

**JOHORE
AND THE
ORIGINS OF
BRITISH CONTROL,
1895-1914**

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1895-1914**

by

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**Dedicated to my brother
The late Dr. R. Suntharalingam**

A brilliant historian
Who dedicated his life
to
The writing and teaching of history



Preface

After submitting my thesis for the M.A degree in 1972, I left the academic scene in Malaysia to accompany my husband, Dato' K.N. Nadarajah, on postings abroad as a diplomat. My involvement in the diplomatic life overseas shifted my focus and interest to other fields. When my husband retired as Ambassador in September, 1993 I came back to a more settled life in Kuala Lumpur. It also brought me back into contact with my friend, Dr Aruna Gopinath, Associate Professor of History, Department of History, University of Malaya, who suggested that I should consider revising and publishing my M.A. thesis. Her contention was that there were not many published, historical works on Johore. Encouraged, I slowly reread and did some changes. It was a slow process as I simultaneously held down my full time job as Director of Studies in Methodist College, Kuala Lumpur. After working on the thesis intermittently for three years, I got it ready for publication. I firmly believe that my book will contribute to a better understanding of the history of Johore.

In Malaysian history, Johore holds a unique position. It boasts of enlightened rulers such as Sultan Abu Bakar and of having resisted British control until 1914. Both these features initially captured my interest and I ventured into research into the history of Johore. After exploratory research and reading, I decided to limit my thesis to the issue of the extension of British control into Johore. It was extremely interesting to discover information which threw light not only on the British desire to move into Johore but also the determination of the Sultan and his supporters to keep the British out. Historical evidence convinced me that the British move into Johore was strongly influenced by economic development – specifically the growing importance of rubber cultivation – and not by a concern for the suffering of the Johore people under the so called 'maladministration' of Sultan Ibrahim of Johore. I have not claimed an impeccable record for Sultan Ibrahim and his 'cronies'. But, I cannot help but admire the fact that the Sultan and his supporters did not surrender their independence without putting up a good fight. I have tried to present both British intentions and actions and the Malay motives and resistance.

The focus in this book is on political developments between 1895 and 1914. The construction of the Johore Railway was a crucial development which brought in its wake economic developments and political consequences. Hence, I have given it lengthy treatment. However, attention was focused on the changing attitudes of the British colonial officials to Johore and its rulers. Simultaneously, I have thrown light on determining interests and consequent actions of the Johore Sultan and his Malay officers. I have traced the struggle of both parties for political control, which meant control of economic development and consequent wealth in Johore.

I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Prof Wang Gung-Wu, who initially encouraged me to go into historical research and was my first supervisor as Head of the Department of History, University of Malaya, Malaysia. I wish to thank Mr Krishen Jit who took over as supervisor when Prof Wang Gung-Wu left the Department. Mr Krishen Jit was then lecturer in the Department of History. My thanks go to the late Mr and Mrs Arumugam and their daughters Ms Gunamany and Ms Navamany for being my foster family while I undertook a major portion of the research in the archives in Johore Baru. I wish to express my deepest gratitude for the hospitality extended by my uncle, Professor R. Kanagasuntheram, and his wife, my aunt, while I did my research in Singapore. Mention must be made of Dr Aruna Gopinath for her constant encouragement for which I am deeply grateful.

I would like to put on record my gratitude to the various institutions and their staff for the facilities provided and the assistance rendered in the course of my research. I must make special mention of the Library of the University of Malaya, the Library of the University of Singapore, the National Library of Malaysia, the National Library of Singapore, the National Archives of Malaysia and the Johore Archives.

Finally, I wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to my husband and my late parents who constantly encouraged the completion of this work. My thanks are also due to my publisher Mr K Arul of Arenabuku Sdn Bhd who patiently helped me through the publication. Last but not least, I record my appreciation to my late brother, Dr R Suntharalingam who was, for me, a shining example to follow.

Datin N. Nesamalar

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1

The Historical Background, 1819 — 1895

When Stamford Raffles set sail from Penang in January, 1819 in search of a suitable port for the British in Malayan waters, the present day mainland state of Johore was still a part of the vast Kingdom of Johore, Pahang, Riau, Lingga, the Kerimuns, Singapore and the lesser islands and dependencies. The last Sultan of this united Kingdom, Sultan Mahmud, failed to name his successor before his death in 1812. There were two claimants to the throne — Tengku Husain, the elder son, and Tengku Abdul Rahman, the younger son, of Sultan Mahmud. Contrary to the Malay custom of the eldest son succeeding the father, Tengku Abdul Rahman was installed Sultan of the Kingdom, despite opposition from some of the elderly chiefs of Riau. Raffles who closely followed Malay politics, came to know of these developments. He was to exploit the loophole this disputed succession had provided, to achieve his purpose of acquiring a port — Singapore — in the Malayan waters.

Finding the Kerimun islands unsuitable to serve the purpose of a port, Raffles with Farquhar sailed to Singapore which he considered met British requirements. He found that the de facto Ruler of Singapore and mainland Johore was Temenggong Abdul Rahman. However, the Temenggong did not have the power to permit the establishment of a British factory or settlement in Singapore. Seeking permission from Sultan Abdul Rahman was out of the question as he was under the influence of the Dutch who wished to keep the British out of this region. So, Raffles devised a plan to instal Tengku Husain as Sultan of Johore and Singapore, and then get him to permit the establishment of a British factory or settlement in Singapore. Temenggong Abdul Rahman fell in with Raffle's plan. However, before this plan was put into effect the Temenggong signed a Preliminary Agreement with Raffles, as Ruler of Singapore and the other islands under his rule, and on behalf of Sri Sultan Husain Muadzam Shah, Raja of Johore.¹ This Agreement gave the British the right to establish a factory in any place under the administra-

tion of the government of Singapore-Johore. Immediately after this, Tengku Husain was sent for by Raffles. On 6th February, 1819 Tengku Husain was installed as Sultan Husain Muadzam Shah, Raja of Johore. On the very same day, Sultan Husain and Temenggong Abdul Rahman jointly signed a treaty with Raffles confirming the Preliminary Agreement and agreeing to other terms. The process whereby Johore with Singapore was separated from the vast Kingdom was thus initiated by Raffles whose sole motive had been to secure British interest by any means available to him.

The process so initiated by Raffles in 1819 was formally completed by the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824. The signing of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty in March, 1824 formally separated Johore and Singapore from the old Kingdom and placed them within the English sphere of influence in the Malay Peninsula. The rest of the Kingdom with its headquarters came under the influence of the Dutch. By largely limiting their activities to their respective spheres, both the British and the Dutch effectualised in practice the formal separation which had resulted from the Treaty.

Between 1819 and 1824 the Malay Rulers were also deprived possession of the island of Singapore, though neither forcibly nor arbitrarily. By the Preliminary Agreement the British had secured permission to establish only one factory. However, in the Treaty that was next signed they acquired the right to establish more than one factory in Singapore. They further convinced both the Sultan and the Temenggong to agree not to sign any treaty with any other foreign nation or permit their settlement on any part of their dominion. Following this, the British encroached on the administrative authorities and powers of the Sultan and the Temenggong. The British removed from their jurisdiction all settlers in Singapore who opted to be under British authority. Under the administrative arrangements made by Raffles for Singapore, the Temenggong shared jurisdiction and authority with the Sultan and the British Resident. This initial encroachment ended in completely relieving both the Temenggong and the Sultan of all their administrative duties in Singapore. By the Convention of 7th June, 1823 which Raffles signed with both the rulers, they agreed to forego their monopolies of Kranjee and Baloo woods within Singapore and the adjacent islands. They also consented to forego their claims to presents and customs which the Chinese traders visiting Singapore were obliged to pay them. They

were relieved of their duties in Court though they were entitled to a seat when they wished to attend. They agreed to the introduction and enforcement of British laws on all matters except on religious and marriage ceremonies, and rules of inheritance which were to be governed by Malay laws and customs.² At this point the Malay Rulers only retained sovereignty over Singapore. For the loss of their administrative powers the British compensated them monetarily. Both Rulers received allowances. Financial assistance was rendered for the construction of a new residence for the Temenggong in Telok Blangah, and a mosque for the Sultan near his home.

Next, the British bought with monetary compensations their sovereignty over Singapore. By the Treaty of 2nd August, 1824, both the Temenggong and the Sultan ceded their full sovereignty and property to the British East India Company and its successors. In return they received handsome monetary compensations — a payment of \$33,200 with a pension of \$1,300 for life for the Temenggong. Both Sultan Husain and Temenggong Abdul Rahman accepted the position of private individuals while residing within Singapore.³ However, they still retained both sovereignty and authority over Johore which thus became essentially a mainland state within the Malay Peninsula.

Having secured Singapore, Johore was unimportant to the British at this juncture, except as a possible base of threat to the security of Singapore. Johore would assume importance only in the event of a foreign power establishing itself in that state. This possibility the British forestalled by including in the Treaty of 1824 a clause stipulating that so long as both Rulers resided in Singapore and received their monthly allowances from the British East India Company, they would neither ally nor have correspondence with any foreign power or ruler without the knowledge and consent of the British. In line with the policy of strict non-interference in the internal affairs of the Malay States, which the Directors of the English East India Company advocated, the British officials in Singapore absolved themselves from any obligation to interfere in the internal affairs of Johore. It can be reasonably deduced from British contemporary actions in Perak and Selangor, and later development within Johore that the lack of commercial interest and economic development in Johore accounted for non-interference rather than a serious belief on the part of the local officials in the obligation to uphold the policy of their Directors, in all circumstances.

Though the Malay Rulers of Johore ceded Singapore to the British, they retained the right to reside in Singapore for themselves and their successors. Sultan Husain had his residence in Kampong Glam until 1834 when he moved to Malacca. Temenggong Abdul Rahman resided in his new home in Telok Blangah for just over a year. He died in 1825. However, his successor, Tun Ibrahim lived in Singapore. The Temenggong family transferred their residence to Johore in 1862. Despite this move from Singapore at the very beginning of the reign of Abu Bakar, both Abu Bakar and his successor interacted with Singapore residents and officials. As a result all three of them were influenced by British ways of living and thinking.⁴ In addition, they earned the respect and gained the friendship of the British residents in Singapore. These Englishmen came increasingly to unofficially advise the Rulers on political and economic matters of Johore. Furthermore, officially they came under the influence of the Straits Government epitomised in the person of the Governor. Both the Rulers and the Governors conferred and co-operated on matters of mutual interest.

When Temenggong Abdul Rahman died in December 1825, he was succeeded by his second son, Tun Ibrahim, at the age of fifteen. Tun Ibrahim received a pension of \$350 a month from the British because they considered that his father had enjoyed the allowance for too short a period.⁵ Sultan Husain died in 1835 in Malacca and left behind a fifteen year old son, Tengku Ali, to succeed him. Tengku Ali enjoyed a pension of \$115 a month from the British. Both Tun Ibrahim and Tengku Ali, when they succeeded their fathers were too young. Furthermore, they were not formally recognised as successors by the British. Tengku Ali made repeated requests of the Bengal Government to recognise him as Sultan. His requests went unheeded. Only in 1840 was a proclamation made to the effect that Tengku Ali was in all respects his father's successor. This accorded Tengku Ali recognition that he had a right to his father's property but was not a recognition of his right to succeed his father to the title of Sultan and status of Raja of Johore. On the other hand, Tun Ibrahim was formally installed as Temenggong by the British, but only in 1841.

Under Tun Ibrahim Johore developed economically. The factors responsible for the initial opening of Johore to profitable economic activities were Johore's contiguous position to Singapore, and the residence of Tun Ibrahim in Singapore. The writings left behind by the few writ-

ers on Johore in the first half of the nineteenth century are consistent on the point that Johore was sparsely populated and economically unproductive except for the jungle produce — timber, taban, and rattan — which was collected and exported to Singapore, by the 'orang asli' and the Malays. Tun Ibrahim's only revenue from Johore seems to have been the duty collected on the export of jungle produce from mainland Johore.⁶ It was in the late 1840's that initiative was taken to exploit the economic resources of Johore. Soil exhaustion and the spread of disease among the pepper and gambier plantations combined to make pepper and gambier cultivation unprofitable in Singapore. Fortunately for Johore, Singapore could not meet the demand for land made by the increasing Chinese population. These factors led the Chinese to look to Johore with its vast area of virgin jungle land.

At this junction Tun Ibrahim's friendship with Mr. W.W. Ker proved to be beneficial. Mr. Ker suggested to Tun Ibrahim that he should encourage Chinese immigration into Johore. The Temenggong accepted the suggestion and the Chinese flocked in to begin pepper and gambier cultivation. In the wake of the Chinese came opium "farming" initially on a limited scale. During this period gutta percha collection and export became a lucrative trade for Johore. The Temenggong monopolised this trade, whilst Mr. Ker's firm — Ker, Rawson, and Company — became pioneers in the export of gutta percha from Johore. Thus, Ibrahim's association with the British in Singapore, as in the case of Mr. Ker, and the assistance he had from them, initiated economic development in Johore. This meant revenue for the Temenggong and profit for the British entrepreneur who participated in it. This was a pattern which was to repeat itself in the history of Johore.

