years the Government allowed a public lottery in order to raise funds for the building of a new Convent on Bukit Nanas Road. B. J. P. Joaquim's father, who was one of the first advocates admitted to practice in the Courts here, took a leading part in managing the lottery. The General Hospital, known for many years as the Pauper Hospital, was opened in 1889 with the late Dr. Welch in charge. I have a vague remembrance that there was some sort of a ward for Europeans where the Tanglin Hospital now stands. There was certainly a padded room for lunatics. A small English-Malay school was situated in Malay Street.

Weld's Hill was a coffee estate. A variety of products including tea and pepper had been tried out in addition to the coffee. F. A. Toynbee, who opened a larger number of estates in Selangor than anybody else has ever done, was manager at Weld's Hill for a considerable period.¹¹ When I first saw the place, the late J. P. Stuart, whose widow afterwards married F. A. Toynbee, was living in the bungalow on the hill. Little did I think when I paid my first call there that, in later years, I should become the owner of the bungalow,

¹¹ Anon, 'Interviews with Celebrities No. III - F. A. Toynbee', *Sj.* 3, 1895, and D. J. M. Tate, *The RGA History of the Plantation Industry in the Malay Peninsula*, Kuala Lumpur: RGA and Oxford University Press, 1996, index entries 'F. A. Toynbee'.

pull it down, build a brick house and have it as my home for more than a quarter of a century.

I seem to remember the first Post Office in Kuala Lumpur as consisting of two small huts near the then so-called Railway Station. The next Post Office was a two storied building on the south side of the Padang. The upper floor was reserved as quarters for the postmaster, a mercantile marine man, who was wont to address his clerks in somewhat nautical language.¹² The mail from Singapore sometimes arrived after the Post Office was closed. One day the Secretary to Government called for the Resident's letters after the office was closed. He knocked at the door. A voice from an upper window asked him who the.....he thought he was and what the.....he wanted. A reply couched in dignified language only added fuel to the fire of wrath animating the gentleman above, who proceeded to tell the Secretary to Government in picturesque language what he thought about him in particular and the world in general. Shortly afterwards there was a change of Postmaster.

The third Post Office was under the Federal Secretariat in the main building of the present Government Offices. There are many people still here who remember Chow Kit's shop at the corner of Market Street where the present Post Office now stands. After this last move had been made, the vacated rooms in the Government Offices were occupied by the Chartered Bank of I. A. & C. whilst the new premises of the Bank were being erected on the south side of the Padang.¹³

¹² The reference may be to A. S. ('Johnnie') Baxendale, to whom Robson refers later (p. 18) in this chapter. He was Superintendent of Posts and Telegraphs from 1888 to 1906, and had begun his career on a cable laying ship.

¹³ Rebuilt on the same site in 1910 and now the National History Museum.

The sole general European store in Kuala Lumpur in 1889 was Maynard's in Market Street. Nominally this was a drug store in charge of a Mr. Williams who afterwards went to Shanghai. In reality it was (i) a bar (ii) a general rendezvous for Europeans in the morning and (iii) a place where one bought hams, tinned food etc. in addition to medicines and medical comforts. Nearly opposite was a Chinese-owned general store run by old Sam Kee who was very popular with Europeans. I do not think that either Maynard's or Sam Kee did much of a cash business. It was all chits. The late Sam Kee was about this time interested in an aerated water and ice business: later on he started the chemist's business which he owned for so many years before retiring to Negri Sembilan.

Cost of Living.

Salaries were low, averaging about one third of what would be paid to-day. The exchange value of the dollar was steadily falling.¹⁴ But living was cheap. Standard wages were: Cook \$12 a month; boy \$10 a month; kebun \$8 or \$9 a month and syce \$9 to \$10 a month with an extra \$2 if he could shoe a horse. Living on contract could be managed for \$1 a day. Buffalo meat and Indian mutton were obtainable in the Kuala Lumpur market. Calcutta hump was an imported luxury. One or two residents had a standing order with John Little's in Singapore for the supply of a weekly box of fresh meat and other provisions packed in ice. These boxes came

¹⁴ Robson refers to the exchange value of the local dollar (silver) against sterling (gold), which was fixed at 2/4d=£1 (\$9=£1.05) in 1906. The chaotic exchange rate situation of earlier years is described in F. Pridmore, *Coins and Coinages of the Straits Settlements and British Malaya 1786 to 1951*, Memoirs of the Raffles Museum No. 2, 1955, p. 49f.



Figure 1. Percentage change in GDP growth rate, 1990–2010

Source: Statistics South Africa (2010), *South African Yearbook of Economic and Financial Statistics*, vol. 10, p. 10.



His Excellency, Mr. Andrew Caldecott, C.M.G., C.B.E.

up by the S.S. *Sappho* (Capt. Wahl) arriving on Sunday. Generally speaking the local food supply was poor in quality. Liquor was cheap. Claret and port were always passed round after dinner. Some people, including the late dear old Father Letessier, the R.C. Priest, and the late Sir (then Mr.) W. E. Maxwell, the Resident, imported their claret by the cask and had it bottled locally. A bottle of German champagne could be bought for less than a dollar. Andrew Usher was the favourite brand of whiskey. On the Straits Steamship Company's vessels a certain amount of free drinks was, I believe, allowed at table. The same practice existed on the French mail steamers. The chit system was almost universal. It even extended to church collections.

The very few people who smoked cigarettes made their own. Most people smoked Manila cigars which were cheap in those days. Nearly all Europeans wore white suits with a *tutup* coat during the day. Straw hats and store clothes appeared in the evening. On very State occasions a few elderly gentlemen sported bowlers. Clothes had to be obtained from Singapore or Penang. John Little, Robinson and Pritchard all had travellers touring the Native States. "Our Mr. Fox will call upon you shortly to collect outstanding account and to receive your further esteemed orders" was a letter John Little's must have sent out by thousands! In later years it was "Our Mr. Jackson" who, cheerful as ever, is now traveller for Robinson's.

Rikishas were used by Europeans in Kuala Lumpur, but it was considered *infra dig* to be seen in a gharry about the town, whereas in Singapore at that time Europeans used gharries in preference to rikishas. Social life in the early nineties was almost entirely controlled by the local official world. It was a freer, simpler, less conventional life than is possible in the imported London suburb atmosphere which

prevails today. Everybody knew everybody, and everybody "talked shop" on every possible occasion.

Riding, cricket, shooting and tennis were the chief pastimes. The ever popular Abrams¹⁵ of Singapore, affectionately known as "Daddy," imported fine Australian horses; and natives from the north-west of India brought down useful country-breds. How much Abrams lost in bad debts will never be known. Except on one solitary occasion he never sued his debtors in court. The exception was the result of a disagreement with a very high Government official over a sum of four dollars! Needless to say \$4 was nothing to Abrams. There was a matter of principle at stake. He left more friends to mourn his loss when he died than most people now living in this part of the world can hope to do.

Entertainment.

In the absence of a Town Hall, the Selangor Club was used for entertainments and travelling shows. The first film to be seen here was shown at the Selangor Club. It was a poor, flickering production. Smoking concerts were held at the Club to which ladies were not admitted. Some of the ladies resented this exclusion, so on one occasion two of them hid under the building in order to hear what was going on. Unfortunately one of them laughed loudly at some joke or other, with the result that their presence was discovered and they were invited to come inside, and that was the end of smoking concerts for men only. This reminds me of another story about the Selangor Club when it had moved

¹⁵ W. Makepeace, R. Brooke and R. St. J. Braddell (eds.), *One Hundred Years of Singapore, being Some Account of the Capital of the Straits Settlements from its Foundation by Sir Stamford Raffles on the 6th February 1819 to the 6th February 1919*. London: John Murray, 1921, Vol. 2, pp. 180 and 506.

into larger premises on the site of the present Club. An amateur performance was being given and a popular official, who later acted as Governor of a Colony, occupied the stage. His rôle was a comic one. The audience laughed, the audience roared! Never had a performer met with such a reception! The house rocked with merriment! The performer thought "by Jove, I am making a hit," until he found himself hauled back into the wings to be told that his pants had split.

Long leave to Europe was only earned after six years' service, official or otherwise, and everybody had to pay their own passages. A sea-trip to Singapore or Penang was the only available local excursion. It was surprising how frequently men required "sick leave" in order to visit a Singapore dentist just at the time when there happened to be a race meeting on in the Lion City. The S.S. *Sappho* (Capt. Wahl) and the S.S. *Malacca* (Capt. Daly) were the favourite passenger ships on the Singapore-Klang run.¹⁶ There was also a Chinese-owned ship, commanded by a tough old salt of an entirely different type and known as "the terror of the sea" owing to one or two collisions. Whether the nickname was meant for the Captain or his ship I am not sure.¹⁷ The late Capt. Wahl, a dapper little Dane, had a house on the Batu Road, Kuala Lumpur, where he resided from Sunday to Tuesday every week. He had his own smart pony dog-cart to take him to and from the Station. The genial Captain Daly is still alive and living in Singapore when not taking trips to Europe.

¹⁶ These were coastal steamships owned by the Straits Steamship company. There is a photograph (Plate 26) of the *Malacca* in K. G. Tregonning, *Home Port Singapore: A History of the Straits Steamship Company Limited 1890-1965*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1967.

¹⁷ However, a more sympathetic description of just such a vessel is given in I. L. Bird (Mrs Bishop), *The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither*, London: John Murray, 1883, pp. 121-3.

All Sorts and Conditions.

New countries in an early stage of development attract all sorts of people in search of employment. It is said that one of the best of the earlier District Officers, J. R. O. Aldworth, who ultimately became Resident of Negri Sembilan, came out to Malaya merely on the chance of finding a career here.¹⁸ At the other end of the scale there was the very seedy, down at heels, alcoholic looking gentleman who applied to the Resident (J. P. Rodger) for employment. On being asked what, if any, qualifications he possessed for any sort of job, the applicant pointed a trembling finger at the Resident and replied, "I am sure, Sir, I could fill any position requiring strict sobriety and trust to your entire satisfaction." The Resident thought otherwise.

The Sultan.

H.H. Sultan Ala'idin Sulaiman Shah, G.C.M.G., ascended the throne of Selangor in 1898 on the death of his grandfather.¹⁹

He has not altered much with the years. As a young man he was quiet, gentle and courteous to all. So he remains to this day. Although a little shy with strangers, he has a natural dignity befitting his station in life. Sir Hugh Clifford, who knew all the royal families of Malaya, had a special respect for

¹⁸ Aldworth (b. 1866) was educated at Cheltenham College, and spent much of his career in the Labour Department, of which he had been head before his final posting to Negri Sembilan.

¹⁹ Sultan Sulaiman (1863-1938) gave his own account of his early years, printed in Sulaiman Shah, 'Royal Recollections', *MJH*, 12(2), 1969. See also J. M. Gullick, *Rulers and Residents: Influence and Power in the Malay States 1870-1920*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992, index entries 'Sulaiman, Sultan of Selangor'. Robson tactfully passes over the ruler's matrimonial and financial crises.

our Sultan. Last year, amid popular rejoicings, he celebrated his 70th birthday and issued the following Birthday Address to his people:

"I give thanks to the Almighty, who has granted to me the Rule in this State, for my long life of seventy years and I pray to Him that I may perform my responsibilities with justice to all, and with the assistance of My officers direct in the right path the government of the State. The good wishes, which I have received from all races in the State, the prayers which have been offered on My behalf, and the presence of the High Commissioner in Selangor to-day, have given Me most deep and sincere pleasure. The times in which we live are still full of trouble; appalling difficulties and great distress have befallen the whole world. May Allah keep far from My State the worst ills, and may He so direct those in authority in the Government of the State, and all who dwell therein, that with loyalty to the State and to His Majesty the King they may search out every means to ensure good Government and banish the distress which exists in the State.

"It is the duty of every person to order his life and his daily work with foresight and care, to cast off laziness and carelessness, to seek peace and act honestly and fairly and to help his neighbours—each in the way which lies to his hand. In such way does the cultivator plant more grain and grow the food which mankind needs, and increase it so that all may live in plenty and the Almighty lengthen our years. May He increase the material welfare of this State of Selangor and strengthen our merits and the blessings which we enjoy, and may He protect each one of us."

Sulaiman.

The G. O. M.

Of all the people still living who played an important part in the development of the country and in the local life of the place during the closing years of the last century, one naturally thinks first of Sir Frank Swettenham, G.C.M.G., C.H., who joined the Straits Settlements Civil Service in 1870, was present at the signing of the Pangkor Treaty in 1874 and retired as Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner of the Malay States more than thirty years ago. A whole book would be necessary for a complete record of his life's work. He has supplied part of it himself in his own classic, *British Malaya*. He has outlived all his earlier contemporaries and most of his later contemporaries. He had already been about a dozen years in the Service here before Sir (then Mr.) Hugh Clifford arrived. One can only wonder at the crass futility of our constitutional system, when a man like Sir Frank did not go to the House of Lords on his retirement from the Colonial Service.²⁰ A statesman, if ever there was one, his services would have been invaluable in the Upper House. As it is, however, he has devoted his leisure to the control of rubber companies and other activities which include a never tiring interest in everything appertaining to the welfare of Malaya. During the Great War Sir Frank was Joint Director of the Official Press Bureau in London. And for some years he has been King of Arms of The Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George.

That his work for the Federated Malay States has been appreciated in his lifetime is evident from the fact that his friends and admirers have already erected his statue at the

²⁰ Apart from other factors, the Colonial Office disapproved of the 20,000 acre concession in Johor acquired by Swettenham just after his retirement. See H. S. Barlow, *Swettenham*, Kuala Lumpur: Southdene, 1995, p. 599.

north end of the Public Offices in Kuala Lumpur. He was a great cricketer in his day. It was jokingly said in Perak that a good bat or a fast bowler could generally get a job in the Government Service, as long as Swettenham was Resident. A good Malay scholar, possessing a strong sense of justice tempered with humour, he was the ideal Resident. Although somewhat of a cynic there was nothing petty in his nature. I never heard of him letting anybody down. To this day he has never forgotten the fact that these States constitute a Malay country belonging to the Malays. Richard Sidney has rightly described Sir Frank as Malaya's G. O. M. Although devoted to the interests of the Malay people, Sir Frank was never unmindful of the interests of other people. Addressing a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute in 1896, he said *inter alia*:—"I think that the English official has something to learn in his treatment of men of his own colour who approach him in his official capacity..... Some British officials (in Malaya) appear to acquire in the course of their service, a habit of looking with suspicion on all their own countrymen who have any official dealings with them. It seems remarkable that it should be so, but almost anybody can bear out my statement, and I think everyone who has influence should use it to discourage an attitude which, if assumed by a senior officer, will very soon be imitated by his juniors. I have never been able to sympathise with this frame of mind myself, because I have, I am glad to say, in a somewhat long experience, never seen anything to justify it..... Government officers are there as the temporary stewards of a property—the servants of the public. It should be their object to encourage every legitimate enterprise for the advancement of the country and the profit and prosperity of those who dwell therein."

Dr. Travers.

An outstanding personality of earlier days who is still enjoying life in the provinces at home is Dr. E. A. O. Travers who came to Sungei Ujong in the late eighties, was State Surgeon, Selangor, in the early nineties and went into private practice here in 1909. He was a good surgeon and an excellent administrator. He was also everything else. For three or four decades he was the life and soul of the European community here—to say nothing of his influence amongst Asiatics. A tabulated list of all his interests—professional, sporting, social, commercial and financial—would fill columns of a newspaper. He was certainly a mighty hunter of wild animals. He now lives at home in the rôle of country squire, and is of course taking an active part in the public life of his locality, when not away on big game shooting expeditions in East Africa.²¹

Like so many successful men, Dr. Travers is uncommonly shrewd, temperate in his habits and never idle. Also he has a charm of manner which never fails him. Over and over again his simple presence in a sick room has acted like a tonic on his patient. It is hardly likely that any other European will ever occupy quite the same position in the general life of Kuala Lumpur as Travers did both when in the Service and afterwards when in private practice.

²¹ His obituary in *The Times*, 22 November 1934, was written by Dr J. A. McCloskey, a former colleague. See also R. Green, 'Leprosy', in *The Institute for Medical Research 1900-1950*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1951, on Travers' outstanding work for the treatment and welfare of lepers during his second spell (after 1918) in the Selangor Medical Department.

An Intellectual.

Another of our still living worthy Malaysians is H. C. E. Zacharias, now attached to a Belgian monastery as a lay worker. How and why he drifted to this part of the world I cannot remember. I know that he brought with him the first motor car ever seen in Kuala Lumpur—a British built Roots and Venable—a name long since forgotten. Later on, he went home again to purchase some Locomobile steam cars for service across the main range to Pahang. This venture was a lamentable failure. The Locomobiles were delightful little cars to ride in, but unfortunately they had a habit of setting themselves on fire or otherwise misbehaving. Anyhow they never seemed to complete a journey. After this "Zac.", as he was affectionately called, became Secretary of the Selangor Club and then later established himself with D. A. A. Christie in a shop-house in Old Market Square and held several very fine agencies—including that of the Ford car

"Zac" was a doctor of philosophy. I do not fancy that he was really interested in commerce. He was more in his element as the efficient Secretary of the Planters' Association of Malaya, an appointment which he held from 1904 when the Association was known as the United Planters' Association of the F.M.S. until he left in 1919 to reside in India. There he adopted native costume and edited an Indian newspaper. A strange character but a very likeable man. He certainly had a first class education and intellectually was considerably above the average. His wife, a cosmopolitan to her finger tips and always one of my good friends, was a power in the land socially until the War came, when her position was made impossible by former "friends," and she went to work for the Red Cross in Geneva. Zacharias, although partly educated in Germany, was a British subject and so was his father before him.

In Advance of his Times.

G. T. Tickell, who writes an occasional article in *British Malaya*, was in the Government Service here nearly fifty years ago. Then he went away and had a life of adventure in all parts of the world. He was everything in turn. Journalism, pearling, orange growing and other occupations kept him busy. Nothing came amiss. If he could not get a brain worker's job he would take anything going. Working his passage across an ocean as a ship's steward rather than borrow money to pay for it was all in the day's work. And then he came back to Malaya and was given the appointment of Chairman, Kuala Lumpur Sanitary Board. I think he was the best Chairman the Board ever had. But he was in advance of his times; his work was not appreciated; he was looked upon as somewhat too daring an innovator and possibly there was some jealousy behind the official opposition to many of his plans and suggestions. Kuala Lumpur would have been a finer town to-day if Tickell's services had been retained and his efforts supported instead of thwarted.²²

Two Favourites.

Both A. S. and Cyril Baxendale were liked by everybody when they were out here. A. S. Baxendale, always known as "Johnnie", began his career in one of the Cable Companies and then came to Selangor as Supt. Posts and Telegraphs. After he retired from the Service in 1906 he started the local business of Baxendale & Devitt which was ultimately sold to the Planters' Stores and Agency Company. He was a

²² Tickell's account of his work, first in Perak, and later (1888-9 and 1903-4) in Selangor was published in *British Malaya* (monthly magazine) in 1927-8. See also Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur*, pp. 108 and 177.

mainstay of the museum as it existed in the early days and played a prominent part in the social life of the town. When he left Malaya Johnnie secured an important position on the staff of another cable company, and as a hobby has written learned works on currency. He has also at least one novel to his credit.

His brother, Cyril, who had been farming in Australia before coming to stay with his brother in Kuala Lumpur, began his career by writing regularly for the *Straits Times* on matters concerning the Malay States.²³ Then in turn he was interested in coffee, ramie, coconuts and then rubber. He retired from active management more than twenty years ago, but has since paid several visits to Jugra Estate as a director of the Company. He still has many friends in Malaya who are always glad to see him. Both brothers possess a real charm of manner: both are naturally sincere, kind-hearted men.

Men of Mark.

"The United Planters' Association of the Federated Malay States", was formed in 1897. Its name was changed to "The United Planters Association of the Malay Peninsula" in April, 1907. This name, in turn, was changed to "The Planters' Association of Malaya" in December, 1907. The Association has been fortunate in its choice of both Chairmen and Secretaries. The three outstanding Chairmen of the Association were the late E. V. Carey (1899-1903), Eric Macfadyen (two years) and the late J. S. Arter (five years). Eric Macfadyen has an unique record all to himself.

²³ Cyril Baxendale is believed to have written retrospective accounts of Negri Sembilan, Selangor and Perak, in the 1920s, under the *nom de plume* of 'Rimba', as well as a personal memoir published as C. Baxendale, *Personalities of Old Malaya*, Penang: Pinang Gazette Press, 1930.

From Oxford he came out here to join the Malayan Civil Service. Had he stayed in the Service he would have become a Colonial Governor. He decided to become a planter. As far as I know he had nothing much in the way of capital. He began his planting career in the usual way, as an assistant on an estate. He had brains, pep and personality. It was not very long before this ex-President of the Oxford Union became Chairman of the P.A.M. and a member of the Federal Council. His next important move onwards and upwards was when he left Malaya for London to become one of the managing directors of Harrisons and Crosfield, and to represent a Wiltshire constituency in the House of Commons. To-day, still hale and hearty, he is a City magnate. Excluding Sir Frank Swettenham, we may look upon Eric Macfadyen as one of the three most distinguished ex-Malayans still carrying on.

I never met the late J. S. Arter, but from all accounts he wore himself out in the performance of his public duties. In the opinion of those competent to say, he was just the right man as Chairman of the P.A.M. and did a tremendous amount of work for the benefit of his brother planters.²⁴

As a rule the success of any institution or association depends largely on the Secretary. The destinies of the P.A.M. have been in the hands of two extraordinarily able Secretaries—H. C. E. Zacharias (1907–1919) and C. Ward-Jackson, who has held the appointment since 1919, except for a short interregnum when he served as Administrator of the Rubber Research Institute of Malaya (1927–1928). The career of H. C. E. Zacharias has already been referred to. C.

²⁴ Arter seems to have been exceptionally inconspicuous in this role. Tate, in *The RGA History*, p. 291, lists 18 members of the P.A.M. without mention of Arter. It is significant that Robson himself had never met him.

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THE JOURNAL OF THE



C. Ward-Jackson

Ward-Jackson, now a man of 43, came out to Malaya in 1911. He has been a journalist in Fleet Street, has written books and plays, was a planter in Malaya before the War, joined up and saw service as an Officer with the Yorkshire Regiment, and since 1919 has been the life and soul of the Planters' Association of Malaya. He was chief founder of the Incorporated Society of Planters. And the Asiatic Planters' Association (the forerunner of the Malayan Estate Owners' Association) owed much to his efforts. He was the founder of the Malayan Kennel Association of which he is now the Hon. Secretary, besides being Hon. Editor of the *Malayan Kennel Gazette*. Of the four or five plays Ward-Jackson has written, one was produced in London (1915) and another was banned by the Lord Chamberlain after the copyright performance had been given. He has written histories of British regiments, and a novel. Also, in conjunction with F. V. Conolly, several works on historical celebrities such as Simon de Montfort, Thomas Cranmer and John Knox. An evening visitor to Ward-Jackson's house at Batu Caves will find the owner in his garden whilst daylight lasts, and then in the library when it is time to turn on the electric light. Intellectually head and shoulders above the crowd, a born organizer, a strong hater with a very pronounced combative element in his mental make up, and, on occasion, a master of satire, Ward-Jackson stands in a class by himself. Yet withal he is very human. Almost a sentimentalist at heart, although I do not suppose he would ever admit it. Skilled in the employment of denunciatory language when engaged in a fight, he is by nature extremely courteous, bears no malice when a fight is over, is utterly devoid of ambition, finds nothing too much trouble when called on for practical assistance and is always both generous and sympathetic in cases of distress. A man of forceful character is sometimes out

of place in a small community. Absence of ambition and lack of scope keep Ward-Jackson where he is today—servant, friend and adviser of the European planting community.

It is interesting to note that the present chief clerk of the Planters' Association of Malaya (C. Samuel) has served it continuously since mid-1912.

No Skirts: By Request

The name of R. J. Wilkinson will be remembered in Malaya long after those of many of his contemporaries have been forgotten. He has created his own permanent memorial in the form of a two-volume Malay Dictionary which will be a standard work of reference for generations to come. Born in Smyrna, Wilkinson became a linguist almost at birth. Although essentially a man of the student type, he was also a very capable official. I doubt if this fact was always recognised in Malaya: partly perhaps because of his quiet, retiring disposition. However, that he was given the Governorship of a West African Colony speaks for itself. Not seeing eye to eye with the Colonial Office on some point or other, he left the Service and has now settled down on the shores of the Mediterranean.

Thinking of Wilkinson reminds me of a story. On the ship which brought me back to Malaya after my first leave, there was Wilkinson and, say, X, who were on their way out as cadets. They were of course both interested to hear all about Malayan life. One day, E. T. C. Garland, of Johore, who was also returning from leave, showed them a collection of photographs, one of which portrayed a Sunday curry-tiffin party sitting out on a verandah. It was obviously a bachelor party as the men were dressed in *bajus* and *sarongs*. "Why," said X, "these men are dressed in skirts." "Yes," said Garland, "it is a sort of skirt, in fact most people sleep in a sarong."

"What," replied X, "European men wear skirts! I should never think of doing such a thing!"

An English Gentleman.

Capt. Sir Arthur Young, G.C.M.G., Chief Secretary to Government, F.M.S., 1911 and Governor, S.S., and High Commissioner, F.M.S., 1911 to 1919, was born in 1854 and as a young man played Rugby for Scotland against England. He left the Army in 1878 to take command of the Military Police in Cyprus and became Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements, in 1906. His transfer five years later to be Chief Secretary to Government, F.M.S., was regarded as promotion, although the holder of the appointment was no longer to be called Resident-General. Speculating one evening at the Lake Club as to who would succeed Sir John Anderson as Governor, various names were mentioned.²⁵ Sir Arthur Young's only contribution to the conversation was: "Well, I should be inclined to back the field." He was too modest to say that he himself had already been offered the appointment. A typical English gentleman who took infinite pains in the carrying out of his duties, he had the respect of all men. As Governor and Commander-in-Chief at Singapore during the War years, he carried a very heavy and responsible burden with complete satisfaction to the people of this country and to the Imperial Authorities. In his younger days he was an enthusiastic player of cricket, tennis and golf.

²⁵ Anderson was unexpectedly recalled in 1910 to London to become P.U.S. at the Colonial Office, and Young, after only a few months in the F.M.S., was appointed to succeed him as Governor in Singapore, with Wilkinson as C.S. S.S. until 1916.

Adek and Abang.

Dr. W. L. Braddon has resided in Selangor and Negri Sembilan for about 45 years and A. Braddon, going strong at 74, for nearly as long a period. The *adek* was one of the most brilliant men who ever joined the Selangor Medical Service. It was W. L. Braddon who first established the connection between beri-beri and polished rice. When he gave up his medical career in 1908 to assist in the mining and planting development of this country, the Medical Department lost the services of a man with a first class brain. He has always been a fighter for some cause or another. Of recent years he has been the champion of rubber restriction. At one time his was the voice in a wilderness of almost lethargic despair. He, more than anybody else, certainly kept the restriction flag flying during the worst crisis the rubber industry has ever experienced. And he has always had a definite scheme to propound in the columns of the local press.

His brother, the *abang*, is of a more retiring and less pugnacious disposition. One of those genial characters who make friends wherever they go. The *abang* has only been home once in the forty odd years of his residence here, so he may be regarded as one of our permanent settlers! His chief interests out here have been in mining and planting propositions.

The Hampshire Brothers.

A. K. E. and D. H. Hampshire are two of the very few European commercial men who have had really successful business careers in Selangor. Other men have done good work as salaried employees. The Hampshire brothers created a business for themselves: although they began as employees. Their father, who was a doctor in the Straits Settlements

Medical Service, had a large family to provide for. He could not do much for his sons except to provide them with an education. Whilst Colonial Surgeon, Penang, Dr. Hampshire secured an appointment for his elder son in Huttenbach's office there. A year or so later Dr. Hampshire retired and about that time, or perhaps a little earlier, A. K. E. Hampshire left the parental roof in Penang and came to Selangor to work for H. Huttenbach. Within a few years he owned the business. D. H. Hampshire came out some ten years later with banking experience and took up work as a Settlement Officer for a short time before joining his brother.

In 1910 the firm became Boustead, Hampshire & Co. The Hampshires sold out their interest in 1920 and the firm is now simply Boustead & Co. In his younger days A. K. E. played cricket and football for the State, and was for many years Hon. Secretary and then President of the Lake Club. He was also one of the first three Europeans in Kuala Lumpur to own and drive a motor car. Both brothers have served on the Federal Council and taken their full share in the public life of the State. A. K. E. retired to England in 1920. D. H. remains out here and occupies his time as a director of public companies, member of the Railway Board etc.

What is the secret of their success? I think it may be put down to straight-dealing, natural shrewdness, imagination and pluck. They were not content to rely on commerce alone as a means of acquiring wealth. They went into the real estate business, planting, mining or any other venture which offered a promising outlook.

Like Father: Like Son.

As he may possibly see these lines before they get into print I must be careful what I write about C. N. Maxwell! His career here has been somewhat out of the ordinary. He began as Private Secretary to his father, who at the time was Resident of Selangor. He then joined the Sarawak Service in which one of his uncles was a Resident. Two and a half years later he came back to join the Selangor Service. He went through the Boer War as a trooper in the Ceylon Mounted Infantry, and ended his official career here as Commissioner of Trade and Customs, F.M.S. He now owns and controls a rubber estate at the Dindings, and, following in his father's footsteps he has recently produced a very original and useful guide to the learning of the Malay language and has a second book on the same subject now going through the press. He is also the author of *Malayan Fishes* and *The Control of Malaria*.

Of the late Sir William's sons who have made their careers in Malaya, Charleton is the most like his father—in appearance and, to some extent, in character. He has many of his father's ideals. (Although he was always known as "Bill" I doubt if Sir William was ever addressed by that name). Charleton has a genial, breezy personality. It is curious that since his retirement from the Service in 1927 the Government has so seldom availed itself of Charleton's extensive knowledge of the country. He served on the Rice Commission. It may be of course that, living at Lumut, he has been unable to accept invitations to serve on public or semi-public bodies dealing with F.M.S. affairs. His services would certainly be of value to the Railway Board and to the new Malayan Postal Board.²⁶

²⁶ As Maxwell was to see the passage before publication, it is hardly surprising that Robson passes over Maxwell's cantankerous disposition to 'pour scorn on bureaucracy and all its works'. He and his Malay

'Ronnie' Kindersley

I cannot do better than quote here some extracts from an appreciation by C. Ward-Jackson which appeared in the *Malay Mail* of March 9, 1926.

"Ronald Charles Murray Kindersley, who goes shortly on leave—perhaps prior to retirement—is one of the few pioneers still in harness.

"As a youth, he "crammed" for the Army; but was "ploughed" on account of his heart. He then entered a Chartered Accountant's office; but a sedentary life made no appeal to him as he was a soldier at heart. He then enlisted in the Black Watch as a private, and in quick time attained the dignity of a corporal. Douglas who "crammed" for the Royal Marines, was rejected on account of his eyesight. These setbacks decided the brothers to seek their fortunes far afield, and they came to Selangor in 1893.

"In 1896, they obtained some Para rubber plants from H. N. Ridley of the Singapore Botanical Gardens and planted five acres of rubber on Inch Kenneth. These were the first rubber trees planted as a field in the State of Selangor, as Sir George Maxwell pointed out at the Asiatic Planters' Association meeting, although Thomas Heslop Hill had previously planted some few isolated trees on Weld's Hill, Kuala Lumpur.

"Ronnie passed through many vicissitudes and difficulties—including the great Slump in 1899—and later on, won through by his quiet determination, strenuous endeavour, cheery optimism, and force of character. He is

wife were murdered by their syce in 1941. R. Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya: The Malayan Civil Service and Its Predecessors 1867-1942*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981, pp. 271 and 225 and other sources spell his forename 'Charlton' without the 'e' which Robson alone uses.

now a director of many rubber companies in the Kindersley group. Douglas, "the Marine", found a soldier's grave in France in 1917.

"Ronnie Kindersley never dropped anything that he believed in, nor adopted anything that he did not believe in. He is an entirely honest man, whose "thoughts lie clear as pebbles in a brook." His motives are as transparent as his utterance. He is singularly sincere and public-spirited, and is motivated not by personal considerations, but by real devotion to the country of his adoption, to his conception of justice and duty, to his sense of humanity."²⁷

The above mentioned names of men still living, who have been prominently associated with Malayan life as I have seen it in Selangor, is by no means a complete list. Rather samples from the store-house of memory.

There are of course many other notable Malaysians, past and present, whom I would like to mention. From 1890 when the late Rev. F. W. Haines was appointed "Government Tutor and Chaplain, Selangor" to 1934 when Andrew Caldecott—the star man of the Malayan Civil Service—goes to Government House, Singapore, is a long period during which many good men have "had their day" here.

A mere list would include W. W. Skeat, the author of *Malay Magic*, who had to leave Malaya on account of ill health; the late Sir Thomas Braddell, C.J. son of a former Attorney-General, S.S., and father of the most brilliant advocate at the Singapore Bar to-day; the late Yap Kwan Seng, the last of the Capitan Chinas; E. S. Hose, a very sound official who finished his career here as acting Governor, S.S., Wallace Cook, a successful and much

²⁷ Tate, *The RGA History* (see index entries 'Kindersley') has many references to this celebrated duo, one known among planters as 'the Corporal' and the other as 'the Marine'.

respected business man; L. P. Ebden and J. R. Innes, two very human, and therefore humane, judges; V. A. Lowinger now representing the different Malayan Administrations in London; the Hubback brothers, one of whom rose to be a Brigadier-General during the War; Dr. A. T. Stanton, now an Adviser to the Colonial Office; Dr. Day, a worthy successor to Dr. Travers, R. Proust who "joined up" at the age of 57 and saw service in Mesopotamia; F. W. Palmer, whose War decorations include the Victoria Cross; Dr. R. O. Winstedt, a Civil Servant of great literary ability: author of a Malay Grammar, an English-Malay dictionary and other publications dealing with Malayan subjects; H. N. Ferrers always a shining light in our local community; Oliver Marks, now Secretary of the Association of British Malaya; H. M. Whitley, one of the best judges drawn from the Civil Service; A. B. Voules, who might have been a Colonial Governor had promotion been faster in his day; the late Douglas Campbell, who was cut off in his prime when Adviser, Johore; the Walsh brothers one of whom died here and the other in Australia; Murray Campbell, the railway contractor (a memory of the nineties); and many Civil Servants who did yeoman service in their day. The old school is changing for the new. This is inevitable throughout the world owing to altered conditions. The late Abraham Hall, W. P. Hume, C. W. Parr, E. Dickson and A. S. Haynes were, I think, very representative types of the old school—men who absolutely identified themselves with the interests of the people of Malaya—irrespective of race.

Men of a newer school of thought and action have not the same opportunities. They have not the same leisure. If and when they can get about in the districts, they travel in fast motor cars. The old time District Officer is being replaced by the modern Malay. This again was inevitable. If

the modern Malay administrative officers turn out to be of the Raja Uda type, there need be no fear for the future of the Malay States.

I have not attempted any pen pictures of the three leading officials who are now engaged in the making and moulding of a *future* Malaya. I refer to Sir Cecil Clementi, Andrew Caldecott and T. S. Adams.

THE
LIFE OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON
BY
JAMES BOSWELL
IN TWO VOLUMES.
THE SECOND VOLUME.
LONDON: PRINTED BY A. MILLAR, IN THE STRAND, 1791.



The late Dr. Loke Yew C.M.G.

CHAPTER II.

PERSONALITIES OF THE PAST.

The following records and impressions concern men who were prominent citizens here in their day. Some in the Public Service: others who helped in the material development of the State. I will begin with those who were here when I arrived and then mention some of those who came later.

*Towkay Loke Yew, C.M.G., LL.D.*¹

This remarkable man was the only son of an agriculturist in China who lived to about the age of a hundred. It was from his father that the late Loke Yew inherited his love of the soil. He came to Singapore when he was a boy, worked in a shop and saved \$99 in four years. Later he went to Perak where he made and lost money in tin-mining and trading. He was one of the contractors for food supplies to the troops during the Perak war. From Perak he came to Selangor—where he spent the greater part of his life. He leased Farms (gambling, spirit and pawnbroking) from the Government,

¹ His business career is dealt fully with in J. G. Butcher, 'Loke Yew', in J. G. Butcher and H. Dick (eds.), *The Rise and Fall of Revenue Farming*, London: Macmillan, 1993, 'Revenue Farming'; and Lee Kam Hing and Chow Mun Seong, *Biographical Dictionary of the Chinese in Malaysia*, Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1997, pp. 123-5. See also Barlow, *Swettenham*, Kuala Lumpur: Southdene, 1995, index entries 'Loke Yew', on his land transactions with Swettenham. In addition to Robson's account of the man, based on personal relations, see Choo Kia Peng, 'My Life's Journey', unpublished autobiography, c. 1953. Kia Peng became his executor in 1917, and had been a close associate in the final decade of his life.

was the first man in Selangor to establish an electric power plant on a mine, constructed the Sungei Besi and Bentong roads, opened up rubber estates, started cement works and a coconut oil mill and put a lot of his money into real estate—both here and in Singapore. Charity was one of his virtues. The Hong Kong University benefitted by his generosity and it was from this University that he received his honorary LL.D. I first got to know him well when I was Assistant District Officer at Rawang, where he had important mining interests. There was no train service and no motor cars in those days, so he and his friend San Ah Peng (father of San Ah Wing) had to drive or ride the seventeen miles from Kuala Lumpur, generally making the return journey the same day. In later years, after I had started a daily paper in Kuala Lumpur, I gave up journalism to become his local real estate agent—a business connection which lasted till his death in 1917.

He was married four times. The first was a child marriage in China. I was on terms of family friendship with his other wives, including the lady who survives him. Three quite different types of women, but all kind-hearted and considerate. Loke Yew had an attractive personality. I think the charm of the man lay partly in the simplicity of his nature, partly in his extraordinary ability (although he had had no education) and partly to the natural courtesy of his manner and his innate kindness of heart. I hope and believe that the only bad turn I ever did him was when, in the long ago, I sold him a horse of very uncertain temper. Later on, when I ventured to enquire how the animal was behaving, he said "Oh, all right"—and then as an afterthought—"last week it knocked down a lamp post."

Careful in Small Things.

The Towkay was always a good and kind husband, although, owing to his dislike of ostentatious display and lack of interest in entertainment or amusement, it is doubtful if he ever quite realized that the joy of life to a woman is bound up to some extent in the paraphernalia of the home, pretty things, the luxuries of modern life and some amusement. He was generally the least expensively dressed man in his own office, kept and used old motor cars which other people would have sold, and often went backwards and forwards to his office in a rikisha. Like so many rich men, he was very careful about petty expenditure, and most generous in big things. It was the same in business. When I was his land agent we once settled an £80,000 mortgage in three minutes. The only point he wanted to discuss was the rate of interest to be charged. On another occasion when I had to advocate, say, the spending of a few hundred dollars on house repairs, the conversation might last half an hour. Perhaps his trips to Europe, his family life and the actual hard work he did on his estates gave him more pleasure than anything else. There is a story told of the late Mrs. Loke Yew (his third wife) going out in the car to fetch him home from Hawthornden Estate because it was raining, and finding him wet through with a *changkol* in his hand showing a coolie how to dig. I believe that if Loke Yew had had a first class education he might have been one of the rulers of China.

Belief in God.

I don't know that he professed any particular religion, but he had a very strong belief in an all-wise, all-powerful God. He once told me that he would far rather have a C.M.G. from *Tuan Allah* when he died than any decoration

he could get on earth. And when told about some swindle or other would say "Well, *Tuan Allah* will judge." He once told me that he was getting 60% of the profits derived from a certain mine. Thinking that he might have partners in this particular venture, I said "Who gets the balance?" He smiled and replied "Ah, that is what I should like to know." Hundreds of people went to him for financial assistance of one sort or another; many of them under the impression that it was the duty of the rich man to grant all such requests. Genuine distress seldom appealed in vain, but he always used his own discretion. In earlier life he had been a fairly heavy opium smoker, but gave it up after his first trip to Europe. Later on he became a great cigarette smoker. Neither drink nor cards ever appealed to him. He was, on balance, a successful tin miner. However it was always the land he loved. He was practically born an agriculturist and he died an agriculturist. If there was any one thing he disliked more than another, it was the cutting down of a coconut tree or a fruit tree. To propose the demolition of an old house was a trifle compared with any suggestion to cut down useful trees. He was always spoken of in the office as "the old man." He would listen to any amount of advice but, having a very decided will of his own, it was always problematical whether he would take it. His Malay was not always easy, but there was one reply well known to his personal staff and that was "Tausa".²

Courteous and Considerate.

The Towkay was undoubtedly proud of his wealth, but it did not bring him unalloyed happiness. The very last time he

² "Never mind", i.e. a polite refusal. See R. J. Wilkinson, *Malay-English Dictionary (Romanised)*, Mytilene: Salavopoulos and Kinderlis, 1932, Vol. 2, p. 638.

was in my office, a few weeks before his death, he told me he was no happier with his wealth than when he had had less. I urged him, as I had done before, to give up his incessant work and worry and to be content with what he had (millions). He got up, walked about the room and said, "Yes, I know, I know, but I can't let go" and went through a pantomime display of holding on to a big rope. Up to the time of his illness his energy and vitality were wonderful. He was as active as most men of fifty and, except when tired, his mind seemed to be as vigorous as his body. He was constantly visiting, tramping over and largely managing his different estates. He was at his Hawthornden Estate to pay his coolies when the malaria attack came on which led to his death. He always treated me with the greatest consideration. When he was so weak, a day or two before he died, that he could scarcely move, he managed by eye and gesture to tell his daughter to bring me cigarettes to the bedside. His death was a tragedy.

A Great Administrator.

The late Sir Peter Benson Maxwell, at one time Chief Justice in Singapore, had four sons. The eldest became a magistrate in Province Wellesley and later held a similar appointment in British Guiana where he died. It was William E. Maxwell, the second son, who had the most distinguished career of the four brothers. Beginning his colonial service as a magistrate in Penang, he ultimately became Sir William Maxwell, Governor of the Gold Coast. When in Ashanti he got blackwater fever and should have taken leave at once. But that deep sense of duty, which was characteristic of the man, kept him at his post and, when at last he did get away, it was only to die on the voyage home. He had a very dominating

personality. His presence always filled me with awe when he was Resident of Selangor (1889-1892). He was known among Asiatics as *Mata Rimau*. To quote from "One Hundred Years of Singapore":—

"He had eyes of a very striking light blue whose natural glitter was brightened by an eyeglass. In the course of conversation he would jerk this eyeglass into position, and then abruptly concentrate a glare that was often disconcerting and at times terrifying."

A man of the highest personal integrity, he was hell and damnation to anybody apt to be crooked, and he loathed incompetence. During his few years in Selangor, he dispensed with the services of more than one head of department. The enduring monument to his valuable service here is the Registration of Titles Enactment. Almost incalculable benefits have resulted from this system of land registration. He was certainly the greatest land administrator we have ever had in Malaya. In those days the Governor in Singapore was far away and a Resident was a power in the land. He was almost above the law. And when he went to visit an outstation it was the custom to erect a triumphal arch in the main street. I can picture one now with "God Bless the British Resident" on it in big letters.

Sir William was a good rider, and fond of shooting, entertained generously and compiled a very valuable manual of the Malay language. All Government officials were expected to know and speak Malay—the language of the country. Sir William was the first high official in my day to go thoroughly into the matter of rice cultivation. I think it was when he was Colonial Secretary S.S., that all District Officers throughout the country were called on to report what was being done or what could be done to increase the supply of locally grown rice. He wrote a covering minute on

these reports which would be worth re-printing to-day. Unfortunately I lost my copy years ago.³ The nineties saw the arrival here of three of his sons who since then have all helped to make local history. Two in the Service and one since deceased in the law.⁴

*Soldier and Sportsman.*⁵

The late Capt. H. C. Syers came to Selangor in 1875 to organize a Police Force out of Tengku di Udin's fighting material. These men had originally been under the command of Ali Mamat, a Mauritius Frenchman or Creole who had turned Muhammadan. Syers built up a new Force consisting of Sikhs, Pathans and Malays. In later years it also fell to his lot to establish a Sikh and Malay Police Force in Pahang when that State came under British Protection (1889). And it is on record that Syers warned the authorities of probable disturbances in Pahang a year before the trouble occurred. Hugh Clifford (now Sir Hugh Clifford, G.C.M.G.) was apparently less apprehensive, although like Syers he thoroughly understood the Malay temperament. Syers was very fond of the Malays—a feeling which was reciprocated. But, with the exception of two buglers, he would have no

³ It was published as 'Reports Furnished by Order of his Excellency the Governor upon the Best Means of Encouraging the Cultivation of Rice in the Malay Peninsula', in *Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements*, Paper No. 6, 1893.

⁴ See W. Makepeace, R. Brooke, and R. St. J. Braddell (eds.), *One Hundred Years of Singapore, being Some Account of the Capital of the Straits Settlements from its Foundation by Sir Stamford Raffles on the 6th February 1819 to the 6th February 1919*, London: John Murray, 1921, Vol. 2, pp. 413–22, on the Maxwell family.