In the initial stage itself the economic development of Johore aroused the interest of the British community in Singapore. This interest came to be focussed on the man who benefited most from the development — Temenggong Ibrahim. As early as March 1848, the Singapore Chamber of Commerce complained that the Temenggong was monopolising the gutta percha trade. As the revenues of Johore increased — which in reality meant increase in the personal income of the Temenggong — the interest of the British in Singapore grew till it came to be more in the nature of involvement, in Johore politics. The issue which precipitated this definite interference was the leasing of opium farming in Johore to a Singapore Chinese. This the Temenggong did for a payment of \$300

per month to him. Tengku Ali had no share in this revenue or even from the undefined general revenues of Johore. As rightful successor to his father, Tengku Ali made his claims to some share in the Johore revenue. He was supported in his claim by members of his family, and friends — among whom were the European residents of Singapore. Soon, the European community came to vigorously discuss and dispute the claims and rights of Tengku Ali and Temenggong Ibrahim who also had ardent supporters among them.

Governor W.J. Butterworth took up the issue with the Supreme Government in India in October, 1846. He was of the opinion that the fixed revenue of \$300 from opium "farming" should be equally divided between Tengku Ali and Temenggong Ibrahim. Despite recognising Tengku Ali's right to a half share in the Johore revenue, Butterworth did not feel confident that Ali, if installed could effectively maintain his position in the face of Ibrahim's powerful influence. However, the Supreme Government paid no heed to the Governor's views as it was aware that there was no gain from such an interference in Johore politics. Next, Governor E.A. Blundell raised the question in 1853 when he relieved Butterworth who went on leave. Blundell, more sympathetic to the cause of Tengku Ali, tried to get the Supreme Government to instal him as Sultan, and make a more favourable settlement regarding Ali's share in Johore revenues. Blundell's settlement got the consent of both Ali and Ibrahim. When sanction from India was received to effect his settlement, Butterworth was on his way to resume his duties. Blundell left the settlement to be made by Butterworth. But Butterworth took up the matter with the Supreme Government only in 1854, and he revised the settlement drastically in favour of Ibrahim. In the face of such strong support for Ibrahim, Ali, despite the support of his friends, could not bargain for better terms than those offered by the Treaty of 10th March, 1855.

Before the Treaty was signed, the British formally installed Ali as Sultan on the same day. By this Treaty, Sultan Ali ceded for himself, and his heirs and successors the sovereignty and property over the whole territory of Johore in the Malay Peninsula and its dependencies to Temenggong Ibrahim, and his heir and successors. However, he retained for himself the territory of Kessang. In return, Temenggong Ibrahim promised to pay Sultan Ali, his heirs and successors an allowance of \$500 Sp every month, starting from January, 1855. Ibrahim also

promised not to interfere in Kessang. The British incorporated the stipulation that if Sultan Ali wished to cede Kessang, first preference was to be given to the English East India Company.⁷ In effect, Ibrahim had bought over sovereignty and property from Ali. This was made possible by his strong economic position coupled with the fact that he was the abler and more powerful ruler. Ibrahim had made a good impression on Butterworth and this strongly influenced the settlement in Ibrahim's favour.

Butterworth probably had confidence not only in Ibrahim's business acumen to develop Johore, but also in his political shrewdness to maintain control over his territory and to work in conjunction with the British. He had got on well with Ibrahim in the past, and expected Ibrahim to do so with the future Governors of Singapore.⁸ Between 1855 and 1862 Ibrahim did attempt to be co-operative with the British, but, simultaneously, he fought to retain the position of an independent ruler — in internal administration and in his relationship with the other Malay rulers.⁹ Also, he consented to lease the Johore opium and spirit farms with those of Singapore, for the year 1855.¹⁰ In 1856 Ibrahim contributed 500 rupees a month for the maintenance of two gunboats which guarded the Straits, and undertook to keep the pirates at bay.¹¹ However, unlike Butterworth, Blundell was unappreciative of Ibrahim's efforts to work with the British.

It was not long before Ibrahim displayed his business acumen and independent spirit. In 1856, Ibrahim decided to let out the Johore farms separately. Independently, he let out the farms for a higher rent.¹² But, Ibrahim did respect and heed the Governor's request that the Johore farms should be leased out to the same individual who rented the Singapore farms so that the revenue of Singapore would not be affected by smuggling. After this instance, in 1857 the Governor made it a point to consult the Temenggong on the terms on which the Johore farms should be auctioned. Basing his estimate on the increased Chinese population in Johore, and, therefore, the increased consumption capacity of Johore, Ibrahim increased the rent for the Johore farms.¹³ At the request of the Governor, he entrusted the final arrangements to his legal advisers and friends — Mr. Napier and Mr. Patterson.¹⁴ Thus, in future, Ibrahim either stated to the British the rent he wanted for the Johore farms or he leased them, independently.

The chief source of this revenue was the Chinese population in Johore.

Ibrahim administered this immigrant population through the headmen of the community, termed kangchus. Ibrahim promulgated the rules and regulations regarding the cultivation and preparation of gambier and pepper. He also fixed rents on land, duties on goods and imposed other fees. The responsibilities of seeing these rules enforced, rents, duties and fees collected were those of the kangchus.¹⁵ In this sphere of administration of the Chinese, the British did step in to give advice to Ibrahim on aspects which they felt would indirectly affect the British Settlements. Two major aspects on which they tendered advice were the prevention of the establishment of secret societies in Johore, and irregularities in the administration of justice by the Johore authorities. Unlike the situation in the other Malay States, Ibrahim did not encourage the spread of Chinese secret societies among the Johore Chinese population. On the advice of Mr. T. Church, Ibrahim tried to prevent the heads of the Chinese Secret Societies in Singapore establishing branches in Johore. Also, Ibrahim warned the kangchus that he would not permit the introduction of these secret societies into his territories.¹⁶

As the right to issue and revoke the river documents¹⁷ was in the hands of the Temenggong and his representatives, there were cases in which Ibrahim did arbitrarily revoke the documents given to the Chinese capitalists. When a Chinese capitalist was the victim of such an arbitrary action, he lost monetarily and he turned to the Straits authorities for justice. The Governor did question Ibrahim in such cases and requested an explanation for his actions.¹⁸ There were not many instances of such complaints by the Chinese capitalists and consequent intervention on their behalf by the Governor. But the possibility of such procedure probably acted as a deterrent on the Temenggong's arbitrary decisions which were really a consequence of the unorganised state of the judicial system and procedure.

The ill-organised judicial system was representative of the general administrative system in Johore. In Johore, at Tanjong Putri there existed a most rudimentary administrative service which functioned under one man who did the assorted duties of being in charge of correspondence, Recorder of Court Proceedings in Session, Government Treasurer and Paymaster. Two other principal men in Ibrahim's service were Abu Bakar, his son, and Che Long, the Mentri Besar, stationed in Singapore.¹⁹

It is clear that though the Temenggong did have independence in the running of the affairs of his country, he did take into consideration the

comments made and the advice given by the Governor. The policy of the English East India Company towards the Malay States was one of non-interference in the internal affairs of the states.²⁰ This policy was officially adopted by the India Office between 1858 and 1867. This explains why the Governor seldom meddled in Johore's affairs. But upholding this policy did not preclude interference to settle local disputes and to secure British commercial interests. Under this camouflage the Governor did step in to settle the dispute between Tengku Ali and Temenggong Ibrahim in 1855. In the guise of commercial interest the Governor tendered advice on the issues of letting out of the excise farms and the prevention of the establishment of Chinese secret societies in Johore. It is apparent that Ibrahim respected the Governor of the Straits Settlements and the advice he gave in that capacity. Ibrahim was very much aware that behind the Governor stood British power. But this did not completely affect his attitude to and his relationship with the Governor. With the backing of his knowledgeable European friends in Singapore, Ibrahim stood up bravely to the Governor as an independent ruler, and was not a British installed puppet in behaviour. This was very evident in his conduct over the issue of aiding Bendahara Mutahir during the Pahang Civil War.

Ibrahim considered himself an ally of Mutahir and his supporters, and an enemy of Wan Ahmat and his faction.²¹ He wanted to aid Mutahir and his supporters, and enlist the support of the British for them. With this purpose in mind, and also wanting to maintain the integrity of his territories, Ibrahim kept the Straits Government well informed of Wan Ahmat's movements and depredations.²² In November 1857, Ibrahim gave his daughter and son in marriage to Mutahir's son and daughter, thus by intermarriage strengthening the bond between the two families. However, Blundell did not see eye to eye with Ibrahim on the issue of him giving aid to Mutahir's faction. He refused Ibrahim permission to send aid. This strained the relationship between Ibrahim and Blundell. Ibrahim pointed out to Blundell that he was not bound by any treaty obligations to the British to refrain from aiding a Malay ruler who was his ally and relative. He boldly informed Blundell that so long as his decision to aid the Bendahara did not contravene his treaty obligations to the British, he was going on to do so. He requested Blundell to inform the Supreme Government of his decision.²³

This decision provoked a severe reprimand from Blundell. He warned

Ibrahim that if he received sufficient evidence that Ibrahim was sending aid to Mutahir, he would have to take the steps provided by Act X of 1839.²⁴ Blundell plainly stated to Ibrahim that he was to be viewed in this case as a simple citizen living in the Straits Settlements, and not as the ruler of a neighbouring territory; and in the event of giving assistance to Mutahir "as a criminal." Ibrahim considered this a great indignity.²⁵ However, in May 1858 when the Supreme Government wrote approving the Governor's proceedings to stop Ibrahim from interfering in the affairs of Pahang, Ibrahim regretfully accepted this decision. Despite this in 1861, Ibrahim renewed his complaints to the Straits Government regarding Wan Ahmat's actions in Pahang.²⁷ In December, 1861 he entered into a "Treaty of friendship, alliance and mutual support," with Mutahir.²⁸ At this juncture Colonel O. Cavenagh was Governor, and he approved this treaty "in order to stiffen the anti-Siamese faction in Pahang."²⁹ The Governor-General in Council approved it in 1862.

Undoubtedly, Ibrahim viewed himself an independent ruler, free to choose and aid his allies. Though willing to co-operate with the Governor, Ibrahim did not allow Blundell to dominate him. It is obvious that the Johore Ruler viewed himself equal in status to the Straits Governor. But, his attitude towards the Indian Government was different. He acknowledged the Indian Government's overriding authority as the Straits Government did. Ibrahim knew how far he could carry his stand of an independent ruler. This political shrewdness in combination with his ability to assess and adapt to changing conditions and British policy during this period accounts for his success in the issue of aiding Bendahara Mutahir. In fact, these factors also explain the Temenggong's control of power within Johore, and the success of his reign with considerable internal autonomy, until his death in January, 1862.

Abu Bakar at the age of twenty-two succeeded Ibrahim as Temenggong of Johore. Within this short time, Abu Bakar was well equipped to play his two essential roles of ruler of Johore, and neighbour to the British in Singapore. Abu Bakar grew up and matured in the cosmopolitan society of Singapore. He was educated in Malay and had English taught to him by a Mr. Keasberry. In the process, Abu Bakar acquired a Western outlook and Western tastes. At a comparatively young age, he had been an active and intelligent participant in the political and administrative affairs of Johore as heir apparent and an officer in his father's ill-equipped administrative staff. Thus, early in life he was ex-

posed to the political, economic, and social presence of the British in the Malay Peninsula. Especially during the latter part of his father's reign, Abu Bakar came to realise the futility of disregarding British counsel in Johore affairs which affected British interest, and acting contrary to his wishes. But, all these did not prevent Abu Bakar from viewing himself as an independent ruler of a Malay state. At the age of twenty-two, due more to experience than to education, Abu Bakar was a very astute young ruler.

With shrewd calculation, Abu Bakar, during the first few years of his reign, handled Johore affairs and his British neighbours with such finesse that he made a favourable impression on the British both in Singapore and in London. On accession, he declared his desire to rule Johore with British friendship and advice.³⁰ At the beginning of his reign, the most pressing problem which Abu Bakar faced was aiding the cause of Bendahara Mutahir in the Pahang Civil War. He tackled this problem in a most tactful manner where the British were concerned. Presenting his version of the state of affairs in Pahang, Abu Bakar sought the advice of the Governor on the course the Bendahara and he should take in Pahang.³¹ Also, he kept the Governor informed that Wan Ahmat was attempting to retake territories ceded to Johore by the Treaty signed between the Rulers of Johore and Pahang, and sanctioned by the British.³² Abu Bakar at no time acted contrary to British advice on this issue. In fact, he paved the path for settling the boundary dispute between Johore and Pahang.³³

In the internal administration of Johore, though Abu Bakar showed greater independence and initiative, he still respected British views and advice. In 1864, he introduced new regulations in Johore with the objective of establishing greater control over pepper and gambier plantations, their imports and exports. Both the Singapore Chamber of Commerce and the Chinese capitalists expressed their opposition to these regulations in petitions to the Straits Government.³⁴ When the Governor of the Straits Settlements raised the question with Abu Bakar, he told the young ruler that these regulations were interpreted by the British as efforts on his part to monopolise trade at the expense of Singapore.³⁵ Denying any such intentions, Abu Bakar explained his motive and the need for such regulations in Johore. He did not abandon the regulations. Rather, he modified the regulations and took steps to see that the regulations could be enforced without too much inconvenience to the Chinese investors, importers and exporters.³⁶ The rules governing land grants,

leases and sales were also modified, but along lines suggested by Governor Cavenagh.³⁷

In the sphere of judicial administration Abu Bakar once again attempted to accommodate British views and requests. The Governor was critical of the Johore judicial system which severely punished aliens who broke the Mohammedan laws but left Muslim Malay subjects guilty of the offence to be punished by God. The Governor requested that when a British subject was charged with an offence, the British authorities must be informed to give the accused the required assistance. In addition to making other requests, the Governor indicated that when the accused was found guilty, he should not be too severely punished.³⁸ Abu Bakar was willing to meet the Governor's detailed requests in cases where the crime was serious, but not for petty offences. As Abu Bakar rightly observed, following the Governor's requests in every case would definitely weaken Abu Bakar's authority and those of his representatives in Johore. However, Abu Bakar recognised the need to modify the existing Johore laws to new developments that is of having to administer non-Muslims and British subjects. He ordered his legal officers to revise the Johore code of laws "... so as to make it more comfortable to European ideas ...". He drew on the expertise of some Singapore lawyers in drawing up this new code of laws. Governor Cavenagh approved this new code of laws which was based on lines of the laws of the Colony.³⁹

Abu Bakar was keen to accept and promote modern and progressive projects for the development of his state. Mr. W. Patterson and Mr. W.H. Read promoted a scheme to form a telegraphic company which proposed to build telegraphic lines from Burma to Singapore.⁴⁰ Johore and Siam were also to be traversed in this project. Having secured a concession from the King of Siam, they approached Abu Bakar. In March 1866 Abu Bakar gave them the concession on condition that it was approved by the British colonial authorities. Both the Governor and the Governor-General-in-Council approved of the concession.⁴¹ It was also during this decade that Abu Bakar encouraged two of the earliest projects for railway construction in Johore. All these schemes failed to materialise, but they were revived later.

Though Abu Bakar was aware of the value of British approval for his actions, he did not permit the Governor to impose his decisions on all matters of Johore. In 1865 when Governor Cavenagh claimed by Arti-

cle 2 of the Treaty of 1824, British jurisdiction over the Straits of Singapore and the port of Tanjong Putri, Abu Bakar refused to accept the Governor's interpretation of the clause. When his arguments failed to convince Cavenagh that the British had no such rights and did not claim them in the past, Abu Bakar requested that the issue be referred to the Governor-General-in-Council. Abu Bakar viewed this issue as a difference in opinion between the Governor and himself.⁴² But, when the Supreme Government decided the issue in favour of the Straits Government, Abu Bakar accepted the decision.⁴³

During the first few years of his reign, Abu Bakar, evidently, acted very cautiously where relations with the British were concerned. In every issue in which the British were involved Abu Bakar displayed in his attitude a delicate balance between maintaining his independent position and being amendable to British advice. Obviously, Abu Bakar desired to be in the good books of his powerful neighbour. He probably felt that as Ruler of Johore, he was of equal standing with the man in immediate charge of British territory in the Malay Peninsula, that is, the Governor. In this attitude, he debated and argued on certain issues with the Governors at Singapore. But, he did not pretend to such equal status, authority or power when it came to relations with the Governor-General. Like Ibrahim, Abu Bakar also acknowledged the overriding authority of the Governor-General, and accepted his decisions without question.

During this short period, Abu Bakar successfully created a positive picture of himself in the minds of the British authorities, both in Singapore and London. His willingness to modernise Johore's land laws and the penal code along the lines suggested by Cavenagh, spoke well for him. So did his attempts at opening up Johore and granting concessions for modern projects — like the telegraph and railway lines construction — with British approval. Abu Bakar's conciliatory and temperate behaviour over the settlement of the Pahang-Johore boundary dispute won him the friendship and staunch support of Governor Sir Harry Ord.⁴⁴ Both the Governors described him to their superiors as "civilised" and "enlightened", and most important of all "amendable" to British advice. In 1866, Abu Bakar made his first trip to Europe and confirmed to the British at home, by his exemplary deportment that their impression of him was correct. With the views of the Governors and the impressions of the Home authorities in his favour, Abu Bakar found no difficulty in

securing permission to change his title from Temenggong to Maharajah in 1868. It was in the light of this background that Abu Bakar came to play a prominent role in Malay politics in the decade that followed.

Between 1868 and 1878 Abu Bakar, along with the British, became involved in the internal politics of Selangor, Perak, and Negri Sembilan. In the internal struggle for control and power between Tengku Ziauddin and Raja Mahdi in Selangor, the British chose to support Tengku Ziauddin. Initially, Abu Bakar disapproved of Tengku Ziauddin, but when the British made their preference explicit, he backed the British candidate.⁴⁵ In 1872 with permission from Governor Ord, Abu Bakar gave Raja Mahdi asylum in Johore. Also, on Ord's suggestion, he attempted to mediate a settlement between the rivals. His mediation proved fruitless, and his political guest slipped away without his knowledge. He immediately informed Governor Ord of Raja Mahdi's absence.⁴⁶ Though local newspapers suspected Abu Bakar of duplicity in the issue,⁴⁷ Abu Bakar retained the Governor's confidence. In September 1872, the Earl of Kimberley after reading a newspaper report became suspicious of Abu Bakar.⁴⁸ However, once enlightened by Governor Ord, the Earl of Kimberley reaffirmed British appreciation of Abu Bakar's constant friendship and his intelligent administration of Johore.⁴⁹ Abu Bakar knew better than to befriend the enemies of the British. He had constantly sought Governor Ord's advice on the course he should take in the affair of Selangor politics. By doing so, he impressed the British — both in Singapore and London who now came to hold a good opinion of him and his administrative ability. This strengthened his position with the British.

In 1876 Abu Bakar played a somewhat similar role in Perak affairs following the murder of Resident J.W.W. Birch in November, 1875. When the British captured ex-Sultan Ismail of Perak they placed him temporarily under the custody of Abu Bakar.⁵⁰ Also, he played intermediary between Maharajah Lela and his followers, and Governor Sir William Jervois. He secured through mediation the surrender of Maharajah Lela and his followers by convincing them that the British would give them a fair trial, and if found innocent of murder, free them.⁵¹ Ex-Sultan Ismail was acquitted and placed under the custody of Abu Bakar permanently.⁵²

Having failed to get Colonial Office approval for his other two proposals to stabilise conditions within the Negri Sembilan states, Gover-

nor Jervois used Abu Bakar to channel British advice into the Negri Sembilan states. In 1876, Jervois attempted to give Abu Bakar this advisory position — by treaty — in these states. Treaties were signed with the rulers of Sri Menanti, Rembau, and Jelebu by the British. They accepted Abu Bakar as their adviser and arbitrator. However, cases referred to Abu Bakar were to be settled in conjunction with the Governor. The British reserved to themselves the right to communicate directly with the rulers of these states — that is without going through Abu Bakar.⁵³ Overtly, Abu Bakar was to advise the rulers on how to put their respective states in order. But in reality the British advised them, through Abu Bakar and also independently. The British gained substantially by using Abu Bakar but Abu Bakar himself lost nothing in the process. In fact, he earned the respect of the Malay Rulers and the British.

Abu Bakar's services to the British in the Straits Settlements and his reputation as an able administrator of Johore paid dividends in 1877. Sultan Ali died in Umbai in 1877. He named as his successor a minor by his third wife, instead of his eldest son, Tengku Alam. Despite Sultan Ali naming his successor, Colonel A.H. Anson, the Acting Governor, made Abu Bakar guardian of Kessang or Muar, until it was decided who would succeed to Muar. Abu Bakar accepted this position, professing that his appointment was an expression of the confidence the British Government had in him. Colonel Anson's high opinion of Abu Bakar and his administrative ability made Abu Bakar the obvious choice as ruler of Muar, in place of the unknown nominee of Sultan Ali, or even Tengku Alam. However, Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Secretary, was not prepared to give Muar to Abu Bakar in recognition of his political services to the British, against the wishes of the people of Muar. He instructed Anson to await the arrival of the new Governor before making a decision. As these instructions were delayed, Anson procured the election of Abu Bakar by the Muar chiefs. Soon after, the chiefs revealed that they had been pressured to elect Abu Bakar. So Carnarvon refused to permit Muar being placed under the Maharajah's authority. The next election of the Muar Ruler was after the arrival of the new Governor, Sir William Robinson. Prior to his departure, Anson had arranged with Abu Bakar to see that the latter was re-elected. Abu Bakar was unanimously re-elected in the second election. This decision was accepted by Robinson, the Colonial staff, and Sir Michael Hicks Beach, the Colonial Secretary. Sir Michael Hicks Beach permitted the absorp-

tion of Muar into Johore territory.⁵⁴ Anson's and the Colonial staff's good opinion of Abu Bakar in conjunction with the change in British policy from one of extension to non-extension of territory in the Malay Peninsula, contributed to Abu Bakar extending his authority and acquiring Muar for Johore.

In the full flush of his political successes with the British, especially in the Negri Sembilan states and Muar, Abu Bakar sought permission from the British to use the title, Sultan of Johore. Unfortunately for Abu Bakar there had been a rapid change in the circumstances which had favoured him in the past. This was especially so in the local scene. In the Straits Settlements the reactions to the settlement of the Negri Sembilan states troubles and the Muar question were not to the advantage of Abu Bakar. The Straits officials felt that a better solution to the troubles would have been direct British intervention and the appointment of a British Resident. The reaction was not totally against Abu Bakar but against the policy of using a Malay ruler as adviser. Some Straits officials and European residents were not too happy about the manner in which the family of Sultan Ali was pushed into complete oblivion, and Muar was given to the Maharajah to administer. The Straits officials would have preferred the annexation of Muar to Malacca. In the process of trying to convince the Colonial staff into changing the policy and permitting them to make alternative arrangements for the Negri Sembilan states and Muar, they could not avoid calling into question the administrative ability of Abu Bakar.⁵⁵ The Straits officials who wanted this change of policy — especially Frank Swettenham, the Assistant Colonial Secretary — strongly influenced Governor Robinson.⁵⁶

Simultaneously, the Residential system which had not been an immediate success was proving in the long run to be effective and efficient. The most progressive state under the Residential System, Perak, soon displaced Johore as the criterion for efficient and successful administration of a Malay state. Governor Robinson did not hesitate to point out to the Colonial Secretary that Johore with informal British advice for more than thirty years lacked behind the Protected Malay States which had accepted the Residents only six years ago. Fortunately for Abu Bakar there was no change in the permanent personnel of the Colonial Office. They were familiar with these issues and their views on them were already formulated. Despite Robinson's complaints about dissatisfaction in the Straits Settlements about the manner in which the

Negri Sembilan states and Muar questions were settled, Lord Carnarvon, and Sir Robert Herbert, the Permanent Secretary, felt that the arrangements made should be given time to prove successful or otherwise.

Likewise, the permanent staff had already formed their opinion of Abu Bakar on the views which had been expressed by Robinson's predecessors. This opinion could not be easily changed by Robinson within a few months. Abu Bakar, oblivious of the altered situation in the Straits Settlements requested permission to use the title, Sultan of Johore. Governor Robinson argued that since Abu Bakar had no right to the title he should not be permitted to use it. He, also, suggested the possibility of opposition from the other Malay Rulers, and hostile public opinion in the Straits Settlements. These reasons camouflaged the real desire to curb the growing influence of Abu Bakar among the Malay Rulers. The Colonial staff did not take Robinson's arguments seriously. Directed by expediency and self-interest, they agreed with Robinson that Abu Bakar should not be permitted the use of the title, at this juncture. However, Sir Robert Herbert did not overrule the possibility of granting this permission in the future.⁵⁷

The campaign to discredit Abu Bakar in the eyes of the Home authorities did not end here, as the purpose of the Straits officials was still unachieved. They did not make much headway between 1878 and 1880 despite reporting disturbances in Muar and the Negri Sembilan states.⁵⁸ However, the appointment of Sir Frederick Weld as Governor, and the return of the Earl of Kimberley to the post of Colonial Secretary in 1880 proved advantageous to their cause. Governor Weld enthusiastically joined the "forward-school" and disapproved of the policy of bringing peace and prosperity to the Negri Sembilan states and Muar by channelling advice through Abu Bakar. So, he set out to displace Abu Bakar from these positions of adviser and ruler, of the Negri Sembilan states and Muar, respectively, and extend British influence into these territories. The Earl of Kimberley assuming office in May, 1880 greatly changed the situation in the Colonial Office. The Governor and the Straits officials found in the Colonial Secretary a man sympathetic to their expansionist ambitions. Despite the fact that the permanent officials like Robert Herbert, Bramston and Robert Meade were opposed to the Governor intervening in the internal administration of the independent Malay states, the Earl of Kimberley supported Weld's view that British influence should be extended to the Malay states. He even anticipated the appointment of

a British Resident in Johore during the time of Abu Bakar's successor. In December, 1881 the Earl of Kimberley in effect permitted the Governor to extend British rule into the Malay states in the cause of law, order, peace and progress. However, the Earl of Kimberley at this juncture did not specifically mean Johore.