⁵ Robson probably knew more about Syers than most contemporaries, as he had married Syers' widow in the 1920s. This book is dedicated to her.

Javanese in the Selangor Police. He thought Javanese secretive and unreliable. Up till the time when he became the first Federal Commissioner of Police, he was also Superintendent of Prisons. First and foremost Syers was a sportsman. He was a fine horseman and a good amateur jockey. But the ruling passion of his life was in the chase, and in the chase he met his death.

Accompanied by the late R. S. Meikle, a well known planter, he was on a big game shooting expedition in Pahang when he was charged and gored by a seladang (which he had wounded on the previous day) and died whilst being taken down river to Pekan (1897). When, later, Dr. Travers arranged for the body to be disinterred at Pekan and brought to Kuala Lumpur for final burial in the Venning Road cemetery, there was one of the longest funeral processions on record here. The following words are inscribed on his tombstone:—

“A brave man to his death did take
 What is all price above
 The tribute of a peoples' tears
 The homage of their love.”

A man of cheery, genial, hospitable nature, he had a host of friends who valued his opinion and sound common sense. Never have I known the death of any individual in Selangor to be so widely and so genuinely regretted as was that of Syers. Some months before the end of his life Syers had been presented with a fine peacock. The stuffed bird was placed in a room of his house where trophies of the chase were on show. He was told by his Sikh orderly that it was unlucky to have a peacock in the house. He merely laughed. We have all heard of human telepathy. Does it extend to animals? At the time of Syers' death in Pahang his favourite boar-hound in Kuala Lumpur became very restless and showed marked signs

of distress. When news of the disaster came through, J. P. Rodger, the Resident, went himself to break the news to Mrs. Syers. And I am sure that nobody else could have done so more sympathetically. Incidentally it may be remembered that Syers was no novice at seladang hunting. He had shot thirteen of these animals before the disaster in Pahang.

Salaries were small in those days and Syers had saved nothing. A month or two before his death he had become a subscriber to the Widows and Orphans Fund: so his widow found herself with \$60 a month on which to bring up a family of three children. In those days the Government made no supplementary grants to widows left in poor circumstances whose husbands had given exceptional service to the State. That innovation came in on the death of Syers' successor, the late Capt. Talbot. His widow did receive a supplementary grant. Only on one occasion did Syers ever "make a bit." In the days when Government officials were allowed to own land, he had acquired a small coconut estate (more estate than coconuts) on the Ampang Road, which he ultimately sold for a few thousand dollars. All his friends thought he had done very well out of it. Two or three years ago this property was acquired by the Government at a total cost of something in the neighbourhood of \$300,000. It is the site of the present Race Course.

Syers' son Tom—a Major in the Artillery—served on three fronts in the great War, did remarkably well and died just before peace was declared. Strange to say Syers never achieved the ambition of his life as a big game hunter. He shot a rhinoceros, a tapir, seladangs, elephants and other wild animals. But he never secured a tiger, although he made many attempts to do so. Syers had a devoted Malay orderly, named Yakub, who attended his master on many shooting expeditions. After Syers' death Yakub was given a job to hunt

out tin stealers in the hills. Apparently he was all too successful, for one day his body was found crucified on the ground in some out of the way place.

Sans Peur et Sans Reproche.

The late Sir John P. Rodger, who ultimately became Governor of the Gold Coast, was a man of outstanding character. I was away during most of the time when Sir Hugh Clifford was High Commissioner of the F.M.S. and only met him a month or two before he retired. In the course of conversation the one old timer he mentioned was Sir John P. Rodger, to whose memory he paid a generous tribute. Educated at Eton and Oxford, the owner of a castle and possessed of considerable private means, Rodger was obviously above and beyond the minor failings of humanity. He had the grand manner, officially, socially and intellectually. This was a little overpowering at times. But the fact that he was most conscientious, that he never bore malice, was always approachable and entertained lavishly more than compensated for a few minor idiosyncrasies. He was certainly a fine type of Resident.⁶

Asiatics adored him. When Resident of Selangor it was his custom to ride round the town and stop in front of certain Chinese houses and shops in order to have short talks with the occupiers. He was a handsome man and looked well on a horse. He had a difficult time in Pahang during the rebellion there and was much criticised at the time in regard to supplying the then Ruler with arms and ammunition

⁶ For a harsher view of Rodger, see R. O. Winstedt, *Start from Alif. Count from One: An Autobiographical Mémoire*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 44-6, where Rodger is 'the Great One'.

which everybody said would get into the hands of the rebels. Events proved that his judgment had been sound. He had the good fortune to be very happily married. His only daughter married Captain Herbert, an A.D.C. at Government House, Singapore. Lady Rodger settled down in Florence after her husband's death and lived there for many years before passing on.

In his book *Trifles and Travels*, the late Arthur Keyser told the following story about Sir John:—

“It was while staying with the Resident of Selangor, my very good friend, Sir John Rodger, that I felt most humbled before General Sir Charles Warren who was then my fellow guest. He had asked our host to play billiards with him. Rodger, with the high toned drawl, which seemed to become a man of his all-round abilities remarked, ‘You had better play with Keyser.’ But his guest insisting upon preference to play with our host, Rodger replied, ‘Very well, then,’ and took up his cue. The General commenced with a cunning miss, which he regarded with satisfaction; his opponent easily made a cannon, continuing his break until he had completed fifty-five. I felt quite sorry for his adversary as, looking rather rueful, he achieved a break of six. Then Rodger, taking his own score to a hundred, without even troubling to finish further, handed me his cue, saying, ‘I think, General, you would do better to play with Keyser’.”

The billiard table figures in another story. The Collector of Land Revenue took up a bundle of land grants for the Resident's signature. Rodger elected to have them placed on the billiard table which was covered with a light cloth of some kind. Unfortunately he also elected to have the inkstand placed on the billiard table. And, as luck would have it, the inkstand got upset. Rodger's only comment was “Damn.” Probably the first and last time any of his officials ever heard

him swear. Lady (then Mrs.) Rodger, a *grande dame* noted for her graciousness and thoughtfulness for other people, entertained a succession of visitors at the Residency. On one occasion the late Bishop Hose—a charming old gentleman—and a lady who is still living in Kuala Lumpur happened to be the guests of the moment. On retiring to her room at night, the lady undressed, put out the light and got into bed. On pulling up her blanket she suddenly realised that some animal was in her bed. She gave a scream and flung herself out of bed. Her hostess attired in a dressing gown and the old Bishop wearing his black gaiters surmounted by a night shirt quickly arrived on the scene. A light showed that a tame musang, which generally slept in the roof, had settled itself in the blanket of the visitor's bed.

"Billie"

The late H. C. Ridges—always known as "Billie"—was a District Officer when I first met him. He was the son of a Wolverhampton coach-builder and had had a University education (Cambridge) before becoming a missionary in China. A clever little man with a heart of gold. He held in turn nearly every appointment in the State except that of Resident. His last appointment was Secretary for Chinese Affairs. For years he sent half his salary to his mother and was always willing to put his hand in his pocket to help a lame dog over a stile. But he was somewhat eccentric and certainly unlucky. His first wife died on the voyage home and was cremated in Colombo. An insurance company, in which he was interested, failed. On leaving the Service in 1911 he dabbled in local real estate and the market went against him. Sir Frank Swettenham very kindly gave him a job at the Censor's office in London during the War. He ultimately

moved to the Channel Islands where he died, leaving his second wife and two girls in somewhat straightened circumstances. The Government at long last recognised the value of Billie's services and made some small contribution for the completion of the girls' education.

The Pioneer D. O.

The late C. H. A. Turney was a pioneer official in Selangor. He came to reside in Singapore when nine years of age; became a clerk in the Labuan Service at fifteen or sixteen; returned to Singapore eight or nine years later to join the Courts department at a time when Capt. Bloomfield Douglas (afterwards Resident of Selangor) was First Magistrate, Singapore; and in 1875 was appointed Treasurer of Selangor. Mr. Davidson was then Resident and lived at Klang. Turney's initial salary as Treasurer was \$100 a month. On the strength of an increase of \$50 a month within a year, he got married. When the Residency was moved from Klang to Kuala Lumpur, Turney was left at Klang as Collector and Magistrate. In turn he was in charge of all the different districts. In 1883 he was Collector and Magistrate "Ulu and Kuala Selangor." He told me in after years that at that time Kuala Selangor was "a miserable village built on stilts over a mud puddle." His next move was to Kuala Lumpur to act as Chief Magistrate and Commissioner of Lands. Then back to Klang again as Senior District Officer. Turney was responsible for the early building of Klang in parts as it exists to-day. His influence with Asiatics—Malays, Chinese and Indians—was wonderful. He was the right type of man for his job at that stage of the State's development. It was a leisurely progressive stage. Turney refused to be hurried and when, for two years in succession, the Resident had to wait for Turney's

annual report before he could complete his own, the Senior District Officer was banished to Jugra. Wherever they were he and his wife kept open house and were famous for their curry tiffins. After his retirement Turney went to live in West Australia in order that his family should get the benefit of his pension on a sterling basis. He died there. Mrs. Turney settled in Singapore where two or three of the girls married. She survived her husband for some years.

Consul and Author

The late Arthur Keyser joined the Selangor Service as District Officer at Kuala Kubu. He had been in the Marlborough House set⁷ and knew everybody in London Society including King Edward—then Prince of Wales. From Kuala Kubu he went to Jelebu for a year or two and then passed into the British Consular Service, where he served in Spain and in the South American republics for many years. It was Arthur Keyser who gave the name of "Spotted Dog" to the Selangor Club. He was the author of several amusing books about the people he had met in the course of his career. In one of these books (*Trifles and Travels*) he has the following reference to a strange peculiarity of some people in this part of the world:—

"Malays were liable to a malady which seemed quite peculiar to their race—it was known as 'Latah.' A man might have this affliction and yet pass through many years of his life undetected, until it was aroused by some sudden movement or sound. A man or woman with 'Latah' is impelled to imitate the motions or noises of others. They are often victimised by heartless practical jokers. I have seen the latter

⁷ As Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII lived at Marlborough House.

pretend to dive into a river, and the unfortunate 'Latah' man would actually plunge in, just as he was, fully dressed. I have seen others play crueller pranks by feigning to tear off their clothes, inducing the poor imitator immediately to discard his, or her, own. I was once riding when my horse neighed. An old woman coming along the path towards me suddenly threw up her hands and neighed in return, and, as she continued this conduct while prancing in front of the horse, it was with some difficulty that I was able to guide him past without hurting her."

Lived Every Hour.

The late Sir Ernest Birch, son of the murdered first Resident of Perak, joined the Straits Service in the eighties and came to the Malay States in the nineties. A man of wonderful vitality, he lived every hour of his life up till the day of his death. As a Resident he was apt to be impetuous, but he got things done. A tremendous worker, a keen cricketer, a good shot, ready to ignore red tape when it suited his purpose, kind-hearted to a fault and backed by a charming personality, he was an inspiration in himself. A man of his temperament was bound to be more popular with his subordinates than with those in authority. His subsequent career in the City and in the municipal life of Bexhill is known to most people in Malaya. On his retirement from the Service in 1910 many eulogistic remarks were made about him by both the official and unofficial members of the Federal Council. The High Commissioner (the late Sir John Anderson) said *inter alia*—"There are two characteristics of Mr. Birch which have made him known and welcome throughout the Peninsula.....One of these is his great personal charm. He had also the most extraordinary

enthusiasm, in some respects almost boyish.....and not even thirty three years' residence in the tropics was able in any way to diminish its fervour."

A Needed New Broom.

When the Powers-that-be decided that the Selangor P.W.D. would be all the better for fresh blood and a thorough overhaul, it was wisely decided to look elsewhere than in Malaya for a man to undertake the job. The late C. E. Spooner was brought over from Ceylon. He was more than equal to the task. He made the P.W.D. hum as it had never hummed before. I do not know if he had an office motto, but, if so, it must have been "get on or get out!" He himself was a man of strong character, boundless energy and unquenchable enthusiasm for his task of the moment. He cursed men who cringed to him, yet was always fair. He had vision and was able to accomplish much useful work before he left the P.W.D. to take charge of the Railway Department in which his son is now one of the highest officials. It was during his time that the through line from Penang to Kuala Lumpur was opened. I doubt if there has ever been an executive officer in Malaya of greater driving force than that possessed by C. E. Spooner. He died here while still in his prime.

The Sultan of Perak proposed in Federal Council (May 1910) that a sum not exceeding \$5000 be contributed towards erection of busts of the late C. E. Spooner, C.M.G., General Manager, F.M.S.R., and of the late G. W. Fryer, Chief Construction Engineer, to be placed in the entrance hall of the new railway station at Kuala Lumpur. This was seconded by Douglas Osborne and the proposal met with

unanimous agreement. When completed, the busts, which are quite good, were placed on the main line platform.

*Outstanding Planters.**

There was a small but fine body of coffee planters here in the nineties. Thomas Heslop Hill, the Toynbee brothers, W. W. Bailey ("Tim"), H. C. Rendle, A. B. Lake, L. Dougal, E. V. Carey, the Meikle brothers, P. Stephenson, the Kindersley brothers, the Glassford brothers, W. de L. Brooke, the Darby brothers, E. B. Skinner, C. M. Cumming, M. Stonor, and others whose names escape me, all materially assisted in the early opening up and development of Selangor. H. d'Esterre Darby is the only one of these pioneer planters still living in Malaya and he talks of going home in the near future. When he does he may meet H. C. Rendle, R. C. M. Kindersley, W. de L. Brooke, E. B. Skinner, M. Stonor, A. B. Lake and possibly the veteran F. A. Toynbee. The others mentioned have all passed on. The late Thomas Heslop Hill—a partner in Hill and Rathbone, the big contractors—was a powerful looking man of considerable ability who controlled the opening of estates in Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan. The Government gave him, or his firm, large concessions of land in appreciation of services rendered in connection with important development works. The Sungei Ujong Railway was one of such works. Of the estates Hill owned in Selangor two have now become residential areas (Weld's Hill still so called and the land between the first and second mile on the

* Much information on planters, including most of those mentioned in this passage, is given in D. J. M. Tate, *The RGA History of the Plantation Industry in the Malay Peninsula*, Kuala Lumpur: RGA and Oxford University Press, 1996, and J. C. Jackson, *Planters and Speculators: Chinese and European Agricultural Enterprise in Malaya 1786-1921*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1968.

west side of the Batu Road, Kuala Lumpur). Hill must certainly rank as one of the great pioneers in the opening up of the Malay States.

At one time he held the appointment of Indian Immigration Agent for the F.M.S. Government in India. But his official relations with the F.M.S. authorities became so strained that he even refused to "break bread" with the Resident-General of the day; and was finally paid a lump sum by way of compensation for abolition of his appointment. Like all the good looking Rathbone sisters, Mrs. Hill had a very attractive personality. One of her sisters married the late Sir (then Mr.) H. Conway Belfield and another sister married the late A. T. D. Berrington, then judge of the Supreme Court in Kuala Lumpur. The late W. W. Bailey was a well known planter in Johore before he came to Selangor in that capacity. But he had been one of the builders of the Kuala Lumpur-Bukit Kuda railway in still earlier days. On his retirement he went in for horse breeding and racing and died a comparatively rich man.

The outstanding personality of all the planters I have known was the late E. V. Carey, who came here from Ceylon to open up New Amherst estate. He was one of the founders and the first Chairman of the P.A.M. What a fighter he was! And being hot tempered he was often in hot water. But he was a very fine fellow for all that, and as straight as a die. Indeed his passionate intolerance of anybody he suspected of being dishonourable was a marked feature of his mental attitude towards life. And yet behind his fighting front was the warmest and kindest of hearts. He was a most generous man and the life and soul of any gathering he attended. In spite of an initial row, we struck up a firm friendship which lasted till the day of his death. In fact the last letter I had from him was written at the nursing home in London where

he died. Carey Island, as it exists to-day is a monument to Carey's foresight and ability as a planter. A poor man in his earlier days here, he created wealth and was comfortably off when he retired for the few short years left to him in which to enjoy life at home. His daughter, the beautiful Mrs. Jack Spooner, has inherited her father's charm of manner.

The Discoverer of Fraser's Hill.

The late L. J. Fraser holding a position of some importance in the commercial world of Singapore met with troubles and misfortunes. So he banished himself to what were actually at that time the wilds of Ulu Pahang and started to fossick for tin in the hills round Tras and elsewhere. The ore obtained was at first carried the long journey from the hills to Kuala Kubu (no road in those days) by coolies and later by pack ponies. Until the arrival of "old Bibby" with his Australian miners to open up the Raub Goldfields, Fraser led a very lonely life and was glad to come into Kuala Kubu occasionally for a yarn with anybody who happened to be staying at the Rest House there. Like many people who live a lonely life, he loved to talk when he got the opportunity. I heard many of his yarns in that Kuala Kubu Rest House. He looked a frail old man and had some slight disfigurement to one eye. But he was much tougher than he looked. On one occasion his Malay attendants thought he was dead and actually started to bury him. Luckily the supposed corpse came to life again before it was too late. Needless to say this incident constituted one of his stock stories. And I provided him with another some years later, when I was editor of the *Malay Mail*. One day I saw a notice in the *Singapore Free Press* of the death of a Mr. Fraser and as the initials were the same, I jumped to the conclusion that it was my friend who

was dead. I filled up the leader column with a discursive article about the old man and the paper went to press. Twenty minutes later, when a certain number of copies had already been sent out of the office, Wallace Cook rushed round from the Straits Trading Co's place to inform me that the old gentleman had been in his office that morning and had shown no indication of becoming a corpse. It appeared that there were two Frasers: one was Lewis James and the other was James Lewis. Even now with only memory to guide me, I am a bit hazy as to which was which, but Charleton Maxwell tells me that our mutual friend, whose name is perpetuated locally in our health resort, was Lewis James. After my unfortunate mistake, I did not see Fraser for some time until he suddenly returned from a trip to Europe with a newly married wife. He was looking very spruce and evidently had no cause to worry about financial matters. He was only on a visit and, I think, died at home a few years later.⁹

Men of the Hour.

The late George Cumming and his brother the late C. M. Cumming, usually known as Malcolm, took a leading part in the life of this part of the world. At one period of his career George was manager of the Straits Trading Company in Kuala Lumpur. He was also keenly interested in racing—a life-long passion. Report had it that he was told by the managing director or some other high official in the Straits Trading Company that he must really choose between

⁹ See S. R. Aiken, *Imperial Belvederes: The Hill Stations of Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 40–5, on the development of Fraser's Hill as a resort. This was in the 1920s long after Fraser had first discovered it. He was 'Louis' (not Lewis) James Fraser.

business and racing. Anyhow he ceased to be a paid employee and started tin-mining on his own account in addition to maintaining a small racing stable. He made and lost money. The late W. Walsh was occasionally interested in some of George's mining ventures.

Among his other activities George was at one time a member of the Federal Council where he could be relied on to express sane views pertinent to the subject under discussion. He was one of the members who protested against the change of title of Resident-General to that of Chief Secretary to Government. He was a sound man in all matters of sport and in the general affairs of life. His advice was sought about many things. He ought to have made money. Yet, such is the perversity of fate, he died worth little or nothing. If George had his faults, he was probably too optimistic and too easy going. His brother Malcolm was the well known and eminently successful Negri Sembilan planter, who at one time had been an assistant on Welds Hill estate in Kuala Lumpur. A third brother, whom I never met, was also out here for some time.

And Another.

Of the four Huttenbach brothers, two were permanent residents in Malaya. The late A. Huttenbach in Penang and the late H. Huttenbach in Selangor. A. Huttenbach was a successful business man and at one time represented Penang in the Straits Settlements Legislative Council. H. Huttenbach, after a somewhat disappointing experience of tobacco planting in Sumatra, came over here to plant pepper and other products.¹⁰ His first estate was somewhere near Batu

¹⁰ Anon., 'Interviews with Celebrities', No. II - Mr. H. Huttenbach', *SJ*, 3, 1895, pp. 142-8. This is a rather discursive reminiscence.

Tiga. He also established himself in business in Market Street, Kuala Lumpur, and in 1892 was Hon. Secretary of the Selangor Club. At that time the Club consisted of 140 members only and was more or less insolvent. Huttenbach saved the situation and the members subscribed money in order that he might buy himself some little memento of their appreciation. Heinrich spent the money on a three hundred piece dinner service, which he presented to the Club. If any present day member of the Club comes across a plate with H on it he will be looking at a Huttenbach souvenir. Straight, capable and industrious H. Huttenbach should have acquired wealth, yet it is believed that he left this country (to join his brothers' office in London) as poor as the day he entered it. If he earned nothing else he certainly secured the respect and esteem of many people in Selangor.

Mention of Huttenbach and the Selangor Club reminds me that the latter institution has had four Secretaries of the Teutonic race. Count Bernstorff held the appointment at \$100 a month in 1890-1891. The other two in later years were H. C. Zacharias (a British subject) and the late G. A. Ketschker who had surrendered his German nationality on going out to join the Dutch Indies Army. For the last 22 years the name Selangor Club has been synonymous with that of P. W. Gleeson,—still a youthful veteran at 70.

The Harper Trio.

No tabloid information about the European personalities of those early days would be complete without some reference to the three Harper brothers. Steve, in the Police, had been boxing partner to Jem Mace in a circus, Alfred was Chief Clerk at the Courts here and Archie, who had been a stock rider in Australia, started a horse food business in

Clarke Street which ultimately became A. C. Harper & Co. All three brothers were amusing characters. After Steve's death, his widow opened the first European Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. Alfred lost his mental balance and was, I believe, sent to some home in England. Archie Harper, one of the most generous of men, had very bad health of later years and finally sold his business to the late F. E. Maynard and Russell Grey. His death was reported a year or two ago.

The Leading Indian.

The late K. Thamboosamy Pillay grew up with the State of Selangor: knew everybody and was known to everybody. He came from Singapore to work under J. Guthrie Davidson, the Singapore lawyer and first Resident of Selangor (1875). Incidentally it may be mentioned that Davidson stayed in Selangor for less than a year and then returned to his law practice in Singapore where, I believe, he met his death in a carriage accident.¹¹ Thamboosamy's official career was concerned with work in the Treasury. On leaving Government Service he became a contractor and miner. He constructed part of the main road from Kuala Lumpur to Kuala Kubu and utilized a small bullock-drawn caravan when engaged on this work. He was interested with Loke Yew in the Rawang Concessions a tin proposition which had been previously worked under European management by a company or syndicate. Socially Thamboosamy was a leading

¹¹ Although Davidson did not assume duty as Resident until the beginning of 1875, he had spent much of 1874 in Selangor as adviser to the viceroy, Tengku Kudin. At the end of the year he was transferred to a similar post in Perak (as successor to J. W. Birch), and did not resume his career in Singapore until 1876. See C. N. Parkinson, *British Intervention in Malaya 1867-1877*, Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1960, p. 308.

light at the Selangor Club. He was almost an institution in himself. In later years he was keenly interested in racing: an interest inherited by his sons, one of whom is still with us. Thamboosamy's bank account must have been depleted more than once to help a friend in difficulties. A curry tiffin at his house on the Batu Road was something to remember. Racial distinctions were unknown here in the early days. Thamboosamy was just as popular with Europeans as with other races. His position in the community was at the top of the ladder. He died about thirty years ago.

A Great Educationist.

The late Rev. W. E. Horley, M.B.E., of the Methodist Episcopal Mission was born in 1870 came to Singapore at the age of 24 and died there in 1931. The greater part of his career in Malaya was devoted to missionary and educational work in Perak and Selangor, where he founded schools and carried on Church work. Among the monuments he has left to his memory are the Anglo-Chinese School at Ipoh, the Methodist Boys' School at Kuala Lumpur and other smaller schools which he started. And he was mainly responsible for making the Methodist Girls' School in Kuala Lumpur the fine institution which it is today. When he died a correspondent wrote to a local newspaper.

"It is not too much to say that one of the best known personalities in the religious life of Malaya has been taken away by the death of the Rev. W. E. Horley. No one who has met him can forget his appearance—his burly figure, his snow-white hair surmounting a youthful face, and the happy disposition which carried good cheer into every group of people he joined. At one time or other nearly every part of the S.S. and F.M.S. has been the field of his strenuous

labours. His conspicuous work in the interest of education won for him Imperial recognition when he received the M.B.E."

"On great questions which affected the welfare of the people, like the Opium and Drink Traffic and the Social Purity Crusade, his attitude was definite and uncompromising; and those who differed from him in opinion held him in great respect. He was a man of generous human sympathies, and formed friendships among all the varied sections of the community—European, Eurasian, Chinese, Tamil and Malay: he could converse with them in their own languages."

"His recreations were tennis and golf, and into them he threw much of his natural energy."

And at the graveside the Bishop of Singapore, the Right Reverend B. C. Roberts, paid a generous tribute to his memory. The following is one passage from the Bishop's address:

"For 37 years William Edward Horley spent himself in passionate devotion to the social and spiritual welfare of the people of this country. His zeal did not go without recognition, and he gained a public distinction which many men might covet, but far more precious to him must have been the confidence of the hundreds of simple souls which he won, and the personal friendships which he made by his cheerful and sympathetic nature. But he was more than a good comrade and kindly humanitarian. He had an exceptionally clear vision of God, and the witness which he bore was never obscure or half-hearted or compromising."

A Successful Career.

The late J. A. Russell who died last year at the comparatively early age of 50 had a long family and business connection with Malaya which began when Mr. John Russell, accompanied by his wife and family, came out to Kuala Lumpur from England in the very early nineties of the last century to take up a Government appointment.¹² John Russell's wife met with a fatal carriage accident in Singapore, after a comparatively short residence in this country, and her husband was left to bring up a family of five sons and start them in life. I can still picture some of them on their way to Church or Sunday school in their best Sunday suits. John Russell was a man of character and ability, so it is not surprising that all his sons have had successful careers in Malaya or elsewhere. The eldest son was Manager of the Federated Engineering Company here before he left for England, where he now has a business of his own. The late J. A. Russell—known to his friends as Archie—was the second of the five brothers three of whom survive him. The late P. C. Russell, the third son, was a civil engineer who at the time of his death, whilst on a visit to Australia, was a partner in the well known firm of Swan and Maclaren of Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

Archie began his business training as an assistant in the Straits Trading Company and whilst there perfected his knowledge of Chinese and learnt something about tin-mining. He left the Straits Trading Company in 1903 to join

¹² P. Clague, *John Russell 1850-1930: A Tale of Early Days in the Malay States*, Kuala Lumpur, T. B. Russell, 1993, includes much information on the careers of Russell's sons. See also *Fifty Years of Progress (Malay Mail Supplement 1954)* for an account of the early history of the firm by one of the Russell family.



The late J. A. Russell.



the International Tin Corporation (U.S.A.) which at that time was proposing to operate in Malaya.¹¹ Whilst working for the American company, he spent most of his time in Ipoh where he learnt more about tin-mining. Before long he became a tin-miner himself and in few years started the well-known Kuala Lumpur firm of J. A. Russell & Co., in which his youngest brother, R. C. Russell, is a partner. These were the initial stages of a career which was to culminate in his becoming the outstanding European commercial man in Malaya—having important business interests in three continents.

Archie's monument in this country exists in the Malayan Collieries which he created some twenty years ago when the proposition had been considered and turned down by more than one hard-headed business man. How successful the venture has been is known to all. But Archie had many other business interests in Malaya. For years he was a purchaser of real estate, including practically the whole of the shop-houses in the new town part of Ipoh. And it may be remembered that of recent years he had been one of the first to realize the possibilities of tea growing in the neighbourhood of Cameron Highlands and had backed his belief by starting to grow tea there on a large scale. His whole career has been a business romance of such magnitude that it can hardly be compared with the achievements of any other European in Malaya—past or present. Without money or interest a young assistant in the Straits Trading Company acquired both wealth and a unique commercial position by pluck, industry, sound sense and vision.

¹¹ Swettenham, as Governor (1901-4), blocked a scheme promoted by American interests to take over the smelting of Malayan tin in the U.S.A. See Barlow, *Swettenham*, pp. 532-3.

He was never afraid to take a risk, after careful consideration of future possibilities. In view of the general slump in the values of property and all securities at the time of Archie's death, it is impossible to guess what his estate was worth in terms of cash. Probate documents are not public property in this country. During the War he presented the British Government with an aeroplane. Of slight build and with a quiet somewhat retiring manner, his success in life was entirely due to his mental equipment. He looked the student rather than a hard-headed, pushing business man. He had no particular hobbies outside his business and his books. He made no parade of his wealth. He was whimsically cynical at times when talking with old friends, but his smile betrayed the expressed lack of much respect for human nature. He was a devoted son. His father who only died a year or two ago reciprocated these sentiments of deep affection.

The Real Malay.

The late Raja Sir Chulan, Raja di Hilir of Perak, the second son of H.H. Sultan Abdullah (formerly Ruler of Perak) was born in 1869 and died in 1933. He was educated at the Raffles Institution, Singapore, and at the High School, Malacca. In 1889 he visited his father at Mahe, in the Seychelles Islands, and also travelled through Mauritius and Bourbon. He accompanied H.H. the Sultan of Perak to England to attend the Coronation of King Edward VII, receiving the Coronation medal. On his return in the same year he was appointed District Officer in Upper Perak. He retired from the Government Service in 1911 and devoted his energies to work on the State Council. In January, 1924, he became the first Malay unofficial member of the Federal Council. A fearless and fluent speaker in Council, he was

prevented by failing health from displaying his powers towards the close of his term of office. He was made a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George in 1925, and a Knight of the British Empire in 1930. At the meeting of the Federal Council on Monday, Jan. 23 1933 His Excellency the High Commissioner, Sir Cecil Clementi, said:—"Before proceeding with the business noted in the Orders of the Day, I desire to give official expression to a feeling which we must all be sharing to-day—a feeling of keen regret that our old friend the Raja di Hilir of Perak is no longer sitting with us at this table. Raja Sir Chulan's term as an unofficial member expired yesterday, on which date he completed nine years of service on this Council, while he has served on the State Council of Perak continuously since 1907. No Malay of modern times has done more for his country and his countrymen than Raja Sir Chulan. His name has twice appeared in the lists of those honoured by H. M. the King, and I am authorised by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to announce this morning that Raja Sir Chulan has been granted the privilege of retaining the local style of "Honourable" after his retirement, in particular recognition of his services as an unofficial member of the Federal Council."

Such in brief is the official record of the life of a very charming Malay gentleman who but for the force of circumstances might have sat on the throne of Perak. He was beloved by his unofficial colleagues on the Federal Council. He generally turned up at my house about tea-time the day before a Council meeting in order to tell me what he was going to say the next day—a practice he continued for five or six years when I was no longer a member of the Council. He always had the outline of his speeches written out, but was never happy until he thought he had got the right phrase to

express his meaning. And through all our conversations there was the leit motif of duty to his Sultan and his race and a desire to show the utmost courtesy to the High Commissioner.

A. Grant Mackie.

I am indebted to *The Times of Malaya* for the following particulars of my old friend the late Grant Mackie who died at Port Said, in October 1933. Born in Moray, Scotland, in 1854, Grant Mackie was educated at Edinburgh University and, on completion of his career, there proceeded to Ceylon and commenced planting in 1875. When coffee failed, Grant Mackie, like several other Ceylon planters, left Ceylon and made his way to Malaya, arriving in Selangor in 1883. In 1884, Grant Mackie went to Perak where he commenced contracting and planting. He opened up Kamuning Estate, Sungei Siput, in 1887, for T. H. Hill, who had obtained the land from the Perak Government absolutely free of rent in recognition of his pioneering work in the country. In those days Kamuning was planted with coffee, papaya, lemon grass and pepper. From the papaya a juice was extracted and exported. Hill who as already mentioned was senior partner of the firm of Hill and Rathbone, Contractors, gave Grant Mackie his first job in Perak. Later Mackie was made a partner in the firm, which constructed many of the roads in Perak including sections of the main trunk road.

He was Construction Engineer for the at one time privately owned Seremban-Port Dickson railway. From contracting, Grant Mackie went in for tin-mining, making and losing fortunes. It is said of him that he was one of the first persons to prospect the Tronoh mines property. His report was, so it was said, that the property contained insufficient

tin to make it worth mining. Mackie was the last Managing Director of the engineering firm of D. G. Robertson and Co., Kuala Lumpur, a firm started by the late D. G. Robertson, who was at one time manager of the Federated Engineering Company. Mackie was one of the promoters of the Klang River Tin Dredging Company in which he had a large interest. He retired from Malaya a few years ago and made Port Said his home, paying occasional visits to Malaya. Among those hardy Malayan pioneers whose memories merit recording none stands out more prominently for big-hearted hospitality and readiness to shout with laughter at jokes at his own expense than Grant Mackie, whose connection with Malaya dated so far back as 1883.

I only knew him during the last fifteen or twenty years of his long residence in Malaya. Our first common interest was motor cars. He bought my Ford car, one of the first batch imported here. He was faithful to Ford cars for many years and always added some gadget of his own to each successive model. Mackie had the utmost contempt for many conventions. He always went to the Lake Club in a white suit with a tutup coat. His language was free and easy. But he was quick to recognise and resent bad manners in men much younger than himself. Mackie will always be remembered—so long as anybody is remembered at all in this part of the world—for his marvellous capacity for imbibing various brands of alcohol at one sitting. He would drink in turn whiskey, brandy, gin and sherry, without this mixture having any effect on his sobriety. I think he rather gloried in this peculiar ability to mix drinks without any disastrous results. He had a fund of stories concerning his earlier life in Malaya and was always good company.

Clashing Personalities.

Right through the official history of this part of the world there has always been a clashing of dominant personalities. Rumour had it that Sir (then Mr.) Frank Swettenham and the late Sir (then Mr.) William Maxwell did not always see eye to eye. Then there was the late Sir John Anderson and the late Sir William Taylor who must have had many a tussle. And later, history repeating itself, the relations between Sir Laurence Guillemard and Sir George Maxwell were certainly strained at times. Further reference to four of these protagonists will appear in a later chapter. Neither Sir Frank, Sir Laurence nor Sir George comes in the category of personalities of the past. They are still men of to-day leading an active busy life in England.

CHAPTER III.

EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS.

The history of Selangor may be divided into three epochs, Selangor before the arrival of His Highness Tengku di Udin (commonly known as Tengku Kudin); Selangor during that noble's reign as Viceroy of the State; and Selangor under British administration. A powerful Malay noble of commanding intellect and outstanding personality, a prince of the blood royal, brother of the then Sultan of Kedah, and son-in-law to the Sultan of Selangor, Tengku Kudin who came to Selangor in 1867 was not the man to sit idle when once he got a foothold in the country of his adoption. At that time Sultan Abdul Samad lived in Klang, and being only too pleased to get somebody to help him, appointed Tengku Kudin, Viceroy of Selangor (within a year of his arrival) and gave him Langat as a place of residence, with the revenue derivable therefrom for his own use. The Tengku having to go to Kedah soon afterwards, on account of his mother's death, heard that the Sultan had returned to Langat and had authorised Raja Ismail to attack Raja Mahdi in Klang. Raja Mahdi, a grandson of Sultan Muhamad (uncle and predecessor of the then Sultan, Abdul Samad), had attacked Raja Ismail's father, the Governor of Klang, had driven him out of the country, and had since then practically set up in Klang as a ruler on his own account. The Sultan himself, openly at least, sided with neither party, preferring to let them fight it out between themselves. Tengku Kudin on hearing this news returned at the head of 500 Kedah men and at once called upon Raja Mahdi for obedience, at the same time sending him a copy of his documentary authority

as Viceroy. Raja Mahdi said it was a forgery. Leaving 50 Kedah men to guard his family at Langat, Tengku Kudin took the field and after some stockade fighting drove Raja Mahdi out of Klang. This was about 1870.

The Sultan then gave Klang to the Tengku as a residence instead of Langat. Raja Mahdi's next move was to capture Kuala Selangor from Raja Musah, the Sultan's eldest son. But the arrival of H.M.S. *Rinaldo* trumped this trick by a bombardment in the July of 1871, and Raja Mahdi disappeared for a time to Johore, via Sumatra, and Tengku Kudin undertook to garrison Kuala Selangor with Sepoys and Malays, leaving Raja Yacoob, another of the Sultan's sons, in command. Raja Yacoob did not stay long, and the place again fell into the hands of the Tengku's enemies. During this time Syed Mashor and Raja Mahmud were acting on the offensive at Petaling, and it was not until nearly a year later that, having routed these turbulent chiefs, the Viceroy was enabled to personally lead an expedition against Kuala Selangor, which he took after driving out Raja Musah, who at this time found favour neither with Sultan nor Viceroy—his father and brother-in-law. Tengku Kudin's power was now firmly established, and history will not only hand down his name as the most distinguished noble of those times in Selangor, but as a man who resolutely put his foot down upon piracy, even when it was strongly suspected, if not actually known, that several of the leading nobles of the country were engaged in that exciting recreation. When the famous Morib pirates were captured and tried at Kuala Jugra in 1874—with H.M.S. ships *Thalia* and *Rinaldo* lying outside the bar—His Highness Tengku Di Udin sat as President of the Court, and solemnly passed the death sentence upon seven out of the eight prisoners—one being reprieved on account of his youth. Before J. G. Davidson was formally appointed the first British Resident

of Selangor, he had for some time been the personal friend and adviser of Tengku Kudin, whom he had assisted both personally and with funds. For several years after the arrival of a British Resident, Tengku Di Udin sat as President of the newly formed State Council, and then finally retired from active participation in the government of the country on a well-earned pension.

But he still maintained his residence in Klang and it was there that I had the honour of meeting him when I was a young A.D.O. His actual style of living was different from that of the ordinary Malay. He kept a Chinese cook and his table was laid in European style. I have seen him wearing a topee. But at public functions or social gatherings, at which he very occasionally attended, he would wear a red fez to complete his well cut European clothes. Tall, dignified and well dressed he always looked the most distinguished person present at any gathering he attended.

When War Broke Out.

On Sunday, August 3rd, 1914, Germany declared war on France.

On Monday, August 4th, 1914, Great Britain declared war on Germany.

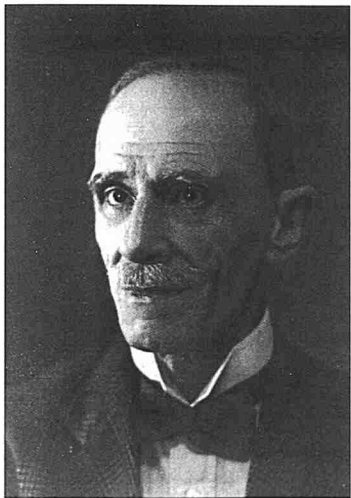
A special meeting of the Selangor Chamber of Commerce with A. K. E. Hampshire in the chair was held at Kuala Lumpur on Saturday, August 2nd, 1914, to consider the position in the event of War being declared.¹ Many views were expressed at this meeting: various suggestions were agreed to and certain lines of action were approved. The latter included the appointment then and there of an

¹ The Selangor (later F.M.S.) Chamber of Commerce had been established around 1910 by a rapidly expanding European business community.

Emergency Committee of the Hon. Mr. E. B. Skinner (planter), the Hon. Mr. W. F. Nutt (Straits Trading Co.), the Hon. Mr. Eric Macfadyen (planter), A. K. E. Hampshire (merchant), P. de C. Morris (Hongkong and Shanghai Bank), J. Argyll Robertson (Chartered Bank of I.A. & C.), J. H. M. Robson (Malay Mail Press Co.), J. A. Russell (miner and property owner) and H. C. E. Zacharias (Secretary, Planters' Association of Malaya) with P. W. Gleeson as Secretary).

The immediate objective of this Emergency Committee was to interview the Acting British Resident (in the absence of the Acting Chief Secretary to Government) and the Under Secretary to Government, F.M.S., in order to place before these high officials the various suggestions made and conclusions arrived at by the Selangor Chamber of Commerce in special meeting assembled. The Emergency Committee was to remain in office as a means of placing before the Government "the views of the public" and was only to be dissolved by its own resolution. The official interview took place. My personal impression is that both E. M. Burnside (acting Resident) and J. F. Owen (Under Secretary to Government, F.M.S.) were surprised at being asked to meet us. They were polite but somewhat chilly, although the popular J. F. Owen was the friend of everybody present.² No doubt nerves were a little on edge at such an anxious time and the Government representatives probably thought we were taking too much upon ourselves in telling

² These comparatively junior deputies correctly anticipated the reaction of their substantive seniors who later characterized the Chamber's suggestions as 'alarmist proposals'. *Annual Report Selangor 1914*, para. 142. J. M. Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur 1857-1939*, MBRAS Monograph No. 29, 2000, p. 239, implies that the deputation actually met Brockman (C.S. F.M.S.) but the full text of Robson's account of the interview now available makes it clear that this was not so.



J. H. M. Robson, C.B.E.

... and the fact that the study was conducted in a developing country, where the business environment is highly volatile and uncertain. The study also has some limitations, such as the small sample size and the lack of control over the variables.

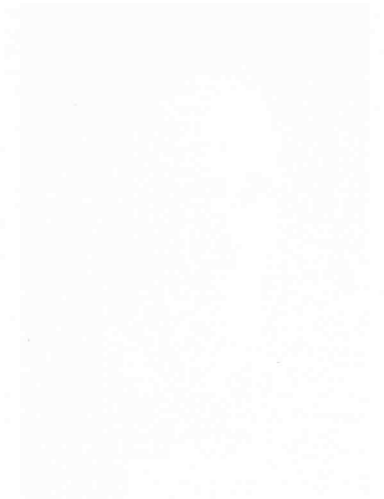


Figure 1. [Illegible text]

... and the fact that the study was conducted in a developing country, where the business environment is highly volatile and uncertain. The study also has some limitations, such as the small sample size and the lack of control over the variables.

them what we thought they ought to do. We said that owing to the extremely critical state of affairs it was essential that the Acting Chief Secretary to Government (R. G. Watson,) should return at once to Kuala Lumpur from a hill station where he was at the moment. He did so and probably would have done so in any case; but it was understood at the time that he resented being "called" back to headquarters.

In the light of what we know now of Selangor during the War years, some of the suggestions made by the local Chamber of Commerce at the beginning of August 1914 make somewhat quaint reading. One was that in the event of a run on the banks, the Government should authorise the banks to pay out a part only of the money asked for. Actually there was no run on the banks. Various suggestions were made to ensure the maintenance of law and order, including the concentration of Volunteers in mufti in the mining centres, the appointment of a military man as Adjutant to the Volunteers (the holder of the appointment was ill), the withdrawal of some of the Malay Police from the rural districts to head-quarters, the keeping open of the telegraph and telephone offices day and night, the regulation of food prices, the arming of guards and other officials on goods trains to prevent said trains being raided at stations, and the supply of search-lights for the use of Volunteers on night duty. As the War might "continue for a considerable time" thought the members of the Chamber of Commerce, it was suggested that planters should be asked to plant up small areas of their estates with quick growing food crops. It was also agreed at the special meeting that the Government be requested to suspend the working of the Labour Code, so far as it concerned the payment of coolies' wages in full. But what was troubling the unofficial community more than

anything else at the moment was the fact that the Metal Market had closed in London so there was no market for tin.

It was naturally thought that this might lead to serious local disturbances. So it was decided to ask the Government to approve of the two big tin smelting companies advancing, under Government guarantee, 50% on the value of tin ore, based on the price when the Metal Exchange closed, and W. F. Nutt was requested to proceed to Singapore to consult with his Directors with a view to bringing the facts of the tin position before the High Commissioner. (R. J. Wilkinson was then acting Governor and High Commissioner. Sir Arthur Young returned in September). To quote from the records of the Selangor Chamber of Commerce:—

"A meeting subsequently took place at Government House, Singapore, and an arrangement was come to by which the F.M.S. Government created a market for tin at \$60 and purchased through the European smelters at that price.....It is interesting at this juncture to note that owing to the financial stringency of the F.M.S., due to financing the Siamese and other foreign loans, the F.M.S. Government, though possessing sound securities, was not in a position owing to shortage of ready cash to finance the tin purchases and the S.S. Government therefore had to come to its assistance.

"There is little doubt that the timely assistance of Government in creating a market at \$60 saved the tin industry from a serious set back and the Native States from a serious crisis. The F.M.S. Government continued to purchase tin at \$60 through the European smelters up to the 17th August, when the Singapore market opened. The local price was quoted at \$62 and reached \$67 by the end of that month. At first miners were disinclined to sell at \$60, but as money became scarce and coolies required advances, sales

increased in quantity. Miners anticipated that the price of tin would boom owing to the incidence of war, but in the early part of September the bottom again fell out of the market, and the F.M.S. Government again came forward on the 8th of that month and decided to purchase as before tin at \$60, this continued to 21st September, when the price rose to \$63, but fell again to \$60 on 28th Sept. The financial position being easier and there being a market in the Colony, the European smelters carried on their business as usual on their own account at current prices until 14th October, when the market again collapsed, and from indication from London the position was even more serious than before. The F.M.S. Government which already held large quantities of tin, then came forward and offered to purchase tin at \$57 per picul and a few transactions took place on that basis.

"On 17th October the market in the Colony opened again with buyers over that figure, the price commenced to rise slightly, and the month closed with the local price at \$6-1½ per picul. About this time owing to the raids of the *Emden* which held up shipping in the Bay of Bengal, the big freight carriers were delayed in Singapore and Penang. Stocks in London being low, and the anticipation that further shipments would be delayed, caused prices for spot tin in London to rise considerably. Shipments for October from the Straits were estimated at 4,600 tons, but on the 22nd October, the S.S. *Troilus* carrying 800 tons was sunk by the *Emden* in the Bay of Bengal. The report of this forced up the price of three months tin from £125.10.0 to £136 at which price the market was firm, with an upward tendency. The local price during November fluctuated between \$62 and \$68.50. The Metal Exchange re-opened on 17th November, and confidence in the Straits was at once restored. Prices rose during December to \$72.50 the average price of that month

being \$70.01½. During the period related above the Government disposed of their holding of tin and netted a fair profit for their boldness in the action taken."

Murders.

I can recall four cases of murder in Selangor in which the victims were Europeans. The first of these cases, which was many years ago, involved the death of two Europeans. This is the story as I remember it. The gaoler in Kuala Lumpur, a man named Foster, went into the town in the evening with his wife and probably had drinks there. Returning home the couple started quarrelling and on arrival at their quarters Foster went in and shut the door, leaving his wife outside. Mrs. Foster started making a row, which was heard by Poole, one of the gaol warders. So Poole came across to see what the trouble was about and to act as peacemaker. Foster opened the door, shot both Poole and his wife and then shot himself. They died; but he recovered and was tried for murder and sentenced to death. The Governor in Singapore commuted the sentence to penal servitude for life. On what grounds I do not know. Probably because Foster was drunk and did not know what he was doing. He was sent to England to serve his sentence and was, I believe, released some twenty years later. Naturally the case caused a great sensation in our then very small European community.

Another case involved the death of a European mine manager. A European woman was charged with the crime, convicted and sentenced to death. When her case came before the State Council, she was given a free pardon and promptly released.³ Two fairly recent and very sad cases, in

³ Robson here refers to the notorious Proudlock case of 1911, on which Somerset Maugham later based his short story, "The Letter". On the

both of which a European woman was shot by a house servant, will be known to most people still living here.

Murders perpetrated by Asiatics can generally be traced to the following causes:—

Among Chinese—money.

Among Tamils—drink.

Among Malays—women.

I remember receiving and recording a report of the death of a Malay fisherman. He had gone out to sea in his boat and was never seen again. His empty boat was ultimately recovered. The report sounded all right and may have been true; but, later on there were rumours that he had been too friendly with a Malay lady belonging to another household with the result that he had been “bumped off.” Instead of being “taken for a ride” he had met his fate at sea. Nothing more definite than rumour was ever heard about this particular death.

During the few years I was on the Bench I only committed one actual murderer for trial. In those days it was common practice for mining coolies to obtain an advance at one mine and then do a bolt to some other mine in a different neighbourhood. (The then punishment for this offence was from 6 to 12 strokes with a rattan and two or three weeks' imprisonment.) There were generally one or two Sikh or Pathan guards at all big mines. These men were very loyal to their employers. One evening a couple of these guards—Pathans I think—spotted some coolies trying to do

actual facts, and surrounding circumstances, see J. G. Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941: The Social History of a European Community in Colonial South-East Asia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979, Appendix 2, and E. Lawlor, *Murder on the Verandah: Love and Betrayal in British Malaya*, London: HarperCollins, 1999.

a bolt and started in pursuit. The faster runner of the two caught up with the absconding coolies and seized one of them, who promptly turned round and stabbed his captor over the heart. But the wounded guard never let go, fell on his prisoner, held him till his friend arrived—and then expired. The Chinese coolie was ultimately hanged.

Temporary Insanity.

Tragic deaths, due to temporary insanity have not been altogether uncommon among European men in Selangor. I have known at least ten men who took their own lives. But I can only remember one case of a European woman committing suicide. She drowned herself in a bath tub. It sounds almost incredible that she could have done so. Yet, strange to relate, some years later a European man living in Kuala Lumpur also ended his life in the same way. It is always difficult to imagine a doctor in bad health. I have known a good many doctors and my general impression is that, in addition to a certain kindly sympathy common to the profession, they all radiate a sane and cheerful outlook on life. Nevertheless there has been more than one suicide among doctors in this part of the world. Many years ago I was having my Christmas dinner at a doctor's house in Kuala Lumpur. Two or three medical men were present. How the conversation drifted on to the subject of suicide I cannot remember, but it did, and each doctor present contributed his view as to the way he himself would end his own life if ever he was mad enough to think of doings such a thing. Dr. Z. said he would do so and so, and within a year or two—I forget dates—actually took his own life in the particular manner he had described at the dinner party. The following

story does not relate to any of the men present at that particular dinner party.

Over forty years ago I was an A.D.O. in a sub-district where there was a hospital in charge of a white man born in India. Let us call him Mr. A. I forget his exact medical qualifications, but I remember he occasionally performed operations because he once showed me a foot he had amputated as a matter of urgency. (As a rule serious operations were performed by a doctor from Kuala Lumpur). Mr. A. was a pleasant, cheerful, tubby little man who was very popular with the few Europeans residing in the district. He lived in the Rest House. There was at that time no completed railway line and travellers used this Rest House as a convenient stopping place, so Mr. A. seldom lacked company. As far as I knew there was no shadow on his life. Yet one night, after playing a friendly game of cards with two very decent fellows neither of whom were gamblers, A retired to his bedroom and blew his brains out with a gun. My bungalow was only a few hundred yards away from the Rest House. I had gone to bed when I heard a voice I knew calling me. I answered "Yes, what is it?" And a voice replied "A has....." and before the speaker could complete the sentence my brain registered the words yet to come—"shot himself." It must have been a case of mental telepathy, because I had never thought of such a thing in connection with A. On going across to the Rest House I found A huddled up on the floor, with part of the top of his head blown away, but still living. We placed him on a bed, sent for the senior dresser at the hospital and despatched two Tamil coolies to run the seventeen miles into Kuala Lumpur with a report of what had happened. Only Tamil coolies would travel long distances at night. There was very little that we could do. The dresser did what he could. A lay on the bed grunting, but the grunting

did not sound like that of a person in actual pain. He never regained consciousness but he lived for two or three hours and we could only tell when he had passed away by holding a looking glass in front of his mouth. Later I had the melancholy task of going through his effects and papers. The latter included a bundle of letters from a sister—the only relative who could be traced. I am not exaggerating when I say that both in form and substance those were the most beautiful letters I've ever read. What prompted A to take his life was never known. Salaries were small in those days and in company A was convivial. As far as I can remember he left neither cash assets nor debts.

Other Forms of Madness.

Like other District Officers and Assistant District Officers of those early days I had all sorts of strange experiences. I was once sent to take charge of a somewhat inaccessible place up a river which had then no road approach. It was a big Chinese settlement with no hospital and no other white man within a journey of several hours. The nearest Malay Kampong was at the mouth of the river. But I had a dozen Malay police under an N.C.O. and a few Malay boatmen living near my bungalow. A thoughtful Government had provided me with a medicine chest to enable me to doctor the inhabitants. One day the Police Corporal came to the bungalow to inform me that the wife of a constable "sudah jadi gila" and to ask for "ubat." On enquiry as to the nature of the lady's madness, I was informed that she would insist on running up and down the verandah of the police quarters in a state of nature. Out came the medicine chest and I presented the Corporal with two or three Cockles pills which I assured him were an infallible remedy for this particular form of madness!

Next morning he reported that the medicine had been most efficacious and that the lady had completely recovered. On another occasion in another out-station where I lived on a hill, a European lady dashed into my house to inform me that her husband was being murdered in the town. I knew her husband well but had never spoken to the lady. I had heard that she was peculiar. It was obvious from the wild look in her eyes and from her excited manner that she was suffering from hallucinations. The only thing to do was to send for her husband and try to pacify her pending his arrival. For about a quarter of an hour or so I had to listen to the wild out-pourings of an unbalanced mind, including the continued iteration of "Oh! Can't you hear they are killing him?" Finally the husband drove up and managed to get her away without any fuss. His presence calmed her down at once. They did not stay long in the district and I never heard what ultimately became of them.

The Case of Dr. X.

It was on a Sunday that a planting friend brought Dr. X. to dinner. He had met him casually in a Penang hotel. Dr. X. had told my friend that he had come to Malaya with the idea of setting up in private practice and my friend had advised him to come along to Kuala Lumpur and have a look round. Dr. X. was a fine looking, middle aged man with charming manners. He was also a most interesting personality—the cultured man of the world who had read much, travelled extensively and could express himself well without in any way monopolising the conversation. After dinner Dr. X. spoke of certain misconceptions among laymen about medical matters. He mentioned a prevalent belief that a cut between finger and thumb was the cause of lockjaw and then spoke of

tetanus. On Monday my planting friend returned to his estate and I asked Dr. X to dine with me again as he wanted to talk about the possibility of settling in Kuala Lumpur. On arrival at my house he mentioned that when crossing the railway line from the hotel to the Selangor Club he had slipped, fallen and scratched the palm of his hand. He showed me an apparently superficial abrasion about the size of a twenty cent piece, said he would have it attended to and mentioned the risk of tetanus. On Tuesday I lunched with him in town when he showed me that he had got some sticking plaster on his hand and I fancy he again mentioned the word tetanus. He then went off to an out-station to stay a night or two with my planting friend. On the Thursday or Friday morning—I forget which—I had a telephone message from the European hospital to ask if I knew Dr. X. and, on my replying in the affirmative, was told that he was in a dying condition. On my arrival at the hospital I found a nurse standing alongside his bed with a chloroform bottle in her hand. Dr. X. was past knowing anybody. It was a bad case of tetanus. He died that morning. It appears that when dining with one or two planters on the estate he had again talked of tetanus and next day developed this dreadful ailment. He was brought back to Kuala Lumpur with the greatest difficulty.

After his death his one and only suit case was opened in the presence of witnesses and was found to be almost empty of even the barest necessities, but it did contain a small wooden box full of used morphia syringes. It was subsequently discovered that Dr. X. had been addicted to the use of some such drug.

Dr. X.'s death was recorded as due to tetanus, but one of the most brilliant doctors in the country afterwards expressed his opinion to me that the scratch on the hand may have had

nothing to do with the death which might have been caused by morphia tetanus owing to the use of a dirty needle.

Many years later I told this story to a resident in Kuala Lumpur who informed me that he remembered another case of a man falling in the same neighbourhood, who also developed and died of tetanus, and he even thought there was a third case but could not be sure. So it will always remain a mystery as to what really did cause the death of Dr. X.

A Surprising Recovery.

Almost within sight of a police-station the mandor of a gang of survey coolies was attacked with a parang by one of his coolies. The supposed dead man was buried by his assailant under pine-apple leaves and a discarded floor mat. Yet in spite of terrible wounds, which included a huge gash at the back of the neck—the would be murderer had attempted to cut off the poor fellow's head—the victim managed to recover consciousness and crawl to the police station. The Sergeant in charge fixed up a long cane chair with bamboo poles and paid Chinese coolies to rush the injured man to the nearest hospital six miles away at the place where I lived. A mounted messenger arrived in advance of the chair cortège, to bring us the news. The employer of the mandor and myself, having warned the local hospital, rode out to meet the procession. The Chinese chair coolies had come along at a steady trot. They wore nothing but pants and were pouring with sweat. (It was a hot afternoon). The sight of the wounded man in the chair was both remarkable and terrible. It looked as if his head was half severed from his body—owing to the muscles at the back of the neck having been cut through—one or more fingers had been chopped off and, as was ultimately discovered, there were other serious wounds

on the body. On arrival at the hospital, the Jaffna Tamil apothecary in charge found himself confronted with a serious task. He said that the sewing up of the neck would be a long job and that the man's life would perhaps depend on the time taken in attending to the various wounds. He wanted help in sewing up the neck. Among those who had come up with the chair coolies was a Malay constable who promptly offered to assist, explaining that he had been accustomed to sewing sails when a sailor. His help was accepted. He and the apothecary between them made a very good job of it. For many days it was a toss up if the man would live, but thanks to the care of the apothecary and two visits from European doctors when the man had been given up for lost, he ultimately recovered. His assailant was arrested and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. Robbery was the main motive for this attempted murder. The injured man was known to have had his savings on his person.

Almost a Miracle.

A Chinese shop-keeper was walking down the kerosine oil lit main street of one of our smaller townships with some money in his pocket when he was met by a fellow countryman who deliberately shot him point blank in the abdomen, grabbed his money and got away with it. I was called to the hospital to take what would presumably be a dying deposition. On arrival at the hospital I found the Tamil apothecary in charge looking rather pleased with himself. Incidentally it may be mentioned that Jaffna Tamils who were placed in charge of many of the smaller hospitals did magnificent work within the limits of their qualifications. They were fine fellows. However to return to the story. On arrival of the patient at the hospital, the apothecary had helped to place

him on a table for examination, and in doing so had felt a small lump on the lower part of the patient's buttocks. He rightly guessed that this was the bullet fired into the abdomen. A slight cut with a lancet and out it came. From the position of this excision it was evident that in some mysterious way the bullet must have travelled round the abdomen. Interest then centred on what part of the patient's interior had been perforated by the bullet in its run round. Nobody will ever know. But this is a fact. In about three weeks' time, the patient had completely recovered and was back in his shop again.

Another Sort of Miracle.

It was in this same township that the Penghulu once solemnly reported to me that a Malay woman had given birth to an egg. He wanted to know how this was to be recorded in the Register of Births. To the best of my recollection I was actually shown the egg. Being very young at the time I did not believe the story, although the Penghulu himself appeared to do so. But having since heard much about the passing of stones I have since wondered if this was or was not an anatomical miracle.

Tiger Stories.

Tigers are not seen frequently in Malaya except on our postage stamps. The great majority of Europeans never come across a tiger during the whole of their stay in Malaya. Forty years ago, however, one was always hearing about people being killed by tigers. The Kuala Langat and Ulu Selangor districts had the worst reputation. Almost the first of the Collectors and Magistrates to be stationed at Jugra was a Mr. Innes, husband of the lady who wrote *The Golden Chersonese*

with the Gilding Off. One day when he was sitting in a shed in his garden reading a newspaper, he suddenly looked up to see a tiger a few yards away. Nothing happened. Equally fortunate was a railway man named Crockhart, engaged on the construction of the railway line from Rawang to Kuala Kubu. He was walking through a deep cutting when he observed a tiger calmly walking towards him. As he told me afterwards, Crockhart knew that it would probably be fatal to turn and run. So he continued walking slowly towards the tiger, when to his relief the animal turned off on to a track at the side of the cutting which had been used by coolies to save them the longer walk round.

I once caught a glimpse of a tiger in the *lalang* when I was riding a small pony on a jungle track between Rawang and Kuala Selangor, before the through road was constructed. And on another occasion I was called to see a fine tigress which had been caught in a flimsy looking bamboo trap on a gambier estate at Sepang. After consultation with the Malay Police Sergeant, I decided that the safest thing to do was to shoot the animal. My experience of rifle shooting being *nil*, and knowing nothing about the Sergeant's prowess with a gun, it was arranged that we should act as joint executioners. Standing about six feet apart we were both to fire with police rifles at the head of the tigress when I gave the signal. This was done. We saw no movement and there was the tigress quite dead: but the head of the animal was where its tail had been at the moment we fired. Dugan Hampshire was stationed at Kuala Kubu when the surrounding territory was a favourite haunt for tigers. Word came in one day from S. T. Debney, the surveyor, that there was a tiger in the neighbourhood of his camp, so D. H. Hampshire and Sidney Smith of the P.W.D. joined forces and went out to assist Debney in tracking the animal. To cut a long story short,

they did not find a big tiger. What they did discover was a tiger cub in a disused *lumbong Siam*.⁴ The problem was how to get it out alive. A cage was made and then Dugan proceeded to lasso the cub at the bottom of the pit. This was a long and difficult operation, but was eventually successful and the cub was dragged up into the cage. The next job was to cut some of the cord which had got pretty tightly fixed round the cub. This could only be done through the bars of the cage—a by no means easy task. It had become dark by this time and, as luck would have it, the one and only hurricane lamp got accidentally smashed, so the party of hunters together with Debney's coolies had to march back through the jungle to Kuala Kubu in total darkness carrying an infuriated tiger cub in a very primitive cage. Debney kept the animal in his garden at Kuala Kubu for some years. During this time two other cubs were caught in pits not very far away from where the first one was housed. Another story told me by Dugan is that when W. P. Hume was District Officer at Kuala Kubu, he was told by his servant one evening, just before dinner, that there was a tiger somewhere about the garden. Hume took his gun, went out, saw something moving in the darkness and promptly fired at it. And then found that he had killed a tiger cub.

In the early days when our only two European Police Inspectors were both stationed in Kuala Lumpur, District Officers and Assistant District Officers performed many of the duties now undertaken by Police Officers. On one occasion a report came in from a village about six miles away that a Malay wood-cutter or lampan worker had been carried

⁴ A *lumbong Siam* was a narrow vertical shaft or pit dug to give access to a tin-bearing stratum some ten feet or more below the surface. See Yip Yat Hoong, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1969, p. 87.

off by a tiger. It was my job to organize a search party, so gathering together half a dozen Malay police with their rifles, off we went. What use I would have been in the jungle with an old-fashioned police rifle, was luckily never put to the test, for on arrival at the village we found that the body had already been recovered and brought in by the villagers. One arm had been gnawed clean off at the shoulder. There were no other marks of violence on the body and from the calm expression on the dead man's face I imagine he must have been killed by a sudden blow before the tiger started to mutilate the body.

A Sad Ending.

The late F. V. Guy came to Kuala Lumpur in 1903 to manage the Federal Dispensary. He was interested in all sorts of animals and kept a menagerie in his garden on Bukit Bintang Road. Among his pets which ran loose about the garden were two small *orang utan*. When Guy had his evening stengah in the garden, three were provided: one for Guy and one for each of the *orang utan*. Towards the end of 1910 Guy made a trip to Kelantan with the representative of Messrs. Pathè Frères, the cinematograph film manufacturers. He took with him a black panther and a leopard, the intention being to match these beasts against Kelantan buffalo bulls and obtain a cinematograph picture of the fights. The party duly arrived at Kota Bahru, and proceeded to make the necessary arrangements. It was at first intended that the fights should take place in the enclosure usually used for bull-fights. This enclosure, however, was only five to six feet high, and when Guy saw it he said that on no account would he release his animals in a place like that. It was therefore arranged to hold the fight in the gaol yard. The

yard was surrounded by a wall nine feet high, and on the top of this was placed corrugated zinc to prevent the animals getting a purchase if they attempted to escape. In the middle of the yard is the gaol. A temporary wall was put up on each side of the gaol proper. The cages containing the panther and the leopard were placed at an opening in this wall similar to that by which bulls are admitted into the arena in the Spanish bull fights. Guy, who was stationed by the cages, was thus not in the yard itself. On the other side at the junction of the permanent and temporary walls a platform with a kind of cage was erected for the use of the camera man. The operator having taken up his position, and the bull being already in the yard, Guy opened the cage to let the panther in. The beast would not go in at first, and had to be prodded before he would do so. Once in, the panther would not approach the bull, but stalked along the side of the wall looking for some means of escape. Eventually the brute espied a small piece of wood projecting from the flooring of the platform provided for the camera man. It leapt on to this and thence on to the wall of the yard and promptly made off, scattering the native spectators, who were either sitting on the wall or on stands outside. The panther made straight for a compound close by, and Guy, having seen what had happened, took up a gun and followed. Having reached the compound, he got quite close to the brute, and let fly with buckshot. At such short range, the shot did not scatter, and the animal was not badly injured. The panther then leapt and got Guy's right hand in its mouth, the two rolling over on the ground.

Guy, with his left hand, felt for a knife which he carried in his belt, and meanwhile a European came up with a gun and fired at the panther. As bad luck would have it, the shot, passing through Guy's right thigh, lodged in the left thigh

higher up. His would be saviour then dashed up and despatched the panther with a sheath knife. Guy was placed on board the S.S. *Boribat*, in charge of Dr. Gimlette, to be brought to the General Hospital at Singapore, but, succumbed on the boat to his injuries. He remained bright and cheerful until the end, which occurred about 26 hours after the accident. The body was taken on shore at Trengganu, where Dr. Gimlette superintended the interment.

Catching Crocodiles.

There are two ways of bagging a crocodile, one by taking pot shots with a rifle whilst the crocodile is asleep on the mud-bank of a river at low water; the other by catching with a baited line, and then playing the brute like a fish. The first method is not so easy as it sounds, for unless the brute is hit in one of certain particular parts of the body, the bullet simply causes it to disappear into the river with a buck jump, to be seen no more. Crocodiles are cannibals and eat their own species. The other method is more exciting.⁵ The *modus operandi* is as follows: A small piece of hard wood about 6 in. or 8 in. long and about three quarters of an inch thick, is sharpened at both ends, and to the middle of this the end of a yard of twine is firmly fastened, the twine having about a dozen strands just held together by, say, a couple of knots, so as to prevent the crocodile from biting it through, as the strands simply get between its teeth. To the other end of this twine is fastened a single uncut rattan, at least 20 feet long, and about a quarter of an inch in thickness or a little bigger.

⁵ An illustration showing the method in use can be seen in W. T. Hornaday, *Two Years in the Jungle: The Experiences of a Hunter and Naturalist in India, Ceylon, the Malay Peninsula and Borneo*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1885, p. 306.

A small stick affixed to the end of the line, to act as a visible float, completes this part of the gear. Probably a crocodile will eat anything, but it is certainly partial to chicken—at least that bait is always successful in the Sepang river where I have tried it—so, having killed some sort of fowl, the body is cut through the breast lengthways from head to tail and the small piece of pointed hard wood inserted, and the bird bound up again with string. Next two pieces of light wood are nailed together, forming a small floating platform about a foot square, and on this the fowl is placed, raised on miniature trestles. The small platform thus furnished is placed in a likely spot near the bank of a river, and the rattan line is hitched over a small branch of a tree on the bank in order that the bait platform may not be carried away by the tide. By next morning the rattan line, bait, and platform may all have disappeared, which probably means that the crocodile, having swallowed the fowl, has gone off with the rattan in tow, a tug being sufficient to set it free, whilst the platform, thus released, has drifted away.

A crocodile is sometimes aggressive, so, when going in pursuit, it is better to have a boat than a sampan. Malay paddles are the most convenient in either case. It is also advisable to have a second man with a rifle. The crocodile has probably a favourite place upstream, so the boatmen paddle up on the look-out for the rattan (which always floats), finding it at length close to the mangrove roots bordering on the river, perhaps. The boat hook picks up the floating stick end of the line, and with a couple of boatmen on to this and a crocodile at the other end with the small pointed hard wood stick across his throat, the excitement begins. The crocodile plunges about amidst the mangrove roots under water, and then makes a rush; the rattan is paid out again and the boat follows; then the quarry rushes under the boat,

perhaps at the boat, whilst the line is steadily pulled in. This proceeding may last some time. The only thing to be afraid of is the rattan's getting twisted round a *bakau* root under water, and so preventing a capture. Otherwise, after a good deal of "playing" of a rather violent nature, the continual pulling of the rattan holders in the boat, or his own aggressiveness, induces the brute to show a head above the surface, whereat the rifles crack and the crocodile dies, though often not till four or five bullets have been put into different parts of his body.

The Huxley Contracts.

A matter which aroused considerable public interest at the time (1921-1922) was the cancellation of contracts for the erection of new hospital buildings in Kuala Lumpur, and the payment of \$225,000 to Major Huxley for breach of contract.⁶ A brief record of the negotiations which led to the making of this payment was given by the Acting Chief Secretary (E. S. Hose) when speaking in the Federal Council on July 10th, 1923. He said:—

"I propose to refresh honourable members' memories by referring to some of the salient facts in connection with these contracts.

⁶ W. S. Huxley had been Assistant Government Architect before the war, and on his return from military service in Europe was appointed to the then vacant post of Government Architect. Shortage of labour and materials had halted the government building programme in the war years, but its revival in 1920, with the very expensive hospital building project, was rash. The facts given speak for themselves, but even if there had been a properly negotiated fixed price contract let to an independent contractor, the abrupt decline of government revenues in the slump of 1921 would have enforced cancellation of the contract and a substantial compensation payment. See Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur*, p. 245.

"In August, 1920, the construction of new European and General Hospitals in Kuala Lumpur was considered to be a matter of urgency.

"Mr. Kenny considered that owing to fluctuation in prices satisfactory results would not be obtained by relying on tenders from recognised contractors.

"In September, Major Huxley had resigned his appointment as Government Architect, and Mr. Kenny recommended that the work be given to Major Huxley on a commission of 15 *per cent.* on the cost of all work done, as the very best arrangement that could be made. This form of contract was, according to the information in the possession of the Government, the usual form of contract at Home at the time. Mr. Kenny also attached much importance to the fact that Major Huxley had a considerable command of labour.

"The proposal was sanctioned by the Acting Chief Secretary—Sir (then Mr.) Frederick James—on 25th September, after prolonged discussion with Mr. Kenny, and with the approval of the High Commissioner. It is considered that the percentage was unnecessarily high and that Major Huxley would probably have accepted a lower figure.

"The terms intended in the original correspondence are not quite clear, but Mr. Kenny states that he did not intend that Major Huxley should draw 15 *per cent.* on labour, and 15 *per cent.* on any materials that were ordered through him.

"In January, 1921, Major Huxley signed a contract which makes it clear that he was only to draw 15 *per cent.* on labour and 15 *per cent.* on materials which the supervising officer thought fit to order through him.

"Before the contract was signed, however, there was evidently a misunderstanding on this point, with the result that Major Huxley was called upon to supply materials which

might have been obtained by the Government without incurring the 15 *per cent.* commission.

"On 18th March, 1921, all work was stopped by the Government owing to the lack of funds, and when it became clear that it was necessary definitely to abandon the work, Major Huxley became entitled to compensation on a basis of the probable profits he would have made had the work been completed. At that time approximately \$875,000 had been spent, and approximately \$66,000 had been drawn in commission by Major Huxley.

"After protracted negotiations, the Government decided to pay Major Huxley a further \$225,000 in full settlement of all claims. The settlement was complicated by the fact that, while there were no plans attached to one of the contracts, the plans which were eventually attached to the other, together with ambiguous expressions in the earlier correspondence, left it in doubt whether the contracts covered only the original scheme costing \$3,600,000 or an extended scheme costing \$7,600,000.

"The following figures are rather significant in that connection. Major Huxley will receive altogether \$291,000, with interest at 7 *per cent.* on the final payment of \$125,000. This represents approximately 8.08 per cent on \$3,600,000, or 3.8 per cent on \$7,600,000.

"It does not appear from these figures that the result has proved unduly costly to the Government, though no doubt the initial misunderstanding and uncertainty hampered Mr. Bannon in effecting a settlement.

"It is, of course, unfortunate that Government has had to pay \$225,000 and has nothing to show for it, but that is an unavoidable result of the slump.

"It is considered that the terms of the settlement are reasonable."

[These hospitals have yet to be built.]

Golden Raub.

About forty-five years ago the late W. Bibby, generally known as Old Bibby—probably because he was the father of grown-up sons—came up from Australia with a small party of expert mining men to take over on behalf of The Raub Australian Syndicate, Ltd. a certain gold bearing property owned by Raja Impeh, of Pahang. In 1893 the Syndicate became The Raub Australian Gold Mining Company, Ltd. Old Bibby was the local resident Manager until he died in 1900. He was succeeded by G. B. Whyte, who has long since happily settled down in Sydney, and still keeps up a correspondence with one or two friends in Malaya. Altogether there have been eight different Managers at Raub, including C. G. Warnford-Lock (1902–1905), who wrote a book on "Mining in Malaya", W. H. Martin (1905–1919) now living in Kuala Lumpur and A. S. Lilburne who has been in charge of the mine since 1919. Messrs. Derrick & Co., of Singapore, the local Secretaries, have been good enough to supply me with certain figures. The Raub Australian Gold Mining Company paid twelve dividends between 1893 and 1901. Approximately half of such dividends were appropriated against calls made on the partly paid one pound shares. Then there was a lapse of ten years until another dividend was declared on account of the year 1910–1911 and the shares became fully paid. No further dividends were declared until the year 1925–1926. Since then dividends have been declared regularly: the dividend for 1932 being 45%.

(At an early stage of the Company's existence the £1 shares were 18/6 paid up, but I cannot remember if this was the issue value.)

The following figures have been obtained through the courtesy of Messrs. Fraser & Co. of Singapore:— In March 1899 the Raub Company's shares changed hands at \$65. In January 1900 the price was \$62 but by December had fallen to \$47.25. Quotations for 1901 were:—

January	...	\$47.00
February	...	40.00
March	...	35.00
May 6th	...	33.00
" 11th	...	22.00
" 16th	...	20.00
June 8th	...	16.00
" 13th	...	10.00
December	...	9.50

Old Bibby himself had a great belief in the mine. In the earlier days of its history he occasionally stayed with me when coming through Rawang with gold from the mine, and always talked with enthusiasm about future possibilities. The value of the shares in 1899 and 1900 shows that his confidence was shared by the investing public. When that loyal, lovable man, the late Sir W. Hood Treacher, was appointed Resident-General he was the holder of Raub shares and was told by higher authority that, in view of his official position, it might be as well if he ceased to have a financial interest in the mine, so rather against the grain he sold out when the market was about \$60.⁷ As events turned out it was lucky for

⁷ In the 1890s the rules on local investment by government officials were lax and uncertain. H. S. Barlow, *Swettenham*, Kuala Lumpur: Southdene, 1995, p. 423, explains the problems with reference to Swettenham's much more questionable transactions.

him that he sold out at the time he did. What sent the market price of the shares tumbling down in 1901 were reports on the mine, first by E. T. McCarthy and secondly by J. H. Curle. Then came the black years in Raub's history. In a long period of something like 25 years only one dividend was paid. The market price became merely nominal. People who had shares forgot that they held any. To-day (January 1934) the one pound shares, now split into five shilling shares, are quoted locally at \$8.55 buyers i.e., about 300% above par. Old Bibby—a fine old fellow—had five sons. William Charles, the eldest, was killed by falling down a shaft at Jelebu in 1898. Another son Frederick Alfred died at Raub in 1902. In the same year two sons returned to Australia. Arthur Hector Bibby—"Mons"—at one time manager at South Raub—a Singapore Company, still has interests in Malaya and now lives in Singapore, when he is not staying at Raub with his old friend, G. M. Harding, a proprietary planter.

A Point of Law.

Law is of course the human conception of justice. Misfortune is sometimes due to ignorance of the law by the individual. Hearing that a certain locality was supposed to contain rich tin bearing land two Chinese gentlemen entered into partnership to undertake mining in the indicated locality. As one of the partners did not live in Malaya, it was apparently arranged that the other partner would apply for the necessary mining titles and conduct the actual mining operations, the foreign partner putting up his share of the initial capital required. The result of actual operations on the ground failed to produce the anticipated profit. More and more money was sunk in the venture. Finally the foreign partner declined to put up any more money. The resident

partner, still hopeful, then borrowed money from other people understanding that his foreign partner had washed his hands of the whole business. In the course of time the resident partner struck better payable ground and began to make quite a handsome profit, some of which he used for the erection of shop-houses in the adjacent small township. After some years he was disagreeably surprised to receive a letter from his foreign partner suggesting that it was about time that accounts were rendered and a division made of the profit. The resident partner was most indignant. He claimed that the partnership had automatically ceased to exist when the foreign partner had declined to put up any more money. The foreign partner thought otherwise and took the matter to Court, basing his claim on the fact that the resident partner had never formally asked for cancellation of or repudiated the original partnership deed. The Supreme Court in Kuala Lumpur decided in favour of the foreign partner and ordered the mines and house property to be sold by public auction, the foreign partner to have half the proceeds of the sale. Whether he was to have anything beyond that in the form of unexpended cash profits, I cannot remember: nor can I remember if any of the mining titles were in the joint names of the two partners. May be that in those early days such titles were issued only to people actually resident in the country.

The Prince of Wales.

When the Prince of Wales visited Kuala Lumpur in 1922, he drove from Port Swettenham in the company of the Sultan of Perak, followed by a regular procession of motor cars conveying other notables. A few people waited outside the Kuala Lumpur railway station to see the Prince go by. To

their surprise the only passenger in the first car was a soldier with a rifle who was sitting in such a way that he could watch the second car in which sat the Prince and the Sultan. Another incident of this visit, which was scarcely noticed at the time, took place on the Padang when Royalty sat on a dais to receive certain public Addresses from the community. Left and right of the dais were serried ranks of school children, the general public standing some little way away from the front of the dais. After the formal part of the ceremony had been completed, the Prince descended from the dais to walk along in front of the benches accommodating the school children. One or two officials accompanied the Prince. When passing the main body of Asiatic spectators in front, a man suddenly dashed out with something in his hand. A member of the Prince's entourage was on him like a flash. The man was turned and pushed back into the crowd. He was a too enthusiastic photographer. The man who had pushed him back was said to be the Prince's personal police attendant. At the dinner given in honour of the Prince at the Selangor Club, the following procedure was observed. The invited guests stood in a sort of circle awaiting the arrival of the Prince and gubernatorial party—husbands and wives standing together. The Prince was conducted round the circle and the guests were introduced by name. The ladies curtsied, the men made a low bow and the Prince then shook hands with them. Some of the good ladies of Kuala Lumpur were a little anxious about their proficiency in the curtsy business.

A Pet Elephant.

A military man from Hong Kong on a big game hunting expedition in Selangor caught a baby elephant. Having no facilities for keeping the little fellow as a pet, he suggested

that I and my next door neighbour might like a baby elephant to play with. We were delighted, and it was decided that the animal should live in my compound. Within a day or so the little elephant was perfectly tame and would play about like a dog. It would even come into the house. When hungry it roared like a tiger and would then be given a bottle of rice pap which it would swig down with great enjoyment. Quite a number of bottles were accounted for in a day. Every evening the elephant was taken down to the river for a bathe. He loved this jaunt and was quite friendly with people he met or passed on the road, except Chinese. Apart from this exception, he was evidently quite happy and contented to be among human beings. Then my next door neighbour was offered an appointment in the Siamese Government Service and we thought it might be to his advantage if he arrived in that country bringing a present for the King in the form of a young elephant. So off went my friend and the elephant in charge of a Malay *gembala* from Perak. The King of Siam was delighted with the gift and during the time my friend was in Siam the King was always his staunch friend. Years later, when in Bangkok, I made enquiry at the elephant stables about the animal from Selangor. Replies were rather vague, but I gathered that the elephant brought in by a European was dead.

Great Provocation.

A superior intelligent looking Tamil contractor stood in the dock charged with killing a man. The case was simple. On returning home one evening he heard voices in his little house. Adjoining the house was a lean-to shed. He stopped for a minute to make sure that there was somebody in the house with his wife, went into the shed, and picked up some

weapon. Then, entering his house, he found a man making love to his wife and promptly killed him. Mr. Justice Kershaw, who had formerly been at the Colonial Bar, was on the Bench. The prisoner was found guilty of homicide. The judge, addressing the prisoner, said:—"You undoubtedly suffered the greatest provocation. Had you on hearing voices gone straight in to the house and killed your wife's paramour with your hands I could have taken a different view. But you took time to think of taking the law into your own hands. Therefore there was premeditation. You must go to prison for two years." These may not be the exact words used but they represent the general tenor of his Lordship's finding. [Mr. Justice Kershaw was a man of quiet retiring disposition. He was fond of taking long walks in the evening, generally dressed in a khaki suit. I do not know if he is still living.]

Since writing the above I have come across the following note in the *Straits Times* of January 29, 1934, concerning what a man may not do if he finds his wife with a lover in compromising circumstances:—

"Last Wednesday a Tamil estate coolie was fined \$14 by a Kuala Lumpur magistrate for stabbing a man whom he found in his wife's room. The husband caught the intruder as he was escaping over a partition and wounded him six times, although not fatally. Presumably the magistrate could not well have inflicted a lesser punishment, the law being what it is, but it is impossible not to sympathise with the prisoner. His wages as an estate labourer are not more than thirty cents a day, so that in all probability he will not be able to pay the fine and will have to undergo the alternative punishment of a short sentence in gaol. Adultery is one of the few matters in respect of which English law is in advance of public opinion. If a husband finds his wife with a lover he may belabour the man with his fists, or, more conventionally, with a horsewhip:

and nothing will happen to him if the bruised Don Juan takes the case to court. But if the husband uses a knife, pistol or other lethal weapon to avenge his honour he goes to gaol, while the man who has made him a cuckold goes scot free. This legal position is all very well so long as the husband is a bigger man than the intruder, or a better boxer, but what if he is physically unable to exact vengeance by non-lethal methods? Is the adulterer in such circumstances to be allowed to snap his fingers at the husband, with liability to no greater punishment than possible citation as co-respondent in a divorce suit? It is fairly certain that if juries had their own way in these cases they would give not a few shocks to legal orthodoxy."

Too Late.

Delays are dangerous. Forty years ago there was a small Chinese-owned steamer running from Singapore to Klang. The European engineer of this steamer did a certain amount of private trading, by selling goods in Klang. The then lessee of the Klang Rest House was said to owe the engineer quite a lot of money for goods supplied and was apparently diffident about settling up. The engineer would drop in for a few words with the young European magistrate in Klang and ask his advice about taking out a civil summons—just to be on the safe side. There were no lawyers practising here in those days. The engineer was told that there was no difficulty about the issue of a summons and the interview generally ended by the engineer saying "Well, next trip I must take action." On the last visit he made to the magistrate's office, he said "I had really intended to take out a summons today, but I've a little job to attend to in a factory in Batu Tiga, so I've no time. But next trip I shall certainly do so." There was no next trip,

for on the journey to Singapore the steamer turned turtle off Malacca and the poor fellow was drowned.

Matrimonial Tangles.

Divorce is always a tragedy. Sometimes it is a blessing which allows two people, who are utterly unsuited to each other, to make a fresh start with new partners. In the absence of statistics it is impossible to say if the percentage of divorce among Europeans is higher in this part of the world than in, say, Canada or Australia. I can recall the names of fourteen men I have known or known by sight who have divorced their wives and of seven men who have been divorced by their wives: not to mention half a dozen couples who, apparently, have agreed to live apart. Nearly all these people resided at one time or another in Selangor. Touching on the humorous side of matrimonial upsets, I can recall the arrival of a letter from home asking me to do what I could for a youngster who his mother imagined to be somewhat friendless and homesick out here. The letter did not come from the mother, so I made no bones about my reply which was to the effect that I could do nothing for the youngster because he had gone off to another country with somebody else's wife.

A Minor Collision.

Years ago when the District Officer at Klang was also Harbour Master, that officer had to hold an enquiry regarding a collision which had taken place at sea in the early hours of the morning between a Straits Steamship Co.'s vessel and a Government launch which was generally employed taking Government officials up and down the coast. No real damage had been done. Long, the *serang* of the launch, was called first to give his evidence, the purport of which was that the

navigating officer of the S.S. Co.'s ship was entirely to blame for the collision. The Captain of the ship then said that he wished to ask the witness one question and one question only and that was: "How many hours had you been on continuous duty at the time of the accident?" It is difficult to remember exact figures, but I think Long's reply was "42 hours." Collapse of the enquiry, when it was ascertained that the reliable Long had been kept going up and down the coast by different officials for the total number of hours stated.

Always a Way

This is a story about Dr. Travers. He was notified that a native woman in an out-station was very ill and that an operation was probably necessary. Accompanied by a man to give an anaesthetic, he drove out to the place as quickly as possible. On arrival he found the woman living in a small wooden house with an atap roof. The woman was too ill to be moved. He decided on an immediate operation. The difficulty was want of light in the interior of the little house. The owner of the house failed to see how more light could be obtained. Travers glanced round and said "Well, pull off part of the roof." "But it may rain" said the owner. "Never mind," said Travers, "we will risk that. Call your friends and do it at once. I must have more light." So part of the roof was pulled off and a satisfactory operation performed. Luckily there was no rain.

Early Malayan Motoring.

I contributed the following jottings from memory to *The Malayan Motorist* of October, 1933.*

It is now thirty years since I purchased my first motor car, a 6 h.p. de Dion-Bouton, and taught other people to drive a car. The late W. E. Kenny, P.W.D., and the late Sir H. Conway Belfield, when he was Mr. Belfield, Resident of Selangor, were my pupils. A little later on when there were about a dozen privately owned cars in Kuala Lumpur, it was decided that drivers should be licensed. Kenny took up the matter on behalf of the Government and called us all to a meeting in his office. After some preliminary talk each of us was solemnly presented with a license to drive a car. This license took the form of a numbered silver disk bearing the name of the licensee. My disk was numbered 3 and I carry it to this day on my key-ring. At this early stage two car owners thought it worth while to bring out professional drivers from England. The late Dr. Loke Yew, C.M.G., was one, and the late E. V. Carey another. The latter's driver was brought out to drive what was then considered to be a big Standard car. Carey was away from Kuala Lumpur at the time, so I was asked to interview the driver on arrival. On reporting himself at my office, I told him that the first thing to be done was to get a driver's license and I gave him detailed information in regard to the locality of the licensing office which was not very far away. Next day I sent him a chit to call at the European Hospital at 2 p.m. and take a lady friend of E. V.'s to an estate near Kajang. About 6 p.m. the man turned up at my bungalow and reported that when returning from

* Robson also contributed "Hints to Motorists" to the official guidebook. See C. W. Harrison (ed.), *Illustrated Guide to the Federated Malay States*, London: Malay States Information Agency, 1911.

Kajang, through Sungei Besi, he had knocked down and killed an old Chinese man. He explained that so far as he was concerned the accident was unavoidable. I told him that this would mean a Court case, but that as he had his license, the Court would very likely accept his version of what took place. He then admitted that he had failed to carry out my instructions about getting a license! Later on his version of the unfortunate affair was accepted, but he was fined \$1 for driving without a license! I rather doubt if the same leniency would be extended to a car driver to-day in similar circumstances. Carey's driver ultimately held a good appointment in the Customs department.

Early Enthusiams.

H. C. Zacharias, Dr. Travers, G. Dearie Russell, A. K. E. Hampshire, the late A. T. D. Berrington, the late Grant Mackie, the late D. G. Robertson, the late Lee Kong Lam and the late Dr. Loke Yew, C.M.G., were all pioneers of motoring in Selangor. How enthusiastic we were in those early days. We were always tinkering about with our cars and thought nothing of dismantling half the works under the bonnet! I can still picture the late W. P. de Basagoiti helping me on a Sunday morning to remove the radiator of a Star car in order to get at a large fibre washer which had expanded slightly and required filing down. I can't remember how long the job took, but Basagoiti in a topee, vest, and linen trousers was a cheerful mass of sweat, grease and dirt by the time we had finished. My Boyanese ex-syce, who was with me for twelve years until he died of asthma, must also be numbered among the early enthusiasts. He loved pulling a car to pieces and putting it together again. At that time the rival merits of different cars was one of the chief topics of conversation

among motorists. Now that cars have all reached such a general level of excellence, according to price, there is less need for discrimination. At first, the majority of motor cars in Selangor were French—mostly de Dions. In their day they did splendid service. Then came the American invasion which provided fairly high powered cars at a moderate price. And now we have the British car with its small engine and economical running.

To return to earlier years: cars were in use then the very names of which have been forgotten. For example: the first British car to be seen in Kuala Lumpur was a Roots and Venable, brought out by H. C. Zacharias. Then there was the pedals-to-push Adams-Hewitt on which the late Mrs. G. P. Owen, the pioneer lady motorist of Malaya, made the then longest trip on record through the Malay States. The starting handle of this car was about two feet long and was used at the side of the car. The engine was a difficult starter! It was on a car of this make that Dr. Fraser, then head of the Pathological Institute, F.M.S., met with a strange accident whilst still a novice at the wheel. He remembered driving quietly along a main road about ten miles from Kuala Lumpur and then found himself in a hospital bed with, if I remembered rightly, a broken collar bone. The car was found with its big headlight lamps squashed. But Dr. Fraser could never remember any collision or details of his accident.

One of the first American cars imported was a big Duryea car from the U.S.A. so powerful that its owner was said to be afraid to drive it. He sold it to that then dare-devil, my old friend the late Grant Mackie. Ford cars came later. I took one of the first batch of three imported by H. C. Zacharias. He took one himself and his partner D. A. A. Christie took the other. The price of a Ford car was about the same then as it is to-day. The lubrication system on the first

Fords gave some trouble, but they were wonderful cars. The starting of a regular mail and passenger service from Kuala Kubu over the Gap into Pahang was the first serious commercial undertaking in the motor transport line. The venture was financed by the late Dr. Loke Yew, C.M.G., and H. C. Zacharias was sent home to purchase cars. He bought three steam Locomobile cars and some sort of light traction engine for heavy goods. He also secured the services of an engineer to keep the cars in order, train drivers etc. If industry and enthusiasm could have secured success, Zacharias was the man for the job. Unfortunately in those very early days, it was the car and not the human element which was always so unreliable. The cars were always breaking down. Zacharias and his engineer had the devil's own time and finally the undertaking had to be given up in despair. Later on M. Kester, the French Consular Agent in Kuala Lumpur, started an efficient transport service with de Dion cars driven by Frenchmen on this same route and apparently the service paid. Kester himself did not live long to see the modern car as we know it to-day. He died in Kuala Lumpur leaving a widow but no children.