Convinced that Abu Bakar wished to play adviser not only to the Negri Sembilan states but also Pahang, Weld set out to remove him and take his place as adviser. To the Earl of Kimberley, Weld complained that Abu Bakar was not always prone to accept British advice. Also, he accused him of not utilising Johore revenues for state development. In January 1882, Weld subtly suggested, to the Earl of Kimberley, removing Abu Bakar from his advisory post. In April, the Earl of Kimberley gave Weld a restricted mandate to intervene when necessary, despite Abu Bakar's status in the Negri Sembilan states. The change of the Colonial Secretary to Lord Derby in December 1882 did not affect Weld's position. Though Lord Derby advised not to intervene unnecessarily in the internal affairs of the Malay states, he left most of the responsibilities to the permanent staff of the Colonial Office. Between March 1883 and April 1886 Weld cautiously but definitely extended British influence and control into the Negri Sembilan states. Simultaneously Abu Bakar was displaced from his position of adviser. But, he retained control of Muar. Weld's moves were so effective that the Colonial staff found no cause for serious objection. In fact they approved Weld's moves as these proved to be successful.⁵⁹ Abu Bakar was helpless in the face of these united efforts to manoeuvre him out of his advisory position. This political position was the creation and gift of the Straits Governor and the Colonial Office to Abu Bakar who now had to accept its revocation by the very same authorities.

Despite approval and acclamations by the Straits Governors of Abu Bakar's efforts to establish the Johore administrative system on British lines and to develop Johore,⁶⁰ Abu Bakar roused British objection on the question of granting large and monopolistic concessions to Europeans. However, British private individuals and firms in Singapore encouraged Abu Bakar in the direction to which the Governor and the Colonial Office objected. Obviously, on the advice and suasion of his legal firm, Messrs. Rodyk and Davidson, Abu Bakar granted in 1878 a charter for ninety-nine years to Johannes Mooyer who was in partnership with Messrs. Rodyk and Davidson. Both firms obtained this concession on

the expressed purpose of wanting to form a company for the economic development of Johore. The terms, privileges and rights of the charter were definitely monopolistic.⁶¹ When the Colonial Office was informed of this concession, Sir Micheal Hicks Beach wrote to Mr. William Napier — Abu Bakar's lawyer and representative in London — that this concession was not in the interest of Johore or Abu Bakar. Simultaneously, he informed Governor Robinson to convey his protest against giving such concessions, to Abu Bakar. When Abu Bakar received this protest, he had no choice but give in to British view, when the protest came from such a high authority. On the basis of Johannes Mooyer not being prompt in establishing the company, Abu Bakar cancelled the charter.⁶² He also promised the British authorities that in future, prior to giving such concessions he would consult the Governor. This he promised in December, 1882.⁶³

Neither the promise nor the failure of the venture seems to have deterred Abu Bakar and his advisers for long. Almost immediately in 1882 Abu Bakar made a somewhat similar concession to a company — the Malay Peninsula Agency — which was promoted by Messrs. Rodyk and Davidson. Abu Bakar signed a Convention with the Company giving a 999 year lease for 100,000 acres, as well as mineral leases.⁶⁴ In 1884 the Colonial Office came to know of this concession. At this time Weld was in London, and he took the opportunity to discuss the implications of the concession with the Colonial staff. In his discussion with de Robeck, Weld managed to convert him to his prejudiced view of Abu Bakar, Messrs. Rodyk and Davidson, and the concession. But Sir Robert Herbert retained his view of Abu Bakar and dismissed Weld's objections on grounds of jealousy. To Herbert, Abu Bakar was still an enlightened Malay ruler trying to rule his country on civilised and modern lines. He was prepared to overlook the blunders which Abu Bakar made in the attempt.⁶⁵ However, he disapproved of the clause in the Convention which gave banking rights and the right to issue legal tender in Johore to the Agency. He wanted Johore and the Straits Settlements to have the same banking system and legal tender, to avoid confusion. Despite acknowledging lack of legal right for British interference in this issue, Sir Robert Herbert told the Governor to inform Abu Bakar that he had not kept his promise. It was also to be impressed on Abu Bakar that the British would never give recognition to the Agency.⁶⁶ This nipped the venture in the bud. Though the British were prepared to praise Abu

Bakar's individual efforts on a small scale to promote economic development within Johore, officials both in Singapore and London were not prepared to countenance Abu Bakar's efforts to introduce outside capital by granting large and monopolistic concessions. Here the desire was not so much to curb Abu Bakar's influence or independence but rather to preserve Johore intact for future British participation in exploiting the country.⁶⁷ This participation was to take place after the British had established their anticipated control over Johore.

By 1884 Governor Weld had come to the decision that in Johore British informal advice was to be replaced by control, through the appointment of a British Resident. To convince the Colonial staff to effect the appointment he resorted to the familiar arguments of maladministration,⁶⁸ detrimental influence of interested parties,⁶⁹ and the possibility of foreign infiltration or influence, in Johore.⁷⁰ de Robeck was convinced by Weld's arguments and considered the possibility of appointing a Resident both in Johore and Pahang, simultaneously. But Herbert and Meade retained their old opinion of Abu Bakar and his administrative ability, and were not influenced by Weld's arguments. Though they were aware of the lapses on the part of Abu Bakar, they did not consider them serious practices of maladministration.⁷¹

Meanwhile Abu Bakar became suspicious that Weld in London was exerting himself to extend British control to Johore, thus depriving him and Johore of their independent status. Abu Bakar's suspicion was roused by a Government Notification in the Government Gazette and local newspapers, and information from a reliable source. The Notification denied British subjects who went to independent Malay states any British Government protection. Also, it reserved to the British Government the right to recognise or cancel concessions granted by the native rulers of these states. Abu Bakar requested of Acting Governor, Cecil C. Smith, that a notification should be published exempting Johore from being affected by the Government Notification. The rumour which Abu Bakar came to hear was that Weld would return from London with authority to annex Johore immediately. Abu Bakar wanted Smith to publicly deny this rumour if it was untrue.⁷²

Abu Bakar was not a man to sit back and watch control over Johore slip out of his hands into those of a British Resident. First, he exerted himself to ensure his independent position (at the local level). In an interview with Governor Smith, he expressed the hope that on the basis

of his past relationship with the British, the British Government would not force a Resident on him. Then, he invited Governor Smith to visit and report on Johore. Smith's report claimed administrative progress in Johore and undermined Weld's argument of maladministration.⁷³ Furthermore, Smith's observation that Abu Bakar was still amendable to British advice eroded Weld's contention that Abu Bakar was very much under the influence of irresponsible advisers. Abu Bakar offered to sign a treaty with the British entrusting Johore's foreign relations to the British. Despite taking these steps, and the assurance from Smith that the Colonial staff were not contemplating the annexation of Johore,⁷⁴ Abu Bakar did not feel sufficiently confident to relax at home.

Hoping to achieve his objective by seeing and persuading the decision makers themselves — the Colonial staff, — Abu Bakar proceeded to London in 1885 with his trusted adviser, Abdul Rahman bin Andak.⁷⁵ On their arrival in London in May, 1885 Abu Bakar was assured by the Colonial staff that neither annexation nor the appointment of a British Resident was envisaged for Johore. But, they grasped the opportunity to sign a new treaty with Abu Bakar. The fact that Robert Herbert and Lord Derby were absent from the Colonial Office at this juncture proved disadvantageous to the cause of Abu Bakar. Robert Meade who succeeded Robert Herbert negotiated the Treaty with Abu Bakar. Neither did he support all the proposals of the Governor. He attempted more to serve imperial interests in the issues, and also to strike a happy balance in meeting the requests of both men. This, he achieved in the Treaty that was signed between Abu Bakar and the British in December, 1885.⁷⁶

Taking seriously Weld's arguments that there was the possibility of foreign infiltration into Johore,⁷⁷ Meade accepted Abu Bakar's offer to place in British hands the foreign relations of Johore. Article VI⁷⁸ effected this and deprived Abu Bakar and his successor of their independence in this vital field of foreign relations. This same article prevented the Johore Ruler from granting any concessions to any Europeans without British consent. Concessions to British subjects and companies were exempted from this provision. Undoubtedly, Meade's preoccupation had been with the prevention of foreign intervention but this did not preclude the fact that this was a definite curtailment in the powers of the ruler in the internal administration of Johore. Abu Bakar had offered to curtail his powers in the sphere of foreign relations, but had also unwittingly brought restrictions on his freedom to grant concessions within

Johore. In addition, this article bound Abu Bakar to non-interference in the politics and administration of the native states. This was an undoubted victory for Weld. He had finally succeeded in displacing for good Abu Bakar from his influential position vis-a-vis the Malay states.

However, Weld was not quite successful on the point of appointing a Resident to Johore. Into Article III which provided for the appointment of a British officer, Abu Bakar managed to incorporate the subtle nuance that it was an arrangement between two independent nations. The officer who was termed as "Agent" was to have "functions similar to those of a Consular officer" only, and by inference, therefore, not those of a Resident in a Protected State. In the Treaty, it appeared that the Johore Ruler accepted the Agent at the request of the Secretary of State. The Treaty itself was signed by the Secretary of State on behalf of Her Majesty, and not the Governor. This fulfilled Abu Bakar's request that he be recognised an independent ruler and the Treaty be signed as between equals. Abu Bakar had also achieved to some extent the major purpose of his trip to London — preventing the appointment of a Resident to Johore, — and thus retained his and Johore's independent status. But Weld did not consider Article III a complete defeat. He was well aware that the position of Agent could with time develop into that of a Resident. Neither was Abu Bakar oblivious of this possibility.

In return for the above concessions, Abu Bakar, undoubtedly, bargained for permission to use the title of Sultan of Johore. Earlier in 1878 the Colonial staff had refused permission because no political purpose was served in the Malay Peninsula. But, at this juncture it had become a chip to bargain with Abu Bakar to serve British interests in the Malay Peninsula. Article VII permitted Abu Bakar and his successors who came to the throne according to Malay law and custom, the use of the title "His Highness the Sultan of the State and Territory of Johore." Thus, paradoxically, the Treaty of 1885 not only exemplified British official interference in Johore affairs⁷⁹ but also British official recognition of Abu Bakar as an independent ruler.

The remaining decade of Sultan Abu Bakar's reign witnessed Weld's efforts not only to interfere in the internal administration of Johore but also to extend British influence into Johore. Simultaneously, Sultan Abu Bakar used his ingenuity to outwit the Governor and also make provisions to keep out the British in future too. However, he was wisely amendable when it served Johore's interest. This was true in the sphere

of Indian immigration and administration. Article I of the 1885 Treaty had provided that, "The two Governments will at all times cordially cooperate in the settlement of a peaceful population in their neighbouring territories." On the advice of Governor Smith, in 1885 itself Sultan Abu Bakar had drawn up and passed an Indian Immigration Enactment.⁸⁰ Following the signing of the Treaty, in April 1886 the British Government of India exempted Indian emigration to Johore from the provisions of the Act XXI of 1883.⁸¹ In accordance with the provisions of the Johore Immigration Enactment, Mr. A. Magregor and Mr. Howard Bentley were appointed as Protector and Assistant Protector, respectively, in June, 1886. Their appointments were subject to the approval of Governor Weld.⁸² This was a markedly different method of administration of an alien, labour community. Sultan Abu Bakar did not choose for the immediate administration of the Indians, an outstanding Indian leader, as he had done in the case of the Chinese community when he accepted and permitted the Kangchu system to evolve in Johore.

Sultan Abu Bakar closely imitated the administrative set-up in the Colony and the Protected Malay States in the administration of Indian immigrants. Mr. H. Bentley organised the Johore Indian Immigration Department.⁸³ Being a pioneer in the field, naturally he modelled the department on those in the neighbouring British territories. The Sultan probably encouraged this duplication in set-up — if not in working — to give the British authorities the impression that his administration was along modern Western lines. Sultan Abu Bakar's attitude towards the Governor on this issue was definitely not one of arrogant independence. He was smart enough to realise that to effect Indian immigration into Johore he needed the co-operation of the Governor. At this juncture when Europeans were becoming interested in opening up estates in Johore,⁸⁴ and Indian labour was going to be in great demand he could not afford to lose this source. This probably accounts for the amendable and co-operative spirit which Sultan Abu Bakar displayed in this issue.