Aged European Fund.

The late Catherine Reyne came to Kuala Lumpur from Ceylon in the early eighties. She was accompanied by her mother (Mrs. Burleigh) and her son Spencer, a civil engineer. The mother died here at an advanced age, as a result of a fall. Spencer died about 1915, leaving a widow and son (born after the father's death). For years Catherine Reyne had been entirely supported by her son. After his death she had practically no resources to fall back on. At the instigation of three old residents in Kuala Lumpur, subscriptions were

collected in 1916, primarily for her relief. Several generous donations were received and, for some time, several members of the European community gave monthly subscriptions. In 1918 it was decided, with the consent of the subscribers, to create a trust to administer the monies received. The nominated Trustees were:—

- (1) Chairman of the P.A.M. and his successors in office.
- (2) Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce (Selangor Branch) and his successors in office.
- (3) The Agent of the Mercantile Bank of India (Kuala Lumpur Branch) and his successors in office.

An indenture was drawn up which defined the Fund as the Aged European (Selangor) Fund.

The indenture provided that Catherine Reyne would be provided for as far as funds permitted during her life time. From the inception of the Fund up to the time of her death (April 1930) she was in receipt of a regular monthly allowance and, in addition, from time to time was given various grants to help her out of occasional difficulties. In addition to providing for Catherine Reyne during her life time, the Trustees made occasional allowances to other eligible and deserving cases.

Catherine Reyne was a fine type of woman. She lived to the age of 88, was of pure European descent, had made only two trips to Europe, never sat in anything but a straight-backed chair, was up at dawn and went to bed late, was never idle, eked out her tiny income by keeping cows and making jam, pickles, etc. and had a remarkable memory. She loved a gossip and had a small circle of friends who visited her regularly.

After her death, which unfortunately took place when her oldest friend happened to be in Europe, the Trustees of the

Aged Europeans Fund were in a position to make substantial grants in three eligible and deserving cases. (No woman under 45 and no man under 50 is eligible). At the present time the Fund, of which the capital is about \$16,000, has one permanent pensioner on its books. Owing to slump conditions, the income of the fund has decreased of recent years and it may be necessary to raise additional capital in the future or to decrease the monthly payment now being made. One member of the European community has very generously undertaken to provide any deficit for the time being, but it does not seem right that his generosity should be encroached on indefinitely. A gentleman who has done much unselfish work for the Fund is its Hon. Secretary (D. St. L. Parsons). He has managed the Fund since it was incorporated. And no man could have done it better or more sympathetically. To carry one a work of this description for seventeen years must constitute almost a record.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FEDERAL COUNCIL.

The first meeting of the Federal Council was held on 11th December 1909. The original membership consisted of:—

Sir John Anderson, G.C.M.G., High Commissioner.

H.H. The Sultan of Perak (Sir Idris Mersid-el Aazam Shah, G.C.M.G.).

H.H. The Sultan of Selangor (Sulaiman Shah, C.M.G.).

H.H. The Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan (Tengku Muhammad, C.M.G.).

*The Regent of Pahang (Tengku Mahmud, C.M.G.).

Sir W. T. Taylor, K.C.M.G., Resident-General.

E. W. Birch, C.M.G., Resident of Perak.

H. C. Belfield, C.M.G., Resident of Selangor.

*D. G. Campbell, Resident of Negri Sembilan.

E. L. Brockman, C.M.G., Resident of Pahang.

F. D. Osborne (Miner)

R. W. Harrison (Planter).

J. H. M. Robson.

Towkay Eu Tong Sen.

R. P. Brash.

Clerk of Council, Claud Severn.

(*Not present at the first session of the Council).

Of these 14 original members and the Clerk of Council, ten are dead. Two, Sir E. L. Brockman, K.C.M.G., and Mr. R. W. Harrison are residing in England, and three, H.H. the Sultan of Selangor (Sir Ala'idin Sulaiman Shah, G.C.M.G.), Towkay Eu Tong Seng and the writer are still living in Malaya.

Asking Questions.

At the second session of the Council (May 1910) I started the practice of asking questions and had 19 on the paper; R. W. Harrison and F. W. Osborne following with two each. One of my questions was:—"Why hundreds of patients at the District Hospital, Kuala Lumpur, were not supplied with mosquito curtains?" The answer was that mosquito curtains were supplied in all hospitals to all fever cases and would shortly be supplied to all patients. But I had to ask a year later "When the Government was likely to fulfil its promise?" before all patients were supplied with curtains.

At the October session of the same year one unofficial had 23 questions on the paper, and another was anxious for information concerning 17 minor matters.

Among the 23 questions was:—

"Is it the intention of the Government to make Mr. H. C. Ridges, the Protector of Chinese, retire on pension next year? Does the Government think that Mr. Ridges has been a most capable officer and that he is still fit for many more years of good work?" The answer was (1) Yes. (2) The Government is not oblivious to the good work done by Mr. Ridges in the past.¹

Another question asked was:—

"What reasons induced the Government to double the rate of freight of rubber on the Federated Malay States Railways?" And the answer was that the increased charge was to cover the risks taken by the Railway department *because of the great value of the commodity.*

¹ Ridges was a personal friend (v.s. p. 42) but it is not apparent what grounds existed for thus querying the retirement of Ridges at the age of 57, and after 26 years' service. It was standard practice to enforce retirement at the normal age, to avoid blocking the promotion of younger colleagues.

Owing to both officials and unofficials constantly being on leave, the personnel of the Council changed almost from session to session. Sir John Anderson, the first President, possessed a quick brain and had a dominating personality. He saw the point of an argument almost before the speaker had had time to enunciate it. He was always most courteous and helpful to the unofficial members of Council; but I once heard him tell a British Resident to stop talking hot air! It is interesting to note that this particular British Resident was the only one of those present who ultimately became the Governor of a British Colony.²

Local Head of Federal Administration.

The first indication of any change in the Federal Administration occurred at a meeting of the Federal Council held in October, 1910 when H. D. Griffiths, the then manager of the Tronoh mine, asked—"Is it intended to abolish the post of Resident-General or replace it by some other post?"—A promise was made to answer this question when the Estimates were being considered. Griffiths then asked:—"Will the Government recommend the promotion to that post of such one of the Civil Servants who has long service, ability, perfect knowledge of all local conditions and popularity"? The answer was:—"The appointment rests with the Secretary of State for the Colonies." When the impending change of title

² The Resident referred to was almost certainly H. (later Sir Henry) C. Belfield, Resident of Selangor (1902-10) and then Governor (1910-20) of the East African Protectorate (Kenya). See p. vi above on Robson's relations with Belfield. J. S. Sidhu, *Administration in the Federated Malay States 1896-1920*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 90, cites Anderson's less than enthusiastic opinion of Belfield (Straits Settlements Despatch (SSD) from Governor SS to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 12 September 1910).

from Resident-General to Chief Secretary was finally announced at the November meeting of the Federal Council (1910) E. W. Birch, the Resident of Perak said *inter alia* that "the only mistake that was made in creating the post of Resident-General was in the name, and I am perfectly certain that if in the past the name given to the appointment had been that of Chief Secretary to Government there would be no occasion to make any change now.....It was distinctly stated at the time (when the appointment was made) that the position would be that of *primus inter pares*."

The change of title was effected by Enactment early in 1911 and Sir Arthur Young became the first of a line of Chief Secretaries to Government. Non-Malay public opinion was against the change, and in later years more than one petition was sent to the Colonial Office asking that the original title of Chief Resident Officer of the Federal Government might be restored. The Colonial Office refused to entertain the idea. It was said at the time that Sir John Anderson was jealous of the power wielded by Sir William Taylor. What is much more likely is that Sir John Anderson, who was an imperialist to his finger tips, had visions of a United Malaya and was intent on sowing the seeds which began to show above ground in the time of Sir Laurence Guillemard and finally blossomed out at Sri Menanti in 1931. When the change of title Enactment was before the Council, H. D. Griffiths referred to persistent agitation in certain quarters to bring about the amalgamation of the F.M.S. and the Colony, and said that was what people really feared. (A. Huttenbach of Penang had once suggested something of the kind when addressing the Legislative Council in Singapore.) The Raja Muda of Perak took a somewhat different view and said that the actual title of the appointment was a matter of minor importance. What really mattered was the personality of the

officer holding the appointment. Incidentally I may mention here that as an orator I never heard anybody in Council to compare with H. D. Griffiths. Unfortunately, owing to deafness, he was unable to take any prominent part in a general debate.

A Guardian of The Purse.

The establishment of a Malay States Information Agency in London was suggested to Sir John Anderson by two of the unofficial members of the Federal Council.³ The proposal met with his hearty support. When it was announced in Council that the Colonial Office had sanctioned the establishment of this Agency, E. W. Birch wrote on a slip of paper "This job would suit me" and flicked the paper across the table to Sir William Taylor—the Resident-General. Sir William wrote on the paper—"Nothing doing. I'd like it myself" or words to that effect and flicked the paper back again. And it was Sir William who not very long afterwards was appointed the first Agent of the F.M.S. Government in London, where he gave years of most valuable service before finally retiring to the south of France, where he rebuilt an old farm house on a magnificent site at Vence and lived there till he died in 1931.

Sir William Taylor went out to Cyprus (Customs) in 1879; was Auditor-General, Ceylon 1895; Colonial Secretary S.S. 1901 and Resident-General, F.M.S., 1905–1910. He

³ F. D. Osborne and J. H. M. Robson submitted a memorandum which was forwarded to the CO under cover of SSD, 1 March 1910. It argued that opportunities of investment in Malaya should be made more widely known in London. Anderson saw in the proposed agency an opportunity of easing into retirement from the post of Resident-General F.M.S. (1905–10) William Taylor, who showed in his London post the same negative attitude as in his days in the F.M.S.

had a quick wit and a ready reply for any awkward questions asked in Council. Once when going through the Estimates in Committee, I protested against the expenditure of F.M.S. money on the erection of a house for the Adviser in Trengganu, Sir William at once replied that he was surprised I should raise such a silly objection: everybody knew that house property was always a sound investment.⁴ I found out afterwards that he himself had protested to Sir John Anderson against this item being entered in the F.M.S. Budget. However being over-ruled, he had no option but to see that the vote was agreed to in Committee. When at Carcosa he was affectionately known as the *Ikan Kering*—being a man of somewhat spare build. Having had audit experience at an earlier stage of his career, he was always very careful about the disbursement of public money and kept a very tight hand on the purse strings. Later on when he was at the Agency in Cannon Street, old John Russell happened to come across him one day looking at the outside of the building which had just been repainted. "Good morning, Sir," said John, "I see you are up to your old game again, trying to cut the poor contractor." Sir William glared at him and no doubt made an appropriate reply; but what it was history does not relate.

Transfers and Discoveries.

Now that we hear so much about the need for Malay reservations and the protection of the Malay peasantry against themselves, it is interesting to note that in reply to a question in Council (May 1911) it was announced that in eighteen months ending 31st December 1910, no fewer than

⁴ Presumably Taylor was alluding to Robson's activities in managing the properties of Loke Yew (v.s. p. 32).

1416 plots of land in Selangor had been sold by Malay owners to aliens. At the October, 1911, Council meeting H. D. Griffiths asked:—"Does the Government consider that an allowance of \$5 a month, to be continued at the discretion of the Government, is a sufficient and adequate reward for a discovery such as that of Rawang (the coalfield) and that it is an incentive to natives and others to report new and important finds? The Chief Secretary (E. L. Brockman) replied:—"A sum of \$150 has been paid to the finder for his present necessities, and he has been told that the matter will be further considered when the value of the discovery is more fully ascertained. The question is out of order since it asks for an opinion which I am not prepared to give." I never heard what final reward was given to the discoverer.⁵

Of Interest in Earlier Days.

What was known as the Stubbs' salary scheme came up for discussion in 1911. The scheme provided for very considerable increases in the salaries to be drawn by the younger members of the Civil Service and lesser increases for the more senior members. It also suggested the abolition of the then existing provision by Government of free quarters for all officials.⁶ Another matter which was mooted from time to time was the desirability or otherwise of spending more

⁵ Production at the Batu Arang colliery began in 1913 and reached its peak in 1940. This coal had a very high moisture content. It could be used by the railway, until replaced by cheaper fuel oil, but was not suitable fuel for most other purposes.

⁶ Report by Mr. R. E. Stubbs on the Salaries and Classification of the Cadet Services in the Malay States, in *Proceedings of the FMS Federal Council*, 1911. See R. Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya: The Malayan Civil Service and Its Predecessors 1867-1942*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981, p. 135.

money on Port Swettenham—the alternative being the creation of a new port at Deep Water Point.⁷ Nothing came of these discussions, and the Government continued to improve the existing port. Even in 1911 there was talk about the scarcity of rice, high prices and the influence of such high prices upon the cost of labour and upon the temper of the labourer.

At the first meeting of the Council, which he attended as High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Young, closed the proceedings with the statement:—"As you have said, we have to work together and in important matters it is not only best for the Government, but it is right that the Government should find out and interview the unofficial members and ask them for their views before they take any important step."

H.M.S. Malaya

In 1912 the Chief Secretary to Government, E. L. Brockman, sounded their Highnesses the Rulers and the unofficial members of Council about presenting a warship to the British Navy. The proposal met with general approval. Probably what most people visualized at the time was a destroyer or possibly a light cruiser. However when the matter came before the Council in November of that year, a resolution was proposed by the Sultan of Perak that the United Kingdom should be offered a first class armoured ship, the vessel to be constructed as soon as His Majesty's Advisers considered it desirable. H. D. Griffiths said there was not a dissentient voice in the whole of the country and

⁷ See D. F. Allen *Report on the Major Ports of Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1931, p. 34, on the circumstances of the unfortunate decision to expand the existing Port Swettenham rather than begin afresh on the site on which Port Kelang was later built.

referred to a battleship or an armoured cruiser. W. F. Nutt spoke of a battleship. It was then explained that it was the Sultan of Perak's wish that it should be left to the Admiralty to decide whether the ship should be a first class battleship or a first class armoured cruiser. The High Commissioner (Sir Arthur Young) said he thought the expenditure on the one would be about the same as on the other. Anyhow the Sultan of Perak desired that the ship should cost not less than \$20 millions (over £2,300,000). Ultimately this gift took the form of *H.M.S. Malaya*, which was finished in time to take part in the battle of Jutland. The cost of the ship was more than \$20 millions.

Change of Personnel.

An interval of about ten years elapsed before I was re-appointed to the Federal Council for a further period of service (1921-1927). With the exception of two of the Rulers (Selangor and Negri Sembilan) the personnel was entirely different in 1921 from what it had been in 1909. Sir Laurence Guillemard was High Commissioner and W. G. Maxwell had become Chief Secretary to Government. The Residents, substantive or acting, were:—

Perak: O. F. Stonor.

Selangor: Oliver Marks.

N. Sembilan: Valentine Hill.

Pahang: Major C. W. C. Parr.

There were also two additional official members, the Legal Adviser (W. S. Gibson) and the Federal Treasurer (F. A. S. McClelland). The unofficial members were A. N. Kenion, R. C. M. Kindersley, R. P. Brash, W. Duncan, J. H. M. Robson and Choo Kia Peng.

By this time members of Council had been granted the courtesy title of Hon'ble. Appointments of unofficial members to the Federal Council are nominally made by His Majesty, the King. A. N. Kenion will always rank as one of the best of the many unofficial members who have sacrificed their private interests to give ungrudging and unpaid for service to the State. A witty and fearless critic of the Government, lacking any sort of personal ambition and being transparently honest, Kenion was a tower of strength to his colleagues and probably at times a thorn in the side of Authority. It has always been regretted by his many friends that no official recognition of his valuable services was forthcoming at the end of his nine years' term of office as a member of the Federal Council. One of the few occasions on which I think Kenion's judgment was at fault was when in 1921 he protested against a proposed Government scheme for a public power supply. F. Bolton, then Government Electrical Adviser, was mainly responsible for the scheme. Kenion argued that it would be wiser to grant out concessions on generous lines and leave undertakings of this sort to private enterprise, rather than invest public money in what after all would be a bit of a gamble. Later history tells us that public money invested in electrical undertakings by the Government in Selangor has secured a good return, whereas private enterprise in Perak, even when assisted by Government, has not so far at least been a success from the financial point of view.⁸

⁸ Arthur Noel Kenion (1873-1945) had joined Eric Maxwell (son of Sir William Maxwell) in his law practice in Ipoh, and in 1906 they became partners (the firm is now Maxwell, Kenion, Cowdy and Jones). See J. A. Devadason, *A History of Maxwell, Kenion, Cowdy and Jones*, Ipoh: privately printed, 1996. In 1911 Maxwell retired but Kenion continued in practice until 1941 when he enlisted as a private

Rice Shortage.

In December, 1921, in answer to a question by Choo Kia Peng, the Government announced that it was "Keenly alive to the importance of encouraging the production of rice in this country". At the time this statement was made the Government had had the very expensive experience of a joint rice control scheme undertaken by the Colonial, F.M.S. and Johore Governments when there was a shortage of available rice supplies. The loss on the scheme had run into millions of dollars. Owing to its investments in tin, the F.M.S. Government had not been able at the time to contribute its share of the money required to finance the undertaking. When it came to the final settling up of accounts, it was found that the F.M.S. owed the Colony many millions. No wonder the F.M.S. Government was keenly alive to the importance of encouraging local rice cultivation. However the keenness seems to have evaporated to some extent and very little was heard about local *production* of food supplies during the prosperous years until the present great world slump. In 1924, the Chief Secretary (Sir George Maxwell), in answer to a question by R. C. M. Kindersley, announced that action was being taken in Selangor with a view to rendering available for wet padi cultivation the large area of unoccupied land which lies between the Selangor and Bernam Rivers. [This scheme is now at last (1934) making steady progress.]⁹

in the Perak Local Defence Corps. He died in hospital in Singapore on 29 September 1945 shortly after his release from internment. See D. J. M. Tate, *Power Builds the Nation: The National Electricity Board of the States of Malaya and Its Predecessors*, Kuala Lumpur: National Electricity Board of the States of Malaya, Vol. 1, 1989, on the tangled early history of the Malayan electricity industry.

⁹ Reclamation of the swamp which became the Tanjong Karang padi area of some 50,000 acres continued until the post-war period.

For years A. S. Haynes was one of the very few officials who showed any particular interest in rice production. At long last (1933) his consistent advocacy of a definite policy to encourage the opening up of new padi areas met with the active support of Government.

The Rice Mills.

It must also be recorded that Sir George Maxwell was mainly responsible for starting Government Rice Mills which proved to be of great assistance to many Malays already engaged in the cultivation of padi, and no doubt also acted as an incentive to potential padi cultivators in certain areas.¹⁰ Sir George outlined what had been accomplished when addressing the Council in November 1924. He said:—

“In 1917, when the food problem of Malaya was becoming acute, a Committee was appointed to report and advise the Government upon the best means of increasing the production of rice and other food stuffs in British Malaya. Mr. Kindersley and I were members of that Committee, and I am proud to think that it was on my proposal that the Committee unanimously recommended the establishment of Government rice mills. The specific recommendation was that in the first instance a rice mill should be established in Kedah, another in Province Wellesley and a third in the Krian district of Perak.

“The Government of the Federated Malay States approved the recommendation so far as the Krian mill was concerned. Sir Edward Brockman expressed his views upon the subject in a minute of which I give the following extract:

¹⁰ See Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and Their Agricultural Economy in Colonial Malaya 1874-1941*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1977, pp. 155-6.

"The main idea is not to reduce the price of rice, but to ensure that the producer will get a fair price for his padi. I do not believe that the undertaking will be a great commercial success, for I think that rice can be grown elsewhere and be sold in this country more cheaply than it can be grown here. I do not look upon this as a commercial undertaking, but purely as a means of stimulating the production of rice and, perhaps, of controlling the price of rice. If these objects are kept in view, I think that we should not try to shew profits but merely pay expenses, and if we do that I should regard the undertaking as a success.

"The result was that a Government rice mill was established at Bagan Serai and has been operating for some years past. The capital account of that mill now is \$302,000. The profit that it made in the year 1921 was \$108,000; in 1922, it made only \$4,000; in 1923 it made a profit of \$63,000, and, in addition to those profits it has written off for depreciation \$165,000. I shall refer later to the feeling of apprehension that I have in regard to these very large profits.

"In March, 1921, there came a fall in the price of rice. The Governments of the Straits Settlements and of the Federated Malay States had given a guarantee of a minimum price of 13 cents a gantang to the padi planters of Krian, Province Wellesley and Penang. When the price of rice fell, the Government was placed in the very gravest difficulties connected with its guarantee, and we were unable to come to any arrangement with the Chinese millers in Penang and Province Wellesley. The Bagan Serai mill was unable to cope with the position, and the result was that the Government had to requisition a mill at Kuala Kurau. That was requisitioned on behalf of the Government of the Straits Settlements in connection with their guarantee in the Colony and the Government of the Federated Malay States in connection

with its guarantee here. That requisition was made under the provisions of the Food Control Regulations of 1918.

"The requisition was made in April; and in May we had an offer from the late Mr. Heah Swee Lee, the owner of one-half share in the mill, to sell his half-share to the Government for \$180,000. The offer was considered one advantageous to the Government, and the Government accepted it.

"In August last, the Estate of the late Towkay Leong Eee, the owner of the other half of the mill, agreed to sell its half interest to the Government for \$115,000, and the Government closed with the offer. In addition to that sum, we have to pay to the vendor a sum of \$8,960, for spares and machinery at the mill.

"The position now is that Government owns two mills. Both are under the same management. We have, in Mr. A. E. Keymer, a most efficient manager, and we have a very keen and zealous Board of Directors who will have control of both mills.

"I feel confident that this mill will be a great success. I only hope that it will not aim at making too much of a profit. I think that, if possible, the mill should try and aim at making a profit of not more than 5 per cent. on its capital, and should, if possible, try and make its profits out of the milling costs. From the figures that I have given you, you will see that profits must have been the result of the price of rice having risen after the padi had been bought. That, of course, is a matter that is intimately connected with rice milling.

"The establishment of these two Government mills in Krian is, I am confident, of the greatest benefit to the problem of rice production in this country. It will benefit not only the rice growers of Krian, but our mill at Kuala Kurau will be in a position to attract padi grown in Province Wellesley, which will come in by tongkang. Our Bagan Serai

mill is on the railway and will be able to attract padi from Kedah.

"The purchase of this mill is of great advantage to the Government, because, if ever another crisis connected with rice came about and if ever we had to offer any guarantee, we should have these two mills upon which we could rely to enable us to carry out our guarantee.

"But when I have said all that, I still must confess that there are grave objections to Government mills. What we have done is, I think, inevitable, and I am fully persuaded that it has been the best thing in the circumstances. What I should like to see would be some day the padi planters of Krian coming forward and offering to buy that mill. We could then have a limited liability company of which the membership would be confined only to persons who actually owned padi plantations in the Krian district. But that will take some time to come about, and before that can be achieved we must have more highly developed amongst the padi planters of Krian the idea and spirit of co-operation. They are moving in that direction, and I think that if we hold out to them the hope that some day they may own these two mills, we shall have gone very far towards helping them in the problem of production."

Servant Registration.

In December 1921 an attempt was made by two European unofficial members to get a Registration of Domestic Servants Enactment passed by the Council. The Sultan of Perak and Choo Kia Peng spoke against the Bill. Nor would the Government support the measure. Result: Bill defeated by 14 votes to 2.

It is doubtful if this decision can be regarded as final. The need of some such Enactment has been voiced more than once during the past twelve years. A Registration Enactment, whether providing for compulsory or voluntary registration, would serve the interests of both employers and servants. I have never heard any complaint about the registration system already in force for car drivers.

A Man of Vision.

In 1921–1922 there was great activity in the spending of very large sums of money on construction work by the Railway Department—more particularly in connection with the Kelantan line, the Prai Wharves scheme and the Johore Causeway. These calls on the Federal Treasury brought P. A. Anthony, the head of the Railway Department, into conflict with the Council concerning over-expenditure of sanctioned provision. This led to the appointment of the Shelley Committee consequent on the refusal of the unofficial members to pass a railway vote. I doubt if Anthony was unduly concerned about his relations with the Council or anybody else, except possibly the High Commissioner. He had big ideas and apparently looked to a somewhat distant future, rather than to the immediate necessities of the day. He had worked at the Ministry of Munitions for some time during the War, had been given a C.M.G. in 1918 and may have been somewhat impatient of red tape. At the eleventh hour (1924) it was discovered that the Prai Wharves scheme was likely to be a fiasco.¹¹ Anthony cannot be held responsible for the failure of the scheme, but the failure was of such magnitude that an irritated public became suspicious

¹¹ See pp. 141–44 where Robson tells the story of the Prai wharves fiasco in detail.

of everybody concerned with what appeared to be an abortive expenditure of a huge sum of public money. Anyhow at the time Anthony's star was certainly not in the ascendant. Like most live wires, Anthony probably made mistakes which justified criticism, but he was undoubtedly a first class man at his job and will rank as one of the principal creators of the F.M.S. railway system. Once during his service in Malaya he was sent to report on an Australian railway and after his retirement in 1925 he was sent to report on the Palestine Railway.

To strike a lighter note for a moment, it may be recorded that when railway communication was established between Bukit Mertajam and Bangkok, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony invited three or four friends, including H. N. Ferrers, Mrs. Nutt, Dr. Crago and myself, to make the trip on the first train to go through. No travelling was done at night and one of the stopping places was Hua Hin—now a popular sea-side resort. Some of the party, including Mrs. Nutt, thought they would like to have an early morning bathe in the sea. Mrs. Nutt had no bathing costume, so I provided her with a new suit of red and white striped pyjamas. This was before the days of pyjamas as ordinary wear for ladies at the sea-side. However the costume certainly suited Mrs. Nutt and all would have been well, but for the unfortunate fact that she forgot to remove her wrist watch before entering the water.

A Memorable Meeting.

The Council meeting held on the 19th and 20th of June, 1922, was remarkable in more ways than one. The late Sir (then Mr.) Frederick Seton James, High Commissioner during the absence of Sir Laurence Guillemard, was in the Chair. When it came to the adjournment speeches A. N.

Kenion declared that rubber restriction was the burning question of the day and for the first time some of the unofficial members spoke very freely and frankly on this subject. There was no voice against the principle of restriction, which A. N. Kenion and R. C. M. Kindersley had advocated as early as 1918 and the late W. Duncan in 1920. I dealt at some length on the advisability of a decentralisation policy—a subject which had not hitherto been talked about in Council.¹² R. C. M. Kindersley, well named "Honest Ronnie," spoke with some feeling about the inferior position assigned to the Chief Secretary to Government during the visit of the Prince of Wales and also on the subject of rubber restriction. Choo Kia Peng also spoke on the subject of the Prince of Wales' visit. The Chief Secretary (W. G. Maxwell) said he entirely agreed with everything I had said about decentralisation. It was the thing at which the Government was aiming and on which it was still conferring with the Residents. It was a thing much to be desired and especially much to be desired in respect of greater powers being given to the State Councils. Certainly neither Maxwell nor I dreamt for one moment that a decentralisation policy need or would involve the abolition of the appointment of Chief Secretary to Government.

Speaking later, the High Commissioner said that he was very glad that I had raised the question of decentralisation. He said that from the very beginning Sir Laurence Guillemard wished to decentralise. Sir Laurence had addressed both the Colonial Secretary S.S. and the Chief Secretary to Government, F.M.S. to that effect and asked them to see

¹² R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, London: Macmillan, 1937, p. 163, quotes the key passage from Robson's speech and notes that it was indeed 'important'. See v.s. p. 107 on the general background.

what they could do to decentralise all the way down. "When," added the High Commissioner, "I was acting Chief Secretary here for a short time I came here with that idea impressed on my mind and I was instrumental in doing away with the Secretary to the High Commissioner..... That officer did interpose between the Chief Secretary and the High Commissioner."

[To say that the present High Commissioner (Sir Cecil Clementi) started a new policy in his famous Sri Menanti Address in 1931 is absurd. Leaving aside certain controversial issues incidental to the form of decentralisation as advocated by both Sir Laurence Guillemard and Sir Cecil Clementi, there can be no doubt that the latter *inherited* a decentralisation policy when he assumed office as High Commissioner. And, what is even more important, that inherited policy in one form or another was always understood to be the Colonial Office policy in regard to the constitutional development of the Malay States.]

Fireworks.

The dramatic climax of the meeting (June, 1922) started when the President announced that he had listened with interest to the speeches and also with surprise and regret. In order to understand what followed it may be as well to explain for the benefit of people who were not in the country at the time that, throughout the visit of the Prince of Wales, the position assigned to the Chief Secretary to Government (W. G. Maxwell) on various ceremonial occasions had been unmistakably invidious. A. N. Kenion put it mildly when he said:—"Perhaps the position assigned to the Chief Secretary was a little unfortunate, because rightly or wrongly, the public took that as an outward and visible sign that the High

Commissioner assumed *de facto* responsibility as Chief Administrator of the Federated Malay States." Feeling certainly ran high at the time. What annoyed the public more than anything else was that when his Royal Highness and His Excellency, with A.D.C.'s in attendance, sat on a dais which had been erected on the Padang for ceremonial presentation of Addresses, the Chief Secretary had to sit among the judges and unofficial members of Council, who had been provided with seating accommodation behind the dais. R. C. M. Kindersley, whilst expressing regret (in his speech on the adjournment) that he had to make remarks in the absence of Sir Laurence Guillemard, described the inferior position assigned to the Chief Secretary as having been a slight to that officer. Choo Kia Peng commented adversely on the insufficient prominence given to the Rulers during the Prince of Wales' visit.

These criticisms brought forth a vigorous and somewhat dramatic defence of the absent High Commissioner by Sir (then Mr.) Frederick James. He indignantly denied—and there was no doubt about the indignation—on behalf of Sir Laurence Guillemard "the statement which Mr. Choo Kia Peng had been good enough to make." Then he accused R. C. M. Kindersley of making wild statements in the absence of Sir Laurence and appealed to the Rulers not to be influenced by what the unofficial members had just said until they had heard Sir Laurence's reply to such criticisms. Compared with what is often said in the House of Commons, there was really nothing in the words actually used by the High Commissioner to create even a mild sensation. In a Council where hitherto no manifestation of passion had ever been heard, the effect produced was one of startled surprise.

Addressing the Council on his return from leave later in the year, Sir Laurence said that he was sorry that the subject of the Prince of Wales' visit should have been discussed in his absence and regretted that expressions used in the heat of the moment had been such as to cause offence.

There is no doubt that the position assigned to the Chief Secretary to Government F.M.S. during the Prince of Wales' visit fanned the flame of a simmering official antagonism between that officer and the High Commissioner (Sir Laurence Guillemard). This was extremely unfortunate because both men were deeply imbued with sentiments of devotion to the best interests of Malaya and could have done so much more for the benefit of the country if their official relationship had been of a happier nature and conducive to co-operative effort.

A Sea Belle Meeting.

1922 was notable in Council history for a meeting which took place on the *Sea Belle* between the unofficial members of the Legislative Council S.S. and the unofficial members of the Federal Council F.M.S. to discuss informally matters of general interest to both territories. It was a most successful meeting; but it did not meet with the approval of one of the Singapore papers which apparently regarded us as conspirators working in the dark.

Rubber Restriction.

The tabloid history of events which led up to the introduction of the Export of Rubber (Restriction) Bill at a Council Meeting held on 24th October, 1922 is as follows:—In 1920 the Rubber Growers' Association appealed for voluntary restriction. Towards the end of the same year

the local Government was prepared to consider compulsory restriction by legislation if there was any unanimous demand for such a measure. Then the Duncan Committee was appointed and drew up a scheme which was forwarded to the Secretary of State. After a delay of some months, the Secretary of State, acting on the advice of senior high officials in Malaya both present and past, and having been kept informed of the views held by representatives of the rubber industry, decided (1921) that he could not allow compulsory restriction. Nothing daunted, a deputation from the Duncan Committee was appointed to visit Java and the Rubber Growers' Association at home put forward a scheme of their own. The next step was the appointment by the Secretary of State in October 1921 of the Stevenson Committee. In May 1922 certain local bodies and individuals sent private cables home to the Colonial Office and in October 1922 instructions were sent out to Malaya by the Colonial Office that a measure of restriction, based on the findings of the Stevenson Committee, should be adopted. Hence the introduction of the Export of Rubber (Restriction) Bill which became Enactment 19 of 1922. When introducing the Bill, the Chief Secretary (W. G. Maxwell) told the Council that disaster could only be averted by means of Government intervention. The Government had been compelled to intervene because of the inability of the rubber industry to organize itself. The Government realized that the difficulties which faced the industry really overwhelmed it to such an extent that it could not combine to face those difficulties. But that, he submitted, was no reason why the industry should, after the present crisis was passed, again come to the Government when in difficulties and again ask for the assistance of Government. There was no adverse criticism of

the main principles of the Bill, which met with the unanimous approval of the Council.

[The Government had a direct interest in the introduction of "restriction." Government intervention was not a philanthropic effort to relieve distress among a lot of people who were too stupid to help themselves. Then, as now, "restriction" was a national matter, and, as such, could be dealt with only by the Governments of the producing countries.]

Attack and Counter Attack.

Another stage of Sir Laurence Guillemard's stormy career as High Commissioner was reached in November 1922 when he was accused in Council by A. N. Kenion of criticising a former Chief Secretary (Sir E. L. Brockman). Kenion said that he did not want to be personal, nor was he there to defend such an able and capable man as Sir Edward Brockman. And thereupon proceeded to attack the High Commissioner by chapter and verse. It was certainly a very spirited and outspoken onset, the gist of which appears in the following extracts from Sir Laurence Guillemard's reply:—

"Mr. Kenion says that I got into a mess, that I shirked responsibility and that I laid blame on another personBut Mr. Kenion went on to make a further point. He said that if a High Commissioner acts on bad advice, the responsibility is his and he has no right to blame his advisers. Now speaking generally that is a salutary and true principle; but like all principles in this work-a-day world it has its limitations.....I doubt whether Mr. Kenion really recognises the difficulties which I, as a new High Commissioner arriving in Malaya, had to deal with.....I came out to Malaya knowing nothing whatever of the details of the

finances. I had as soon as possible to learn all I could about the administration and finances of the Colony, of the Federated Malay States and of the Unfederated Malay States. As far as the Federated Malay States are concerned.....I had to look to the Chief Secretary alone for satisfactory advice, and I did not get it.....I did not get from the Chief Secretary full or correct information even when I asked for it. The only piece of considered advice on finance which he gave me was a minute, written on the eve of his departureA minute in which he stated that he was entirely in favour of the Federated Malay States raising a general purposes loan when a favourable opportunity offers.....I assume that the Chief Secretary had consulted the Treasury before writing his minute on the eve of his departure. [Yet] a fortnight later.....the Treasury minute was to the effect that a loan at that time (July 1920) was not justifiable or likely to be successful and it was hard to see why the Federated Malay States should borrow at a high rate of interest with actual revenue exceeding actual expenditure and with large surplus funds."

After Kenion retired at the end of his nine years' service on the Council, the following official tributes were paid to him in his absence.

The Chief Secretary to Government (W. G. Maxwell) said:—"I would like to associate myself with what has been said by the unofficial members of this Council in regard to the services rendered by Mr. Kenion during the long time he served as a member of the Federal Council. I think I can say that the Government always felt stronger when they knew that they had Mr. Kenion on their side and that they always felt that they had need of all their strength when they knew that he was against them. Mr. Kenion often jested in this Council; but I think he did so in order to relieve our

somewhat portentous solemnity and because he felt that it was good for us. But whatever he did, throughout he worked his very hardest and he gave this country of his best."

The High Commissioner (Sir Laurence Guillemard), was equally appreciative in the following words:—"I wish to add my voice to the chorus of regret at Mr. Kenion's retirement. We are fortunate in having had, and still having, on this Council a succession of men who, when they retire, will leave behind them a fine record of service done to the State. But, in addition to this public record, such men will leave in each case, when they retire, what one may call a personal memory; and, in Mr. Kenion's case, that memory will be very personal and very vivid. He brought to our debates a breeziness, which was very refreshing, and an element of unexpectedness which served to keep official members awake and alert: and with the breeziness and the unexpectedness were combined humour, good sense, a power of acute criticism and the rare gift of a personality which enabled him to express his criticisms, however trenchant, in a manner which disarmed resentment."

The Kelantan Railway.

In view of what proved to be a costly entanglement of the F.M.S. with Kelantan and its railway affairs it may be recorded here that in January 1923 I asked the following question in Council:—

Has the Government ever given any definite pledge to the Government of Kelantan in regard to railway construction in that State, and, if so by whom was that pledge given and what were the terms thereof?

Written reply: No pledge has been given.

Two months later (1923) A. N. Kenion, addressing the Council, said *inter alia*:—

"If it was a British official who advised the Sultan (of Kelantan) to enter into an agreement with the Duff Company to build a railway within a specified time, it is of the utmost importance to the people and to the officials of the Federated Malay States that they should know whether such agreement was seen and approved by the Federated Malay States Government: in other words whether we have any moral responsibility in the matter, because if the Federated Malay States Government did not authorise such advice, then it is for the Imperial Government to see that the good name of Kelantan is not dragged in the mud for any advice given to it by a British Official."

The High Commissioner's Annual Address presented to the council (in his absence) at the 1926 December meeting contained the following passages:—

"The outstanding feature of the period under review was the gift of two million pounds sterling towards the cost of the Naval Base at Singapore, a fresh proof, if any were needed, of the loyalty and wide imperial outlook which permeate the territories under Your Highnesses' rule."

* * *

"This year has seen the final settlement of the long dispute between the Duff Development Company and the State of Kelantan—a settlement made possible by the writing off by the Federated Malay States of the loan of £300,000, and the repayment of the interest paid thereon and the loan by the Colony to Kelantan of the funds necessary to enable her to pay the award and costs of the litigation. The sum of £300,000 was the amount paid to the Duff Development Company for the purpose of acquiring from the Company certain rights, the acquisition of which was necessary for the development of the F.M.S. Railways in accordance with the

Anglo-Siamese Agreement. The actual payment had been made by Kelantan, but though she might hope in the future to benefit from the construction of the line, she was clearly not the party primarily interested: she would not have contemplated its construction on her own account, or been in a position to find the money required. It seems therefore only just that the Federated Malay States, as the party primarily interested, should pay. The settlement of this matter was an indication of the spirit of mutual co-operation and goodwill between the different administrations in Malaya which has steadily increased of late years."

[The East Coast railway was and still is a development line. The Federated Malay States which provided funds for the construction of the line had no interest in the development of Kelantan. It was no part of the duty of the Chief Secretary to Government, F.M.S, to instruct the General Manager of the Railway Department as to how and where the line through Kelantan was to be made. The Chief Secretary had no jurisdiction in Kelantan. The British Adviser on the spot and the High Commissioner in Singapore were the responsible officials. At the end of the litigation with the Duff Development Company, the State of Kelantan had no money, either to pay the heavy damages secured by the Duff Development Company or to pay back the millions of dollars advanced by the Federated Malay States at the instigation of the High Commissioner. Kelantan had to be saved and it was really the duty of the Imperial Government to provide the funds necessary for that purpose. Naturally the Colonial Office was not anxious to have the matter discussed in the House of Commons and looked to the then High Commissioner in Malaya to raise the necessary funds locally. He did this by inducing the Federal Council, F.M.S. to *write off* the millions of F.M.S. money advanced to Kelantan and

by inducing the Legislative Council, S.S., to *lend* Kelantan some millions of dollars, free of interest for five years.]

The Chief Secretary.

At the Council meeting held in March, 1923, I raised certain issues of policy in regard to the Administration and referred to the position of the Chief Secretary in the following words:—

“Has the Government made up its mind about the future position of the Agricultural Department, the Customs Department and the Post and Telegraph Department? There is a feeling—the Government knows it as well as I do—among many people that these departments ought to be Peninsular Departments; but as far as I know, no steps have been taken. The first two could be managed by Boards of Control. I should have no objection to having the Postmaster-General, as the man who runs the Post and Telegraph Department, in the Colony. I should not consider that as in any way encroaching on our rights up here, as we should take that as a service rendered to us by the Imperial Government. The Agricultural Department and the Customs Department are in a different category.

“May I make a somewhat personal remark, without being offensive, about our present Chief Secretary. He is a man of most wonderful mental vitality and tremendous greed for work, and no doubt he is doing at the present time far more than any other person in his appointment either could do or would do. But we are not always going to get people who are such gluttons for work and the time may well come when the Chief Secretary’s duties must be decentralised to a certain extent; and I think if these recent Railway and Public Works Department investigations have shown us anything, they

have shown us the need of having a senior, fully qualified officer of the Civil Service with the time to devote to making a special study of those two departments. And that man ought to have the responsibility attaching to the importance of his job."

In reply the Chief Secretary (W. G. Maxwell) said *inter alia*:—

"A very large and difficult subject was raised by Mr. Robson in regard to the administration system of the Federated Malay States. The declared policy is that of decentralisation; and that policy is being put into effect with the utmost expedition compatible with caution. It is not a matter in which one can move quickly; the greatest care has to be taken to unravel knots. Unless one is careful, one is in danger of breaking things. The relations of the Heads of Federal Departments with the British Residents are laid down in Appendix D of the General Orders. I gave that matter my own personal attention for many months, and worked hard at it, taking up the question of each department separately; and eventually, after a meeting, at which His Excellency presided, of Their Highnesses the Rulers, the Residents and myself, it was decided to ask Mr. Hose to preside over a Committee to deal with the re-casting of Appendix D. That, I know, is receiving his most careful consideration, and occupies a very considerable part of his time.

"With that policy of decentralisation, a policy of extreme centralisation, such as that suggested by Mr. Robson, in respect of 'Peninsular' appointments would perhaps not work well. I do not think that with decentralisation, with Their Highnesses' State Councils and British Residents, we could have a number of highly paid officials who would be, by virtue of their position, independent of the Chief Secretary to Government in the Federated Malay States, of the Colonial

Secretary in the Straits Settlements, and of the Advisers and State Councils in the Unfederated States. I think we should arrive at a position, which is one of the many causes of our present difficulty of administration."

It will be noted that the remarks of an unofficial member gave the then Chief Secretary an opportunity of criticising proposals, which were ultimately dealt with, one way or another, in the Sri Menanti declaration of policy made eight years later.¹³

Sympathy with Japan.

The Financial Adviser (A. M. Pountney) addressing the Council in November 1923 said:—"I move that this Council approves the special provision of \$50,000 as a donation for the relief of sufferers from the recent earthquake in Japan.

"World-wide expressions of sympathy with the Government of Japan were evoked by the disaster which befell that country early in September last. In common with many other countries, this country accompanied its expressions of sympathy with material help towards relief measures. I trust that all honourable members of this Council will warmly support this motion, to which effect was given on the 18th September by the despatch of the \$50,000 to His Majesty's Ambassador at Tokyo to use in his full discretion. As was

¹³ In 1927 (v.i. p. 154) the membership of the F.M.S. Federal Council was reconstituted, and the four Rulers withdrew. The earlier practice (1897 and 1903) of holding a gathering (darbar) of the Rulers was revived; the Chief Secretary and the four Residents attended and the High Commissioner presided. At the 1931 darbar, held at Sri Menanti, Clementi (H.C.) announced a policy of decentralization (in effect a revival of Guillemard's scheme) designed to tempt the U.M.S. Rulers into joining an enlarged federation of all nine States. See Emerson, *Malaysia*, p. 314.

announced in the Press shortly afterwards, His Majesty's Ambassador decided to allocate \$10,000 out of our \$50,000 towards the relief of distressed British people in Japan who had suffered from the earthquake." The motion was agreed to.

First Signs of Opposition.

A note of criticism about the amalgamation of Federal and Colonial Departments was first voiced in Council by D. H. Hampshire, in May 1924, when he said:—"I do not know whether the Government have changed their policy in regard to the question of decentralisation at the present moment. I think Mr. Robson brought up the question about July, 1922, and His Excellency the High Commissioner, at the Council meeting of November, 1922, stated that that was having his consideration and that a Committee was about to be appointed. That Committee was appointed and has issued a report. At a meeting of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, at which the Governor was present, Mr. Lowther Kemp asked the following question:—

'Whether Government has under consideration the question of amalgamation of the administrations of the Post Offices of the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, and if so whether any progress has yet been made with regard thereto?'

"And the answer by the Colonial Secretary was as follows:

'This Government has nominated two representatives to form a Committee with two members representing the Federated Malay States Government and the Secretary to the High Commissioner to investigate this question and is at present in consultation with the Federated Malay States Government.'

"It seems that at one moment the Government is all for decentralisation and the next for amalgamation.

"There have been many rumours of various departments that are about to be amalgamated with the Straits Settlements. Some two years ago the Police Force was mentioned and it has been mentioned again quite recently. Well, I do not see that any advantage is to be gained by amalgamation of that Force. It simply means, in the first instance, that the officers who have been appointed as police cadets here will lose possible chances of promotion to the highest billet available. Later on, I think, if one of these supermen is appointed to supervise both Forces, that in a very short time he will find he has got more work than he can do and the billet of Commissioner of Police or its equivalent will be reinstated. So that this country will not save. It certainly will not be economical, and I doubt very much whether it will be efficient. We have had these supermen before. There was one appointed to the Medical Department and I think the only result was a very valuable report. If one judges by the salary and emoluments, it must have been.

"I do not see any reason why this country should not co-operate in every way with the Straits Settlements by more conferences between Heads of Departments of these States and the Heads of Departments of the Straits Settlements. At the time of the Retrenchment Commission, I advocated more conferences between the Residents and their State Officers and the Federal Heads of Departments and their officers, and I think that more co-operation and more conferences between the Heads of Department here and the Straits Settlements would probably help much more than any question of amalgamation of which I doubt very much both the efficiency and the economy."

Combination: Co-operation: Consultation.

At a later meeting (November 1924) I followed up D. H. Hampshire's remarks on amalgamation and put forward the following views:—

"Except for a little head-shaking on the part of Treasury officials, I think the blessed word "decentralisation" now passes for good current coin in this country. The same cannot be said for the word "amalgamation." That word has still few friends in the Federated Malay States. I do not see why we ever used it at all; it only tends to create a wrong impression. I venture to suggest that with decentralisation in full practice, the superstructure of a political system suitable for all British Malaya can be built up on a foundation of the 3 C's, combination, co-operation and consultation. The dictionary definition of "combination" is a union of persons or of things. How does this apply elsewhere? In South Africa, independent States have not amalgamated, but they have combined in their mutual interests to establish a Customs Union. I think we can do the same thing in Malaya. A Railway Union exists now in fact, if not in name. The parties to the Union are the Federated Malay States and the State of Johore, although, strange to say, there is no representative of Johore on the Railway Advisory Board. We hope later on the Colony may come into this Union, say by helping Johore to develop further railway extensions. The only connection the Colony has with this Union at the present time is that two gentlemen from the Colony sit on the Railway Advisory Board, and, therefore, have something to say about the management of our railway.

"There is the beginning of a Customs Union already. I think that that Union might be extended. Our preventive fleet is working in the interests of other States, and if any

change is deemed to be necessary in the Posts and Telegraphs services of this country, I think a Postal Union under unified control is indicated. In neither case is there any question affecting the independence or sovereign rights of any particular State. If several business men joined together to form a syndicate to carry out some special business or work, the mere fact that those individuals formed part of a syndicate would not give them any right to interfere in the general business of their friends; and because you cannot get everybody to come into a combination or union at the same time, I do not think that that is any reason why you should delay in starting your union or combination amongst those people who are willing to come in at the moment.

"I am in favour of this combination as regards the Railways, the Customs and the Posts and Telegraphs, but for no other department of the Government Service.

"For ordinary administrative work I believe in co-operation. The Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States and the Unfederated Malay States already do co-operate in much useful work. Because Johore avails itself of, and contributes towards the cost of, the Federated Malay States Agricultural Department, the Federated Malay States Registry of Criminals, the Quarantine Station at Port Swettenham, and our coast preventive fleet, Johore does not, I am quite sure, feel that its independence or sovereign right is in any way affected; and in the same way, I am quite sure that Kedah does not feel itself subservient to the Federated Malay States when it avails itself of the officers of the Federated Malay States Labour Department to assist in solving the problems of its Indian labour. A system of combination in a few cases, of co-operation in many cases and of consultation in every case where it is likely to be

useful, will, I think, meet the needs of Malaya for some very considerable time to come."

When closing the meeting, the High Commissioner (Sir Laurence Guillemard) expressed his interest in what had been said on "by far the most important problem which those responsible for the administration of Malaya had to deal with." (Hear, hear, said the Chief Secretary.)

The Guillemard Policy: First Statement.

In his address to the Council in November 1924, the High Commissioner (Sir Laurence Guillemard) made the following reference to decentralisation:—

"The policy of decentralisation which the Government has adopted is being carried out. Progress must necessarily be slow because it is essential to avoid the mistakes which might accompany over-hasty demolition of existing practice. It is easy to destroy and difficult to build. In this connection I should like to correct a confusion of thought on this subject which I have noticed in some quarters. An extension of co-ordination is not, as some appear to think, antagonistic to decentralisation, but if properly carried out, it is favourable to it. The advisory control exercised, for example, by the Controller of Labour in the Federated Malay States, the Straits Settlements, and the Unfederated Malay States, is not only compatible with decentralisation, but it is almost a *sine qua non* of effective decentralisation in executive detail. It is our policy to encourage the State Councils to take an increased interest and share in the Administration, and we are prepared to support such further measures as experience may prove to be necessary in order to make that share and that interest real and effective."

Position of Unofficial Members.

I never had the pleasure of serving on the Council with Eric Macfadyen, but I believe that he spoke on at least one occasion about the status and duty of the unofficial members. In my time we were never quite certain what was (a) the Government's attitude towards us, apart from a personal courtesy to individual members: and (b) what the public expected of us. This led me to state our position as I saw it (1924) in open Council:—

“For some time there has been, or I may say there was, an opinion that the functions of the unofficial members of the Federal Council were to advise the Government. We ourselves have never accepted that at any time. (Hear, hear.) We believe that our proper function is to criticise the Government. Some of that criticism is destructive, and some of it is of the more helpful, constructive kind. Beyond criticising, we have no power and no responsibility. But as members of the Finance Committee our position would appear to undergo a change. With the exception of the Financial Adviser, whose advice we always receive with very great respect (or in his absence the Federated Malay States Treasurer), this Committee consists entirely of the unofficial members of Council. This Finance Committee is asked to sanction practically all the expenditure during the year which is not provided for in the Supply Bill. It also discusses the main totals of the Supply Bill itself, before it comes before this Council. We therefore, of necessity, find ourselves, at least to some extent, in the position of taking part in the administration of the country, because the wisdom or need of spending extra money must often depend on the view that we take of the proposals put forward by the Administration. As a matter of fact, we do discuss these proposals very often at great length.

"I think that this places us unofficials in a somewhat invidious position. I would prefer—and I believe that some of my colleagues at least agree with me—that all new expenditure, exceeding items of \$10,000, should be brought forward by the Financial Adviser, or by the Chief Secretary, in open Council. This might hang up a particular scheme for a month or two, but I do not know that that would be altogether a bad thing, when we remember that the amount of Supplementary Votes in a single year sometimes runs into millions of dollars. This year, take up to the end of October, the Supplementary Votes which the Finance Committee were asked to sanction exceeded \$2 millions—a very large sum indeed. I would rather be in a position to criticise Government proposals for spending large sums of money here in open Council than discuss them in Finance Committee, behind closed doors.

"If we have these proposals brought before the Council, we are at liberty to express our opinions on the whole or part of any particular scheme; and, so long as there is an official majority in this Council, I do not see that we improve our position in the least bit by being anything more than free and independent critics of the Government.

"The only alternative to the suggestion would be an Executive Council, such as I understand exists in the Colony."

[I do not know that the position is any clearer to-day than it was then.]

Prai Scheme Fiasco.

The all absorbing Council topics in 1925 were (i) the Prai Wharves fiasco and (ii) the outlining of his decentralisation policy by the High Commissioner (Sir Laurence

Guillemard) on his return from London towards the close of the year.

A full history of the Railway Department's venture at Prai would fill a volume in itself. As H. T. Jones said in one of the long debates which took place in Council when it was known that the scheme was practically a failure:—"The outstanding fact is that the country has suffered loss. That loss approximates to \$23,000,000. It does not seem to me that there is any way of getting that back. We cannot talk the \$23,000,000 back. That is a fact which we must face." This is the story in a nutshell. In 1914, at the instigation of the General Manager for Railways (P. A. Anthony), the F.M.S. Government purchased the Prai Docks for a million dollars with the intention of creating a first class terminal port for the railway on the mainland. A layout scheme was prepared locally. The Consulting Engineers (Messrs. Coode, Matthews, Fitzmaurice and Wilson) submitted a report and a scheme in July 1915. The scheme differed slightly from the local scheme in some minor details intended to reduce costs. It was on that report that the F.M.S. Government felt justified in starting the whole scheme. One paragraph of that report read:—

"It will be seen that the dredging required to give effect to our recommendation is very considerable, and over the length affected will add largely to the cross section of the river as now maintained by natural scour. The dredging will undoubtedly result in the admission of more tidal water into the river and will consequently to some extent increase its scouring capacity, but we do not anticipate that this will be sufficient to be of any material value in maintaining the depth of the river, and therefore, in our opinion, maintenance dredging will always be required and should be provided for.

Such maintenance dredging in the early stages of the works after completion will be greater than later on, consequent on silt being drawn down from the upper reaches and deposited over the dredged area, more particularly at the inner or eastern end."

In 1918 a contract was entered into with Messrs. Topham, Jones and Railton to carry out the major part of the scheme, which included construction of jetty, wharf widening, provision of coal wharf, dredging and part of the reclamation work. One of the indispensable factors of the scheme in regard to dredging was the maintenance of a uniform depth of thirty feet of water over a defined area. Up to October, 1922, there appeared to be no cause for anxiety, although it was known that owing to increased cost of labour and materials the total cost of the scheme would be some millions more than had been anticipated. The first serious warning of trouble in regard to silting was sounded in a letter from the Contractors to the Consulting Engineers in October 1922. They said that they were of opinion that a uniform depth of 30 feet could not be maintained for more than a few days on any particular portion of a certain area. This information was sent to the General Manager (F.M.S.R.) but apparently was not at the time forwarded to the Government, for in 1923 the High Commissioner appointed a joint committee of Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States representatives, under the chairmanship of the Resident-Councillor of Penang (A. B. Voules), to consider the future administration of Prai. Eight meetings of the Committee were held before it was discovered that there was not more than 24 feet at low water on the bar at the end of the jetty. Then followed a further meeting, in December, when it was stated that the Consulting Engineers first became aware of the excessive

accumulation of silt in August of that year (1923). At the end of 1922, it had been suggested that instead of maintaining the channel at the full depth and width for six months after completion of work as they were bound to do by their contract, the Contractors should be relieved of this liability in return for a dredger and tug they would hand over to Government. The Government agreed to this proposal in June, 1923.

To cut a long story short and in order to avoid delving into a mass of technical details, the failure of the scheme as a workable proposition was admitted by the Chief Secretary (Sir W. G. Maxwell), when, presiding at a Council meeting in June 1925, he moved a resolution that "pending further information regarding the silting problem at Prai it is undesirable to incur any further expenditure in connection with Prai Wharves or with dredging the Prai Harbour basin." "We have it on record" said the Chief Secretary "that the silting was entirely unexpected by all the experts.....In regard to the policy of the future, the Railway was requested to circularise the heads of the big firms in Penang and to enquire whether, in the event of the Railway Administration putting up godowns at Prai, those firms would be prepared to take leases of those godowns. The unanimous reply has been that they do not want any accommodation in godowns at Prai."

Prai as a great terminal port had become a white elephant and has remained so ever since. Whether a succeeding or succeeding generations will ever make anything out of a scheme which promised well at its inception and then, beaten by nature, ingloriously fizzled out, remains to be seen. Historical documents relating to the Prai River Wharves are Council Paper No. 30 of 1924 and Council Paper No. 22 of 1925. H. P. Bryson, M.C.S. and A. Palmer, secretary to the

G.M.R., were responsible for the 1924 Paper and H. P. Bryson alone for the second paper.

The Guillemard Policy.

In December 1925, on his return from England the High Commissioner (Sir Laurence Guillemard) introduced his decentralisation policy as part of his Annual Address to the Council, supplemented by a memorandum which was laid on the table. He said at the commencement of his remarks:—

“I anticipate that the part of my policy which will arouse most interest is the part explaining the proposals affecting the status of the Chief Secretaryship. On them I expect a good deal of criticism and probably some opposition. Without local sentiment there can be no healthy public life. Local sentiment is not only right and proper; it is inevitable and natural: it has always been and must continue to be.”

And then later on:—

“The memorandum will make it clear that there is no proposal to increase the powers of the High Commissioner. The powers taken from the Chief Secretary will be vested in the Rulers in Council or their Residents, acting either severally or in conference. There is no intention of introducing a system which will mean over-centralisation in the hands of the High Commissioner. That is an idea to which, as I have constantly shown throughout my term of office, both by speech and action, I am absolutely opposed. Nor will my policy involve any risk that the interests of the Federation will be sacrificed to those of the Colony. I know that in certain minds there exists a vague fear that a man holding the two offices of Governor and High Commissioner, though he is in honour bound, when the interests of the Colony and the

Federation appear to diverge, to hold the scales even, will be so hypnotised by his duty to the Colony as to neglect his duty to the Federation. If any such danger does exist at present I believe that my proposals will not increase but diminish it. But I do not believe that the danger exists. I cannot think of any reason why a man responsible for the whole of a machine should oil the crank and neglect the valves."

The concluding paragraph of the memorandum was as follows:—

"My proposals are now in outline before the Council and the public. They need working out. I am not wedded to any particular details, and I have no wish to avoid discussion or stifle criticism."

There was nothing very startling in the memorandum. Its contents had been more or less anticipated. Sir Laurence was evidently prepared to listen to both destructive and constructive criticism. He was always approachable. The unofficial members determined to fight against the proposal to abolish the appointment—at some future date—of "Chief Secretary to Government as at present constituted." In this attitude they had the general support and approval of the professional, commercial, planting and mining communities. And yet looking back I wonder if we acted wisely. As a result of what appeared to be a successful fight at the time, the working out of a practical decentralisation policy was held up for five years. And then those people who had not been particularly enthusiastic found that King Log had given place to King Stork. Sir Laurence Guillemard, who has a keen sense of humour, must have had many a quiet chuckle to himself since 1931. I am not suggesting that Sir Laurence's views about the abolition of the appointment of Chief Secretary, could have been or should have been assimilated by the unofficial members. What I am wondering now is if, instead

of fighting him, we had tried to negotiate a compromise on this all important point, would we have avoided the possibly greater loss to the Federal Administration which seems likely to follow on the Sri Menanti programme? Compromise might have taken various forms, such as change of title on next appointment of a Chief Secretary and the maintenance of a senior officer in the appointment for a period of five years before the matter was brought up for final settlement of status and responsibility. Of course whether any form of compromise could have been effected will always remain a matter of speculation.

In March 1926 R. C. M. Kindersley moved the following resolution in Council:—

“That this Council, being of opinion that the great agricultural, mining and commercial development of Malaya in recent years has sprung largely from the confidence inspired by Federation of the States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, under British Administration, declares:—

- (1) That while entirely sympathising with the policy of restoring to each of the Federal States full control over all its purely internal affairs, this Council declares its belief that such a policy need not and should not affect the maintenance of a strong Federal Government, which is absolutely necessary for the continuance of credit and confidence, and for the initiation, carrying out and control of many important matters of common interests to all the States.
- (2) That a full and efficient maintenance of Federal service is essential to the welfare and credit of the country.
- (3) That it is essential to the efficient working of that Federal system that there shall be a resident Executive

Head of the Federal Administration, under the High Commissioner, having a status equal at least to that of the officer serving as Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements."

In reply the High Commissioner (Sir Laurence Guillemard) stated *inter alia*:—

"I wish to congratulate Mr. Ritchie on stating what seems to me the central fact of this position, that what we are dealing with is the situation to-day and that however interesting the past history of the case may be it does not really govern the situation to-day. With regard to the preamble and the 1st and 2nd paragraphs, I am perfectly prepared to accept them. The paragraphs are quite general in character. When I come to paragraph 3, I feel the position is very different. I want to try and make it clear to Council, even if I do not accept paragraph 3, what my position in the matter is. Paragraph 3 is not general in character; it is definite and particular. Now, the position with regard to the future status of the Head of the Federal Government was defined by me in the Paper which I laid on the table to-day and which Mr. Robson has quoted. In paragraph 29 I said this:—

'I think, therefore, that with regard to this matter—(i.e., the future status of the Head of the Federal Government)—the difference between the views of the unofficial members as stated by Mr. Robson and my own views as stated by me may be fairly described as one of degree.'

"I purposely refrained from defining my views as to what, under the proposed new policy, ought to be the exact status of the Chief Officer under the High Commissioner, because

I did not wish to prejudice in any way the recommendations of the Committees.¹⁴ But I concluded:—

'I am not without hope that, when the problem has been thoroughly examined and fully discussed in a judicial spirit, an agreement will be reached.'

"Quite frankly, I am not willing to tie the hands of Government at this stage in advance of the Report of the Committees, and for that reason, if part 3 of the resolution is moved the Government vote will be cast against it. If this is put to the vote and, as is inevitable, it is rejected by Government, people outside the Council will have the unfortunate impression that Government have come to a decision in this matter of the status of the Chief Secretary which is not the case—and they will come to the conclusion that this decision represents a direct conflict between the views of Government and the views of unofficial members, which I hope will, in the event, prove not to be the case."

The result of the division was 7 in favour and 8 against. R. C. M. Kindersley then moved a resolution omitting the third paragraph and this was agreed to unanimously.

Sir George Maxwell.

The Chief Secretary (Sir George Maxwell) retired in May, 1926 and William Peel, now Sir William Peel, Governor of Hongkong, became Chief Secretary. When in 1924 Sir George had been made a Knight Commander of the

¹⁴ Three committees—Financial, Legal and Administrative—were appointed to examine and make recommendations on the implementation of Guillemard's decentralization scheme. The main problem was the extent to which State governments should have financial autonomy. Clearly there was a conflict between that autonomy, if substantial, and the maintenance of a strong federal government.

Most Excellent Order of the British Empire an unofficial member, speaking on behalf of his colleagues, said:—

"I do not think I can pay Sir George Maxwell any greater compliment than to say that by his untiring zeal, his driving force and his interest in everything pertaining to the welfare of the Malays, he is closely following in the footsteps of his distinguished father and of his eminent grandfather." (Applause)

A year or so before Sir George left Malaya, C. Ward-Jackson jotted down his impressions of the then Chief Secretary. The following paragraphs are quotations from those written, but hitherto unpublished, impressions:—

"It can truly be said that Sir George Maxwell has had a most successful career, and owes it entirely to himself. He has not been pushed up the ladder. He has climbed up. To what attributes of character, particular qualifications or temperamental influence does he owe his success in life? That he is a man of singular ability goes without saying. Sir George is, however, remarkable for more than mere ability. All of us who have watched his career have remarked on his extraordinary driving force, his untiring energy and the fact that he loves his work. He is much like the rest of us, and like the rest of us he has his faults.

"When Sir George assumed the Chief Secretaryship, he took up his task with a passion of zeal and with the thoroughness of a new broom. He swept, as it were, incessantly, and as he swept he talked; now to his fellow officers, now to the Federal Council, now to the public. His breezy confidence won him confidence. The world always believes in a man who believes in himself. It is the first condition of success, and Sir George's faith in himself amounts to inspiration.



Sir W. G. Maxwell, K.B.E., C.M.G.

"Sir George, whatever he may or may not be, is efficient, and he demands efficiency. It follows, therefore, that he is not loved by some. There are those who, while admitting the need for efficiency, hate the efficient, for he is a constant rebuke to their own love of slack and slipshod ways, and a constant menace to their comfortable rut of routine, red tape and custom.

"He has the reforming spirit very strongly developed, and no matter is too small for his personal attention. This, and his passion for efficiency, are two of the dominating influences of his life, and they largely account for what his critics describe as "wanting to have his finger in every pie."

"There is no more industrious man in the public service; none whom you find more completely equipped in knowledge or in clear cut, decisive opinion. No matter what subject you raise bearing upon Malaya, you find that he is prepared to crush you with facts and figures and experiences of schemes and places of which you have never heard. His enormous capacity for mastering the details of a subject, and his genius for taking pains are well known. His power of application and his mastery of the letter give him a knowledge that is more potent than inspiration."

After Sir George's departure from Malaya, appreciations of his service to the country were recorded in Council. C. Ritchie alluded to the co-operation and good feeling which had always existed between Government and the unofficial members during the time Sir George had been Chief Secretary. William Peel, who had succeeded Sir George, spoke of the high standard set by his predecessor.

The High Commissioner (Sir Laurence Guillemard) said:—

"I do not like to let the opportunity pass of adding my tribute to those already paid by other speakers. Sir George

and I did not see eye to eye in all matters—such differences are perhaps inevitable between two men who are both in earnest—but we were on common ground in having at heart the welfare of Malaya and in desiring to carry out what we believed to be in her best interests. Sir George belongs to a family which for three succeeding generations has earned fame in Malaya by a life's work in her public service. That is a unique record. He himself spent 35 years in the country and he gave to it of his best. No one has a greater appreciation than I have of his energy, his devotion to work, his grasp of detail and his driving force. He had experience in the Colony, in the Federated Malay States and in the Unfederated Malay States, and in whatever post he found himself, he never lost that keenness which was one of his greatest assets." (Applause).

There was no exaggeration in any of these gratuitous testimonials. Sir George has shown the younger men in the Malayan Civil Service what can be accomplished in an official career by a youngster coming out here direct from a Public School. After joining the Service (1891) Sir George became a Barrister of the Inner Temple. He held in turn several of the highest Civil Service legal and administrative appointments. An interesting incident in his earlier career out here was the conducting of a party of Chinese labourers from Malaya to the Gold Coast when his father was the Governor of that Colony. In addition to many publications dealing with legal and official matters, he wrote a fascinating book entitled *In Malay Forests*. At all times he had a prolific and facile pen. He resembled his father in that no detail connected with the Administration was too insignificant for his attention. Occasionally in his passion for getting things done, made or mended, he was apt to be impetuous.

For a considerable period of years Sir George was largely responsible for the efficient administration of different Malay States and has certainly left his mark on the country. It was expected at one time that he would end a distinguished official career as the Governor of a British Colony. Fate ruled otherwise.

Lady Maxwell was both liked and respected. Although I never heard of her discussing local politics with anybody, it is believed that she took an intelligent interest in her husband's career. She was an excellent hostess at Carcosa and always looked remarkably well dressed.

Last Stage and Appreciation.

The Council meeting of February 28th, 1927, was the last to be attended by the Rulers and by Sir Laurence Guillemard before he retired a month or two later. My own connection with the Council also ended at this time. At a subsequent meeting of the Council, after Sir Laurence had left the country, both official and unofficial tributes were paid to the value of his work in Malaya. First by the Raja di Hilir¹⁵ who said:—

"Sir Laurence took up the reins of office on 3rd February, 1920, at the zenith of a boom, when large and expensive schemes of development were either undertaken or contemplated. Shortly afterwards this country, in common with the world generally, went through the biggest slump the world has ever known. Through those critical years of depression Sir Laurence maintained a courageous front, retaining unbro-

¹⁵ Raja Chulan held the title of Raja di-Hilir of Perak, which placed him fourth in line to the Sultan, Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara in succession to the throne. As he was older than the first three, it was an honorific appointment.

ken his confidence in Malaya to weather the storm. That Malaya did so is in no small measure due to Sir Laurence and the capable officers under him, and he left the country in a more prosperous condition than it has ever been in the course of its wonderful history.

"There are many men of ideas and hordes of men of action, but how rare is the combination? It existed in Sir Laurence, as no person devoid of this fortunate combination could have initiated and carried through the policy of what is known as devolution. There was a certain amount of criticism of that policy, but the motive which actuated Sir Laurence in forming it was of the highest. It was his aim and ambition to make Malaya, great as it is, even greater still.

"We have in this reconstituted Federal Council, of which this is the first meeting the first fruits of his policy of devolution. No one will deny that a Council constituted on such lines is a great step forward. Not only does it permit of the quicker despatch of business, but, what is more important, it adds dignity to the position of Their Highnesses the Rulers. For this alone, if for no other, Sir Laurence is deserving of the grateful thanks of these States. That spirit of fair play, the determination to keep promises and the desire to understand the people of the country are the attributes which Sir Laurence possesses, attributes which have contributed in an immeasurable degree to strengthen the loyalty of the Malay States to the Protecting Power. Above all, Sir Laurence has that rare power of sympathy which His Majesty the King has declared to be one of the most essential qualifications of administration in the East."

A. S. Bailey dealt with Sir Laurence's decentralisation policy and concluded his remarks by saying:—

"Sir Laurence came to us from outside, and so coming he brought with him perhaps a detachment of view which might



The late Raja Sir Chulan bin Abdullah, K.B.E., C.M.G.

not of necessity be possessed by others whose life's work has been carried on within the sacred pales of the Colonial Civil Service. This detachment, I suggest, enabled him to appreciate in very full measure the very solemn and sacred trust which is reposed in the Administrators of this country, and it always appears to me that he kept ever in his mind the balance which should be struck between the legitimate interests and aspirations of the Malays and the commercial exploitation of this country."

The then High Commissioner (William Peel) completed the expressions of appreciation by saying:—

"It was my privilege a week ago to endorse in the Legislative Council of the Colony, the high opinions there expressed of the work done by Sir Laurence Guillemard as Governor of that Colony, and I am glad to have a similar privilege in this Council to-day. Sir Laurence has always been deeply interested in the Federated Malay States and in the people in them. It used to be suggested that Sir Laurence placed the interests of the Colony above those of the Federation and I used to hear or read cryptic remarks about 'the fetters of Singapore'. I must confess that my year's experience as Chief Secretary under him does not bear out those views. I found him a real decentraliser, and he delegated during that year powers to the Chief Secretary in excess of any wielded by that officer. At the same time I can honestly say that he has always had at heart the interests of the Malay States equally with those of the other Administrations under his charge.

"Both he and Lady Guillemard always enjoyed their sojourns in the Federated Malay States and they both have shown to most of us considerable kindness; I am sure they will be greatly missed."

I am glad that Sir William Peel mentioned Lady Guillemard who was an undoubted success in every way, as "the first lady in the land."

Sir Laurence's craft ploughed through many a choppy sea in the political waters of Malaya. In one of his first utterances he spoke of Malaya as "a country of arrears." This was an unfortunate expression, because it was deemed to be an unmerited criticism of his predecessors in office. Had he voiced his impression in some other way, such as "opportunities for further expansion in a rapidly developing country," all would have been well. It is doubtful to my mind, if contemporary opinion has yet accorded Sir Laurence Guillemard his rightful place in the hierarchy of notable Colonial Governors. He came to Malaya with a freshness of outlook and an enthusiasm which is comparatively rare in the Colonial Service. He was a man of the world. There was no doubt about his ability. He got on remarkably well with the Rulers of the Malay States. When he retired they felt that they had lost a real friend. His hospitality was proverbial. He was the most approachable of men. And I have no hesitation in saying that he had a genuine and deep-seated affection for the country he was sent to govern. It may have been politic for him to have maintained friendly relations with unofficial members of Council who were sometimes fighting him tooth and nail. But even if this was the actuating motive, which I rather doubt, there could be no reason for maintaining the same attitude when he no longer had any official interest in Malaya. Yet I know of more than one instance in which he has been most kind and hospitable to people, who fought against him out here, when they have happened to be in England. When the tumult and the shouting is forgotten—and even now the memory of it grows faint—Sir Laurence's term of office in Malaya will stand out in truer perspective

than could be envisaged immediately after a period of storm and stress.

The unofficial members of Council with whom I was longest associated were R. C. M. Kindersley—a fine character: C. Ritchie—a cultured man and an able speaker: J. H. Rich—a sound man with a merry twinkle in his eye: R. P. Brash, a reliable man who has now made his home on Penang Hill and Choo Kia Peng who was always helpful and never obstructive. Members of the F.M.S. Bar who served at different times on the Council all did good work. It is an undoubted privilege to be a member of the Federal Council, especially when such members are like a happy family and are actuated only by a lively sense of duty to the land in which they live, and the people who dwell therein.

CHAPTER V.

THE PAHANG DISTURBANCES.

Sir (then Mr.) J. P. Rodger was appointed the first British Resident in Pahang and assumed duty in October 1888. No effective system of government was functioning. Each great Chief was a law unto himself. In 1889 the Selangor Government requested Capt. H. C. Syers to organize a police force for Pahang. This was done: the nucleus of the new force being Sikhs from the Selangor and Singapore police forces. These men were placed in various small police stations which Syers established when making a tour of the State. During the year 1889 several charges of levying illegal taxes on boats passing up and down the Semantan River had been brought against the Orang Kaya Pahlawan who was described by Syers as one of the biggest rascals in Pahang. At the first meeting of the Pahang State Council, which took place in October 1891, the conduct of this Chief was discussed and the Sultan issued an order depriving him of his title and position.

First Outbreak.

In December 1891, the Collector and Magistrate of the Temerloh district entered the Semantan river with 15 Sikhs and 6 Malay policemen, intending to station most of them as re-inforcements at the Lubok Terua police station which was in the centre of the Semantan district. On the second day after entering the river, the Collector's boats were fired on and some of them capsized, leading to the loss of 4 Sikhs. The other boats then returned to Temerloh. One of the

missing Sikhs also ultimately made his way back to Temerloh: the other three were captured and killed.

The first news of the outrage was brought to Raub by the man who was in charge of the rice store, and thence telegraphed to Selangor, where Mr. J. P. Rodger, then acting Resident of Selangor, was handing over to Mr. W. E. Maxwell preparatory to going on leave. Mr. Rodger at once left for Pahang, accompanied by Captain H. C. Syers and 25 Selangor Sikhs. On arrival he learnt that the ex-Orang Kaya had stockaded various points on the Semantan river and had ransacked Temerloh, the head-quarters of the district, from which the Collector had retired with his police, leaving forty confiscated Malay muskets to fall into the hands of the rebels. Also that the leading Chinese shop-keeper at Temerloh, together with three of his friends and a Tamil contractor, had been murdered when trying to escape down the Pahang river.

Action Taken.

In view of the generally hostile attitude of the surrounding Malays, it was decided to leave Syers at Bentong with Selangor and Pahang Sikhs whilst the Resident (J. P. Rodger) joined Sir (then Mr.) Hugh Clifford in an attempt to deal with the ex-Orang Kaya Pahlawan and his followers. The Resident paid two visits to the Sultan at Pulau Tawar, with the result that the Sultan declared his willingness to take charge of an expedition against the Semantan rebels, if he could be provided with rifles and ammunition. The Straits Settlements Government sent up 500 Sniders and in January 1892 the Sultan took the field with nearly a thousand Malays. The Resident accompanied the expedition.

Except at the first stockade, where two of the rebel headmen were killed, the expedition met with no real resistance, although a few shots were fired on both sides. Twelve different stockades were demolished, the occupants of which had fled into the jungle on the approach of the Sultan's men. Bentong was reached on Jan. 31, where it was found that Syers had had several skirmishes with the rebels, that the officer in charge of the detachment of Perak Sikhs had been wounded and that two Chinese shopkeepers, a Malay constable and two transport coolies had been killed.

Whilst the Sultan's expedition was on its way up the Semantan river, Major McCallum had been sent up from Singapore as Military Commissioner. He arrived at Bentong the day after the Sultan's expedition reached that place, and at once advised the withdrawal of the Perak and Selangor detachments, which was shortly afterwards effected.

In order to restore confidence and to induce the ryots to return to their villages, the whole length of the Semantan river was left in charge of the Sultan's people. The ex-Orang Kaya disappeared and to all appearance the trouble was at an end.

The Second Outbreak.

Early in March 1892 the Resident went to Singapore to see the Governor. When there he received a telegram to say that the ex-Orang Kaya had re-appeared and had re-captured Lubok Terua.

The Resident hurried back to find that not only was this the case, but that thirty-nine rifles had been captured as well. This looked extremely like treachery somewhere, especially when it was found that the Sultan's men, who had been left to guard the river, had in many cases been replaced by men

in the surrounding villages who were naturally not to be relied upon to make any resistance to their own friends.

Another expedition made up of friendly Malays was at once organised. Lubok Terua was re-occupied and E. A. Wise, the Collector and Magistrate, remained encamped there in a strong stockade. Further action was to be taken at the end of the Bulan Puasa.

The Third Outbreak.

Before further operations could be resumed against the ex-Orang Kaya, the whole Peninsula was startled by the news of the murder of two Europeans, named Harris and Stewart, in the employment of the Pahang Exploration Company, at a place about half way between Temerloh and Pekan and in a district far removed from the Semantan area. One of these men was bravely but unavailably defended by a Malay woman.

This fresh outbreak (April 1892) was the work of the Panglima Muda of Jumpol, who, after mutilating the bodies of the two murdered Europeans, started down stream to attack Pekan.

For a day or two this caused quite a panic there. The few Europeans arranged to defend themselves in the gaol, and people in the other States and in Singapore began to get anxious. The arrival in safety of the Resident from Pulau Tawar and the appearance of a detachment of Sikhs from Singapore, not to mention the coming of H.M.S. *Hyacinth*, *Plover* and *Rattler* quickly restored confidence: and soon afterwards the police succeeded in arresting most of the Panglima's not very extensive following. These men, together with a man arrested by the Resident on his way down river, were afterwards tried and some of them sentenced to death and executed for actual participation in the murders.

The Panglima himself was killed by some of the Regent's men, who had gone to hunt him, after R. W. Duff and the Pahang police had already captured most of his worst followers.

Sultan Again Moves.

The Sultan moved down to the mouth of the Semantan river and sent one of his sons and To' Gajah to again clear the ex-Orang Kaya out of the Semantan district. This they did very effectively. The ex-Orang Kaya once more became a fugitive and most of his followers were brought in, or came in, and made their submission to the Sultan (June, 1892). During most of this time the Resident remained with the Sultan at the mouth of the river.

The Fourth Outbreak.

Meanwhile, however, further trouble had already broken out in the Ulu Pahang district—a trouble which led to somewhat extensive military operations.

Early in April (1892) Mat Kilau, began to attract attention by raising a band of armed followers at Budu; and all sorts of rumours were afloat as to what he intended to do.¹

The manager of the Raub mine (W. Bibby) having reason to believe that Mat Kilau intended to attack Raub,

¹ After his expedition to the Semantan valley, Sultan Ahmad gave no active support to the colonial regime in its campaign, and by stages withdrew from contact with it, leaving his son Tengku Mahmud, as Regent, to deal with it. See W. Linehan, 'A History of Pahang', *JMBRAS*, 14(2), 1936; reprinted in *A History of Pahang*, MBRAS Reprint No. 2, 1973, p. 147, and A. Gopinath, *Pahang 1880-1933: A Political History*, MBRAS Monograph No. 18, 1990, p. 108.

² Mat Kilau was a son of To' Gajah, one of the leading Pahang chiefs. His exploits made him—in modern times—a legendary hero of Malay resistance to colonial rule.

fortified his premises and applied to the Selangor Government for assistance.

Col. Walker, C.M.G., (from Perak), at once proceeded to Raub with a detachment of Sikhs and from that time onwards maintained a military occupation over the greater part of Ulu Pahang. His task consisted not only in keeping open communication with Selangor and communications in Pahang itself, but in carrying on a guerilla warfare with rebels who never showed themselves. The force under Col. Walker consisted of Perak Sikhs, Sungei Ujong Sikhs, Pahang Sikhs, a few Malay Police and some friendly scouts, his command being gradually re-inforced from time to time as the extent of his operations was increased.

The Sikhs, being unaccustomed to the jungle or jungle fighting, were never at any time able to get to close quarters with a people who had been born and bred in the jungle, otherwise of course Col. Walker's campaign would have been over in six weeks instead of six months. His difficulties were generally (a) to find the enemy and (b) to prevent his men from being 'sniped' at.

By the end of September every Pahang Malay who was known to have taken up arms against the Government had been either killed in guerilla skirmishes, driven from the State into Kelantan, or had submitted. The troops were then gradually withdrawn leaving only sufficient for garrison duty. By October Col. Walker's work was done and he returned to Perak.

The First Pahang Disturbance had lasted from December 1891 to September 1892.

Two Years Later.

In June 1894 occurred what is known as the Second Pahang Disturbance. About a hundred raiders from across

the border (Kelantan) suddenly swooped down on a small garrison of 11 Sikhs in a stockade at Kuala Tembeling. Five of these Sikhs were killed. The others managed to escape. One of them, Rham Singh, who was wounded with knives and crises in more than 30 places, succeeded in making his way to Pulau Tawer where he reported what had happened to the local Chiefs.*

The raiders started to preach a Holy War, but this awakened no particular interest among the Pahang Malays. Some of the raiders then proceeded a few miles up the Tembeling river and constructed a stockade at Jeram Ampai.

Meanwhile Mamat Kelubi, one of the principal rebel Chiefs, who with some fifty men, had been left in charge of the captured post at Kuala Tembeling, had gone up the Jelai River with half a dozen men to ensure the interruption of all communication with Kuala Lipis, and thus to prevent the news of the fall of the Tembeling station reaching the Government headquarters of the Ulu Pahang district.

On June 16th, he returned, being still unaware of the retreat of his friends into the Tembeling. He and his party were at once attacked and killed by the Pulau Tawer Chiefs,

* In his book, *In a Corner of Asia*, Sir Hugh Clifford refers to Rham Singh's gallant conduct in the following words:— "If you should chance to meet him he will be much flattered should you allow him to divest himself of his tunic, and you will see the network of scars on his brown skin. He is inordinately proud of them and rightly so, say I, for which man amongst us can show such an undoubted proof of courage, endurance, and self-sacrifice as this obscure hero?"³

³ This is Robson's, not an editorial footnote, citing H. C. Clifford, *In a Corner of Asia, being Tales and Impressions of Men and Things in the Malay Peninsula*, London: Fisher Unwin, 1899, p.194, 'The Story of Ram Singh'.

who had gathered together such arms, ammunition and men as they had been able to collect, and after despatching messengers to Temerloh and Pekan, had themselves taken the initiative without waiting for assistance from the Government.

In the meantime, Col. Walker, C.M.G., had again been sent for. Perak Sikhs, Selangor Sikhs and even the Colonial Sikh Police were again hurried into Pahang.

On June 28, 1894, sixteen days after the rebels and raiders had crossed the frontier, Col. Walker arrived at Kuala Tembeling. Capt. Talbot was in command of the Perak Sikhs, Capt. Lyons of the Selangor Sikhs, and R. W. Duff (late Militia) of the Pahang Sikhs.

On the morning of June 29, the attack on Jeram Ampai was begun, Colonel Walker, Capt. Lyons and Capt. Talbot proceeding up the left bank of the Tembeling, the attack on the right bank being entrusted to R. W. Duff and others, who, however, were misled by their guides and did not arrive until the action was over.

Death of Mr. Wise.

Col. Walker's column reached a spot in the jungle within hearing of the rebels in their stockade, without the latter being aware of their approach, and a somewhat impetuous attack would then appear to have been made.⁴ Col. Walker himself led the attack, rushing forward right ahead of his men. He was closely followed by E. A. Wise, who was acting

⁴ 'A somewhat impetuous attack' is a milder comment than most on Walker's leadership and tactical sense. P. Morrah, 'The History of the Malayan Police', *JMBRAS*, 36(2), 1963, p. 86, gives a fuller account and calls it 'a muddled affair'. Walker, in this as in some other cases, blamed his subordinates for mistakes for which he should have accepted responsibility.

as Political officer on Colonel Walker's staff. Unfortunately, while in the very act of hacking his way through the surrounding fence of the stockade, Wise was shot dead from behind by some of the Sikhs who, under cover of the surrounding jungle, were firing somewhat wildly at the stockade.

There were no medical officers attached to the column and Wise succumbed. Four Sikhs were also killed and Capt. Talbot was wounded. Capt. Lyons had a miraculous escape, a bullet striking him near the region of the heart, but was stopped in its course by a note-book in his breast pocket. Those of the rebels who were not killed of course bolted as usual into the jungle.

This practically finished the Second Disturbance in Pahang which was of very short duration. Subsequent expeditions into Trengganu and Kelantan, conducted by Sir (then Mr.) Hugh Clifford, assisted by R. W. Duff and others, in search of raiders and rebels failed to achieve much in the way of captures. But it showed the peoples across the border that they could not make raids into Pahang with impunity. It was perhaps when engaged in the Kelantan expedition that R. W. Duff first conceived the idea of opening up that State—a task undertaken later on by the Duff Development Company when R. W. Duff had retired from the Government Service.⁵ So much attention was paid at one time to the litigation in which the Duff Development Company was concerned that

⁵ Robson is again being emollient about a very controversial affair. For the history of the Duff concession and the protracted disputes between the Kelantan government and the Duff Development Company, which cost the state a large sum of money, see Shaharil Talib, 'The Duff Syndicate in Kelantan 1900-1902', *JMBRAS*, 45(1), 1973; Shaharil Talib, *A History of Kelantan 1890-1940*, MBRAS Monograph No. 21, 1995; and R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, London: Macmillan, 1937.

some people may forget the important part played by R. W. Duff as the pioneer who did so much for the early development of Kelantan.

CHAPTER VI.

NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE.

IN 1889 Selangor depended on the *Straits Times* and the *Singapore Free Press* for its news of the world. Arnot Reid, after an unsuccessful attempt to secure election to the House of Commons, came out in that year to take up the editorship of the *Straits Times*. W. G. St. Clair had arrived two years previously, and with the assistance of W. Makepeace, had got the old *Singapore Free Press* going as a daily paper. Arnot Reid retired when the *Straits Times* was turned into a limited liability company in 1900. From 1895 onwards the *Singapore Free Press* was owned by W. G. St. Clair and W. Makepeace until the former retired in 1916 and the latter in 1926.

The rival editors were both brilliant men in their particular calling. Arnot Reid was perhaps the best all round journalist who ever came to Malaya.

[The *Straits Times* has been fortunate in having had the services of men like Arnot Reid, E. A. Morphy, T. H. Reid and A. W. Still, to say nothing of present company.]

Morphy was a brilliant writer.

T. H. Reid—no relation of the late Arnot Reid—is a first class journalist and a good businessman. It is nearly forty years ago since I met him in Hongkong, when he was editor and part proprietor of the *China Mail*. Later he became news-editor of the now defunct London *Standard*, until he came East again to take up the editorship of the *Straits Times* (1906–1908). When his successor had to be selected the choice lay between the late A. W. Still and the late Edgar Wallace—a journalist who achieved world wide fame as a



F. L. Jones



writer of crime stories. A. W. Still was chosen. After T. H. Reid retired from journalism, he joined Sir William Taylor at the then newly established Malay States Information Agency in Cannon Street and was there for about thirteen years, (1910–1923). In excellent health at 70, he is now making a trip round the world with his wife and has recently been in Kuala Lumpur on a visit to his son in the Chartered Bank.

A. W. Still was a worthy successor to T. H. Reid. He was a fighter and a fine character. He will always be remembered as the leading advocate for rubber restriction. No other pen in Malaya carried such weight. It was said at the time that the increasing circulation of the *Straits Times* was mainly due to public appreciation of Still's leading articles. I can quite believe it.

W. G. St. Clair was a robust Imperialist, a musician and a keen Volunteer, who was ably supported by his ever popular partner, W. Makepeace, now living in retirement at Bristol. From time to time the *Singapore Free Press* would attack the views of the *Straits Times*, but throughout his whole career in Singapore, I do not remember that Arnot Reid ever replied to a single attack. He calmly went on his way as if no other local newspaper existed.

The greatest scoop ever made by the *Straits Times* was when it published a full, detailed account of the important naval action in Manila Bay (1896) before any official account was made public.¹ How the *Straits Times* obtained the information, so soon after the action, was considered a

¹ Robson may here be referring to the naval action of 1 May 1898 (not 1896) in which an American squadron sank the Spanish fleet, with the consequence that the USA replaced Spain in control of the Philippines. See D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 4th edn, London: Macmillan, 1981, p. 764.

mystery at the time. And, as far as I know to the contrary, remains so to this day.

When Arnot Reid retired in 1900 he again contemplated standing for Parliament—Merthyr Tydvil being the selected constituency, but his failing health gave way and he went into a mental home where he died in 1901. After his retirement from Singapore, W. G. St. Clair set out to search the world for a home and visited several countries, including the West Indies which he found too parochial. He and his wife finally settled in Ceylon where he died in 1930. There have been other Singapore newspapers, which had their brief life, such as the *Eastern Daily Mail* (1905–1906). And there is the *Malaya Tribune* born in 1915 and still going strong. The *Pinang Gazette*, the oldest newspaper in Malaya, has been issued as a daily since 1891. The *Straits Echo* was started under Chinese auspices in 1903. One of the best of the editors who have been in charge of this Penang paper at different times was Herbert Welham—another born journalist. Apart from the dailies quite a number of weeklies have appeared in Malaya during the past forty odd years—and some of them quite good of their kind.

Perak Newspapers.