This spirit was not manifested in the administration of the Chinese community in Johore. In February, 1887 Governor Weld attempted to interfere in Sultan Abu Bakar's administration of the Chinese coolies who had been imported into Johore through the Straits Settlements. Utilising the instructions which Lord Derby had sent in 1884 to Governor Smith to inquire into the treatment of these Chinese coolies, Weld sought Sultan Abu Bakar's permission to send an official to Johore to

investigate their treatment. Sultan Abu Bakar saw through this as another of Weld's many attempts to interfere in his internal administration. He told Weld so in his letter to him. "Reverting to the Secretary of State's instructions I cannot bring myself to believe that they were intended to interfere with the internal administration and domestic affairs of my country."⁸⁵ The factors which made Sultan Abu Bakar amenable and co-operative in the issue of Indian immigrant administration were not pertinent in the Chinese case.⁸⁶ The Chinese coolies may have been imported through the Straits Settlements but all of them were not British subjects. Their entry into Johore, therefore, was not totally in British hands. Furthermore, Chinese coolies were already present in Johore in large numbers, and they had been under his father's and his administration for many years. In fact, they were more a resident population than an immigrant one.

Much more important were Weld's efforts to realise the appointment of the British Agent in Johore. Though Weld raised the question immediately after Sultan Abu Bakar's return from London, in November 1886, delay ensued due to disagreement over the site on which the residence of the Agent was to be constructed. Camouflaging his ulterior motive to have the Agent conveniently situated to watch the Sultan, Weld stated that he wished the residence to be situated within the Istana (palace) grounds to ensure privacy. Sultan Abu Bakar was perceptive enough to read between the lines. As he was bound by treaty on this issue, Sultan Abu Bakar offered to take steps to ensure privacy for the original site proposed. Also, he was willing to offer other sites which had the advantage of being secluded but suffered from the defect of being too removed from the business center of Johore Bahru.⁸⁷ In fact, he refused to consider having the residency within the palace grounds.

While disagreement over the site delayed proceedings, other bodies undermined Weld's argument for the immediate appointment of the Agent by expressing their opposition to the proposal or by denying support. Prominent among these were the unofficial members of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements. Without mincing their words, they declared that Weld's main aim in making the appointment was to spy on the Sultan. Next came the Johore Advisory Board which communicated Sultan Abu Bakar's sentiments on the appointment to the Colonial Office. Finally, some members of the Executive Council of the Straits Settlements refused to support Weld's case and proposal. All these con-

tributed to the permanent staff and the Colonial Secretary shelving decision on the issue until after Weld's retirement from the Governorship of the Straits Settlement.⁸⁸

When Governor Weld was succeeded by Governor Cecil Clementi Smith, the Colonial Office suggested in September, 1888 the appointment of the Agent to facilitate the extradition of Indian coolies. Governor Smith put the suggestion before the Sultan and found him opposed to it. Sultan Abu Bakar's sentiments were conveyed to the Colonial Office by Governor Smith who advocated patience. He pointed out to the Colonial Secretary that he was satisfied with the efforts made in Johore to limit expenditure and carry on administration, efficiently. So advised, the Colonial Office did not press the appointment but rather decided to drop the question during the life-time of Sultan Abu Bakar.⁸⁹

It is obvious that Sultan Abu Bakar had the assistance of Englishmen to fight his battle to remain independent. The unofficial members of the Colony's Legislative Council expressed views in the interest of Johore and its Ruler who was their friend. However, they were motivated by self-interest too. Keeping Johore and its Sultan independent left free a profitable and potential source of business which they could exploit. The contention that Sultan Abu Bakar was under the influence of private interests was not without basis. In addition, Sultan Abu Bakar bought the services of experienced and prominent Englishmen when he appointed them to the Johore Advisory Board. This marks the beginning of British ex-officials and later unofficials slowly coming into the service of Sultan Sultan Abu Bakar, first in London and then in Johore. Part and parcel of this development were Sultan Abu Bakar's efforts to increasingly set up departments and establishments resembling those in the Colony. He also incorporated certain British administrative practices into the Johore system. This was especially so after his trip to London and the signing of the Treaty of 1885. One of the first departments to be styled on lines similar to that of the Colony was the Indian Immigration Department in 1886. It was a practice of this Department to publish annual reports like the ones in the Straits Settlements. Other departments which mushroomed in the second half of the 1880's were the Public Works Department and the Land Office. By 1892 the Land Office came to undertake survey work and it was then designated as the Public Works and Survey Department.⁹⁰ Other Johore establishments on British lines were the Secretariat, Treasury, Audit Offices, Supreme Court and Gov-

ernment Printing Office.⁹¹ It was during the last decade of Sultan Abu Bakar's reign that the Registration and Military Departments were established.⁹²

Complementary to Sultan Abu Bakar's policy of setting up administrative organs on the Colony's pattern was his policy of creating appointments with British terminology and largely appointing Englishmen or Europeans to these posts. In 1891 Sultan Abu Bakar created the post of Commander of and Military Instructor to the Johore Force, and decided to entrust this appointment to an European or English.⁹³ At the beginning of the decade the Medical Officer in Johore was Dr. Wilson. He was assisted by an apothecary.⁹⁴ Sultan Abu Bakar appointed in 1892 as Mining Engineer, Mr. Harry Lake. Later in 1892, Harry Lake represented Johore as Assistant Commissioner at the World Columbian Exposition.⁹⁵ Other Europeans came to man other minor posts in the Johore administrative system. These efforts on the part of Sultan Abu Bakar to incorporate in his administration of Johore British ideas, practices and personnel culminated in the drawing up of a constitution for his State. Before making his last trip to Europe, Sultan Abu Bakar drew up the constitution with the help of his advisers. At this time no other Malay state had a written constitution. Rather it was passed down as customs and traditions from one generation to another. Drawing up a written constitution was a Western development which Sultan Abu Bakar adopted for his state.

However, Governor Smith was not wholly satisfied with developments within Johore. He felt that Johore had not only slackened in economic development in the 1890's when compared to the 1850's but also was far behind the British Protected Malay States. He was convinced that this slowing down was due to the absence of any personal supervision by the Sultan and the lack of finance to build the necessary infrastructure. The cause in his view were the Sultan's frequent trips overseas and the lavish expenditures they entailed. Simultaneously, Governor Smith's attempts to interfere in Sultan Abu Bakar's administration of the Chinese led to a display of Sultan Abu Bakar's resentment and resistance to British advice in the internal administration of his state. Sultan Abu Bakar demanded to be treated like an independent ruler and not be expected to follow directives from the Straits Government. Smith sensed that Abdul Rahman bin Andak, the private secretary, was a strong advocate of this independent attitude. However, the slowing down of

economic development and the display of an independent attitude to the Governor did not make a sufficient case at this juncture for the extension of British control into Johore as far as the Colonial staff were concerned. When Sultan Abu Bakar died in London on 4th June, 1895, the Colonial staff decided to stand by the agreements signed with Sultan Abu Bakar, overriding possibilities of incorporating Johore into the F.M.S. or appointing a Resident. Sultan Abu Bakar's past record of steady loyalty to the British left Johore an independent state⁹⁶ when Ibrahim ascended the throne as Sultan of Johore. In the opinion of C.P. Lucas, Johore's future as an independent state depended on the character of the new Sultan.⁹⁷ But it was not the determining factor for the establishment of British control over Johore. Important developments within Johore sparked the desire for control while the Sultan's character and administration of Johore provided the ostensible *raison d'être* for British take over of Johore administration and eventual political control.

NOTES

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- 2 C.B. Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore, 1819-1867* (1965 Edition. Kuala Lumpur). p 107.
- 3 *Treaty of 2nd August, 1824*. Original seen in National Archives, Malaysia.
- 4 Winstedt, *Op cit*, p 91.
- 5 F.A. Swettenham, *British Malaya* (London. 1929) p 91.
- 6 *Ibid*, p. 91.
- 7 F.A. Swettenham, *British Malaya* (London. 1929) p 91.
- 8 Khoo Kay Kim, "Johore in the 19th Century": A Brief Survey." *Journal of the Historical Society, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur*. Vol. VI. 1967/68. p. 83.
- 9 *Treaty of 10th March, 1855*. National Archives, Malaysia.
- 10 In 1846 Governor Butterworth himself presented Temenggong Ibrahim with a sword in recognition of the co-operation and services he had rendered in the suppression of piracy in the areas surrounding Johore and Singapore.
- 11 Ibrahim promised Governor Blundell that he would contribute \$1000 an-

- nually towards a school of general education. He offered to provide the land necessary to build another school in Telok Blangah for Malay education and make an annual contribution of \$500 towards the running of this school. *Letter Book of His Highness the Maharajah, 1855-1868*. See letter from Ibrahim to Governor Blundell, 1855.
- 10 *Ibid.* See letter from Ibrahim to Blundell, 17th April, 1856.
- 11 *Ibid.* Letter from Ibrahim to Thomas Church, Resident Councillor at Singapore, 7th July, 1856.
- 12 In 1855 Blundell had arranged to let out the Johore farms with those of Singapore, for Sp\$2500 a month. In 1856 Ibrahim arranged to receive for the same farms a rent of Sp\$3750 a month.
- Ibid.* See Ibrahim's letter to Blundell, 17th April, 1856.
- 13 He placed the value of the Johore Farms at Sp\$5000.
- 14 *Ibid.* See Ibrahim's letter to Blundell, 1st December, 1856.
- 15 A.E. Coope, "The Kangchu System in Johore." *J.M.B.R.A.S.* Vol. 14. Pt. III. December, 1936. pp 247-263.
- 16 *Maharajah's Letter Book, 1855-1868*. Letter from Ibrahim to Governor Cavenagh, 4th October, 1859.
- 17 The Temengong issued documents termed "Surat Sungei", giving the Chinese capitalists of Singapore the right to open up the river valleys in Johore, for the cultivation of pepper and gambier.
- 18 *Maharajah's Letter Book, 1855-1868*. Letter from Ibrahim to Blundell, 11th May, 1857.
- 19 Khoo Kay Kim, *Op Cit.* p 16.
- 20 C.D. Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control* (London, 1961) p 10.
- 21 W. Linehan, "A History of Pahang", *J.M.B.R.A.S.* Vol. 14. Pt II, 1936. p 67.
- 22 *Maharajah's Letter Book, 1855-1868*.
Letters from Ibrahim to Blundell, 23rd July, 20th Nov; and 7th Dec; 1857.
- 23 *Ibid.* Letter from Ibrahim to Blundell, 3rd Feb; 1858.
- 24 This Act provided for a punishment of criminals by deportation from the country for not more than fourteen years or by imprisonment with or without hard labour for not more than ten years.
- 25 *Maharajah's Letter Book, 1855-1868*. Letter from Ibrahim to Blundell, 20th February, 1858.
- 26 *Ibid.* See letter from Ibrahim to Blundell, 22nd May, 1858.
- 27 *Ibid.* Letter from Ibrahim to Captain R. MacPherson, Councillor of Singapore, 14th February, 1861.
- 28 *Ibid.* Ibrahim to Cavenagh, 7th December, 1861.
- 29 Cowan, *op cit.* p 16.
- 30 *Maharajah's Letter Book, 1855-1868*. Letter from Abu Bakar to Colonel

- MacPherson, Secretary to Government, S.S., 11th April, 1862.
- 31 *Ibid.* Letter from Abu Bakar to Colonel MacPherson, May, 1862.
- 32 *Ibid.* Letters from Abu Bakar to Colonel MacPherson, August 1862, and to Capt. J. Burns, officiating Secretary to Govt., S.S., 17th June and 7th November, 1863.
- 33 The disputes were finally settled by the Boundary Commission in the settlement of 1898.
- 34 *Maharajah's Letter Book, 1855-1868.* Letter from Abu Bakar to Capt. J. Burns, 20th October, 1864.
- 35 Cowan, *op cit*, p 38.
- 36 For example, a regulation, newly declared, required the exporters of gambier from, and importers of goods into Johore to call at Tanjung Putri to declare their cargoes and get a pass. The Chinese importers and exporters complained that it was inconvenient for them to go to Tanjung Putri. Abu Bakar to avert this inconvenience established stations at Pandas, Cocob, Batu Pahat, Tanjung Surat and Pangenang where passes could be obtained. *Maharajah's Letter Book, 1855-1868.* Letter from Abu Bakar to Colonel MacPherson, 26th Feb, 1866 and enclosed proclamation.
- 37 *Ibid.* Letters from Abdul Rahman, Regent of Johore, to Secretary to Government, S.S., 31st July and 21st September, 1866.
- 38 *Ibid.* Letter from Abu Bakar to Colonel MacPherson, 29th May, 1862.
- 39 *Ibid.* Letters from Abu Bakar to Captain Burns, 20th August and 26th September, 1863.
- 40 *Ibid.* Letter from Abdul Rahman to the Secretary to Government, S.S., 7th May, 1866.
- 41 C0273/15 Despatch from Colonel MacPherson to Secretary of the Government of India, 1866.
- 42 *Maharajah's Letter Book, 1855-1868.* Letter from Abu Bakar to Colonel MacPherson, 7th April, 1865.
- 43 Cowan, *op cit*, p 38.
- 44 *Ibid* p 158.
- 45 *Private Papers of Swettenham*, National Archives, Malaysia. Various Despatches Regarding Selangor, not published in Parliamentary Papers. Letter from Abu Bakar to Governor Ord, 15th Oct, 1872.
- 46 *Ibid.* Letter from Governor Ord to the Earl of Kimberley, 24th Oct, 1872.
- 47 *Ibid.* Letter from Maharajah Abu Bakar to Governor Ord, 15th Oct, 1872.
- 48 *Ibid.* Letter from the Earl of Kimberley to Governor Ord, 2nd September, 1872.
- 49 *Ibid.* Letter from the Earl of Kimberley to Governor Ord, 24th Dec, 1872.
- 50 C.N. Parkinson, *British Intervention in Malaya: 1867-1877* (Singapore, 1960) p 299.
- 51 *Ibid* pp 300-306.