The first newspaper in Perak was the *Perak Pioneer*, a twice weekly publication, produced by the much respected Syed Abdul Hassan Burhan of Taiping in 1894. This brave man was also the proprietor of an aerated water factory. By a gallant struggle he kept his newspaper alive till about 1912. The *Times of Malaya* (Ipoh) was started in 1904. J. A. S. Jennings became editor in 1906, and is now, I believe, sole proprietor. For many years he also published a fortnightly magazine called the *Malayan Tin and Rubber Journal*. This

consisted of 60 quarto pages with two columns to a page. It ceased to appear at the end of 1932. Although ably assisted at different times, Jack Jennings has practically made the "T.O.M." a one man show. For twenty eight years he has borne the burden on his shoulders. During this long period he has closely identified himself with the thousand and one interests of Perak. Every credit is due to him for the success he has made of his paper. In early days another paper called the *Malaya Daily Chronicle* was started in Ipoh by Dr. R. M. Connolly. It had a life of about two years (1912-1914). Then in 1922 came the *Malayan Observer*, which was produced in Ipoh under the editorship of F. F. Cooray. This was a well edited, nicely got up little paper, but it lasted only a few months. Then in 1932 came the ill-fated *Morning News* which was also published in Ipoh. The paper only lasted a week or two.

Selangor Publications.

The *Selangor Journal* was started under the auspices of Dr. Travers, W. W. Skeat and John Russell in 1892. It appeared once a fortnight, carried no advertisements, was ably edited by John Russell and lasted until I established the *Malay Mail* in 1896. Some twenty-five to thirty years ago a small weekly publication called *In Tinland* was printed and published in Kuala Lumpur by the late G. Bain. The *Malayan Leader* was started in Kuala Lumpur in 1920 and existed until 1921. A. E. Moreira was editor. This paper was caught in the first slump—and could not weather the storm. Then came the *Malayan Daily Express* which was started in 1927 under the editorship of A. R. Fernando and collapsed in the second slump—after being edited for a time by F. F. Cooray, who had an arduous task to keep the flag flying as long as he did. No matter how ably a newspaper is edited, it cannot be run

indefinitely with insufficient capital or with insufficient revenue to cover expenses. In 1932 C. J. Baker published a small daily bulletin in Kuala Lumpur called the *Morning Gazette*. It was a plucky little venture. Its life was short.

First Daily in Kuala Lumpur.

When I was acting Collector of Land Revenue and Registrar of Titles at Kuala Lumpur, I went on leave to Japan and met a *Times* war correspondent who was passing through Hongkong. He talked a lot about journalism and introduced me to T. H. Reid, then editor of the leading Hongkong paper and afterwards editor of the *Straits Times*. Up till this time my only connection with local journalism had been the writing of special articles for the *Singapore Free Press*. On my return from Hongkong I got into touch with Arnot Reid, then editor of the *Straits Times*, and discussed the possibilities of starting a daily paper in Kuala Lumpur. I also had several talks on the same subject with W. W. Skeat, who was then in the Selangor Civil Service. The plunge was taken in 1896. W. W. Skeat and I put up the same amount of money and the necessary plant was obtained for us in Singapore by Arnot Reid. The very primitive plant had formerly been used to produce the *Morning Herald* in Singapore. The old hand press on which the earliest issues of the *Malay Mail* were printed is still in the office, and, until recent years, was in use as a proof press for full and half page advertisements. At first I was sole editor and manager of what was then a four page daily. The only assistant I had was a Ceylonese clerk. The circulation was under two hundred copies a day.

Within a few weeks of starting the paper, I had a visit from Archie Harper, founder of the firm of A. C. Harper & Co., now Harper, Gilfillan & Co. He was in some distress

because he had to go away for about ten days or so, and there was nobody who could look after his business during his absence. Would I undertake the job? I pointed out that I knew nothing about running a business. He said that did not matter, so I agreed to do what I could to help him. To look after a business and produce a daily paper at the same time without assistance or knowledge was certainly a serious undertaking. However, nothing happened.

Up till the time he left Singapore, Arnot Reid gave me much valuable advice about the editing and production of a newspaper, as did also W. Makepeace of the *Singapore Free Press*, when I invoked his assistance. Relations between the two Singapore papers and the *Malay Mail* were always cordial.

Four or five years after the Kuala Lumpur daily was started it was turned into a private limited liability company. The men who have been mainly responsible for the growth, management and prosperity of the *Malay Mail* during its thirty seven years' existence include S. C. Yeomans, editor from 1902 to 1906 and manager from 1908 to 1910; A. F. M. Price, who was editor from 1907 to 1912 and again from 1913 to the time of his death here in 1922; G. A. Ketschker, who was manager for many years till 1920, when he became the Company's auditor—a position he held until he died in 1927. And, coming to more recent times, F. L. Jones, the present editor, who has been with the Company since 1912 and Mrs. Green who joined the editorial staff in 1921. Many other names could be mentioned if space permitted.

There hangs in the office a portrait of Norman Marriott, a former manager, who was killed in the War. By his death the Company lost one of its most valued employees. No brief account of the history of the first daily paper published in the F.M.S. would be complete without reference to A. K. E.

Hampshire and D. H. Hampshire. Although holding no large financial interests in the Company, one of them has always been on the Board of Directors since 1901. First A. K. E. Hampshire and then D. H. Hampshire, who practically acts as Managing Director of the Company when I am away on leave. Between them the two brothers have given over thirty years of helpful service to the Company. When the paper was first started, a shop-house was taken in Market Street, which has since been pulled down to make way for the present Post Office. The building now occupied by the General Electric Co. at the corner of Java Street was built for the Malay Mail Press Company in 1903. It cost the Company \$5,629. Needless to say it is worth a vastly large sum to-day. Four years later these premises were found to be too small, so I erected the four shop-house type buildings in Java Street, three of which were bought by the Company in 1907, and the last one in 1925.² Until this time the paper had been printed on flat bed machines taking a sheet equivalent in size to four pages. It took hours to get the whole sixteen pages printed and then the sheets had to be hand fed into a folding machine. Six years ago, it was decided to install Duplex presses which could both print and fold the paper from a reel—and do it in far less time. The Java Street houses were not large enough for the new presses, so the existing three storied premises in Pudu Road were erected and occupied in 1929; opportunity being taken at the same time to bring the office equipment thoroughly up to date.³

² A photograph of this building appears in J. M. Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur 1857-1939*, MBRAS Monograph No. 29, 2000, Plate 34.

³ Makepeace wrote an article on the Malayan press, with a passage on the first decade of the *Malay Mail* and Robson's Malayan career, in A. Wright and H. A. Cartwright (eds.), *Twentieth Century Impressions of*

Always an Optimist.

A. F. M. Price deserves more than a passing reference. After completing his education at Downing College, Cambridge, he entered the office of the London *Times* and, after quite a brief stay there, came to Kuala Lumpur in 1906 to join the staff of the Malay Mail Press Co. as a junior assistant. A year later he was editor of the paper. Family affairs called him home about 1911 and he then went out to the *Statesman* in Calcutta for a short period before returning to the editorial chair in Kuala Lumpur. Both inside and outside the office Price was always regarded as just the right man for the job. During the War, under his editorship, the *Malay Mail* was the most optimistic journal in Malaya. It was published seven days a week for a considerable period and at one time came out as both a morning and an evening paper. There is no doubt that the *Malay Mail* had a very steadying influence locally through some of the darkest hours of the great world struggle. It is interesting to recall that the last leading article from A. F. M. Price's pen was on the death of Lord Northcliffe. It appeared only a few hours before his own sudden death. Price's death was tragic. It was known that his heart was in a bad state and the directors of the Company had suggested during a previous leave that, for his own sake, he should remain in England. After consulting two specialists, one of whom was against his return to the tropics

British Malaya: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources, London: Lloyds Greater Britain Publishing Co., 1908, pp. 262-3. In 1954 the *Malay Mail* published a supplement, entitled 'Fifty Years of Progress—1904-1954', to celebrate the installation of new printing presses. The first (unsigned) article in the Supplement, headed '200 copies by manpower—Today thousands an hour', reproduces much of Robson's account herein, with some additional material on Robson as an editor and the history of the paper from 1934 to 1954.

and the other in favour of his doing so, he decided that however long he had got to live, he would certainly be happier and more comfortable in Kuala Lumpur than at home. The end came quite unexpectedly. He had had a very bad cough for some days. And then early one morning I received a telephone message to say that he had been found dead in his bedroom. The scene on entering the house was horrible. The body, partly dressed was covered with blood, also the surrounding floor and a small towel still grasped in the dead man's hand. He had evidently been reading, his cough had come on, he had got up to cross the room or perhaps to go to his wife's room opposite, and then suddenly a blood vessel in the heart must have burst.

A Curious Incident.

Newspaper men occasionally meet with strange experience. About half an hour before going to press one day, the news-editor received a letter announcing the death of a European. The letter came from a good address and was apparently written by a friend. Sympathetic reference was made to the career of the deceased and to his wife who survived him. In fact just the sort of details which would be sent to a newspaper for publication. The news-editor had never heard of the deceased who, according to the letter, had always lived in an out-station. Nor was the name of the writer familiar to him: but of course many letters are received in a newspaper office from people unknown to anybody on the staff, so there was nothing surprising about that. A short paragraph giving the gist of the contents of the letter was inserted in that day's issue of the paper. In the circumstances this was the correct procedure and any other news-editor would have taken action.

Next morning a gentleman walked into the office and demanded to know on whose authority we had reported his death when he was still very much alive. He was shown the letter, but this threw no further light on the mystery, because he had never heard of the writer. He was able to say, however, that whilst some of the facts in the letter were correct, others were pure invention. A further and more careful perusal of the letter raised some doubts as to whether the writer was a European—although the name given sounded English. On enquiry at the address given in the letter—which turned out to be the residence of a man I knew quite well—it was ascertained that no such person as the writer was known even by name. Naturally the first thought which occurred to us in the office was what could have been the motive in sending false news which was bound to be contradicted next day. There was nothing detrimental in the letter. As far as he knew our visitor had not an enemy in the world. He could suggest no earthly reason for anybody recording his premature death—even in kindly language. The matter was then reported to the Police who I believe discovered one or two people bearing the same name as the writer of the letter, but there was absolutely nothing to connect any of them with the document. To this day the mystery has never been solved.

The Daily Task.

It is doubtful if any other occupation in this part of the world is quite so consistently strenuous, during certain hours of the day, as the production of an afternoon paper. The responsible members of the editorial staff are always working against the clock. Trains have to be caught. A morning or an evening paper would not involve the same strain. If all the

news for the day was available at 9 a.m., there would be less difficulty in going to press at 1.30 p.m. But with, say, *Reuter's* cables coming in bit by bit all the morning, it is impossible to know what the chief news items of the day are going to be or how the cable pages can be arranged until the last available moment. Incidentally it may be mentioned that F.M.S. papers have to pay considerably more for *Reuter's* cables than the papers in the Colony, on account of the extra overland charge which goes into the pocket of the P. & T. department.

Perhaps the greatest strain of all in most Malayan newspaper offices is the production of a leading article, day after day, year in and year out. This task generally falls on the editor. The editor of a daily paper in England has the assistance of special leader writers. The editor of an important provincial daily paper told me that he wrote very little himself. When, as in most Malayan newspaper offices, it is possible only to maintain a small editorial staff, the editor is never free of interruption. Visitors call, the telephone calls and he is being frequently consulted by members of his staff. He has to know what is going into the day's paper and see it all in print—say over forty columns a day. A libel may lurk in the most innocent looking paragraph. And of course he must see every cable as soon as possible after it comes into the office. How he ever finds time to write his leading article is often a mystery. And then what is he to write about? The supply of local topics is not inexhaustible—yet it is not everybody who would prefer to read editorial opinion on other than local topics. When I have asked well educated Europeans, outside the office, if they could help us with an occasional "leader" I have nearly always met with the same responses:—"I would not know what to write about"—or—"I can't think of any topic of local interest I could write

about"—or—"I am very busy, I don't think I could find time to write an article."

On the other hand quite a number of people send in useful letters to the editor recounting their particular grievances or recording their particular views about some affair of the moment. Nearly all these letters require some slight sub-editing before being sent to the printers. Correspondence, articles etc. destined for a newspaper office must be typed on one side of the sheet only, because the sheet is cut up into slips before being distributed among the linotype operators. Each column has to be set up as quickly as possible, in order to provide a steady stream of proofs for the correctors. And seven men can of course set up a column in less time than one man, hence the cutting up into slips.

That Malaya has a definite attraction for journalists is evident from the fact that so many of them who leave this country to take up work elsewhere soon show a desire to return. At the moment I can think of eight men who have expressed such a desire, including one now dead who said that he could do far better as a free lance in Fleet Street than in any Malayan newspaper office. He tried it. The experiment did not last long and he was very glad to return to Malaya.

Obtaining Assistants.

There is no difficulty in securing applications for journalistic appointments in this part of the world, but it is a long and precarious business to select the right men. Suppose, for example, that a sub-editor is required: age between 25 and 35: an unmarried man for preference. An advertisement in the London *Times* for two or three days will produce a crop of from fifty to sixty applications within a

week or so. Half the applications can be immediately consigned to the waste paper basket. There are applications from aged men with large families, from men who have no professional training whatever, from men who say they are tired of their present occupation and would like to try journalism for a change, from men who simply express a wish to go abroad and give no further details about themselves or their qualifications.

The next step is to select about a dozen of the most promising applications and arrange for personal interviews with the applicants. This starts the weeding out process. One applicant states that he has a wife and two children and that his family will remain in England. It is explained that the salary of the appointment is insufficient for the maintenance of two homes. Another applicant puts forward testimonials from previous employers of such suspiciously luke-warm appreciation that he is ruled out in favour of more promising material. A third may have no interest in games or sport. And so on until the choice is narrowed down to two or three—all with about the same qualifications—all of presentable appearance—and all apparently likely to do well in the tropics. Then references have to be taken up and a final selection made. The next step is the giving of notice by the selected candidate to his then employers, if any, and the undergoing of a medical examination in order to produce a certificate that he is bodily fit for work in the tropics. Lastly there is the signing of the agreement and the securing of a passage. From the time that the Company's representative in London is asked to find a suitable man to the time that the selected man arrives in Malaya may be anything from four to six months. And the whole business is a gamble from start to finish. It is impossible to tell from a short personal interview

in England how a man is going to shape in and react to the tropics.

Sometimes men have to be sent home again within a few months of their arrival. Others of course turn out trumps. I remember one particular case in which the selected man cried off at the last moment, because the girl he was engaged to did not want him to leave England. The next available man on the list, call him Q, had been strongly recommended by somebody whose words carried weight. So much time had been wasted in coming to a selection decision, that there was little hesitation in offering the appointment to Q who was very glad to get it. On arrival in Kuala Lumpur he turned out to be a very capable, steady and industrious worker. But, alas, he also turned out to be the most impossibly tactless person it is possible to imagine. He could not hit it off with anybody in the office. He was then given the opportunity of making a fresh start in a very good appointment unconnected with journalism. He made a mess of that, too, and died in another country some years later under somewhat tragic circumstances.

At another stage in its history the Company employed a gentleman whose duty it was to expand the daily *Reuter's* cables before passing them on to the compositors. On several occasions it was noticed that other local papers published cables which did not appear in the *Malay Mail*. Subsequent investigation showed that when the gentleman concerned was feeling a little off colour, he could not be bothered to tackle all the cables of the day and simply threw a few of them into the waste paper basket. Needless to say he was not one of the trumps.

A General Outlook.

No great fortunes will ever be made out of newspapers in Malaya, because the field of opportunity is strictly limited. A moderate return on capital invested is all that can be hoped for nowadays in a newspaper or any other business. Malaya is well supplied with newspapers of a very good class. I do not know of any other English speaking territory which can show a better Press on a comparative basis i.e. taking into consideration the field of opportunity. I remember the time when the *Malay Mail* published about a column or less of cable news a day. And I do not think that even the Singapore papers provided much more. Now cable and wireless news may run to as much as twelve to fifteen columns a day. Naturally this vastly increased service involves a greatly increased cost. And that is only one item in newspaper expenditure. A very considerable percentage of earned profits has to be set aside year by year for the ultimate purchase of new machinery. As a practical illustration I may mention that the existing plant in the *Malay Mail* Office represents the accumulated savings of a long period of years.

If I had my life over again I should have no desire whatever to start a daily paper in Malay or elsewhere. There are other occupations in life involving less constant worry, anxiety and never ending strain than newspaper control and production.

CHAPTER VII.

KUALA LUMPUR RIOTS.

IN the early nineties occurred what was known as the Datching Riot in Kuala Lumpur. The authorities had been busy with people accused of using faulty datchings,¹ and a certain number of these weighing instruments had been confiscated. This necessitated the purchase of new datchings from the only shop dealing in this particular line of goods. A quite unwarranted idea got about that the activities of the authorities were instigated by the man with the new datchings for sale. It was suspected that a storm was brewing. Suddenly one afternoon Chinese shopkeepers in the centre of the town put up their shutters, and all the rikishas disappeared off the streets as if by magic. Crowds collected in the streets, near where the Federal Dispensary now stands, and an attempt was made to sack the shop of the datching dealer. There was a lot of stone throwing—not to mention a few bricks. A mere handful of police, by a bayonet charge, saved

¹ Spelt 'dacing' in modern Malay. It was a balance scale (a 'steelyard'); both the device and the word were said to be of Cantonese origin. See R. J. Wilkinson Wilkinson, *Malay-English Dictionary (Romanised)*, Mytilene: Salavopoulos and Kinderlis, 1932, Vol. 1, p. 224. A horizontal rod, rather over a foot in length, is suspended from a marked position (not central). The goods to be weighed are hung from the longer end of the rod, and weights are added to the shorter end until the rod is horizontal. A false marking of the point of central suspension or false weights can give an inaccurate measure of the weight of the goods, but the dacing was in common use in Malayan markets and shops. The 'authorities' were the Kuala Lumpur Sanitary Board whose functions included the supervision of markets.

the shop from wreckage. The mob dispersed in one spot, only to gather in another.

Some little time later the Resident (J. P. Rodger) heard about what was happening. Calling on H. C. Ridges to accompany him, he at once drove down to town and into the midst of an angry mob. Ridges stood up in the dog-cart and harangued the crowd in Chinese on behalf of the Resident. He warned them that the Resident would stand no nonsense, and that if they did not disperse at once the consequences would be very serious. This speech had the desired effect and the trouble was over.

The Tauchang Riots.

A much more serious disturbance of the public peace occurred in Kuala Lumpur and the surrounding villages at Chinese New Year in 1912. The town was naturally full of holiday makers, including a number of mining coolies. The usual gambling in verandahs² had been prohibited. The coolie population wandered about the streets and then by way of amusement started throwing Chinese sand-crackers into Petaling Street houses. Knowing of the movement then on foot among certain sections of the Chinese to discard the queue*, some adventurous spirits among the crowd decided to accelerate the movement by seizing individuals in the streets and cutting off their queues. If the victims resisted they had a rough time.

*The severance of the tauchang or queue had a political significance connected with the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty in China.

² 'Verandahs' here refers to the pavement ('five foot way') in front of shophouses, often obstructed by hawkers' stalls, gambling tables, petition writers tables, etc. It was a verandah because the upper storey of the shophouse projected over it to make it a covered way.

What started as a joke led to serious faction fighting which lasted about a week, involved the calling out of the Volunteers, and the summoning of contingents of the Guides from Taiping.³ Several people were killed and property was destroyed. For a day or two there was almost a reign of terror among some of the Chinese women and children. The following diary made up of extracts from the *Malay Mail* for the week ending Monday, February 26, 1912, will give a general idea of what actually took place.

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 20—1912.

Boisterous scenes have been witnessed in and around Kuala Lumpur since Sunday evening among the rikisha coolies. Similar reports come from other centres. Several

³ 'Chinese Riots at Kuala Lumpur 1912', report of an enquiry enclosed with Despatch from Governor to State Secretary for Colonies (SSD), 9 September 1912 (CO273/387), found that the origin of the riots was a dispute between a T'ung Meng Hui (forerunner of the Kuo Min Tang) faction and another which supported the existing regime in China. But this was exacerbated by traditional feuds between language groups. 'The determination of the Khehs [Hakkas] and Cantonese, whose minds had been inflamed by Chinese revolutionary literature and propaganda, to force the Hokkiens to remove their queues, was the major cause of the riots'. Ibid. On the significance of the queue, see C. Yong and R. B. McKenna, *The Kuomintang Movement in British Malaya 1912-1949*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990, pp. 24-5; V. Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948, p. 208; and J. D. Vaughan, *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements*, Singapore: Mission Press, 1879, p. 3.

The Volunteers (F.M.S.V.F) were a local, part-time 'territorial' reserve (predominantly but not wholly European). The Malay States Guides (M.S.G.) had been formed in 1896 under a reorganisation of the police by which many of its Sikh and other north Indian personnel were hived off to form a paramilitary reserve, with its headquarters at Taiping.

persons have been hurt, but no fatalities are reported. In Kuala Lumpur the trouble began in Petaling Street, the headquarters of the Reform party. Hokien pullers wearing tauchangs, coming into the street, were seized and forcibly taken into barbers' shops, where their tauchangs were removed. This continued for two or three hours in spite of the presence of the police, who were overpowered by the vast crowd of Chinese, the majority of whom were Cantonese. The aggressors were, it is stated, composed solely of queueless Chinese and only a portion of them were pullers. During Sunday morning, it is asserted, quite a considerable number of pullers had their queues removed and when their fellow pushers refused to follow suit an organised attack upon them was planned.

Between eight and nine o'clock the police were strengthened by the arrival of a large contingent from the Depot on Police Hill and something approaching order was restored. Stones had been freely thrown and even bottles, from Petaling Street restaurants, while in several cases the Chinese arrested, when in the act of cutting queues by force, were rescued by their friends from the police. A volley was fired over the heads of the crowd, which at once became cowed. Several pullers were dragged to barbers' shops which were found to be full, but the difficulty was overcome by the use of a parang.

Attack on Inspector.

A European police Inspector was struck, kicked and punched while securing a ring leader of a queueless faction. Order was eventually restored, but a strong force of police remained on duty in Petaling Street throughout the night.

Yesterday (Monday), the venue of the trouble was changed to Batu Road, the headquarters of the Hokien and Sinyew rikisha coolies. They refused to turn out, telling their kepalas that their tauchangs were not safe. Kuala Lumpur's streets presented an appearance of emptiness. It was impossible to get a rikisha. Cricketers arriving at the station from outstations had to carry their bags to the Club or get coolies to carry them. At this time in Batu Road things were made lively by the tauchanged pullers attacking the queueless. Any number of skirmishes took place, some of an ugly nature. The police drove the men with tauchangs into the houses and thus allowed the queueless a free passage. It was noticeable that although the larger proportion of the aggressors the previous night had not been rikisha pullers, the queued men in Batu road confined their attacks almost entirely to rikisha coolies.

Mr. W. Cowan (Protector of Chinese) called a meeting of rikisha towkays at the Selangor Chamber of Commerce at noon. There was a large attendance.

The acting Resident, Mr. E. G. Broadrick, Mr. W. W. Douglas, Mr. Owen, Secretary to Resident, and Mr. Cowan drove through the town last night.

Early this morning (Tuesday) a motor bus was attacked in Batu Road. The windows were broken by stones and two queueless occupants were pulled off the bus, which was considerably damaged. The police drove the attackers into their houses. Rushes were frequent in Batu Road and Klyne Street throughout the morning, but nothing of serious moment occurred.

A puller whose queue was cropped by a parang suffered a severe cut on the back of the neck and had to be medically attended.

A Chinese clerk, employed at one of the Kuala Lumpur banks, was seized on Sunday evening in Petaling Street. He resisted the efforts of the queueless, it is said, and had his arm dislocated.

A Chinese was killed at Kepong on Sunday. His body was badly mutilated.

At Ampang a Chinese was found yesterday lying dead. Hundreds of cuts had been made on all parts of his body. His face and hands were slashed about and his tauchang had been cropped.

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 21—1912.

Police Fire on Mob.

At tiffin time the mob in High Street made a determined rush at the police, whom they outnumbered, and drove towards the town. Cheering Chinese appeared to swarm from all quarters and there was a great hubbub until the order was given for buck shot to be fired. Three Chinese, who were leading the throng, fell shot through the legs. They were placed at the side of the road by the police in order that they might not suffer further injury. One of the men was carried into a kedai and treated while another was placed between the railway and the wall nearly opposite Huttenbach's premises. They were subsequently removed on police ambulances for medical attention.

Earlier in the morning the crowds had got out of hand. The premises of Kwong Gee and Co., tailors, in Java Street were attacked by queueless Chinese. Stones were thrown through the windows at the front and at the rear of the shop, an entrance was forced, in face of a fusillade of flat irons, and a number of rolls of cloth taken. The raiders found the rolls

too big an impediment, however, and when chased by Europeans and Asiatic police they dropped their booty. Two arrests were made.

Simultaneously trouble was experienced in other parts of the town and arrests were made in Klyne Street. The police worked splendidly in the hot sun. Since Sunday evening they have had practically no sleep.

Today's events have clearly demonstrated that the trouble is no longer confined to the rikisha pullers. Queueless Chinese have attacked each other with fury and old scores, existing between the different clans, are said to be now in course of settlement.

The fire brigade, which did good work last night in Sultan Street, by dispersing a rowdy faction by means of the hose, were called out to Batu road this afternoon. Yesterday evening a number of attap huts in Circular Road were destroyed by fire before the brigade arrived. Mr. Cowan motored to Kepong yesterday and succeeded in quelling the disturbances there. A ring-leader was brought to Kuala Lumpur in the police motor car.

The majority of the Chinese shops are closed and business is practically at a standstill all over Kuala Lumpur, as far as the Chinese are concerned. In Batu road the police have obtained a supply of food for the besieged. To-day Chinese under escort were to be seen carrying bags of rice to the house doors and there weighing and selling. A smart watch is being maintained at the railway station in order to prevent a possible supply of arms to the Chinese.

Previous to the police firing on the crowd in High Street a determined attempt was made to fire some shops in Klyne Street. The attacking party had kerosine oil in their possession and were about to set light to the door of a shop, when the Indian police dashed up and beat the mob off with

their muskets. A Cabul watchman was accidentally struck on the thigh and badly injured.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 23—1912.

Attack on Police Station.

A desperate attempt was made yesterday afternoon (Wednesday) by the mob to rush the Central Police Station in Sultan Street, Kuala Lumpur, and but for the prompt action of the Inspector-in-charge, who by means of a "double" reached the station first, there is little doubt that the mob, would have achieved their object—the release of the men in the police station cells.

Carrying two flags, the Revolution flag and the new Chinese flag, a thousand men came marching up Petaling Street from the direction of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.⁴ On seeing the police they advanced at a trot. The leader, who carried the blue and white flag, was told by the Inspector to fall back. His answer was a shout to his comrades to rush. The small band of police were hopelessly outnumbered and immediately fell back on the Central Police Station in Sultan Street. Encouraged, the mob dashed in the same direction and the ringleader, when a halt of the police force was called, ran towards the Inspector and made a blow at his head with the flag pole. This the Inspector warded off and promptly laid the man low by means of a stick. This greatly incensed the crowd and stones, bottles, tins

⁴ The Chinese Chamber of Commerce occupied the building first constructed about 1890 as an Immigration Depot (for newly arrived labourers), at the south end of Petaling Street. In the early 1920s, the building was replaced by a Chinese Assembly Hall. See J. M. Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur 1857-1939*, MBRAS Monograph No. 29, 2000, p. 258.

and water were hurled at the police from all quarters, particularly from the windows of houses.

Then came a dramatic incident. A revolver was fired at the police from an open window, the bullet striking the ground. The mob, who had evidently awaited some such decisive signal, shouted and charged the police. The order to fire was given immediately by a sergeant and several men in the mob were hit. The flag fell and a hasty retreat was beaten. All round the police cells at the station, the police were stationed with fixed bayonets, but the mob did not return. The ringleader, it is stated, was shot.

Further firing took place in different parts of Kuala Lumpur during the afternoon, and by five o'clock order had been restored.

Eleven Chinese were shot and a Bengali police constable. The latter received buck shot in the foot, but was not seriously injured. Three Chinese have died at the General Hospital and eleven are still under treatment.

Volunteers Called Out.

There was an excellent response to the summons issued to the Volunteers, and men of the M.S.V.R. turned up about 130 strong, many coming in from outstations in cars and on motor cycles. It rained rather heavily, but intermittently, some time previous to their formation at the Armoury—at 6 o'clock—under Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Hubback. Heavy clouds threatened uncomfortable conditions for the night's patrols. The men formed up quickly, and were served with ball. Lt.-Col. Hubback was in command and other officers on duty were Lieuts. Mills, Ash, second Lieuts. Howard, Gerrard, and Tyte and Sergt.-Major Laing, the honorary Chaplain, Rev. P. G. Graham, and the honorary Surgeon, Dr. Travers. 130

men were on parade. They came from all parts of Selangor, including Klang, Kapar, Kuala Kubu, Kajang, Kent and Carey Island. Nine of the twelve Europeans on Carey Island¹ attended the parade. One man came from Kuala Kangsar. The assembly took place at six o'clock at head-quarters and two companies were formed, one marching to Batu Road under the command of Lieut. Mills and Lieut. Gerrard and the other to Petaling Street under Lt.-Col. Hubback.

They were not called upon, however, to deal with any serious disturbances. Many rumours were afloat in town as to the movements and designs of the mob. Three hundred armed men were positively stated to be marching from Pudu at nine o'clock, but they failed to arrive within the town boundaries; Sungei Besi was said to have fallen into the hands of Chinese and Volunteers were actually sent there only to return and report the place quiet and in no danger. There had, however, been some rioting there, and a number of rikishas destroyed, but the police had fired and dispersed the crowd. One man, it is stated, was killed.

The Volunteers were dismissed at the armoury at six o'clock this morning when the Resident, Mr. E. G. Broadrick, on behalf of the Government thanked the men for the services they had rendered, and expressed pleasure at seeing such a representative parade.

Troops Arrive from Perak.

About 11 o'clock a special train steamed into Kuala Lumpur Station bringing 125 of the Guides (under Capt. Prince) from Taiping, a smart, workmanlike body who detrained very rapidly and formed up in a few seconds. They swung off down the Damansara Road and proceeded to the

¹ Carey Island Estate had been developed by E. V. Carey (v.s. p. 48).

vicinity of the Town Hall, where Mr. Douglas soon put in an appearance.⁶ They found things quiet. This morning they relieved the police and Volunteers in various parts of the town.

Chiefly, we believe, owing to harrowing tales brought from Ampang, many Chinese women and children were removed from their houses on the Ampang and Batu Roads yesterday. Some of Mr. Loke Yew's household were moved from his house on the Batu Road to Sultan Street and the women and children of two Chinese families sought refuge at the house of a European on Weld's Hill. Mr. Chan Sow Lin's engineering works also became a refuge for women and children. In the case of one family living on the Ampang Road an old grandfather refused to be moved. "Get the women and children away," said the veteran, "I am an old man and they can kill me if they want to."

Mr. Kia Peng was one of the few English-speaking towkays in evidence yesterday. He drove his car about the streets. Mr. Hap Loong Hin was another towkay who was seen about on Monday and Tuesday trying to assist in restoring order.

Mr. Ferrers was one of the few people who essayed to get about town yesterday in a rikisha—and later on there was, it is stated, an attempt to raid his office.⁷

⁶ W. W. Douglas (son of the former Resident (1876-1882) Bloomfield Douglas) was Commissioner of Police F.M.S. (1907-1916).

⁷ Choo Kia Peng (1881-1965), educated at Penang, was at this stage of his career an employee of Loke Yew, and administered the latter's estate after his death (1917). In the 1920s, Kia Peng was an unofficial member of the F.M.S. Federal Council and one of the leading spokesmen for the Chinese community.

H. N. Ferrers was one of the dozen or so European lawyers in private practice in Kuala Lumpur at this time.

The shutting up of European shops, at a time when the Chinese close up from fright, sets a bad example; but managers are obliged to do so lest they be held responsible for damage or loss. On an occasion like this the Government might reasonably guarantee them against any such loss or damage.

Many people are asking the question "Is our Police Force of sufficient strength to meet emergencies like the present one and, if not, would it be worth while to establish a Police Reserve?"

Our Chinese friends tell us that the calling out of the Volunteers was appreciated by the law-abiding Chinese. The moral effect was certainly good.

Trouble Entirely Chinese.

Several Chinese clerks managed to get about yesterday in disturbed localities by declaring that they were Eurasians who only spoke English. The number of so called "Sanitary Board Inspectors" about the town would have delighted the heart of our enthusiastic municipal authorities if they had all been genuine! A popular medical officer attached to the M.S.V.R. very thoughtfully visited the outposts last night with a supply of sandwiches and cherry brandy, a little attention which was much appreciated. Mrs. Hubback and Mrs. Gerrard were at headquarters all night superintending the preparation of soup, etc., for the Volunteers.

There was a big fight at one of Loke Yew's mines at Ampang on Tuesday. A crowd of the queueless arrived to demand that all the mining coolies should discard their tauchangs. The queueless were driven off but later on returned in larger numbers and a general action took place.

About a dozen men were wounded, a kongsi was burnt down and one man is reported dead.

A large number of sticks were brought into the town yesterday by Chinese, but practically all the disturbers of the peace so far have been unarmed coolies who rely on stones or fists when attacking their fellow-countrymen.

At noon the Commissioner of Police and Chairman of the Sanitary Board, Mr. F. W. Douglas, visited shops that were closed in Petaling Street and ordered them to open their doors. The majority of the shops opened last night, including gaming farms, following a meeting held at the Chinese Protectorate at half past four yesterday afternoon.

The Chief Secretary, Mr. E. L. Brockman, who it is understood, has been officially acquainted with events as they occurred, is due to arrive in Kuala Lumpur this evening by the mail train from Kuala Kangsar.

Fifty Europeans assembled at the headquarters of the M.S.V.R. camp last evening and applied for the use of arms. They were not supplied in view of the presence of the Volunteers.

Although every effort has been made to induce them to turn out, practically no rikishas were on Kuala Lumpur's streets to-day. Many dhobies in the Batu Road district have refused to take Europeans' clothes this week; they say the clothes would be stolen.^a

The number of Chinese arrested since Sunday evening in connection with the disturbances is nearly 50. Those given bail on Sunday surrendered yesterday, and were sent to Pudu

^a Washermen plied their trade on the bank of the Klang River at the north end of the government offices (Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad), known as the 'dhobi ghaut', where they spread out the clothes to dry in the sun. See Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur*, Plate 18.

gaol to await their trial. A batch will be brought before the Magistrate to-morrow and the remainder on Saturday. Yesterday Mr. Daly sat at the Central Police Station in order that the police concerned in the various cases might be at hand if required for street duty.

When a European Inspector entered 94 Batu Road yesterday afternoon to quell a disturbance, an explosion occurred. A Chinese, who was in the act of lighting some article, was seen to stagger. His face, chest, stomach and thigh were badly burnt. He was removed to hospital.

Mr. Owen, the Secretary to Resident, has a reputation for pluck handed down from the old troublous days in Pahang. It is not surprising therefore to hear that he went out alone to Ampang yesterday to get first hand information about the trouble there.

When people were smashing up rikishas in Sultan Street on Tuesday, no police were present, but there were plenty in the adjoining Petaling Street. When asked why they did not stop the wrecking going on in Sultan Street the reply was that they could not move without orders. It is to be hoped that any non-com. or private who acted on his own initiative in the interests of public order will not be overlooked for early promotion.

Some people are suggesting that the present disturbances show the need of a Chinese Advisory Board consisting of the different Chinese races living here. A quarterly meeting of such a Board in the Resident's Office would certainly keep the Government in better touch with the Chinese than is the case at present.⁹

⁹ Chinese Advisory Boards had been established in Singapore and Penang around 1890. and were judged to be 'a great success'. See W. L. Blythe, *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya: A Historical Study*, London: Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 234. Their

It is wonderful what one resolute man can do with a crowd. Yesterday afternoon one of our police Inspectors cleared out a crowd in Petaling Street without the least trouble.

People are asking why some of the Guides were not brought down here on Sunday night, instead of Wednesday night. The police have had an anxious time during the past few days and they deserve the thanks of the community.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 23—1912

It is notified elsewhere in this issue that the Prevention of Crimes Enactment, which compels the carrying of a lantern after dark, has been put into force throughout the district. It was generally known yesterday afternoon that the authorities had decided to adopt this measure, and practically everyone abroad last night was carrying some form of lantern.

Women Seeking Refuge.

Though the town was quiet, the country between Ampang and Setapak appears to have been in a disturbed state all yesterday. At about eleven o'clock in the morning a collection of huts occupied by Cantonese, a quarter of a mile from the Leper Hospital, was raided by a band of Hokien coolies from a mine near by. One of the huts was burned down, 32 pigs perishing in the flames, a considerable amount of goods were stolen, and two men injured. The Cantonese women and children from the huts took refuge in the Leper

members, however, were government nominees. The official view (Blythe, p. 286) later was that the autonomous Chinese Chambers of Commerce (there had been one in Selangor since 1904) were a better source of advice.

Hospital. Later in the day, some Sikh police visited the Hokien coolies' kongsi houses, recovered some of the stolen property, and effected ten arrests. Last night the Cantonese women and children were removed from the Leper Hospital to the District Hospital, where they were joined by other refugees from the vegetable gardens in the vicinity. Other Cantonese women and children sought protection in some shop-houses near the Federal Home for Women and Girls.¹⁰ The Hokiens let it be known that they intended to attack these refugees after dark, so at 7 o'clock a detachment of the M.S.V.R. about 30 strong, under Lieut.-Colonel Hubback, occupied the Federal Home for Women and Girls. The road leading from the Home to the old Volunteer camp, and the footpath to the rifle range, the only two avenues of approach, were guarded, but no attack was made. At 12 o'clock Colonel Hubback took a patrol by motor bus to Setapak and afterwards examined some Hokien kongsis. The inmates were awaiting attacks by Khehs. In one kongsi a dead man was found who, the Hokiens said, had been murdered by Khehs. The patrol returned to the Home about 2.30 a.m. The detachment of the M.S.V.R. returned to Kuala Lumpur in a motor bus and motor cars at 7 o'clock this morning. The Klang and Batu Caves sections of the Volunteers may be called out to-night.

A Chinese woman is reported to have been wounded by a stray shot on the Ampang or Batu Road, and a woman returning from market is said to have been attacked and beaten with sticks.

¹⁰ See Gullick, *A History of Kuala Lumpur*, Ch. 7 and elsewhere, on the development of hospitals in Kuala Lumpur. Prostitutes who had escaped from brothels and sought refuge, and other vulnerable women and girls, presented a social problem, leading to the building of a 'refuge' (Po Leung Kuk). *Ibid.*, index entries 'Women's Refuge'.

Men were going about the streets yesterday evening warning people not to be out after 9 p.m. or they might get shot. How many people have been killed or seriously injured since Sunday seems to be unknown, but the total already must be sufficiently alarming to the authorities responsible for the protection of human life.

A few rikishas were about in the Petaling Street quarter yesterday evening, but the great majority of pullers are still idle. Considering the risk they run, especially if wearing tauchangs, this is not to be wondered at.

Last Monday night 12 Hokiens were admitted to the District Hospital suffering from injuries received in a riot at Ampang. They had had their queues cut off by force.

Yesterday morning early a Chinese was admitted to the District Hospital from Batu Road. He had 27 incised wounds on his body and his queue had been forcibly removed.

An Emergency Committee Meeting of the Selangor Chamber of Commerce was called for this afternoon to consider a circular letter from merchants in connection with the action of the Chinese Protectorate during the disturbances.

There is a very plucky Chinese clerk in private employment in Kuala Lumpur who has refused to cut off his tauchang, has been twice assaulted, has had his arm broken or dislocated and still goes about the streets and visits restaurants in the queueless quarter of the town.

Although the disturbances originated on the queue question and although the Batu Road and Malay Street rikisha pullers still consider this an important point and refuse to discard their queues, the main trouble now seems to be the antagonism between Khehs and Hokiens and there are further complications probably manufactured by agitators—owing to expressed grievances about the refusal of permission

to gamble in the verandahs during the Chinese New Year, the high price of opium and goodness knows what else.

Of the Chinese injured in the rioting 6 have died in the General Hospital. Twelve are now in the hospital, 10 guarded and 2 unguarded. There is 1 out-patient.

Of those now in the institution one, shot through the chest, is in a serious condition. Another Chinese has a fragmented skull. His condition is very serious.

At 12.45 to-day just in front of this office two Chinese snatched a hand-bag from a fellow-countryman and bolted down Malay Street. The man's shouts drew the attention of the police who gave chase and succeeded in making one arrest.

A European warder at Pudoah gaol was attacked while on his way to Kuala Lumpur last night and has reported the matter to the police.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 24—1912

The situation to-day is considerably improved. Yesterday afternoon a mass meeting of leading Chinese of Kuala Lumpur, at the request of Mr. Lee Kong Lam,¹¹ was held at the Chamber of Commerce to formulate measures to suppress the present lawlessness. There were about 150 persons present in the hall and a large number congregated outside. Messrs. Chan Sow Lin, M.C., and Lee Kong Lam, M.C., represented the Cantonese, and Messrs. Ung Ka

¹¹ Lee Kong Lam (1853-1931) had been educated in Singapore, and, like Choo Kia Peng (Note 7 above), began his career as an associate of Loke Yew, for whom he acted as private secretary and attorney. He became a successful miner and a prominent figure in public life in Selangor. He was an important witness at the enquiry into the riots (Note 3 above).

Tseung and Low Leong Gan represented the Hokiens. Mr. Lee Kong Lam pointed out the object of the meeting and submitted proposals for consideration. After harmonious discussion it was resolved to print and circulate notices instructing the various factions to refrain from creating further disturbances, as a representative committee was appointed to settle their grievances according to Chinese custom. Mr. Kong Lam offered to subscribe \$1,000 towards compensation to the sufferers. Mr. Tong Takin was unanimously appointed Hon. Secretary for the Cantonese and Mr. Khoong Soo Kee for the Hokiens.

Affair at Ampang.

There was a serious affray at Ampang yesterday morning. On Thursday the Khehs had fired Hokien huts, and about 9 a.m. yesterday a large body of Hokiens set out to institute reprisals. They had actually fired two kongsis before information was brought to Inspector Travers, who, with a force of 20 Sikh policemen, immediately started for the scene of action. Meanwhile, the Khehs had assembled in force and were preparing to bear down upon the Hokiens. The position, it will be realised, was a very serious one, and the Inspector and his men were actively engaged for several hours before they succeeded in finally dispersing the rival bodies and thus averting conflict between them. The police force was stationed on a hill between the opposite bodies. With, literally, thousands of the coolies to deal with, strong measures were necessary. On the combatants advancing and refusing to retire, the police fired volleys, which caused the advancing mobs to waver, and followed these up with bayonet charges which clinched matters and drove them helter-skelter back to their kongsis. These resolute measures

eventually prevailed, though, as stated above, it was several hours before the coolies finally returned to their kongsis. It is practically impossible to ascertain the actual number of casualties. On enquiry at Ampang yesterday evening our representative learnt from an unofficial source that two men were known to be killed. These may or may not include a man whose body, burnt almost to a cinder, was found in one of the gutted kongsis. After order had been restored the Inspector went round the kongsis with his men and brought out about a dozen wounded, receiving little or no assistance from the latter's comrades. They were taken to the police station, and after their wounds had been washed and dressed they were despatched in carts to the General Hospital, Kuala Lumpur. There must be more casualties, however, for in various directions near the scene of the fighting traces of blood were found. The coolies, of course, would not take their wounded back to the kongsis since their presence there would furnish evidence against the whole kongsi. The heartiest praise is due to the Inspector for the resolute manner in which he dealt with the gravest of situations, where anything but the strongest of measures must inevitably have led to disaster, and to his 20 men who behaved admirably in the most trying circumstances. Both the Inspector and the men had been on practically continuous duty since last Sunday, and in view of the known seriousness of the situation at Ampang it seems amazing to us that reinforcements were not sent out there before.

Some of the M.S.V.R. patrolling in the direction of Setapak on Thursday night had an experience which was thrilling at the moment. The patrolling party had visited a Hokien kongsi, and four of them remained on guard there, while the others went in search for a Kheh mob from which the Hokiens expected an attack. They had been gone about a

quarter of an hour when those who remained heard shouts and cries followed by the blowing of whistles. Their first impression was that a trap had been laid for the patrol. Doubling across very rough country in the direction whence the noise came, they found the remainder of the patrol at a Hokien kongsi, whose inmates had at first taken the patrol for attacking Khehs and were much relieved when they discovered the identity of their nocturnal visitors.

An employee of Wolfram (Selangor), Ltd., hit on an ingenious method of frightening off disturbers of the peace. A crowd had collected at Pudu on Thursday night, and it was thought that an attempt might be made to rush the police station. By making the engine at the Company's premises misfire he created an explosion which effectually scattered the mob.