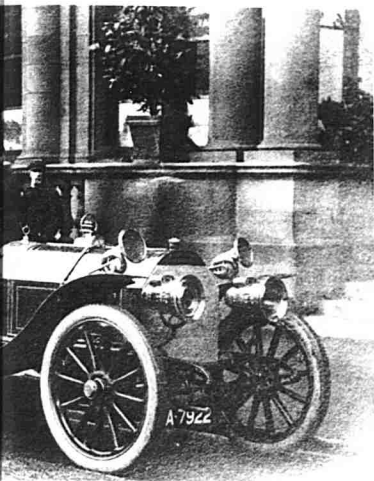
- 52 Cowan, *op cit*, p 245.
- 53 E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula: 1880-1910*. Volume I, Introduction. pp XXIII-XXVI.
- 54 *Ibid*. pp XXVI-XXX.
See also Winstedt, *op cit*, pp. 113-116.
- 55 In the internal administration of Johore, Abu Bakar watched developments in the Protected Malay States and imitated them for Johore, especially in setting up the State Council in 1874 and other departments like the Treasury, police department, land department, etc. *Khoo Kay Kim, op cit*. p 94. Also economic development progressed along established lines i.e. increase in pepper and gambier cultivation and export, *Ibid*. p 92. See also Winstedt, *op cit*. p 117.
- 56 E. Thio, *op cit*. pp XXXI-XXXV.
- 57 *Ibid*.
- 58 It was suspected that the disturbances which broke out in Muar in December, 1879 were instigated from the Straits Settlements. Hostilities also broke out between Rembau and Tampin.
- 59 E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula*. See Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 for detailed discussion of the issues involving British policy during this period.
- 60 In 1883 Abu Bakar set up in Johore Bahru the postal, survey and education departments. He encouraged the cultivation of sale crops and established a brick making industry in the 1880's.
- 61 By the terms of the charter, Abu Bakar promised not to give any other prospective concessionaires similar charters. The Company and its personnel were to enjoy tax exemption. The Charter gave Johannes Mooyer and partners preferential rights to all Government contracts, financial and banking business. Also, if Abu Bakar required money he was to borrow it through the Company. The Company was to hold 100,000 acres for its own plantations.
- 62 Khoo Kay Kim, *op cit*. pp 90-91.
Also Keith Sinclair, "Hobson and Lenin in Johore: Colonial Office policy towards British concessionaires and investors, 1878-1907", *Modern Asian Studies* I, 4(1967) pp 335-352.
- 63 E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula: 1880-1910*, Vol. I, p 101.
- 64 Among the exclusive privileges the Company gained was the right to issue bank notes which were to be legal tender in Johore. The Company's aim was to participate in the various fields of economic activity in the state — contracting for public and private works, money lending to planters, planting, mining, transportation and trade.
Khoo Kay Kim, *op cit*. pp 91-92.
Keith Sinclair, *op cit*, p 339.



Photo of H.H. Sultan Abu Bakar dressed in all his finery to welcome the Duke of Sutherland and other guests to his Istana in Johore in 1888. – Donald Davies, *The Malay Mail*, dated 20/11/1961. *Source: National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.* (page 36)



Photo of H.H. Sultan Ibrahim of Johore in his car which he had rented.
Archives Johore Branch. (page 51)



ly purchased in England at the beginning of 1900. *Source: National*



H.H. Sultan Ibrahim of Johore was a keen racing man in his youth and is shown here with one of his cross-bred Arab racehorses. (c. 1905.) (page 49)

- 65 E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula: 1880-1910*. Vol. 1, pp 102-103.
- 66 Keith Sinclair; *op cit*, p 340.
- 67 *Ibid.* pp 335-352.
- 68 In support of his contention Weld sent a memorandum by Thomas Braddell on the administration of justice in Johore.
- 69 Weld convinced de Robeck that the concessions in Johore were made by Abu Bakar on the advice of Messrs. Rodyk and Davidson.
- 70 According to the rumours Weld heard, French financiers were going to take over and work the concession made to the Malay Peninsula Agency.
- 71 E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula*, pp 101-104.
- 72 *Johore State Secretariat: Official Letter Book, 1885-1893*. Letter from Sultan Abu Bakar to Governor Smith, 23rd February, 1885.
- 73 Smith also mentioned that Sultan Abu Bakar was very interested, especially, in economic development in Johore. This countered Bradell's accusation that Sultan Abu Bakar did not expend the revenue on the economic development of Johore.
- 74 E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula*, p 104.
- 75 He had the title Dato Sri Amar d' Raja. From this point onwards he emerges as the most prominent Malay Adviser to Sultan Abu Bakar and Sultan Ibrahim.
- 76 E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula*, pp 104-106.
- 77 That is, on the pretext of upholding the rights given by one of Sultan Abu Bakar's concession, or even attempting to work one of them.
- 78 *Treaty of December, 1885*. National Archives, Malaysia.
- 79 By this Treaty it was legally settled that the Straits Government was to supply currency to Johore. This prevented confusion in the currency and banking systems which the Colonial staff feared would happen in the event of both territories having different systems.
- 80 *Johore State Secretariat: Official Letter Book, 1885-1893*. Letter from Sultan Abu Bakar to Governor Smith, 29th January, 1885.
- 81 *Ibid.* Letter from Ungku Abdul Majid to Governor Weld, 17th April, 1886.
- 82 *Ibid.* Letter from Ungku Abdul Majid to Governor Weld, 5th June, 1886.
- 83 *Ibid.* Letter from Sultan Abu Bakar to Governor Smith, 4th February, 1889.
- 84 E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay States*, p 114.
- 85 *Johore State Secretariat: Official Letter Book, 1885-1893*. Letter from Sultan Abu Bakar to Governor Weld, 10th March, 1887.
- 86 Later in June, 1892 Governor Smith suggested to Sultan Abu Bakar that he should suppress the Ngi Hin Society and the operation of the Wai Seng Lottery in Johore. Sultan Abu Bakar promised to think about bringing the Wai Seng Lottery under greater control, and refused to suppress the one

Chinese secret society — the Ngi Hin Society — that he recognised in Johore. *Ibid.* Letter from Sultan Abu Bakar to Governor Smith, 23rd June, 1892.

- 87 *Ibid.* Letter from Sultan Abu Bakar to Governor Weld, 5th February, 1887.
- 88 E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula*, pp 110-111.
- 89 Zakaria bin Hj. Mohd Ali, *The Reign of Sultan Abu Bakar, 1862-1895*. (Unpublished B.A. Hons. Thesis, University of Singapore, 1961).
See also E. Thio, "British Policy towards Johore:" p 14.
- 90 *Johore State Secretariat: Official Letter Book, 1885-1893*. Letters dated 16th October, 1887 and 11th August, 1892.
- 91 E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula*, p 114.
- 92 Khoo Kay Kim, *op cit*, p 94.
- 93 *Johore State Secretariat: Official Letter Book, 1885-1893*. Letter, 9th December, 1891.
- 94 *Ibid.* Letter, July, 1890.
- 95 Letters, 22nd June, and 17th September, 1892.
- 96 E. Thio, *British Policy towards Johore*, pp 17-20.
- 97 *Ibid.* See also Keith Sinclair, "The British Advance in Johore", *J.M.B.R.A.S.* Vol XL Pt 1, July, 1967, p 97.

2

Constitutional Rule In Johore

The opening years of Sultan Ibrahim's rule were promising for Johore's future as an independent state. In September, 1895 on his accession to the Johore throne, Sultan Ibrahim faithfully promulgated the Constitution of the State of Johore (*Undang-Undang Tuboh Kerajaan Johore*) which had been drawn up by his father, Sultan Abu Bakar, and his advisers. In the following year, Sultan Ibrahim appointed Johore's representatives to the Boundaries Commission which aimed at defining Johore's boundaries with Pahang, Negri Sembilan and Malacca. These initiatives on the part of Sultan Ibrahim could be interpreted as public expressions of Sultan Ibrahim's intention to protect and preserve Johore as a modern, independent state in the footsteps of his father. Despite the 1885 Agreement the British in 1893 acknowledged Johore's independence in the famous case of *Mighell v Sultan of Johore*.¹ This chapter is devoted to examining how far in the drawing up and working of the Constitution, Sultan Abu Bakar and Sultan Ibrahim retained their independent rule of Johore between 1895 and 1914 in the face of British expansion in the Malay Peninsula.

Sultan Abu Bakar's intention in codifying the Constitution was two-fold. One, he wanted to ensure that the territories and title which his predecessors and he had acquired with conscientious effort and calculation would be passed on to the descendants of the family of the Johore Temenggongs.² Two, he was determined to prevent British take over of Johore either on the basis of cession by the Ruler of Johore, his relatives or prominent officers, or internal maladministration. To achieve both these objectives Sultan Abu Bakar and his advisers found it necessary to incorporate into the Johore Constitution certain major features — in form, if not in the detail workings — of both traditional Malay constitutions and modern British Colonial constitutions. Sultan Abu Bakar formalised in the written Constitution the basic concept of the Malay sultanate which was a feature of traditional Malay states since the Malacca Sultanate. The Council of State which has among others the important

function of legislation seems to have been patterned on the State Councils in the Protected Malay States and the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements. The Council of Ministers, the advisory body in the government, was probably an imitation of the Executive Council of the Straits Settlements. It was Sultan Abu Bakar's hope that a Sultan ruling Johore with the aid of a modern government would keep the British out of Johore by denying them an opportunity to build up a case of maladministration. Also, there would be no grounds for doubts and questions once these institutions were formalised and declared in a written constitution.

The Constitution of the State of Johore first dealt with the question of succession to the Johore throne.⁵ Priority in succession, after the death of Sultan Abu Bakar, was reserved to the male descendants of Sultan Abu Bakar. In the event of his male descendants being disqualified⁴ or becoming extinct in the future, the succession clauses provided that the male descendants of Temenggong Ibrahim should succeed to the throne. If the same circumstances left no male descendants of Ibrahim eligible to ascend the throne, then provision was made for male descendants of Temenggong Abdul Rahman to be eligible to succession on the same conditions. Sultan Abu Bakar did not overlook the extreme possibility of the Temenggong dynasty failing to provide an eligible successor to the throne of Johore. In such an eventuality, the Johore Constitution reserved the right of succession to a Johore Malay elected by the Council of State and the "Supporters of the Country".⁵

It is of significance to note that female descendants of the Temenggongs, and male descendants from female members of the Temenggong families were not constitutionally eligible to succeed to the Johore Sultanate. Also, Sultan Abu Bakar and his advisers did not give the right to ascend to the Johore throne to male descendants of royal families of the other Malay states, whether through marriage or otherwise, in any eventuality. Furthermore, the succession clauses made no reference to the descendants of Sultan Husain of Johore. Sultan Abu Bakar tacitly denied the one time royal family of Johore the right to claim succession to the Johore Sultanate. Thus, Sultan Abu Bakar and his advisers incorporated strict provisions in the Constitution to ensure that the Johore Sultanate remained a preserve of the Temenggong dynasty.

Sultan Abu Bakar took precautions to see that the Johore Ruler was

neither deposed nor overthrown during his absence from the country. He incorporated into the Constitution provisions enabling the Sultan to undertake prolonged overseas trips. Journeys abroad by the sovereign had been a feature unique to the reign of Sultan Abu Bakar. Unlike his predecessors and even contemporary Sultans in the other Malay States, he did not restrict his movements to his state and the Malay Peninsular. His interests in developments in the West and his determination to retain his independent status took him to the West. In fact, Sultan Abu Bakar left for Europe in 1894 after drawing up the Johore Constitution, though it was for health reasons. Article XI of the Constitution provided that if the Sultan's travel and stay abroad exceeded thirty days, a Regency to take over the responsibilities of the Ruler during his absence was to be appointed. The longest period a Sultan was permitted to stay away from his country was five years. However, if illness, business or other circumstances prevented the Sultan from returning to the State, this limitation to the five year period was inapplicable. But if the Sultan stayed abroad without a legitimate reason for more than five years, the Council of State was constitutionally empowered to meet and decide whether to give the Ruler more time for return or to appoint and install his successor as Sultan of Johore. Following the installation of the new Sultan if the old ruler returned, he was to be treated as an ex-Sultan. His return was in no way to affect the position of the new Sultan. These liberal provisions to travel abroad were not made entirely in the cause of political journeys. They also ensured that pleasure trips and recuperating stays abroad did not jeopardise the position of the rulers or their successors within Johore itself.

Securing the position of the dynasty within the State was complemented by provisions to safeguard Johore against external threats. Sultan Abu Bakar and his advisers had witnessed four Malay States in the Peninsula losing their independent status to the British through agreements and treaties. Sultan Abu Bakar himself had resisted such loss of independence in the past decade. Naturally, Sultan Abu Bakar, rightly, assumed that Johore's independence would be threatened by British presence in the Straits Settlements and the Malay Peninsula. Consequently, he incorporated within the Constitution two clauses denying the Sovereign, the ministers and the other "Supporters" of the country the right to cede any part or the whole of Johore to an European power. If the Sovereign either in his desire to retire from ruling the country or to obtain

any payment or pension from a foreign nation cedes Johore, the people of the country were no longer obliged to show loyalty to him. If a relative of the Ruler, a minister or a "Supporter" of the country attempts to cede Johore, he could be charged and punished for high treason.⁶ It was a judicious move on the part of Sultan Abu Bakar to make these restrictive provisions but it had yet to be seen how effective it was in achieving Sultan Abu Bakar's aim in the face of changing British policies in the Malay Peninsula.

This was one of the two instances in the Constitution where a restriction was imposed on the powers of the Sultan. Another sphere where the Constitution limited the power of the Johore Ruler was that of the sovereign's allowance. According to the Constitution the Sultan's allowance for expenses regarding the royal residences and personal maintenance was to be fixed by the Council of State. It had the power to revise the allowance of the Sultan periodically to make it adequate and befitting the position and dignity of the Sultan.⁷ The Constitution prohibited the Sultan from taking or appropriating to himself anything more than provided by the Council of State. A very wise provision by Sultan Abu Bakar to forestall future British claims of maladministration on the basis of the Johore Ruler treating the revenues of Johore as his personal income — a contention made by Thomas Braddell in 1884 in his memorandum on the administration of justice in Johore.⁸ However, Sultan Abu Bakar was constitutionally exempted from this clause. It was specifically stated to apply to successors of Sultan Abu Bakar.

Other than these two specific and explicit instances of restriction, the powers of the Sultan of Johore were neither defined nor limited in the Constitution. Unlike most constitutions, the Johore Constitution of 1895 failed to define the extent of the ruler's powers, the checks on his powers and his obligations to the State and his people. It is doubtful that Sultan Abu Bakar was ignorant of these aspects of a constitution. It would be more in line with the Sultan's character to surmise that he wanted the Sultan of Johore to enjoy unlimited and autocratic powers in the internal affairs of Johore. But, Sultan Abu Bakar did not explicitly repose autocratic and absolute powers in the Sultan through the Constitution. It is implicit in the fact that no provisions were made to limit or check the Sultan's powers. However, Sultan Abu Bakar sought to camouflage this by incorporating into the Constitution provisions for separate executive and legislative institutions to assist the Sultan in the ad-

ministration of Johore. Though the Sultan had unlimited powers, the Constitution provided for a government which seemed far from being autocratic in nature. In reality Sultan Abu Bakar ensured that the Sultan retained absolute power within the state. The government provided by the Constitution was a facade for the benefit of his British neighbours.

An administrative and advisory body provided for by the Constitution was the Council of Ministers. It was to consist of a minimum of eight members and a maximum of twelve members. The Ministers (Mentri-Mentri) were to be chosen from among the principal officers of the State by the Sultan. They should be ex-officio members of the Council of State. To be eligible for selection they had to be of Malay race, Johore subjects and of the Mohammedan religion. The chief of the Ministers was the Prime Minister (Mentri Besar) who was also President of the Council. The selection and appointment of the Mentri Besar was the prerogative of the Sultan. The right to choose and appoint the Deputy Prime Minister rested with the Council members. However, to make this selection and appointment legal the approval of the Sultan was necessary. The power to dismiss the Ministers from their office and the Council rested in the hands of the Sultan. The Council members also could request of the Sultan the dismissal of one of the members from office and Council. The specific function of the Council of Ministers was to assist the Sultan in the administration of Johore. The Ministers were also to advise the Sultan on all matters affecting the interests of the country and the people. Though the Sultan, it was stated, would find it "expedient, necessary and advantageous to take their counsel",⁹ the Constitution did not make it obligatory for him to do so. Further, the Ministers were expected to consult each other in the running of their respective departments of administration. But the ultimate responsibility for each department resided in the Head of Department.¹⁰

The next institution of government outlined in the Constitution was the Council of State. It was to comprise of a minimum of sixteen members. The maximum number of members was unspecified. The members were to be appointed by the Ruler with the advice of the Council of Ministers. Members were to be selected from among the Ministers, principal officers and elders of the State. However, the members of the State Council were not required to be all of the Mohammedan religion, or Malay nationality though they had to be Johore subjects. The State Council had legislative and advisory functions. As a legislative body it

was to assist the Sultan and the Council of Ministers in the administration of Johore by "making, creating, revising, enlarging, or amending laws and regulations of every description",¹¹ except religion and Moslem law. The approval and sanction of the Sultan was necessary to bring them into operation. The State Council was to give advice on internal security and relations with foreign nations. In addition, it was given the task of presenting schemes and projects for improving state revenue and development of trade. Another of its duties was to propose means to promote public works and provide better living conditions for the people of Johore.¹²

The burden of promulgating and implementing Sultan Abu Bakar's Constitution fell on the shoulders of Sultan Ibrahim and his officers. The succession to the Johore throne of Sultan Ibrahim on the death of Sultan Abu Bakar in June 1893 was in accordance to the provision of the succession clauses in the Constitution. Sultan Ibrahim who had been the Tengku Mahkota Johore (Crown Prince) since May, 1891 was proclaimed Sultan of Johore in September, 1895. Though Sultan Abu Bakar had constitutionally ensured the Johore throne for his son, he failed to prepare Ibrahim through education, training or experience for his future role as Sultan of Johore.

Ibrahim was born in Singapore. Until about the age of fifteen Ibrahim was at school receiving most probably a Malay education. There is no evidence that he was educated in English or was taught English. In accordance with Sultan Abu Bakar's wish, Ibrahim joined the Johore Military Forces as a soldier. After some training he was made Second Lieutenant in the Johore Military Forces and also his father's aide-de-camp. Following this, in 1890 Ibrahim made his first journey abroad to join his father in Switzerland. Sultan Abu Bakar introduced his son to the royal families of Germany, France, and England. In the following year he was proclaimed Crown Prince and simultaneously promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in the Johore Military Forces. He acted as regent during his father's absence, and attended to routine matters.¹³ Barely educated, with little military training, limited overseas travel and with minimum exposure to routine administrative matters, Ibrahim was ill-prepared to be a suitable successor to Sultan Abu Bakar.¹⁴

As the future ruler of a state which had for its neighbours the British in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, there is little evidence to show that Ibrahim was exposed to British official pressure

which was exerted on the government of Johore, or even to the economic presence of the Europeans within Johore during the period from 1880 to 1895. Socially — in friendly polo matches and other sports, and visits to Singapore — Ibrahim related with the British. But, he had little experience on how to cope with British officials in diplomacy, and European officials in his administrative service. Other than introducing him to European royalty and Western tastes, Sultan Abu Bakar had not given his son the necessary training and experience to cope with them in the political and administrative fields. Likewise, evidence is lacking that Ibrahim was familiar with his father's administrative system, procedures and policies. It is doubtful that Sultan Abu Bakar trained the heir-apparent to carry out his policies and practices aimed at preserving the independent status of Johore. However, one could reasonably state that Sultan Abu Bakar deliberately kept Ibrahim out, without participating and thus not acquiring the art of running the affairs of state. This applied to others on the line eligible for succession to the Johore throne and the members of the Sultan's family.¹⁵ Instead of moulding his son into a responsible and efficient future ruler, Sultan Abu Bakar directed his son's interests and energies into other futile activities.

At the impressionable ages of sixteen and seventeen years Sultan Abu Bakar introduced Ibrahim to the Johore Military Forces. Ibrahim was to show considerable interest in the Johore Military Forces during the rest of his reign. Similarly, sophisticated, expensive and time-consuming sports of the West like game hunting, horse-racing, riding, playing polo and other games captured his fancy during his reign as Sultan of Johore. Racing his horses took him to Calcutta, Ceylon and Australia. His first journey to Europe at the age of seventeen gave him a taste for travelling to Europe, Australia and other countries of the world.¹⁶ Travelling during his reign not only took him away from his duties of state but also drained Johore's revenues in unprofitable expenditure.

However, fortunately for Johore and Sultan Ibrahim, Sultan Abu Bakar left behind experienced advisers in Abdul Rahman bin Andak, the members of the Advisory Board, and the legal advisers belonging to the firm, Rodyk and Davidson. Sultan Ibrahim, due to his ignorance and inexperience, relied heavily on them during the initial years of his reign to conduct relations with the British at the official and unofficial levels. With their assistance Sultan Ibrahim maintained the independence of Johore. Once deprived of them, he made the wrong moves and his poor

diplomacy did not rescue him from these mistakes where the British were concerned. Thus he weakened his position and rapidly succumbed to British control due to serious lapses in constitutional rule and maladministration within Johore. Alone, he was unable to maintain the facade of constitutional and efficient rule in Johore to deny the British an apparent reason to extend their control to Johore.¹⁷

When Sultan Ibrahim proclaimed the Constitution on his accession to the Johore throne, it was essentially for the information of the Johore subjects. At this time Sultan Ibrahim had neither his father's diplomatic astuteness nor his obsession with impressing the British with efficient administration with the ultimate motive of thus keeping the British out of Johore. So, naturally, Sultan Ibrahim did not take steps to see that the Straits Government and the Colonial Office received copies of the Constitution to make them aware of Johore's progress towards constitutional rule on modern, western lines.¹⁸ However, this failure proved to be advantageous to Sultan Ibrahim later in 1898 when he was accused of unconstitutional rule.

In May, 1898 Tungku Mohammed Khalid, an uncle of Sultan Ibrahim and a member of the State Council, complained to Mr. J.A. Swettenham, the Acting Governor of the Straits Settlements, that Sultan Ibrahim had failed to strictly observe certain articles of the Constitution. Among these complaints of lapses in constitutional rule, the most serious were the forcible assumption of control of the Treasury from the *Mentri Besar* in July, 1897 and failure to pay allowances to members of the royal family.¹⁹ Tungku Khalid's accusation suggested that Sultan Ibrahim took control of the Treasury not only to effect savings in the empty Treasury but also to appropriate money for his personal use. Tungku Khalid stated that these actions of Sultan Ibrahim violated Articles XXV and XXVI of the Constitution.²⁰

Officially, Sultan Ibrahim declared that he had to assume control of the Johore treasury as it had failed to finance the development of the state. Furthermore, he expressed his dissatisfaction with the position of the state debts, concessions and "wakaf" (religious foundations). Sultan Ibrahim attempted to tackle these issues. He convened his officials and explored ways to reduce the state debts and improve the financial position of Johore. Next, Sultan Ibrahim appointed a special committee to look into the issues of concessions and "wakaf".²¹ Swettenham reported Tungku Khalid's accusations to J. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary.

He was supportive of Sultan Ibrahim's efforts to improve the financial position of Johore. Swettenham advised the Colonial Secretary to give the Sultan time to achieve his objective. He was confident that Sultan Ibrahim would approach the British for assistance if his attempts failed to produce results.²²

When this issue is viewed in the light of certain subsequent developments, it is not possible to accept either the official reason or J. A. Swettenham's interpretation, for ignoring Tungku Khalid's complaints of unconstitutional rule, without suspecting Sultan Ibrahim's motive for taking control of the Treasury. On 16th September, 1903, Frank Swettenham, the High Commissioner to the F.M.S. visited Johore Bahru to inspect the administrative departments of Johore with the view of submitting a report to the Colonial Secretary. Though he was taken to see how various state departments functioned, his request to visit the Treasury was warded off by Sultan Ibrahim who fabricated some unconvincing excuses and kept Swettenham away from the Treasury. It is obvious that Sultan Ibrahim did not want an inspection of a department which had come under his control. Probably, he had not carried out the administrative and financial reforms which he had claimed were the reasons for his take-over of the Treasury.²³ Also, Sultan Ibrahim did not relinquish control of the Treasury until 1910 when the General Adviser was placed in charge of Treasury administration.²⁴ In 1913, Mr. D.G. Campbell, the General Adviser to Johore, claimed that when he took over the Treasury in 1910, it was on the verge of bankruptcy. In the same year Mr. Campbell complained to the High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Young, that Sultan Ibrahim prevented the employment of sufficient officers to open up Johore with the aim of creating large Treasury balances for personal use.²⁵ When these facts are considered in conjunction with Sultan Ibrahim's constant overseas trips during which he insisted on a special overseas allowance of \$40,000 a month,²⁶ and his expensive purchases of the finest horses and automobiles²⁷ during the period between 1898 and 1910, they subscribe to the fact that Sultan Ibrahim may have taken control of the Treasury with the motive of creating balances in the empty Treasury for future personal use.