MONDAY FEBRUARY 26—1912

There has been no recrudescence of the disturbances in Kuala Lumpur, and yesterday the appearance of the streets indicated a general return of the rikisha pullers to work. A further detachment of 50 Guides arrived from Taiping on Saturday night.

There was an affray at Sungei Besi about midday on Saturday. A mob attacked a kongsi and its inmates. Mr. A. E. Bailey, who was present, made an attempt to repress the disturbance, but, being unsuccessful, fired a revolver, and dispersed the crowd. Two men were wounded and are now in hospital. Petaling Street and Batu Road were undisturbed on Saturday night. It was noticeable that the former thoroughfare did not present its usual Saturday night aspect.

[My old friend, San Ah Wing, has given me his personal recollections of these disturbances. He mentions in a note

that the Chinese Chamber of Commerce drew up an exhortation for peace and resumption of business and had leaflets distributed. The principal of the Kwan Seng Girls' School (the late Mr. Chong Cheok Keng) rendered assistance in this connection. He anticipated that if men attempted to carry out the distribution they would be assaulted, so he wisely got school boys to carry out the work. Some of the leading Cantoese and Hokiens formed a Committee and arranged to make grants to the families of those killed. He also mentions that all told, about a dozen men lost their lives during the disturbances.—J.H.M.R.]

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APPENDIX I

Kuala Lumpur in early 1882—A Retrospect from 1905

This article from the *Malay Mail* is reprinted here to supplement Robson's recollections of Kuala Lumpur in 1889 (Chapter 1) with a description of the town in the early 1880s, when it had only recently become the state administrative capital but already had a developed 'government quarter' on the west bank of the Klang River. We are told (p. 223) that a severe flood had recently destroyed the brick house of the Capitan China; this disaster occurred on 21 December 1881. Perks, referred to as one of the two Europeans at Klang, had taken up his post there early in January 1882. Douglas was still Resident (p. 222) but he went into enforced retirement about May 1882. 'The time of which we are writing' was therefore early 1882.

The article was published, under the heading 'Memories of Kuala Lumpur' in the weekly edition of the *Malay Mail* of 9 March 1905, when S. C. Yeomans (v.s. p. 173) was editor, but Robson was part proprietor and acting as managing editor. The information provided in the article is attributed to an unnamed 'old resident', and was then 'worked up' for publication in the *Malay Mail*. Some touches of journalese (e.g. 'rears its haughty head' at p. 219) echo those found in Chapter VII which Robson explicitly says (p. 185) were extracts from the *Malay Mail*. It is likely therefore that the text as published was the work of Yeomans, or a reporter, rather than of Robson himself. But Robson may well have obtained the material from the 'old resident', when Robson was running the paper single-handed, and then put it aside, until much later it was handed over to Yeomans or a staff reporter for 'editing' into shape. Apart from its intrinsic

value, it illustrates Robson's enduring interest in the town which for half a century was his home.

One can only guess at the identity of the 'old resident'. We know that he was a newcomer since he had first 'set foot in the Malay States' (p. 217) at the time he recalls. He must have still been in the town to talk to Robson (who arrived at the end of 1889) in the 1890s or later (up to 1905). He need not, however, have survived to 1905. His command of various details of the roads and buildings (and the mention of the Resident's Sunday church service at p. 225) suggests that in 1882 he was in the government service. Douglas, in his diary for January 1882 (the last period for which the diary is extant), mentions the arrival of a Mr Fell, whom he invited to stay at the Residency until quarters could be found for him. This fits neatly with the tribute to Douglas as 'extremely hospitable' (p. 222). But nothing more is known of Fell; he was probably of fairly junior status in the government service, say a police inspector, who after his retirement lived on in Kuala Lumpur.

MEMORIES OF KUALA LUMPUR

(*Malay Mail* Weekly Edition
9 March 1905)

An old resident of this town has kindly consented at our special request to dive into the recesses of his memory—a very good one—and to furnish us with some past records of the town and of the journey to it. The facts so given we have worked up into the following article, believing that, as events have taken place here with such startling rapidity, much of what we are relating will be new to most of our readers, and will not be without interest to such as are personally able to recall the scenes described.

The information supplied to us was essentially as follows:-

THE JOURNEY UP

Our informant travelled up from Singapore to Klang—there was of course, no Port Swettenham in those days—by the S.S. *Louisa III*. She was not exactly a fairy palace, but merely a small boat of about 100 tons, belonging to a Chinaman. She was chiefly conspicuous at the time for being the only steamer which ran between Singapore and Klang.

He arrived at Klang at daylight, and as there was no proper landing place, he had to creep up a log in order to reach the shore. In this way did he set foot in the Malay States. This acrobatic feat having been safely accomplished, he set to work to ascertain where Kuala Lumpur was and how he was to get there—for nobody at Singapore was able to furnish him with the requisite information. They had all heard of Klang, but our town was a terra incognita which had not then been included in their geography.

At the time of which we are writing, the only European residents at Klang were Mr. Perks, Collector of Customs, and Mr. Cross, Inspector of Police, who was afterwards transferred to Pekan, where he died.

But, to return to our journey. Our traveller was informed that a Chinese launch, the *Blachan*, left in the afternoon for Damansara, but the time of leaving could not be stated, as the boat waited to secure passengers. However, they got off at last, and succeeded in negotiating the 17 miles of river in about two hours, arriving at Damansara at 5 p.m.; there, at the point where the present road touches the river, they disembarked at a rough wooden staging.

Damansara at that time consisted of [a] police station and a few Chinese and Malay shops on each side of the road leading to the river. It was here that our informant first made the acquaintance of Mr. Steve Harper, who did his best to help him on his way by stating that, as there were no gharries in the village, he would send one down from Kuala Lumpur, whither he was bound on horseback. Meanwhile sleeping accommodation had to be found, and as there was no rest House, our traveller ultimately had to take up his quarters for the night in the police barracks. The police station at this time consisted of a small hut, but a new building was in course of erection, the contractor being a Singhalese, who, it is said, is still residing in Kuala Lumpur.

A two-wheeler gharry duly arrived early on the following morning, and at 9 o'clock a start was made on the final stage of the momentous journey. The driver of the vehicle was evidently a man of parts, and one who meant to have his own way, for he had invented a most ingenious instrument of torture whereby to check the waywardness of his steed. This consisted of a piece of bamboo with saw-like teeth cut on one side—the same to be drawn, like a violin bow, across the hind leg as occasion demanded. But Nature had, as usual, been kind, and had, in time, provided the long-suffering pony with something in the shape of a corn on the spot which was subjected to the Jehu's novel attacks. Along the road they went. When we say "a road", our readers must not imagine that it was one of those beautiful specimens of the art of MacAdam which we all hope to see here—or is it that we do see?—some day; for the highway in question was innocent of all metal, and was mostly covered with grass; to make things worse, the gradient was nothing short of stupendous. At Batu Tiga our traveller passed a little village consisting of a beer shop and a few Malay huts, while at

Kubu Lada— at the 7th mile from Damansara—there was a police station and a couple of Chinese shops. Again, at the 10th mile there was a small village, which formed a halting-place for bullock-carts. The only other place of note that was passed was another police station, known as Anak Ayer Batu, at the 13th mile.

The journey up was devoid of all incident, with the exception of a considerable amount of "coasting" down the hills, and murderous-looking bamboo. The drive occupied three hours.

THE PADANG

At the time of which we are writing, the Padang did not exist, but instead there was to be seen a vegetable garden laid out in those ridge-like beds which now exist only outside town limits. Where the Bank now stands, there was a swamp, which, extending, under the Damansara Road, also occupied the site of the present **Railway Offices**. Where our fine pile of Government buildings now rears its haughty head, there was then only low-lying land, chiefly occupied by dhobies, who pursued their avocations unhindered, even where Loke Yew Buildings now stand. In passing we may mention that the late Mr. Tamboosamy then lived in a little attap hut on the side of the road leading to Skew Bridge. The Gaol, with a bamboo palisade around it, stood as a warning to all evil-doers on the spot which is now devoted to the Recreation Club.

Then, working round the present road, came a few attap houses, occupied by Government servants, where now are to be found the F.M.S. Hotel and Rest House. At this period, it is worthy of mention, it had not been considered advisable to disturb existing institutions, in the shape of vegetable beds, in

order to build the **Selangor Club**. At the Church end, all was scrub, bounded by a footbridge over the Gombak River at the point where it is now crossed. For the rest, there was a kind of rough track leading from the end of the Damansara Road to the Gombak Bridge. There were no other roads round what is now known as the Padang, and Holland Road did not exist.

DAMANSARA ROAD

Starting from the Padang, to use modern nomenclature, the Damansara Road followed more or less its present course. After passing over the swamp mentioned above, it undulated gracefully until the Government Armoury was reached. This institution, situated on the hill-side near the present Bluff Road, consisted of an attap hut, inhabited by a Chinese armourer, who furbished up the old police rifles.

Where Bluff Road Hall now stands, there were the Courts of Justice and Police Office, a building with bamboo walls and topped by an attap roof. Just past Bluff Road on the right, were two newly-built Government quarters, and a house inhabited by Mr. Bristowe, Chief Clerk to the P.W.D. and the handy man of the community, who did everything for every body. On the opposite side stood the P.W.D. store.

The river at that date approached the road opposite the Police Court. Hospital Road was in existence at that time, and on the opposite side stood some half-dozen Malay [shops?]. On the vacant swampy ground adjoining Hospital Road there was at the time we are speaking of a rifle range for the police, who had to retire and fire over the highway when they reached the long range—some 300 yards. With the exception of a few native huts, there was nothing further until the site of the present Masonic Hall was reached, but

from there down to the Brickfields Road (not then in existence) stretched the pauper burial ground.

On the right-hand side of the Damansara Road from Hospital Road, tapioca was extensively planted, and fields of this were to be seen on both sides of the highway beyond the Gardens, and even on the ground of the Gardens themselves. The old Damansara Road went up the other side of the gully beyond the present Federal Road, and there the virgin jungle commenced. A smallpox hospital stood just below Mr. Mills' bungalow.

BLUFF ROAD

By the side of this road, going up the hill, were two Government quarters, one of which was occupied by Mr. Sims, Secretary to the Resident, and formerly of the British and Siamese navies, and the other by a surveyor. The road at that time went up the face of the hill. At the top were the Government Offices, on the spot where the house occupied by Mr. Charter now stands. It was an attap-roofed building with wooden walls and no ceiling. On the left, as you entered, was the Resident's Office, with the Land Office behind it. The P.W.D. occupied the central portion, while the Treasury occupied the remainder of the space, to the right.

The printing department was at that time represented by a native lithographer, who occupied a small hut to the rear of the main building. Beyond these Offices, on either side of the road, were the Police Barracks. There were only Malays in the force in those days. Capt. Syers, Superintendent of Police, lived in a bungalow on the spot where the signalling guns now stand.

Continuing along the road which led up to the Residency, one came to the quarters of Mr. Hawley, the

Treasurer, and of Mr. Steve Harper, Police Inspector. Beyond these stood the Residency, a nice wooden two-storied house on brick piers, and surrounded by a rampart and ditch. It is said that they bored for water there, but had to abandon the undertaking after several lives had been lost owing to poisonous gases. The Resident at that time was Capt. Douglas, of the navy, and father of Mr. W. W. Douglas, of Perak. He was a great sportsman, of a kindly disposition and extremely hospitable.

BATU ROAD

This now important thoroughfare may be dismissed in a few words, for it consisted merely of a little track leading out to the Batu Caves and Rawang. On either side was thick scrub, only relieved here and there by native huts. Along the route could be seen numerous rifle pits dug by the Malays and the Chinese at the time of their fights between one another and amongst themselves. Java Street did not exist.

MARKET STREET

Taking this thoroughfare as it leaves the Padang, there were dhobies on the left in the olden days, whilst opposite, where the Railway Goods Yard now is, there were some brick kilns, where they used to make excellent blue bricks, belonging to the Captain China, Towkay Yap Ah Loy. Passing on, the wayfarer came to the river, over which there was a wooden bridge 11 ft. wide, on piles. On the other side of this, where Messrs. Chow Kit & Co's premises now stand, there was a row of attap houses, facing what was then known as Hokkien Street; while across this, in the centre of what is now known as Old Market Square, was held the town market, with Hongkong Street on the far side.

More attap houses bounded this. In that portion of Market Street which runs by the square was situated the Captain China's residence, an attap roofed structure, which had succeeded a brick building demolished just previously by a big flood. There the chief of the Chinese dispensed hospitality regularly to the European community. The site of the present market was then occupied by his back premises, consisting of a yard, gardens and a little country house.

A small portion of Rodger Street existed at the time, but only as far as Pudoh Street. High Street only existed between Java Street and Market Street. Beyond this, in the Ampang direction, was a large fish pond. There was no triangle in those days: the space was built over, the houses standing back. It was therefore necessary for traffic either to pass along Rodger Street and Pudoh Street, or along the very narrow Yap Ah Loy Street to Cross Street to get on to the Pudoh Road.

AMPANG STREET

This street consisted of rude Chinese shop houses from Old Market Square up to the present Java Street, beyond which point was the chief Malay quarter of the town, with the fish pond mentioned above on the right. Ampang Street was at that time continued up the face of the hill to the present Museum, which stands on the side of a house formerly occupied by the Resident and surrounded by a rampart and ditch. The building was afterwards converted into the Rest House.

THE AMPANG ROAD

From the beginning to the entrance of Weld's Hill Estate there was nothing but garden and huts. The Estate at that time was just being opened up for coffee by Mr. Evans, a

Ceylon planter, who was working for Messrs. Hill and Rathbone. Beyond the entrance to this Estate there existed a rough cart-track, made by the Captain China to facilitate transport to and from his important mines at Ampang.

At the 3 half mile there was a big Chinese village, and at this point a foot-track branched off to Ulu Klang. The Ampang Road continued as far as the mines, which were situated at the 6th mile. A few squatters lived by the road side, and quite a feature of the scene in those days was the number of small tobacco plots planted by Malays.

The Central Police Station was placed at an angle formed by Yap Ah Loy and Cross Streets. It consisted of a small attap building.

The Pudoh Road then ran by Mr. Purdy's house, and was anything but level. It was then chiefly a miners' track. It was bounded by gardens and huts at intervals up to the 2nd mile, where the road split up into about half a dozen mining tracks, which only led to the neighbouring mines. No proper road at that time existed to Kajang.

MISCELLANEOUS

The locality along what is now known as Brickfields Road was covered with tapioca. The sites of the **Federated Engineering Company** and the **Victoria Institution** formed parts of the Captain China's vast property. In the region now known as Drury Lane were situated some *samsu* distilleries. Petaling Street was a private track of the Captain China's leading to his cattle sheds and large tapioca mill, situated on the space between Cecil Street, Petaling Street, Sultan Street and the railway line. A great amount of tapioca was then grown in Kuala Lumpur. This tapioca mill was a large affair, as its buildings extended to the foot of Petaling Hill. At the

foot of Birch Road, the Captain China built a dam, and a footpath passed by this, and through two miles of tapioca on the way to Petaling.

That portion of the High Street which now exists in the direction of the Federated Engineering Co.'s premises was then nothing but vegetable gardens, relieved by a Tamil village, opposite the extensive stables of the Captain China. Swampy ground extended across from the river by the present market to the Pudoh dam, and all this land was highly cultivated by Chinese.

The only bridges in Kuala Lumpur at this period were those in Market Street and at the commencement of the Batu Road. There was no Chaplain in those days; but Capt. Douglas, the Resident, used to read the Service every Sunday in the Government Offices whenever he was in town. There was no club, but the meeting house of the community was at Teck Yong's shop in Ampang Street between Java Street and Church Street near the fish pond. This, the principal emporium of the town, supplied its customers with everything from champagne to boot-laces.

The dollar in those halcyon days—we do not speak from the Sterling Scheme point of view—stood at rather over four shillings. A bottle of whisky at that time cost 60 cts, champagne was very cheap. A half lb tin of tobacco cost 25 cts, a fowl 33 cts, buffalo beef no other meat procurable 42 cts per catty. Fish was a luxury then as it was only brought in occasionally, and then it had been boiled down at the coast. By way of compensation, however, there was a far better supply of vegetables and fruit than now. Rice of which none was grown locally was 16 cts a gantang.

As regards servants, the best Chinese cooks were paid \$10 a month, a "boy" \$9, a *tukang ayer* \$8, and the ordinary labourer \$8.

Mr. Evans, the planter, and Mr Hood, an engineer employed on the Capt. China's mines at Ampang, were the only unofficial Europeans at that time in Selangor. The other Europeans then in the State, besides those already mentioned, were Mr. Turney, Collector at Jugra, Mr Rankin, at Kuala Selangor and one other. There were only four European ladies in Kuala Lumpur and two at the outstations.

The General Hospital, on the present site consisted of only one native ward, and was under the care of Dr. Jansz. The Pauper Hospital was on the site of the quarters now occupied now by Mr. Hendricks.

The Resident had a steam launch, the old *Abdul Samad*, in which he visited the coast districts. Such a means of transport was absolutely necessary in those days, as there was no connection with Jugra and Kuala Selangor except by native tracks.

The *Sri Macassar*, a little native steamer, ran once a week from Jugra to Malacca.

Taking it all round, we may fairly congratulate ourselves that we have not been called upon to live here in "the good old days".

APPENDIX II

A Selection of Robson's Other Writing

	<i>Page</i>
1. Robson's Career 1889–1909	228
2. The Malay Policeman	234
3. Sultan Abdul Samad	244
4. Kuala Lumpur—a Programme of Improvement	250

Much of Robson's published work consists of unsigned leading articles, news reports and other material which appeared in the *Malay Mail* from 1896, and at an earlier stage in the *Selangor Journal* (1892–7). He also contributed articles to the *Singapore Free Press*, a selection of which had been republished in book form,¹ and also 'Hints for Motorists'.²

A reprint of documents of the early twentieth century on the debate, in which Robson played a significant part through leading articles in the *Malay Mail* and other writing (e.g. Part 3 of this Appendix), is also available.³ The long account of the installation of Sultan Sulaiman, which appeared in the *Malay Mail* of 6th November 1903, was probably written by Robson.⁴ In allocating limited space, these items, already available, are not included.

¹ J. H. M. Robson, *People in a Native State*, Singapore: Singapore Free Press, 1894.

² See C. W. Harrison (ed.), *Illustrated Guide to the Federated Malay States*, London: Malay States Information Agency, 1911.

³ Khoo Kay Kim (ed.), *Kuala Lumpur: The Formative Years*, Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing, 1996.

⁴ Reprinted in *JMBRAS*, 58(2), pp. 14–18. 'Hints to Motorists' has been reprinted as part of the *Illustrated Guide to the Federated Malay States*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985, and in part duplicates the passage in *Records and Recollections* (reprinted at pp. 99–102 above).

The material included in the Appendix has been chosen to provide a variety of Robson's other writing, and to fill some gaps (discussed above in the 'Introduction') in *Records and Recollections*. We begin with his voyage out and first employment in Selangor. As an administrator he held district posts for a year or two each in Ulu Selangor, Klang, and Kuala Langat (ending in Kuala Lumpur). He thus came into personal contact with the Malay police and with the aged Sultan. Finally, Item 4 serves to illustrate Robson's interest in the future of the town in which he spent an active half century (just as the article in Appendix I shows his interest in the past).

* * * * *

1

Robson's Career 1889-1909

Robson celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his first arrival in Kuala Lumpur on 5 December 1889 with a reminiscent newspaper article. Four columns of the *Malay Mail* were allocated to this article, but—to judge from the result—Robson ran out of steam halfway through and filled up the space with jejune summaries of common knowledge material, such as 'Historical Events' and 'Distinguished Officials', and ended with the full text of the official notice of 1892 warning Straits Settlements lawyers that they could not at that time appear for clients in the courts nor even represent them in dealings with the state government. This material adds nothing to the corpus of history in our time, and so space has not been found for it here. But the account of Robson's progress from England to Selangor in 1889, and some

snippets from his diary on his career in the 1890s, add to what we have in Chapter 1 of *Records and Recollections*.

“50 YEARS”

Jottings From My Diary

by

J. H. M. R

Malay Mail weekly edition 7 December 1939—Extracts

It is just fifty years ago today that I arrived in Malaya.

My reference diary shows that I left England on May 26, 1889, en route for Ceylon to become a creeper on a tea estate. (Premium paid—£150).

After “stopping over” at Paris, Turin, Milan, Venice (for an hour or two), Trieste, Alexandria and Cairo I went on by train to Suez, where I expected to embark on the new B.I. Steamer *Golconda* which had most of my baggage on board. However, when the train reached Suez three hours late owing to engine trouble in the desert, I was told that the *Golconda* had come and gone on her record breaking passage of 26 days to Madras.

A day or so later the B.I. Agent secured me a passage to Colombo in the Orient liner *Iberia*, of 4,800 tons. The ship had sails as well as steam power. The ship’s officers did not wear the regular mercantile marine uniform which is now universal. In fine weather the Captain wore a blue suit and a straw hat. I can’t remember what sort of head gear he had when there was a strong wind. Three years later, when I made a trip to Europe and back by Messageries Maritimes, the ship’s officers wore some sort of uniform, and I have a vague recollection that one or other of those French steamers I travelled by also carried sails. The general idea at the time was that sails helped to steady a ship. There was no cold

storage or electric light in those days, ships carried their own live stock. Oil lamps provided the lighting.

On the French ships there was no division of first and second class on deck but the smoking room was reserved for first class passengers only. Free wine and free bottled beer were supplied in both the first and second class dining rooms. The passage from Suez to Colombo took 10½ days. Except in the case of one or two specially fast foreign ships this voyage still takes about the same time.

FURTHER EAST

After a stay of a few months on a Ceylon tea estate I saw a notice in a local paper, inviting applications for certain Railway appointments in the Malay State of Selangor and that candidates would have to attend an examination at the office of the Surveyor-General in Colombo. Thinking that I would prefer an office to an outdoor life, I entered for the examination and was given the appointment of Clerk and Draftsman, Selangor Government Railway, at a salary of \$60 a month.

KUALA LUMPUR FIFTY YEARS AGO

The voyage by P. and O. *Ganges* from Colombo to Penang took 4½ days. On arrival I was given \$6 to pay my E. & O. Hotel bill for two days, and later left on a German steamer (under charter to the B.I.) for Bukit Kuda. I arrived in Kuala Lumpur on Dec. 5 1889 and went to stay at the then newly erected Rest House now the present Selangor Club. There was no European Hotel in Kuala Lumpur [until] some years later when Mrs. Steve Harper opened the Victoria Hotel on or near the site of the present Methodist Girls' School.

My diary records that it [was hot in?] Kuala Lumpur and that the exchange value of the dollar was 3s 3d. I cannot remember anything about prices except that a brand of German champagne was sold at 50 cents a pint.

After living for a week or two at the Rest House, I was told that I was to share a fine new house with a Mr. Snell, the then Traffic Manager of the Railway. The building was near Seven Dials [and was?] partly surrounded by jungle. I cannot remember what furniture was supplied by Government. There is a [note?] in my diary that I had to spend £12 on furniture.

During my brief stay of less than two months in the Railway Department I received much kindness and assistance from Mr. Fernando, the Chief Draftsman. Thanks to a letter of introduction to Mr. J. A. G. Campbell, District Officer, Ulu Selangor, I was offered and was glad to accept the appointment of Chief Clerk in his office at \$100 a month. Two bullock carts conveyed my baggage from Kuala Lumpur to Kuala Kubu at a cost of \$10 a cart. But I had to walk five miles of the journey to Rawang and after a night's rest there the whole of the 21 miles from Rawang to Kuala Kubu because it was Chinese New Year and no pony carts were available.

On arrival at Kuala Kubu more dead than alive, I was met by the popular Chinese cashier Yap Swee Hin and the Malay Police Sergeant, who conducted me to the Rest House, where I stayed for seven months before being appointed 2nd Asst. District Officer, Klang. I was under 21 when I first sat as a magistrate.

NOTES FROM MY DIARY

Here are a few entries from my diary:

Sept. 29, 1890: "Have a new Sinhalese cook. A Malay woman proposed to come but finding that she could drink half a tumbler of neat whisky I thought she would not do. I have seen some nice looking Malay women, but no pretty Chinese."

Dec. 14, 1890: "There is a big row on in Kuala Lumpur. A Board of Investigation is sitting on the whole P.W.D."

Jan. 20, 1892: "Major McCallum, Colonial Engineer, R.E., (later Sir H. E. McCallum, G.C.M.G.), passed through Rawang, where I was A.D.O. to take charge of the Pahang operations (First Pahang Disturbances). He stayed the night at my house and I rode part of the way with him next day. He had adopted the Sikh head-dress in order not to be too conspicuous."

[Major McCallum was one of the most popular men in Malaya. He left in 1897 to become in turn Governor of Lagos, Newfoundland, Natal and Ceylon.]

June 1, 1893: "Prices at the Europe Hotel in Singapore have gone up from \$3 to \$3.50 a day."

June 7, 1893: "On S.S. *Tannardice* (1,400 tons) to Bangkok. Empty ship chartered by Katz Brothers to take cases of munitions to Siam, Capt. Habekost in command. Told me that he had fought in the American Civil War.

[On arrival at the bar of the Menam river he and I dined on board a Siamese gun-boat which was damaged some weeks later when French war-ships forced the passage of the Menam river and steamed up to Bangkok.]

To quote from an article I wrote for the *Singapore Free Press* (July 7, 1893): "Of the Bangkok-Korat Railway about 80(?) miles is well in hand—the first fifty miles being more or less finished. Messrs. A. R. Bagnall, G. Best Day, R. C. Barnby and (?) Robertson, formerly of Selangor, and Mr. MacClashan(?), formerly of Perak

and Singapore, are all working for Messrs. Campbell & Co., the contractors. The Chief Railway Engineer to the Siamese Government and all his subordinates except one are Germans."

SALARIES IN THOSE DAYS

July 27, 1894: "My pay for acting District Officer, Klang is now \$175 a month."

[The Selangor Government Gazette of April 16(?) 1894 recorded that the Chief Magistrate (as Judge of the Supreme Court), the Government Secretary, the Treasurer, the Senior District Officer, the Chinese Secretary and the Auditor all drew salaries of \$300 a month; District Officers and the C.L.R., Kuala Lumpur, drew from \$200 to \$275 a month, and Assistant District Officers from \$125 to \$150 a month.]

October, 1896: Purchased the plant of the *Morning Herald* [indecipherable] and resigned the Government Service."

[I was then acting C.L.R. and Registrar of Titles, Kuala Lumpur.]

December, 1896: "Started *The Malay Mail*. After ten issues have 134 subscribers."

Entries in my diary during the earlier years of the century are not very extensive. One under 1903 records the purchase for \$2583 of my first motor car—a 6 h.p. De Dion Bouton. Under 1908 there is a mention of the starting of the Empire Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. In the following year (1909) appears an entry "Appointed an unofficial Member of the Federal Council. Attended first meeting at Kuala Kangsar."

These notes are mainly about Selangor as I have never resided in any other part of Malaya.

The Malay Police in Selangor

Each chapter (this is Chapter 4) of *People in a Native State* is a composite stereotype of the officials and local notables whom Robson had encountered in his early service as Assistant District Officer, Rawang (Ulu Selangor). In this case, Robson was seeking to entertain as well as instruct newspaper readers, of whom the majority lived in the Straits Settlements and knew very little of the Malay States. He was also entering on a field of controversy.

H. C. Syers (v.s. p. 37) had (since 1875) built up an effective civil police force in Selangor. His policy was to uphold order in a predominantly rural Malay state by recruiting Malays as the mainstay of his force, and dispersing them into village police stations in outlying districts. Each detachment was under the immediate charge and supervision of the District Officer and his assistants; hence Robson wrote of police with whom he had daily contact, both on duty and in their quarters, where he knew their wives as well as the men themselves. At this period it was still difficult to induce the Selangor Malay population to take a favourable view of the police, whom they regarded as successors to the often lawless 'followers' (*budak raja*) of rulers and chiefs in pre-colonial times. Hence a large proportion of the Malay police in Selangor were 'foreigners' recruited in the country districts around Malacca, even though (p. 236) there was some prejudice there also.

In marked contrast to Syers' police, R. S. F. Walker (v.s. Chapter 5), who commanded the Perak police, recruited Sikhs and other north Indians, often with previous service in Indian Army units, to provide an armed gendarmerie, to be used as a strike force in putting down disorder in Chinese

mining centres. The Perak police included a cavalry detachment and 'mountain guns'.

Walker, and also Swettenham in his early service, were opposed to the extensive use of Malay police, arguing that Malays did not make good policemen, still less good soldiers, and that they would be intruders in Malay villages. Swettenham, however, later came to recognize the merits of Syers' policy, and it led to the hiving off of Indian paramilitary police to form the Malay States Guides in 1896. But that was yet to come when Robson wrote his article.

Although Robson's sympathy for and liking of the Malay police whom he knew is clear enough, he found it politic to repeat—and perhaps himself accepted—the prevailing prejudices, which the modern reader will find unacceptable. Nonetheless, his message, in his final paragraph, is clear.³

'The Malay Policeman',
People in a Native State, 1894

"O While you live tell truth and shame the devil",
Henry IV, Act III, Sc. 1.

To criticise, to deride, or to condemn "The Malay Police" is a not uncommon form of intellectual divertisement amongst certain public-spirited Europeans residing in the Native States. Now in the Far East, where people gradually cease to take very much interest in anything except themselves, any concern for the public weal is to be commended, even though it be of a somewhat common-place order. The ques-

³ J. M. Gullick, *Glimpses of Selangor 1860-1898*, MBRAS Monograph No. 25, 1993, pp. 45f, 53, 56 and 74 deals at more length with these issues.

tion thus arises as to whether there are any good grounds for impugning the utility or efficiency of this large body of native non-commissioned officers and men. A general though not direct negative is probably the best answer. Critics are apt to be unreasonable. A complains that the Malay Police are drilled too much, B that they are not drilled enough; C is of opinion that because they are armed with rifles they should be soldiers, D thinks otherwise. The administrative system of the force is not understood nor departmental orders known—to the outside public. For example, gentlemen sometimes feel their dignity slighted if not honoured with a salute, yet the constable is only carrying out a departmental order which tells him who is entitled to a salute and the manner of giving it.

There are sins of commission and omission, but with one or two exceptions referred to later on, all the shortcomings of Malay police come under the second heading.

It is not so very long ago that Malays, especially Malacca Malays, considered it derogatory for a true believer to become a policeman, or "anjing kompani" as they styled it; a respectable man did not care for a constable to come near his house, whilst he would have refused to entertain the idea of giving his daughter in marriage to a man who wore the objectionable uniform. This feeling is gradually dying out, but the manner and class of recruits go to prove that even now a man who elects to obtain his livelihood as a policeman usually does so without parental approbation. For one of the young bloods of Malacca to have a few words with the "old man", and then to depart in haste to join a Native State's police force, is still a frequent source of many an enlistment. Young gentlemen in England, whose tastes and ideas are a little too advanced for the stern parent, mysteriously drift into South African police barracks. On the same principle,

the Malacca Malay prefers to serve elsewhere than in his native land, which inclination has apparently been shared by the bulk of the men making up the Natives States' forces. One result of this is that a policeman is not always a fair criterion of a Malay. When he enlists and first mixes with kindred spirits, there is every probability of his becoming a little overbearing, "sombong", and generally loose in his mode of living, but even if he is one of those who do take this line, it will not last long, for marrying as he grows older, he becomes steadier and steadier until at last retiring into private life he naturally lapses back into the ways of his forefathers and becomes a courteous, simple-minded peasant without a vestige of his former upright military bearing. The years he has passed in the force seem to have made but little impression upon him either for good or evil. A non-commissioned officer having been brought more into direct communication with Europeans aspires to something higher than peasant proprietorship when re-entering private life, and is more likely to show signs of his former occupation. The sooner Malays have discarded the idea that there is something dishonourable or degrading in becoming a policeman, the better it will be both for them and for the force. Whether it is more advantageous to be a humble tiller of the soil or fisher on the deep whence comes neither a superfluity of cash, clothes or even daily food, or whether it is not preferable to receive a fixed monthly wage of fair proportion, together with free clothes, lights and quarters in return for duties by no means onerous, might cease to be a debatable point, were it not for the objection to all restraint, which is such a strong feature of the Malay character. Again, the Malay is *not a fighting man*, indeed he is not a pugnacious man, he is only at home when fighting in ambushes or from behind trees.

The young Malay, leaving the slow, simple, peaceful life of the kampong for barrack quarters must have somewhat the same feelings that an English boy has on his entry into public school life; in both cases the greenness soon wears off as the environment becomes familiar. The men are well treated by their non-commissioned officers; in fact the latter are too lenient with them, if anything. The prospects of promotion, if the candidate can read and write and will only keep steady, leave nothing to complain of. Unfortunately it must be admitted that intellectually the Malay policeman does not shine. His Excellency the Governor recently stated in Council that only ten per cent of the men in the Singapore police force had received education through the vernacular schools of the Settlement. Here it is as bad, and yet vernacular schools abound, both in the Colony and the Native States. Still there are people to be found who would advocate that English should be taught in all our schools. Somehow the intellectual and physical development of the Malay seems to be on a par; it always stops at a certain point and never gets any "forrader". Nevertheless a *mata-mata* has quite enough intuition and common sense to make a good and useful policeman either for town or country. As a soldier, I may almost say as a semi-military policeman, he is not worth the boots he stands in; but, as a constable pure and simple, he can be and often is of great use and efficiency, the latter qualification depending on the amount of attention bestowed on him by the European officers of the force. As recruits have all to pass the doctor before enlistment, it seems a pity not to have a standard, however small, for height and chest measurement. A Malay is naturally short of stature, but that is no reason why there should not be a little more uniformity about size and physique. In some respects it would be better

if the Javanese element were a little stronger than it is, as these men are of rather stronger build.

One notices that very few policemen are regular attendants at the mosque—religion ever sits lightly on the Malay; at the same time there is none of that ridicule or derisive sneering which is fashionable amongst the “bad young men of a western land” when church-going is mooted. “A Policeman’s Lot is Not a Happy One” comes to us from behind the footlights. Ah me! Well, although this is a hard world, P. C. Mat bin Tahir, or whatever his name is, doesn’t have such a bad time of it after all. *Place aux dames*—he is a bit of a lady’s man. To flirt with another gentleman’s wife when the other gentleman happens to be away is not right, but then if the lady will “make eyes” at him, who is to blame. A Malay P.C. could compete with the G.O.M. as a lightning opinion changer. Before marriage he considers it a duty to make himself agreeable to his comrades’ wives; after marriage it is a criminal offence for anyone to look at his wife. By nature he is susceptible to female charm at all times, and as the Malay ladies who grace the barrack square are seldom pretty or graceful, small wonder that a smile from a young Japan bowls him over altogether.

He will drink anything from brandy to beer when indulging in any great festivities. This may end in his being assisted home by friends, but such occurrences are rare; to his credit be it said that although he can drink and has a taste for beer, drunkenness in the force is practically an unknown offence. In his earlier years he has a partiality for fine clothes, sometimes to the extent of dressing himself in a white shirt, stick-up collar, boots and a tweed suit, but without socks or tie; in this garb he presents a picture best described as a cross between ‘Arry on the ‘Eath and a dressed-up monkey; on the other hand, contented with Malay or Chinese made clothes,

he cuts rather a dash as the native swell. He can get several weeks furlough every year, whilst that old familiar dodge of the dying mother can still be relied on with many a soft-hearted Tuan. There are no cooks—no area steps—no cold meat and beer to be met with on his rounds, but there is—the squeezable Chinaman. "Eh! What! Cutting timber without a pass! You come along with me—Eh!—er!—Well don't let me catch you again." Fifty cents richer than he was before. Where is the Eastern race that will refuse a bribe? They are all tarred with the same brush: the Malay is honester than most of them. People will make a great mistake if they imagine a constable makes much by this "gentle appropriation," he does not. The men who can really make money where they ought not are the native non-commissioned officers in charge of stations where there is a considerable Chinese population. It is a good thing to constantly change the N.C.O.'s with those from Malay Stations. A Malay is not such a fool as to offer bribes to his own countrymen.

To return to the *mata-mata*, his favourite musical instruments are the tom-tom and the violin; add to this a chunk of wood and a bit of iron, and a first-class orchestra is ready to tune up and begin; a couple of Malacca gentlemen will perform step dances, another gentleman from Rembau or Sumatra will supply the vocal part of the "Musical At Home" on the barrack verandah, and so the entertainment will continue far into the night.

Both the Red and White Flag societies possess a large number of members in the police force of some of the Native States but there is no rivalry between them, *nor is there any law to declare membership illegal either for natives or Europeans.*

The Malay policeman is more courageous in combat with wild animals than he is with his fellow-men, particularly if greatly outnumbered. He is somewhat addicted to fall asleep on duty if his superiors are slack in their supervision. This, however, is not so much indifference to duty as the characteristic Malay desire to sleep on all and every possible opportunity. As a rule he is a poor rifle shot, which may properly be attributed to insufficient practice. To sum up—He is not over fond of mob fighting, has been found asleep whilst on duty at night more times than one, and has the usual oriental ideas as to the elasticity of truth and receipt of pecuniary gratification. This is the worst that can be said of him; but coming from our own more favoured land of light and learning—drunkenness and Socialism—critics are wont to look down upon the untutored natives of the jungle, who joining the force, fail to attain at a bound that degree of excellence which years and years of experiment and discipline have helped to produce amongst the English constabulary.

Pitch it ever so strong, no damnation of their foibles and follies coming from an alien race will ever disturb or shame the cheerful and unconcerned Malay himself, for he is a practical example of that philosophy which we Europeans can only read, write, or rant about. The kindly, pleasing face, the good temper, the willingness, the non-treacherous nature of the man, his courteous manner and his amiability must outweigh his chief personal failing—a failing common to Malays—ingratitude. There is one thing a policeman does not like, that is his boots, which I should be very sorry to have to wear myself when new, even if I were paid for doing so. Patience—patience, and, as the years roll on somebody with a little originality may yet be able to obtain a light strong boot fit alike for Sikhs and Malays, and so abolish the present heavy cumbersome clod-hopping beetle-crushers.

Very few policemen start on the pilgrimage to Mecca, their usual excuse being lack of funds; (indifference is a strong factor), hence it is quite the exception to find Hajis in the force, for the small number who do *naik Haji* mostly prefer to seek other employment on their return.

If you desire to hear the very latest scandal in the place don't "ask a policeman"; ask his wife. Oh those policemen's wives, with their plain, plain faces, their cheap old garments, and their interesting pasts! Constables frequently marry widows or the divorced wives of other people; not that they prefer middle-aged ladies with a past, but simply because their financial resources will not run to the "young and beautiful" and it has been said because they know their unmarried comrades will be less susceptible to the charms of a middle-aged lady. Since there is no Malay nation, we cannot talk of a national dress, but compared with that of women in surrounding countries, the ordinary daily dress of a Malay woman is neither particularly pretty, graceful or tasty. The "medicine man" does not exist only in Matabele land. A friend has related the following:— An unmarried constable attempted to start a flirtation with a comrade's newly married wife, the lady declined to have anything to do with him. Piqued at this he announced his intention of seeking the assistance of a "herb gatherer" who, by the aid of medicines, would infallibly assist to entice away the lady. Her husband hearing of this and thoroughly believing it went straight away to the offender's quarters, where after a very brief preliminary explanation, he felled him to the ground with one blow on the head and then with the utmost gravity—retired. When last heard of the medicine man had not arrived.

The native non-commissioned officers shew up to worst advantage for, as such, the Malay constable promoted to this greater dignity usually stamps himself as an egregious failure.

Scarcely any of them are capable of preparing a case for the Court and undoubtedly in this, it is the police who are answerable for much that is said of the Magistracy. The laws being in English, European Police Inspectors and Sergeants in the Colony are naturally smarter in getting up cases where a Malay Sergeant would fail, but the latter has no excuse for laziness and the disregard of plain simple rules prepared for his guidance. If a Sergeant does happen to be a competent man at his Court work, the chances are ten to one that he keeps his police station dirty, or his men are out of hand, or likely as not he is amassing a private fortune from improper sources. (Never very large!) There is a remedy but only one remedy, namely, constant supervision and instruction by a European police officer resident on the spot, who can talk Malay.

Some of the police station compounds possess neatly kept gardens, but maintenance of the same, although done willingly, is regarded as a duty, not a pleasure; a Malay does not experience that satisfaction in having a nice garden which one finds among the Javanese. The Malay policeman is a good walker, is more inclined to make friends with the Pathan than with the Sikh, knows the meaning of the words *esprit de corps*, has his character written on his face, is scarcely if ever objectionable, assumes an air of importance when in the service of the "Company" (Malay name for Government) which is dropped the moment he leaves it, and, lastly, debt does not oppress him, no matter how big the amount. That the pipe is as much in vogue as the cigarette is a regrettable sign of advancement! The pipe is too big for the little Malay.

It would be invidious to discuss the comparative efficiency of the different Native States police forces, but this much one can say, to all outward appearance the smartness of

the men is in the *ratio* of the progress of the States themselves.

In conclusion, as a native constable, the Malay can be both a success and an acquisition to any Native State, if his superior officers will only take the trouble to teach him: as a non-commissioned officer, although the majority have been referred to in no flattering terms, there is a minority who do their best with fair success; but remember—in any case the making or marring of the force depends entirely upon its European officers.

* * * * *

3

Sultan Abdul Samad

C. H. A. Turney's well-known disinclination for paperwork led to his removal from Klang (c. 1890—v.p. 43 above) to the post of District Officer, Kuala Langat, with Robson (later succeeded by W. W. Skeat) as Assistant District Officer. The unsigned article below can only have been written by someone who had been a regular visitor to the istana at Jugra, and that factor effectively limits the identification of its author to a choice between Turney, Robson and Skeat. However Turney's articles in the *Selangor Journal* are identified by ending with the initials 'C. H. A. T.', which do not appear in this case, and Skeat did not arrive in Kuala Langat until July 1893, nine months after the article had appeared in the *Selangor Journal*—Skeat's articles, moreover, are identified by the initials 'W. S.', which do not appear here. The article may therefore be attributed to Robson—and it is in a style found in other writing by him on such subjects.

Robson's picture of Sultan Abdul Samad (b. 1805) in his nineties corresponds with that given by Emily Innes⁶ and by Isabella Bird⁷, but to a much greater extent than those two ladies Robson had noted the Sultan's very real interest in the welfare of his subjects, especially in matters agricultural.

H.H. SULTAN ABDUL SAMAD, K.C.M.G., AT HOME.

Selangor Journal, 1, 1892.

Some 220 miles to the north-west of Singapore, and four miles up the Jugra River, lives the aged Chieftain, who for some 35 years has been regarded as the Sultan, even though he may not have held undisputed sway over the territories which form the now prosperous State of Selangor. He is the son of the late Raja Abdolah and the nephew of the late Sultan Muhamad.

The former Sultan, who usually resided at Kuala Selangor, handed over the charge of the Langat River to his brother Raja Abdolah and appointed as his heir and successor his younger son, then a boy of seven years old. Shortly after Sultan Muhamad's death the boy was proclaimed Raja Muda, and his mother, Raja Puan, seems to have been accepted as Regent. It is said to have been partly through her influence that Raja Abdul Samad, who had only lately been created Tunku Panglima Besar was put in charge of the Government. He took up his residence at Bandar Langat, four miles from his present residence, and had a considerable following.

⁶ E. Innes, *The Chersonese with the Gilding Off*, London: Richard Bentley, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 38f.

⁷ I. L. Bird (Mrs Bishop), *The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither*, London: John Murray, 1883, p. 231f.

From that time until 1872, but little is known of what went on in Selangor. But in that year, owing to a glaring case of piracy off the Selangor coast, the British Government felt called upon to intervene, and since that intervention His Highness has remained at peace with all his neighbours.

In 1879 he removed his residence to Jugra, and has lived there ever since. In appearance, he is of medium height and slightly built, having a light complexion with good features, more after the Bugis type than that of the Peninsular Malays. He is proud of his Bugis descent, and never speaks of himself as a Selangor Malay. A good forehead and well-shaped, slightly arched nose give him a decidedly distinguished appearance, which would be noticed even by one who was a stranger to Malays. He is an enthusiastic gardener, and spends much of his time looking after his plantations in and around the Istana grounds.

Like many Malay Rajas he is a late riser, being seldom seen before four o'clock in the afternoon. It is then his custom, after taking "breakfast," to go for a walk. Visitors to Jugra may often in the evening see a party of some 30 or 40 men coming along the road with His Highness walking a few paces ahead of them. Should a native meet the little procession he will squat down at the side of the road until the Sultan has passed, for according to Malay ideas it shews a want of respect in a subject to remain standing in the presence of his Raja. Although this and other like marks of homage are always shewn to him, His Highness is not fond of state or ceremony but lives and dresses very plainly. When out walking he generally carries his coat over one shoulder. The coat is of the Malay pattern, ornamented with embroidery and diamond buttons. On his head he wears a Malay handkerchief (*tengkolo'*), in one hand he carries a long Malacca cane in the other often a *parang*; for he likes it to be

seen that he does his own gardening and knows how to use the parang. He is always barefooted. In this dress he will walk with his followers down to the village, three-quarters of a mile distant from the Istana, and entering the Malay and Chinese shops discuss the price of rice and opium. He is a great smoker, and opium is a topic of never-failing interest to him. It seems to agree with him very well, and one cannot help wishing that the people who so exaggerate its ill effects could see the vigour of the old Sultan, who has been a heavy smoker nearly all his life. Just before dark he returns home, and from then on to the small hours of the morning any of his subjects who wish to see him can do so. At these times, but little etiquette is observed, but on replying to His Highness natives place the palms of their hands together and so raise them to their forehead by way of obeisance, and this is done even by his own children. The Sultan often has native visitors from different parts of the State. To them he will lend an attentive ear while they relate how they are getting on, and what their crop prospects are, and, if necessary, give them rice or money to tide them over until harvest. Some time after midnight the Sultan eats his dinner, and, in the ordinary routine, the opium-pipe is then prepared, brought in, and enjoyed by the Sultan until he falls asleep. If, however, there are many people to see him, and the conversation is of a nature to interest him, he may not retire till near daylight.

When Europeans wish to see him he usually arranges for the interview to take place at about five o'clock in the afternoon. On going to keep the appointment, the visitor will be met at the Istana gateway by one of His Highness's Secretaries and conducted past the lower Audience Hall and private residence to the Council Chamber in the Istana grounds. These buildings, constructed by Chinese workmen,

are of wood with tiled roofs, and have a more or less European appearance. The Council Chamber, which is perhaps the best structure, is a room 6 ft. long by 30 broad, in the centre of which is a raised railed-in dais with a long table and chairs round it. At the head of the table is the Chair of State. The walls consist almost entirely of Venetian windows, over which are hung portraits of H.M. the Queen-Empress and the Members of the Royal Family. Especially noticeable is a large Chinese tablet, which was sent by the Chinese Government with a letter of thanks to His Highness for assistance rendered during the Chinese famine. Near this is a portrait of Sir Andrew Clarke, whom the Sultan always remembers with affection; on the other side a memorial picture of the Sydney Exhibition of 1879, to which he sent a most interesting collection. After His Highness has been informed of the arrival of his visitor, he will come up into the Council Chamber. Unless on State occasions, he will be dressed much the same as described when out walking, and will have his coat off. After shaking hands he sits down and then proceeds to put on his coat, his followers meanwhile standing around the dais. In conversation His Highness shews considerable interest in all matters affecting Malays or Malay countries, any remarks about the progress and development of his country at once catch his attention, and he is always glad to hear particulars of interest about the railway now being constructed in the State. For the refreshment of his visitors he will order coconut water, fruit, etc., and manifest the greatest impatience until these have been placed on the table. After chatting for half an hour the visitor is very courteously dismissed with an invitation to come again, and upon leaving the presence will usually find that some fruit is sent with him.

Occasionally His Highness can be persuaded to shew some of his gold ornaments, of which he is reputed to have about five hundred-weight. They consist for the most part of sirih-boxes, pindings (Malay waist-buckles), earrings, bracelets and brooches. One of the largest pindings weighs about five pounds, and is of pure gold with a large uncut sapphire in the centre. It is remarkable more for its weight and value than for its beauty. To the European the gold sirih-boxes and kris handles will always come first, as many of them are very beautifully wrought.

Such are the experiences of the casual visitor to the Sultan; but should H.E. the Governor of the Straits Settlements or other distinguished guest come to see His Highness very much more state and ceremony is observed.

His Excellency on landing is met by the Sultan's two surviving sons, Rajas Kahar and Nosah, and conducted towards the Istana, when about half way there he will be met by the Raja Muda, dressed in European fashion but with a sarong added, with him most probably will be 40 or 50 followers all dressed in their best, who fall in behind, so that by the time His Excellency reaches the Istana gateway he is the head of a procession of over a hundred Malays.

At the Istana gateway stands H.H. the Sultan, dressed in true Malay style, in silk and cloth of gold, and wearing his order of St. Michael and St. George, and surrounded by his Chiefs carrying the gold kris, the yellow umbrella and gold sirih-boxes, all part of his insignia, conspicuous amongst which is the sword presented to him by Her Majesty. And together with him are waiting perhaps a couple of hundred followers ready to receive His Excellency. Only those who have been in the East can form an adequate idea of the beauty of such a scene. The bright sunshine on the tops of the waving coconut palms, and the brilliant, but harmonious,

colours of hundreds of Malay dresses below, form a picture which a spectator will long remember.

After receiving His Excellency at the gateway the Sultan will lead him by the hand to the Council Room, which has been gaily decorated with greenery and flags for the occasion, and conduct him to a Chair of State.

On the conclusion of the visit the same ceremony is observed, and His Excellency is again escorted back to the gateway.

His Highness seldom leaves Jugra, but occasionally he will go to Kuala Lumpur, when he is fêted by the Europeans and Chinese. He, however, much prefers his quiet life at Jugra to the gaieties of the capital. He has now two wives, to the elder of whom he has long been married; the younger he married in 1887 on the occasion of the opening of the line of railway between Klang and Kuala Lumpur. The Raja Muda, who is Heir Apparent, is his grandson, being the son of the former Raja Muda, who died in 1884.

His Highness, although now an old man, keeps his health and thoroughly enjoys life; so there is every reason to hope that he will continue to reign till the volume of trade for the States of the interior passes over Selangor Railways, and Sungei Dua, the finest harbour in the Malay Peninsula, has become the anchoring place of ocean-going steamers.

* * * * *

4

Kuala Lumpur—A Programme of Improvement (1905)

In the early years of the twentieth century, Robson played an active part, both as a newspaper editor and a member of the Kuala Lumpur Sanitary Board, in a campaign to improve the

town by measures to relieve congestion and overcrowding, and by the adoption of a programme, to be implemented over a period of years, in the nature of the 'town planning' eventually introduced into the F.M.S. in 1920 as a federal service.

In this book, Robson (p. 18) commends Tickell, and regrets his enforced departure, but says nothing of his own involvement (this is discussed in the 'Introduction' at p. vi-vii). The Memorandum, part of which is reproduced below, appeared soon after Tickell had resigned, and it may well owe much of its substance to Tickell. However, it was signed by Ridges, Travers and Robson (the two first named were official members of the Sanitary Board, and Robson then or a little later was an unofficial member), submitted to the Board, and publicized by printing it, in instalments in the *Malay Mail*.

The Memorandum has recently been reprinted,⁸ but without including paragraphs 24-37, which are printed below, together with the opening salvo on the need for something more than a set of short-term expedients by a constantly changing sequence of bureaucrats. Paragraphs 33-4 are a particularly interesting sign of the times. In England, local authorities were moving towards a programme of publicly funded construction of low-cost dwellings for the poor. In colonial Kuala Lumpur, such ideas would have seemed to some readers of the *Malay Mail* to be unthinkable, arrant socialism. Robson, and his associates, may have made no converts, and certainly got no results, but they tried.

⁸ Khoo, *Kuala Lumpur*, pp. 43-72.

MEMORANDUM
on the Future Policy of Municipal Schemes
in the Town of Kuala Lumpur
Malay Mail weekly edition, 26 January 1905—Extracts

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Kuala Lumpur as the Capital of the Federated Malay States should continue to grow in importance with even greater strides than it has made in the past. Its development has been phenomenal, but the lines on which it has taken place have been somewhat haphazard.

There is a danger of repeating the kind of mistake that has arisen hitherto. They may be attributed generally to a want of continuity of policy, to the absence of a programme of development of far-reaching nature, and there can be no wonder that so simple a cause has sufficed to give occasion for a word of warning at the present epoch in the history of the town, when we consider the constant change of officials. The Resident, the Board and its officers, may be said to have found their hands full from time to time with the municipal work of the year in hand, which one and another has had to relinquish without formulating a programme for the remoter future, having, as a rule, held a responsible relation to the department for a comparatively short period.

The lesson of the past is therefore the need of a programme of improvements, an outline which may be kept in view and handed on from year to year for fulfilment. We have set out in this memorandum a sketch of the progress which we think should be made in the course of the next few years. The evils for which we have tried to indicate a remedy are mainly those of overcrowding, with the consequent higher mortality, and of dearness of living, and, without

going into detail, we have made proposals which, we conceive, are suggestive of an advance in the right direction, and will, if acted upon, form a sound basis on which to found a progressive policy with a view to later schemes.

* * * * *

BRIDGES.

NEW BRIDGES WANTED

24. (a.) There should be an iron bridge across the river near Mrs. Ah Yeok's garden to give a direct and wide approach to the Government Offices from the Ampang Road. The Ampang Road is a popular residential quarter. At present the main route to it lies down one of our narrowest streets of the meanest appearance, over a bridge congested with traffic, and then, with a sharp turn from the narrow bridge at an awkward gradient, into a thoroughfare which is under water at flood-time. In view of the well-kept and picturesque approach to all Government residences on the west of the town—which are not taxed—private residents in the Ampang Road and Weld's Hill locality have hardly received due consideration. The difficulty about the proposed route has already been explained in paragraph 5.⁹
- (b.) An iron bridge should be substituted for the wooden bridge on Kampong Atap Road. The wooden bridge was wrecked during the last big flood.

⁹ The proposed new bridge would cross the river further upstream from the Java Street bridge (see (e) below) and would divert traffic from the Ampang Road to provide an easier approach to the west bank, but the compulsory acquisition of land for this purpose might be costly.

- (c.) The direct approach to the railway station, via Rodger Street, should never have been closed. It should be re-opened and an iron bridge erected in place of the old wooden bridge. This matter is dealt with fully in paragraph 66.¹⁰
- (d.) Another bridge is wanted for proposed second outlet to the goods yard, paragraph 19.¹¹ The cost of this bridge should be borne by the railway department.
- (e.) If the bridge referred to in (a) above is erected, it may not be necessary to rebuild the Java Street bridge, and an outside hanging foot-way on the south side will be all that is absolutely necessary for a good many years to come.
- (f.) The question of a bridge over the river at the end of Scott's Road depends on the expert report mentioned in paragraph 8.¹²

SANITATION, SWAMPS, OPEN SPACES.

SWAMP DRAINAGE.

25. On paper the town of Kuala Lumpur is not cramped for space, but in reality there is none too much land available for building owing to (a) all the land west of the railway

¹⁰ There was need of a direct route across the river to the railway station (on the west bank) from the centre of the Chinese business district, in the vicinity of Rodger Street (now Jalan Hang Kasturi). See also para. 36 below.

¹¹ Vehicles carrying goods from the railway goods yard came out into Market Street, causing congestion at the approach to the bridge. It is here proposed that there should be a second exit, at the south end of the yard into Rodger Street, with a new bridge over the river for traffic using this route. See also para. 19 above.

¹² The proposal (para. 8) was to provide a direct route from Scott's Road (in the Brickfields area) to Petaling Hill (now the site of the Victoria Institution buildings constructed in the late 1920s).

being practically a Government reserve except Selangor Estate and the Public Gardens and (b) a goodly portion of the remainder, which is still unbuilt on, being undrained swamp. For instance, a big swamp extends all along the Batu Road on both sides. A large tract of land at the back of Pudooh railway station is a swamp, the country between the Malay Settlement and the Ampang Road comprises a large swamp, on both sides of the Gaol site there is a swamp, and a good deal of the land on the town side of the Circular Road is distinctly swampy.

26. It is possible that if drained properly much of this land might be utilized either for building purposes or for agriculture. But the advice of an irrigation engineer is required, particularly as so much depends on a better control of the river to prevent floods. The question arises, will the cutting off of tanjongs tend to facilitate the rising of spring tides and so keep back the water more than before. Another point to be considered is the advisability or otherwise of erecting a weir to hold up the level of the river during the dry season in order to keep the banks clear of filth, refuse, old boxes, baskets etc. (If the weir is impracticable a small sum should be voted annually for "clearing river" and this money expended during the dry weather in employing one or two river scavengers. A view of the river from Market Street bridge during the hot weather is not very creditable to the scavenging department.) If no irrigation engineer is available, it might be possible to obtain one for a short period from India or Ceylon.

SCAVENGING AND NIGHT SOIL CARTS.

27. At present bullock carts are used for collecting street and house refuse and night-soil buckets. The scavenging carts crawl about the town from dust-bin to dust-bin, many of which are often to be seen more than full. Night-soil carts are sometimes met in the town as late as 9 a.m. In a town of distances like Kuala Lumpur all this work could be done more expeditiously by the use of motor lorries. Such vehicles are already in use in some English municipalities. Enquiries should be made into the relative cost and utility of working these lorries as compared with bullock carts.

BATU ROAD POND.

28. The pond on Evelyn Estate should be filled in. It is a breeding ground for mosquitoes: and, if reclaimed, would supply additional building land. However, being private property it is difficult to see what action can be taken by the Government. The filling of this pond will entail considerable expense. The Government might find the money at a nominal rate of interest to induce the owner to undertake the work on the ground that it would benefit the neighbourhood generally. Otherwise the owner will probably sell the rest of his land at a good profit and finally dispose of the pond for fish-breeding purposes.

THE PUDOH DAM.

29. The Pudoh Dam and its continuation swamp should be filled up. The pond is picturesque but helps to block building development along the Pudoh Road. There is

available hill land close by where earth can be obtained wherewith to fill it. The ground would have to be kept as an open space for a few years until it was firm enough to build on.

MALACCA STREET RECREATION GROUND.

30. The small Sanitary Board store on the Malacca Street Recreation Ground should be demolished as soon as possible. The beauty and utility of the plot is at present spoilt by this store, which was previously a school, and before that an empty market.
31. The Golf Links should be declared a public recreation ground, unless this has already been done, but care should be taken that the boundaries of such reserve do not interfere with the proposal set forth in paragraph 2.¹³

LACK OF SHOP-HOUSES.

SHOP-HOUSE ACCOMMODATION.

32. The high rents prevailing in Kuala Lumpur may be traced to two causes, viz., want of available building land and the auction rule. When the town was laid out originally no provision was made for future extension on a large scale, whilst the titles for much of the land alienated in the past for shop-houses contained no building clauses, consequently a number of owners found it more remunerative to keep their land vacant than to build on it. There have been brief slumps, but, generally speaking, shop lots have never ceased to rise in value, a rise which has been particularly marked within the last year or two.

¹³ In para. 2 it was proposed that shophouses should be built on the east (Pudu) side of the town.

33. The greater demand for houses and an ever dwindling number of vacant lots naturally bring about high prices. The same causes swell the State Exchequer when the Government is in a position to offer lots by auction. The result is that the purchase of such land is restricted to a few rich men, and that rents have to be fixed at a high figure to give a reasonable return on the amount paid for the land plus the cost of the house. The supply of houses being less than the demand, there is no difficulty in getting these high rents, it being a matter of indifference to the landlord how many people choose to live in one house. From time to time, the public—especially the European public—protest against the collections of hovels within town limits. Such hovels are certainly an eye-sore. At the present time there are a number of them along Birch Road. The occupants should be ejected and the hovels pulled down, but where are the people to go? Rents of all kinds are very high and accommodation is limited. The sanitary housing of the large Asiatic population in this town is a big problem. If there were plenty of vacant State land available for the laying out of new streets, a solution would be in sight. The auction rule could be temporarily repealed and lots could be sold to individuals at a moderate premium, subject to a strict building clause, and with no right of transfer till the building was completed.
34. Under present circumstances the only remedy seems to be for the State to do everything in its power to encourage private land-owners to build shop-houses on their land. This encouragement might take the practical form of advancing half the cost of the building at a low rate of interest, the loan to be given in instalments as the

building progressed. In order to provide accommodation for the very poor, plans should be got out for model dwellings. Those buildings might be farmed out subject to fixed rentals and a limit to the number of occupants, or they might be placed in charge of salaried caretakers. In the latter case it would be possible to discriminate between the really poor and people who could afford to pay a higher rental elsewhere. The London County Council builds its own model dwelling houses. It would be better, perhaps, if the Chinese could be induced to build such houses for their own poor, but the objections to this are (i) there are but few Chinese capitalists in Kuala Lumpur, (ii) there would be no guarantee against raising rents, over-crowding, and ultimate sale of such property.

35. The difficulty is not so much how the town proper can be extended as where it can be extended: Birch Road and the back of Batu Road are indicated. There are a large number of vacant lots at Pudooh and they will soon be built upon, if only that place can be joined on to the [indecipherable phrase]¹⁴....practicable, it might be possible to get over the difficulty by buying up the Tung Shin Hospital site, filling up the Pudooh dam and draining the land on each side of the Pudooh Road near the Gaol. This would probably give a sufficiently continuous line of houses to induce the Chinese to build at Pudooh. A Land Office report showing the number of alienated vacant lots and the number of unalienated on the Pudooh Road between the Gaol and the town boundary would be useful.

¹⁴ The missing phrase probably referred to linking the west end of Pudu village with the roads running east from the town centre.

VICTORIA INSTITUTION SITE.

36. There remains one other suggestion. The land on which the Victoria Institution now stands is almost in the heart of the town. A scheme for the removal of the Victoria Institution elsewhere is set forth in a later paragraph. If that scheme was carried out, the present site of the school, cut up into town lots, would realize about \$100,000. The river could be deviated to a line parallel with High Street behind a single row of houses: the existing river bed behind Mr. Shaw's house could be filled in and several new streets laid out, including one connecting Rodger Street with the Station (paragraph 24 c).
37. It is impossible to draw up any detailed scheme for future extensions of the Town owing to want of a town map such as that described in paragraph 1.

Kuala Lumpur
November, 1904

H. C. Ridges
J. H. M. Robson
(Dr.) E. A. O. Travers

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GLOSSARY

- adek/abang (24)
 atap (or attap)(3)
 baju (22)
 bakau (86)
 barang (3)
 B.I. (E) (229)
 changkol (33)
 creeper (E) (229)
 datching (dacing) (183)

 dhoby (I) (195)
 dog-cart (E) (184)
 gantang (117)
 gembala (94)
 gharry (I) (9)
 gila (74)
 ikan kering (110)
 infra dig (E) (9)
 istana (247)
 kedai (188)
 kepala (187)
 keris (or kris) (249)
 kompani (236)

 kongsi (C) (195)
 lalang (80)
 lampin (81)
 latah (44)
 lombong siam (81)
 mandor (I) (77)
 mata mata (240)
 mata rimau (36)
 M.S.V.R. (195)
 musang (42)
 naik haji (242)
 orang utan (82)
 parang (77)
 picul (3)
- younger/elder sibling
 palm thatch, roof
 jacket (see also 'tutup')
 mangrove
 baggage (lit. 'things')
 British India Steam Navigation Co.
 draw hoe
 apprentice planter (coll.)
 balance scale, steelyard used in markets and shops
 washerman
 pony trap (two wheeler)
 gallon (approx) ie measure of volume
 elephant mahout, an animal keeper
 horse-drawn carriage
 mad
 dried fish
 undignified (Latin *infra dignitatem*)
 ruler's residence, palace
 shop
 head (lit.), headman or foreman
 dagger
 government (coll.), from the East India Company in 19th century usage
 association, hut for gang of Chinese labourers
 coarse grass (*Imperata cylindrica*)
 ground-sluicing for tin
 form of hysteria
 narrow vertical mine shaft. See Chap 3 note 4.
 gang headman (Indian labour)
 police constable, lit. 'eyes'
 tiger eye
 Malay States Volunteer Reserve
 pole-cat
 pilgrimage to Mecca
 ape (*Pongo pygmaeus*) in Borneo and Sumatra
 chopper (also used as a weapon)
 133 1/3 lbs

pinding (249)	waist buckle
queue (E) (184)	pigtail (hairstyle). v.i. <i>tauchang</i>
rikisha (or rickshaw) (9)	two-wheeled light passenger vehicle, drawn by a 'puller' between shafts (from Japanese 'jinrickshaw')
sampan (85)	boat (undecked), dugout
sarong (22)	sheath: 'kain sarong' meaning skirt or kilt is often abbreviated to 'sarong' (Robson's usage)
seladang (38)	<i>bos gaurus</i> , wild buffalo
serang (97)	coxswain
sombong (237)	proud, haughty
syce (or sais) (I) (100)	groom, driver of horse-drawn vehicle (or car)
tanjong (255)	cape, bend of river or road
tauchang (C) (184)	queue (v.s.)
tausa (34)	never mind (polite refusal), from <i>tidak usah</i> 'it's no use'.
tengkolok (246)	headcloth (folded as a turban)
tiffin (I) (188)	midday meal, lunch
towkay (C) (187)	master, proprietor, Chinese businessman
tutup (9)	closed; <i>baju tutup</i> is a tunic (sometimes uniform) which is buttoned up at the neck (sometimes abbreviated to <i>tutup</i>)
ubat (74)	medicine

(C) means of Chinese origin, (E) English, and (I) Indian; in other cases a Malay word. Numbers in brackets refer to pages where the word is in context.

INDEX

A. Individuals

- Abdul Hassan Burhan, Syed, 170
Abdul Jalil, Raja Muda of Perak, 108
Abdul Samad, H H Sultan of Selangor, 63,
Appx 2/3
Abdullah, Raja (of Klang), 245
Abdullah, Raja (of Kuala Langat), 245
Abrams, H ('Daddy'), 10
Adams, T S, 30
Ahmad, H H Sultan of Pahang, 159f, 162
Aldworth, J R O, 12
Anderson, Sir J, 23, 45, 62, 105f, 109f
Anthony, P A, 120f, 142
Arter, J S, 19
Ash, Lt, 191
- Bagnall, A R, 232
Bain, G, 170
Baker, C J, 172
Bahaman, of Semantan, 158-161
Bailey, A E, 203
Bailey, A S, 154
Bailey, W W ('Tim'), 47f
Barnby, R C, 232
Basagoiti, W P de, 100
Basik, Tunku Puan, 245
Baxendale, A S (Johnnie'), 7, 18
Baxendale, C, 18
Belfield, Sir H C, 3, 48, 99, 105, 107
Bernstorff, Count, 52
Berrington, A T D, 48, 100
Bibby, W, 49, 81f, 162
Bibby, A H, 91
- Bibby, F A, 91
Bibby, W C, 91
Birch, Sir E W, 45, 105, 108f
Bolton, F, 114
Braddell, Sir T, 28
Braddon, A ('Abang') 24
Braddon, Dr L, 4, 24
Brash, R P, 105, 113, 157
Bristowe, 220
Broadrick, E G, 187, 192
Brockman, Sir E, 105, 111f, 116, 195
Brooke, W de L, 47
Bryson, H P, 144f
Burleigh, Mrs, 102
Burnside, E M, 66
- Caldecott, Sir A, 28, 30
Campbell, D G, 29
Campbell, J A G, 2, 231
Campbell, M, 29, 233
Carey, E V, 19, 47f, 99
Chan Sow Lin, 193, 200
Charter, R, 221
Chew Kam Chuan, 4
Chong Cheoh Keng, 204
Choo Kia Peng, 113, 115, 119, 122, 124, 157, 193
Chow Ah Yeok, Mrs, 253
Christie, D A, 17, 101
Chulan, Raja Sir, 58f
Clarke, Sir A, 248
Clementi, Sir C, 30, 59
Clifford, Sir H, 12, 14, 37, 40, 159, 166
Connolly, Dr R M, 171
Cook, W, 28, 50
Cooray, F F, 171
Cowan, C, 187, 189
Crago, Dr, 121
Crockhart, 80
Cumming, C M, 47, 50
Cumming, G, 50f

RECORDS AND RECOLLECTIONS

- Curle, J H, 91
- Daly, M D, 196
Daly, Capt., 11
Darby, H M, 47
Davidson, J G, 43, 53, 64
Day, Dr B, 29
Day, G B, 232
Debney, S T, 80
Dickson, E, 29
Dougal, L, 47
Douglas, F W, 195
Douglas, W B, 43, 215, 222, 225
Douglas, W W, 187, 193, 222
Duff, R W, 162, 165f
Duncan, W, 113, 122
- Ebden, L P, 29
Eu Tong Seng, 105
Evans, 223, 226
- Fell, 216
Fernando, A R, 171, 231
Ferrers, H N, 29, 121, 193
Foster, 70
Fraser, Dr H, 101
Fraser, L J, 49
Fryer, G W, 46
- Garland, E T C, 22
Gerrard, 2/Lt, 191f
Gerrard, Mrs, 194
Gibson, W S, 113
Gimlette, Dr J D, 84
Glassford, C, 47
Glassford, J, 47
Gleeson, P W, 52, 66
Graham, Rev P G, 191
Green, Mrs, 173
Grey, R, 53
Griffith, H D, 107-109, 112
- Guillemard, Sir L, 62, 108, 113,
121-123, 127, 129, 139, 142,
145, 151, 153-156
Guillemard, Lady E, 155f
Guy, F V, 82f
- Habekost, Capt, 232
Haines, Rev F W, 28
Hall, A, 29
Hampshire, A K E, 24f, 65f, 100,
174
Hampshire, D H, 24f, 80, 135,
137, 174
Hap Loong Hiu, 193
Harding, G M, 91
Harper, Alfred, 82f
Harper, Archie, 52f, 172
Harper, S, 52f, 217, 222, 230
Harrison, R W, 105f
Hawley, 221
Haynes, A S, 29, 116
Heah Swee Lee, 118
Hendricks, 226
Herbert, Capt., 41
Hill, T H, 47f, 60, 224
Hill, V, 113
Hood, 226
Horley, Rev. W E, 54f
Hose, E S, 28, 86, 133
Hose, Bishop G F, 42
Howard, 2/Lt, 191
Hubback, A B, 29, 191f, 198
Hubback, Mrs, 194
Hubback, T, 29
Hume, W P, 29, 81
Huttenbach, A, 51, 108
Huttenbach, H, 25, 51
Huxley, Maj W S, 86f
- Idris, H H Sultan of Perak, 46, 58,
105, 112f
Innes, J, 79
Innes, J R, 29

- Irby, 1f
 Iskander, H H Sultan of Perak,
 92, 119
 Ismail, Raja, 63
- James, Sir F, 86, 121-124
 Jansz, Dr, 226
 Jennings, J A S, 170f
 Joaquim, B J P, 6
 Jones, F L, 173
 Jones, H T, 142
- Kahar, Raja, 249
 Kemp, L, 135
 Kennion, A N, 113f, 122f, 127-
 129
 Kenny, W E, 87, 99
 Kershaw, Mr Justice, 95
 Kester, 102
 Ketschker, G A, 52, 173
 Keymer, A E, 118
 Keyser, A L, 41, 44
 Khong Soo Kee, 201
 Kindersley, D C M, 47
 Kindersley, R C M, 27, 47, 113,
 115f, 122, 124, 157
 Klyne, J, 4
 Kudin (Dhiauddin), Tengku, 63f
- Laing, Sgt Maj, 191
 Lake, A B, 47
 Lee Kong Lam, 100, 200f
 Leong Ecc, 118
 Letessier, Rev C, 9
 Lilburne, A S, 89
 Lister, M, 1
 Loke Yew, 31-35, 53, 99f, 102,
 193f
 Low Leong Gan, 201
 Lowinger, V A, 29
 Lyons, Capt, 165f
- MacClashan, 232
- Macfadyen, Sir E, 19f, 66, 140
 Mackie, G, 60, 100f
 Mahdi, Raja, 63f
 Mahmoud, Raja, 64
 Mahmud, Raja Muda (of
 Selangor), 245
 Mahmud, Raja Muda (of Pahang),
 105
 Makepeace, W, 168f, 173f
 Mamat Kelubi, 164
 Marks, O, 29
 Marriott, N, 173
 Martin, W H, 89
 Mashhor, Syed, 64
 Mat Kilau, 162
 Maxwell, C N, 26, 37, 50
 Maxwell, E, 114
 Maxwell, Sir W E, 1, 9, 26, 35-37,
 62, 159
 Maxwell, Sir W G, 27, 32, 62,
 113, 115-119, 126, 128, 132f,
 144, 149-153
 Maxwell, Lady E, 153
 Maynard, F E, 53
 McCallum, Sir H, 160, 232
 McCarthy, E T, 91
 McClelland, F A S, 113
 Meikle, C, 38, 47
 Mills, Lt, 191f, 221
 Moreira, A E, 171
 Morphy, E A, 168
 Morris, P de C, 66
 Moss, S, 2
 Muhammad, H H Sultan, 63, 245
 Muhammad, H H Yam Tuan of
 Negri Sembilan, 105
 Musa, Raja Muda of Selangor, 64
- Nicholas, W, 1
 Norman, A C, 4
 Nosa (Abunosah), Raja, 249
 Nutt, W F, 66, 68, 113
 Nutt, Mrs, 121

RECORDS AND RECOLLECTIONS

- Osborne, F D, 46, 105f, 109
 Owen, Mrs G P, 101
 Owen, J F, 66, 187, 196
- Palmer, A, 44
 Palmer, F W, 29
 Parr, C W C, 29, 113
 Parsons, D St L, 104
 Paul, W F B, 1
 Peel, Sir W, 149, 155
 Perks, 215, 217
 Pountney, A M, 134
 Price, A F M, 173, 175f
 Prince, Capt, 192
 Proudlock, Mrs E, 70
 Proust, R, 29
 Purdy, 224
- Ram Singh, 164
 Rankin, C, 226
 Rathborne, A, 47, 224
 Raymond, 2
 Reid, A, 168f, 170, 173
 Reid T H, 168f, 172
 Rendle, H C, 47
 Reyne, Mrs C, 6, 102f
 Reyne, S, 102
 Rich, J M, 157
 Ridges, H C, 42, 106, 184
 Ritchie, C, 148, 151, 157
 Roberts, Bishop B C, 55
 Robertson, D G, 61, 100
 Robertson, J A, 66, 232
 Robson, J H M: Personal, 6, 72,
 97, Appx 2/1; Junior
 administrator, 73-75, 84;
 Public life, 66, Chapter 4, Appx
 2/4; Friends, 32, 48, 59, 65,
 157
 Rodger, Sir J P, 1, 12, 40-42,
 158f, 184
 Rodger, Lady M, 41-42
 Russell, G D, 100
- Russell, John, 56, 110, 171
 Russell, J A ('Archie'), 56-58, 66
 Russell, P C, 56
 Russell, R C, 57
- St Clair, W G, 168-170
 Sam Kee, 8
 Samuel, C, 22
 San Ah Peng, 32
 San Ah Wing, 32, 203
 Severn, Sir C, 105
 Shaw, B, 260
 Sidney, R J H, 15
 Sims, 221
 Skeat, W W, 28, 171f, 244
 Skinner, E B, 47, 66
 Smith, Sir C C, 1
 Smith, S, 8
 Snell, 231
 Spooner, C E, 46
 Stafford, G, 1f
 Stanton, Dr A T, 29
 Stephenson, P, 47
 Still, A W, 168f
 Stonor, M, 47
 Stonor, O F, 113
 Stuart, J P, 6
 Stubbs, Sir R E, 111
 Sulaiman, H H Sultan (formerly
 Raja Muda, 12f, 105, 249f, 227
 Swettenham, Sir F A, 1, 14f, 19,
 62
 Syers, H C, 37-40, 121, 158f, 221
 Syers, Mrs T, 39
 Syers, Major T, 39
- Talbot, H L, 1, 165f
 Taylor, Sir W, 62, 105, 108f, 169
 Teck Yong, 223
 Thamboosamy Pillai, 53, 219
 Tickell, G T, 18
 Tong Takin, 201
 Toynbee, F A, 6, 47

Travers, Dr E A O, 16, 29, 98,
100, 171, 191
 Treacher, Sir W H, 90
 Turney, C H A, 43, 226, 244
 Turney, Mrs M, 44
 Tyte, 2/Lt, 191

Uda, Raja Sir, 30
 Ung Ka Tseung, 200

Venning, A R, 4
 Voules, A B, 29, 143

Wahl, Capt., 9, 11
 Walker, Lt Col, R S F, 163
 Walsh, W, 29, 51
 Ward-Jackson, C, 29, 51
 Warneford-Lock, C J, 89
 Warren, General Sir C, 41
 Watson, R G, 67
 Webster, B, 4
 Welch, Dr, 6
 Welham, H, 170
 Welford, 1
 West, W, 4
 Whitley, H M, 29
 Whyte, G B, 89
 Wilkinson, R J, 22, 68
 Winstedt, Sir R O, 29
 Wise, E A, 161, 165f

Yakub, Raja, 64
 Yap Ah Loy, 222-226
 Yap Loong Hin, 193
 Yap Kwan Seng, 28
 Yap Swee Hin, 231
 Yeomans, S C, 173, 215
 Young, Sir A, 23, 68, 108, 112f

Zacharias, H C E, 17, 20, 52, 66,
100-102

B. Places and (KL) Roads

Ampang Road and Street, 4f, 193,
198, 223-225, 253, 255
 Ampang Village, 188, 193f, 197,
201
 Anak Ayer Batu, 219

Batu Caves, 222
 Batu Road, 5, 11, 48, 54, 187,
189, 192f, 196, 198f, 203, 222,
255
 Batu Tiga, 218
 Birch Road, 225, 258
 Bluff Road, 220
 Brickfields Road, 221
 Bukit Kuda, 230
 Bukit Nanas, 6

Cameron Highlands, 57
 Cecil Street, 224
 Church Street, 225
 Circular Road, 255
 Clarke Street, 53
 Cross Street, 223f

Damansara Road 5, 192, 218-221
 Damansara Village, 217f
 Drury Lane, 224

Federal Road, 221
 Fraser's Hill, 49

High Street, 187-189, 225, 260
 Hokkien Street, 222
 Holland Road, 220
 Hongkong Street, 222
 Hospital Road, 220f

Java Street 5, 174, 222f, 225, 254
 Jugra, 226, 245, 250

RECORDS AND RECOLLECTIONS

Kajang, 99f, 192, 224
Kampong Atap Road, 253
Kapar, 192
Kepong, 188f
Klang town, 43, 63f, 96, 192, 217,
231, 233
Klyne Street, 187, 189
Krian, 116-119
Kuala Kubu, 3, 23, 44, 49, 55,
80f, 102, 192
Kuala Langat, 43, 63, 79, 250
Kuala Selangor, 43, 64, 80, 226,
245
Kubu Lada, 210

Malacca Street, 257
Malay Street, 199f
Market Street, 4, 7, 52, 174, 223

Old Market Square, 222f

Petaling Street, 184-186, 190,
192, 194, 196f
Petaling Village, 64, 225
Port Swettenham, 92, 112, 138,
217
Pudu Road, 174, 223f, 259
Pudu Village, 192, 225, 256, 259,

Raub, 3, 89, 91
Rawang, 222, 231f
Rifle Range Road, 4
Rodger Street, 223, 254, 260

Scotts Road, 254
Sepang, 80, 111
Setapak, 197, 202
Seven Dials, 3, 5
Sultan Street, 189, 193, 196, 224
Sungei Besi, 203

Tanglin Road, 3
Tanjong Karang, 115

Tras, 49

Ulu Klang, 224
Ulu Selangor, 79, 231

Venning Road, 38

Yap Ah Loy Street, 223f

C. General

Adultery, 70f, 95
Agricultural Dept, 132, 138
Animals, 38, 42, 82, 93f, 241 (and
see Crocodiles, Tigers)

Banks: Chartered, 47, 66, 219;
Hongkong & Shanghai, 66;
Mercantile, 103
Brick kilns, 222
Bridges (Kuala Lumpur):
Gombak/Java Street, 220, 225,
253f; Kampong Atap, 253;
Market Street, 222, 225;
Rodger Street, 255; Skew, 219
Buildings: Armoury, 192, 220;
Capitan China's house, 223;
Council Chamber (Jugra), 243f,
250; Courthouse, 220; Govt
offices (1880), 225; (1884), 6;
(1897), 6f, 219, 253; Hotels, 1,
53, 219, 230, 232; Istana
(Jugra), 247, 249; Loke Yew
building, 219; Masonic hall,
220; Police station and
barracks, 218-221, 224, 243;
Post Office, 7; Prison (Pudu),
70, 200, 219; Public Works
Dept, office and store, 2, 221;
Railway Station and Offices, 7,
46, 219, 222, 254; Residency,
3, 222; Resthouses 1, 49, 73,

- 96, 217, 219, 223, 230f;
 Shophouses, 8, 223, 247, 257f;
 Town Hall 10, 193
- Businesses and Shops (by name):
 Aerated Water and Ice Factory,
 8; Baxendale and Devitt 18;
 Boustead & Co, 25; Campbell
 & Co, 233; Chow Kit & Co, 7,
 222; Derrick & Co, 89; Duff
 Development Co, 166; Federal
 Dispensary, 82, 183; Federated
 Engineering Co, 56, 61, 224f;
 General Electric Co, 174;
 Harper, A C & Co, 53, 172f;
 Harrison & Crosfield, 20; Hill
 & Rathborne, 47, 228;
 Huttenbach & Co, 52; Katz
 Bros, 232; Klang River Tin
 Dredging Co, 61; Kwong Gee
 & Co, 188; Little, John,
 (Singapore), 8f; Malayan
 Collieries, 57, 111; Maynard's
 Dispensary, 8; Pahang
 Exploration Co, 161; Pritchard
 (Singapore), 9; Raub Australian
 Gold Mining Co, 49, 89, 162;
 Rawang Concession, 53;
 Robertson, D G & Co, 61;
 Robinson (Singapore), 9;
 Russell, J A & Co, 57; Straits
 Trading Co 4, 50, 56f, 66;
 Teck Yong, 225; Wolfram
 (Selangor) Ltd, 203 (and see
 Brick kilns, Tapioca)
- Cement Works, 32
 Cemetery, 38, 221
 Chinese: Advisory board, 196;
 businessmen, 91f; Chamber of
 Commerce, 90, 200, 204;
 labourers, 3, 67, 184, 197, 202;
 New Year, 184, 231;
 Protectorate, 42, 106, 187, 196,
 199; Political parties, 185f, 190,
 194, 199, 202
- Churches, 6, 56, 220, 225
 Cinema, 10, 82
 Civil War (1867-1873), 63f, 222
 Clothes, 9, 229, 239-242, 246,
 249
 Clubs: Lake Club 25, 61;
 Recreation Club, 219; Selangor
 Club, 4, 10, 44, 52, 93, 220,
 230
 Coal, see Malayan Collieries
 Coconuts and C Oil, 5, 19, 32, 39
 Coffee, 19
 Cost of living and Salaries, 8, 57,
 111f, 117, 225, 231-233, 247
 Crocodiles, 84f
 Currency, 3, 67f, 225, 231
 Customs dept and duties, 132,
 137
- Dhobies, 195, 219, 222
 Divorce, 97
 Domestic servants, 8, 119, 225,
 232
 Drink (alcoholic), 9, 61, 224f,
 230f, 239
- Electricity, 3, 114, 230
 Elephant, 93f
 Entertainments, 10
 Europeans: Fund for Aged, 102f;
 Lifestyle, 3, 8, 9, 29; Race
 relations, 4, 9, 14, 54
- Federated Malay States:
 government, 1, 69;
 decentralization, 122f, 153f,
 139, 145-149, 154; relations
 with SS and UMS, 115, 125,
 132-139, 155 (and see Duff
 Development Company);
 Resident-General/Chief

RECORDS AND RECOLLECTIONS

- Secretary, 51, 107f, 122-125, 145-148; Federal Council, 25, 51, 58; Chapter 4 *passim* especially 146f, 233; finances, 115, 127f, 140, 153
- Fire Brigade, 189
- Floods, 255
- Food, 8, 225, 247 (and see Padi)
- Gold : mining, see Raub
Australian Mining ; ornaments, 249
- Golf, 4, 55, 257
- Horse racing, 4, 11, 36, 38, 50, 54
- Hospitals, 6, 86f, 99, 106, 191, 197-200, 202, 221, 226, 259
- Hotels, see Buildings
- Housing, 258f
- Indians, 71, 73, 78, 94, 138, 225
- Insanity, 6, 44f, 72-77
- Insignia (royal), 249
- Japan - earthquake, 134
- Journalism and Journalists, 168-171, 176-182
- Kampong Bahru Malay Settlement, 255
- Kedah, 138
- Kilns, brick, 222
- Kuala Lumpur described: in 1882, Appx 1; in 1889, 1-7
- Labour Dept, 138f
- Lake (Public) Gardens, 5, 221, 255
- Land values and Ownership, 5, 32, 36, 39, 42, 57, 110, 258
- Latah, 44
- Leave to Europe, 11
- Malay : language, 22, 29, 36; character, Appx 2/2; quarter (in KL), 223; lifestyle, 246 (and see Clothes, Land Ownership, Police)
- Malay States Guides ('MSG'), 185, 192, 197, 203, 235
- Malay States Information Agency, 109, 169
- Malaya, unification, see FMS 'Malaya', H M S, 112
- Markets (produce), 8, 223
- Medical Dept etc, 74f, 98
- Mines, tin, see Tin, Raub
Australian Gold Mining Co, Rawang Concession, Braddon, Loke Yew
- Murders (and attempts), 70f, 77f, 94, 188, 191
- Museum, 18, 223
- Naval base (Singapore), 130
- Newspapers and Periodicals:
Eastern Daily Mail, 170; *In Tinland*, 171; *Malay Mail*, 49, 66, 171-182, 185, 228-233; *Malaya Tribune*, 170; *Malaya Daily Chronicle*, 171; *Malayan Daily Express*, 171; *Malayan Leader*, 171; *Malayan Observer*, 171; *Malayan Tin and Rubber Journal*, 170; *Morning Gazette*, 172; *Morning Herald*, 172, 233; *Morning News*, 171; *Perak Pioneer*, 170; *Pinang Gazette*, 170; *Selangor Journal*, 171; *Singapore Free Press*, 49, 168, 172, 232; *Straits Echo*, 170; *Straits Times*, 168f, 172; *Times of Malaya*, 170; (See also Journalism, Robson)

- Padang, and other open spaces, 6f, 93, 219f, 222, 257
- Padi cultivation, 36, 115-119
- Padi mills and marketing, 115-119
- Pahang: Mines, 49 (See also Fraser's Hill, Raub Australian Gold Mine); Police in, 37, 158, 163-165; Residential system, 1, 37; Semantan rising, 158-160, 232; State Council, 158; Events 1892-1894, 163-166
- Piracy, 246
- Plantations, 5, 19, 26f, 32, 47f, 51f, 60, 67, 192, 255f
- Planters' associations, 17, 19, 21, 66, 103
- Police, 37, 67, 74, 77f, 80f, 136, 158, Chaps 5 and 7, 218f, 224, 231, Appx 2/II (See also Pahang, Riots)
- Ponds and Dams, 223, 225, 256
- Port Swettenham, 112, 217
- Post and Telegraphs Dept., 7, 18, 67, 132, 135f, 138, 174
- Prai wharves, 120, 141
- Prince of Wales' visit, 92f, 122-125
- Printing machines and offices, 56, 174, 221
- Prisons, 70, 196, 200, 219, 259
- Public Works Department, 2, 46, 220f, 232
- Queue (pigtail), 184f
- Railways, 32, 46f, 60, 67, 80, 120f, 130, 137, 192, 230f, 254 (and see Buildings)
- Refuse, and night-soil, collection, 256
- Rice, see Padi
- Riots: in 1897, 183; in 1912, 184-204
- River (Klang), 255 (and see Bridges)
- Rubber, 106, 122, 125, 169 (and see Plantations)
- Sampan, 85
- Sanitary Board, 5f, 18, 183, 194f, 257
- Schools, 5, 54, 58, 204, 224, 230, 238, 260
- Secret societies, 240 (and see Chinese)
- Selangor Chamber of Commerce, 65f, 103, 187, 199
- Selangor history, 63f, 245f
- Shooting (big game), 16, 36, 38, 130, 241
- Singapore naval base, 130
- Sports, 10, 23, 25, 36, 38, 55
- State Councils, 58, 65, 70, 158
- Steamships, and launches, 9, 97f, 217, 226, 229f, 236
- Suicide, 72f
- Surveyors 1f, 18
- Swamps, 219f, 225, 255f
- Tanjong Karang padi area, 115
- Tapioca, 221, 224f
- Tea growing, 57, 229
- Tetanus, 75f
- Tigers and Panthers, 79, 82f
- Tin: Mines, 24, 31, 49, 194, 201-203; Price, 68f
- Tobacco and cigarettes, 9, 34
- Town planning, 252
- United Planters' Association, 17, 19
- Vehicles: Bullock carts, 53, 231, 256; Buses, 187, 198; Gharries 9, 217; Lorries, 256; Motor Cars, 17, 25, 33, 61, 99-102,

RECORDS AND RECOLLECTIONS

193, 198, 233; Pony traps, 11,
184; Rickishas, 9, 33, 187, 193,
195f, 199, 203;

Wages (domestic servants), 8, 225

War 1914-1918 (local impact),
65-70, 175

Warships, H M S: *Hyacinth*, 161;
Malaya, 112f; *Plover*, 161;
Rattler, 161; *Rinaldo*, 64;
Thalia, 64

Water supply 3

Weld's Hill, 6, 47, 51, 193, 223,
253

Womens' Refuge, 198

Volunteers, F M S, 67, 185, 191-
202

'f' = 'and the next following page'