Though Sultan Ibrahim had accepted the position of a constitutional monarch in 1895, in 1897 he took the first step in the direction of unconstitutional and autocratic rule. At this juncture he seems to have made no attempt to maintain a facade of constitutional rule even for the ben-

efit of the British. However, several factors combined to let this lapse in constitutional rule on the part of Sultan Ibrahim pass unexploited by the British to make their entry into Johore. First, the British in the Straits Settlements and the Colonial Office were unaware of the existence of the Johore Constitution until 1898 when Tungku Khalid submitted a copy at the request of Mr. J.A. Swettenham. Second, the main British personalities involved at the local level in this issue were not ardent advocates of British expansion into Johore. When Tungku Khalid made his complaints and requested the British Government "to interfere and put matters right," Mr. J.A. Swettenham reminded him that by Article X of the Treaty of 2nd August, 1824 the British Government had bound itself not to interfere in the internal affairs of Johore. Furthermore, when he reported the issue to the Colonial Secretary he soft-pedalled the problem and finally advocated to him that time should be given to the Sultan to solve the financial problem or approach them for assistance.²⁸ Mr. J.A. Swettenham did not present this issue as a case for British intervention in Johore. Likewise, Governor Sir Charles Mitchell who was on holiday in England when consulted on the issue viewed Tungku Khalid's complaints as personal grievances and therefore made no case for intervention. In fact he was of the opinion that the Constitution was not morally binding on Sultan Ibrahim.²⁹ The Colonial staff which was guided by the men on the scene³⁰ to formulate policy and make decisions — the Governor and the Acting Governor — ignored Tungku Khalid's accusations of unconstitutional rule in Johore.

Partial explanation for this cool British attitude was also found in British policy towards Johore as had been decided upon by the Colonial Office as recently as 1896. A request by Sir Robert Herbert in 1896 to approve a loan by the Singapore Government to Johore had led to British hopes of bringing Johore into the Federation. However, Sir Robert Herbert had enlightened Mr. Charles P. Lucas, a clerk in charge of the Eastern Desk at the Colonial Office, that Johore would not enter the Federation on any terms. The Colonial Office then felt that it should not apply pressure on the Sultan at this time. The British Government had only recently assured Abdul Rahman that the relationship between Britain and Johore would be governed by existing treaties between them. Also, the fact that Sir Robert Herbert was Chairman of the Johore Advisory Board gave them the confidence that Sultan Ibrahim would be wisely guided. As there was no change in British policy towards Johore since

1896, *Tungku Khalid's* accusations passed without much attention.³¹ Thus, *Sultan Ibrahim's* rash move which openly violated certain important articles of the Constitution was not considered as a case for intervention in Johore due to the lack of enthusiasm in the Governor and the Acting Governor to exploit the opportunity. Also, the Colonial staff had respect and confidence in the private advisers of *Sultan Ibrahim* and did not consider it necessary to bring Johore under direct control to influence its internal affairs.

The private advisers of *Sultan Ibrahim* — *Abdul Rahman*, the members of the Advisory Board, *Mr. C.B. Buckley* and the legal firm, *Messrs. Rodyk and Davidson* — weakened and to some extent nullified the position of the constitutionally provided advisory bodies, the Council of Ministers and the Council of State, in the development of Johore. During the initial years of his reign, *Sultan Ibrahim* relied heavily on the advice and guidance of *Abdul Rahman* in the administration of Johore affairs. *Abdul Rahman* had been, since 1885, the private secretary of *Sultan Abu Bakar* who had conferred on him the title of *Dato Amar d'Raja*. He was appointed Secretary to the Johore Government in 1893.³² Having been the trusted adviser of *Sultan Abu Bakar* during the last few years of his reign, *Abdul Rahman* became and remained a trusted adviser of *Sultan Ibrahim* until 1907. He was the Vice-President of the Council of State. In December, 1896 *Sultan Ibrahim* appointed him one of the two representatives of Johore to the Boundary Commission. In the official negotiations with the British Government and the private negotiations with the English financiers in London for a loan to construct the Johore State Railway *Abdul Rahman* played a crucial role. He also had a hand in the large concession which *Sultan Ibrahim* made to English concessionaires.³³ At home in Johore, he advised *Sultan Ibrahim* and sometimes dealt on his behalf with important economic questions like the leasing of the Johore opium and spirit farms. Other than being trusted adviser to *Sultan Ibrahim* he was an ardent advocate of preserving Johore's independent status.

Another source of private advice designed to serve the interest of Johore was the Johore Advisory Board. This body was set up in London in 1883 by *Sultan Abu Bakar*. He chose as its members men who had been his friends in the Colonial Office and had retired from its service. Both *Sir Robert Herbert*, the Chairman of the Board, and *Sir Cecil Smith*, the Vice-Chairman, during the reign of *Sultan Ibrahim* were retired mem-

bers of the Colonial Office. Though set up by Sultan Abu Bakar, the Board was not made a constitutional body by the Constitution. In fact, no mention was made of it in the Constitution. Sultan Abu Bakar set it up to advise him on matters involving Johore's relations with the British Government in London and private English entrepreneurs, financiers and those interested in Johore.

During Sultan Ibrahim's reign the members of the Advisory Board — especially Sir Robert Herbert — played a triple role. First and foremost as the name signified they were advisors to the Sultan of Johore. Simultaneously, they acted as representatives of the Johore Sultan in London. Finally, they served as intermediaries between Sultan Ibrahim and the Colonial Office. In 1896 Sultan Ibrahim appointed Sir Robert Herbert as the other representative of Johore to the Boundary Commission. The Board played a significant role in the negotiations with the British Government and private financiers to secure a loan and the personnel for the construction of the Johore State Railway. In 1905 Sultan Ibrahim's displeasure with its handling of a private concession led to the unanimous resignation of the members. Sultan Ibrahim reduced its members to two — Abdul Rahman being one of them. The Colonial staff grasped the opportunity to press for the abolition of the Board. Despite British refusal to give it recognition Sultan Ibrahim retained it until 1907³⁴ when he officially abolished it. During the period between 1895 and 1905 the Advisory Board was a serious contender as advisor to Sultan Ibrahim on significant developments like railway construction and the granting of large concessions of land for rubber cultivation within Johore.

An important trusted friend and personal adviser of Sultan Ibrahim was Mr. C.B. Buckley. He was a lawyer who later became a partner of Rodyk and Davidson, Advocates and Solicitors. They were the legal advisers to the Johore Government. Sultan Ibrahim made Mr. Buckley an honorary member of the Johore State Council in 1899.³⁵ He was invited to attend the weekly State Council meetings when important economic questions like the leasing of the opium and spirit farms of Johore were discussed.³⁶ Five years later in 1904 Sultan Ibrahim made Mr. Buckley Financial Adviser and General Adviser to the Johore Government. Until 1909 when Sir John Anderson brought about his removal to make way for Mr. D.G. Campbell, the British appointed General Adviser to Johore, Mr. Buckley was an important source of advice for Sul-

tan Ibrahim on economic and other administrative issues within Johore.

In the Constitution of Johore the Council of State had been assigned the responsibility of drawing up schemes and projects for the economic development of Johore. It should have played a bigger role as advisor to the Sultan. But, in reality, in issues of national interest and involving the British as in the settling of the boundary dispute and the negotiations for the construction of the Johore State Railway, its role was minimal. Though Sultan Ibrahim requested the views of the State Council on Frank Swettenham's proposals for railway construction in Johore, he ignored its recommendation that the offer should be accepted. He informed the Council the next day that the decision would be left to Sir Robert Herbert and Sir Cecil Smith.³⁷ Likewise, on the question of the opening up of the country to economic development, the State Council had a serious competitor. Messrs. Rodyk and Davidson were in charge of the Johore Land Department.³⁸ This meant that the grant of land for gutta percha collection, gambier and pepper cultivation, rubber planting, and tin mining within Johore at the turn of the nineteenth century was in the hands of a legal firm in Singapore. Constitutionally, the State Council should have had a great say in the matter. However, the Sultan acted on the advice of his legal firm instead of being guided by his State Council members or even the Minister in charge of internal affairs (Dato Bintara Dalam). Sultan Ibrahim took a personal interest in land alienation. He specified to Messrs. Rodyk and Davidson the area of land and the terms on which a concession was to be granted. On the other hand, he relied on their advice and recommendation in making grants to concessionaires.

Though Sultan Ibrahim did not turn to his Ministers and State Council members for advice on important projects and plans for Johore, he did not hesitate to use them when it served his purpose. In February 1904 the Colonial Office requested Sultan Ibrahim's presence in London to conclude negotiations for the construction of the Johore State Railway by signing the Railway Convention.³⁹ The Sultan who had left Johore in early January 1904 for Europe, primarily to settle the railway question, stopped at Paris instead of proceeding directly to London. The Colonial Office requested Sultan Ibrahim to be present in London to sign the Convention. The Sultan informed the Colonial Office through the Advisory Board that they would have to wait until the arrival of three of the members of the State Council in April 1904. He had instructed them to come to London so that, he claimed, he could get their

advice and co-operation before taking a step which involved the economic development of Johore and Johore's relations with the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States.⁴⁰ At this advanced and concluding stage of the negotiations, the Sultan's desire to have their advice conveyed the impression that he was trying to stall rather than attempting to make the decision constitutional.

The Colonial staff wanted the Convention signed before the new High Commissioner, Sir John Anderson, sailed out to Singapore. They refused to delay the signing of the Convention. They arranged an interview for Sultan Ibrahim with the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, and requested the Sultan to be present at the interview. At this meeting on 11th March 1904 the Sultan, obviously under pressure, agreed to sign the Convention soon after the arrival of his Council members.⁴¹ Sultan Ibrahim made the important decision before he had been advised by the members. Their journey failed to achieve the apparent purpose of advising the Sultan and his intention to delay the signing of the Railway Convention. Following their arrival they attended the Johore Advisory Board meetings which were held to discuss and make amendments in the Convention. The demands were largely made by Abdul Rahman⁴² and the members of the Johore Advisory Board rather than the Council members. However, before their departure they witnessed the formal ceremony of signing the Railway Convention on 11th July, 1904.

In the following year Sultan Ibrahim once again resorted to using the State Council. This time he used it to camouflage his decision to disperse with the services of the members of the Johore Advisory Board in London. Dissatisfied with the manner in which the Advisory Board had handled the concession which had been made to a group of financiers forming the Johore State Corporation,⁴³ Sultan Ibrahim in conjunction with Abdul Rahman planned to bring about their removal. In October, 1905 Abdul Rahman informed the Advisory Board that the State Council had decided to reduce the size of the Board and its establishments in order to cut down expenses.⁴⁴ The members of the Board realised the implication of the letter which only asked their advice on the course of actions to be taken. On 20th October, 1905 the members unanimously resigned.⁴⁵

Another aspect of the Constitution which Sultan Ibrahim exploited was the provision for travel abroad and absence from Johore. State affairs took him to England, largely. He travelled to Europe for pleasure.



Photo of Dato' Abdul Rahman bin Andak – Dato Sri Amar Diraja Johor.
Source: National Archives Johore Branch. (page 53)



Photo of H.H. Sultan Ibrahim of Johore on a visit to England in 1900.
Source: *National Archives Johore Branch*. (page 54)



standing on the right with members of the Johore Advisory Board.



Photo of Dewan Istana Besar Johor Bahru 1890. Reproduced from the original in an album belonging to Mrs. Nixon of KL. *Source: National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.* (page 34)

Between April 1901 and June 1902 Sultan Ibrahim was in England not only to negotiate with the British Government for a railway loan but also to look around for private English financiers who would undertake to finance and construct the railway in Johore. Again between January 1904 and April 1905 Sultan Ibrahim was in Europe. It was during this visit that negotiations with the British for the Johore State Railway loan and construction were finalised and the Railway Convention signed. In 1906 Sultan Ibrahim was in London granting large concessions of land to English capitalists and financiers to open up and develop the country.⁴⁶ Pleasure was part and parcel of these business trips abroad. His interest in horse racing took him to Calcutta, Ceylon and Australia as early as 1899.⁴⁷ In March 1903 Sultan Ibrahim sailed to Australia on a holiday to escape the embarrassment in yielding to Frank Swettenham over the railway issue, and letting down his private financier friends in London. Travelling in Europe was also a means Sultan Ibrahim used to escape from being pinned down to keep his word as in the signing of the Railway Convention. Likewise in 1906 Sultan Ibrahim was reluctant to return from Europe⁴⁸ to uphold his promise of responsible administration in Johore along British lines as advised by the High Commissioner.⁴⁹

Expensive and lavish pleasure trips abroad not only resulted in squandering state revenue but also took Sultan Ibrahim away from the responsibilities of state. The Sultan's absence from Johore especially during the period from July 1905 to July 1906 was exploited by Sir John Anderson to British advantage. During this period when both Sultan Ibrahim and Abdul Rahman were absent from Johore, Anderson succeeded in establishing a rapport with Dato Jaafar, the Mentri Besar, and Dato Mohamed, the Assistant State Secretary, and through them with the State Council. In an interview which Anderson had arranged with Dato Jaafar and Dato Mohamed on 20th February 1906, he learnt that Sultan Ibrahim demanded a special allowance of \$40,000 per month for himself while he was abroad. The State Council had voted and paid him this special allowance till the end of 1905. But for the year of 1906 they had voted the usual \$20,000 per month for the Sultan and for the maintenance of the Istana (palace). Anderson advised them to stand firm in their decision.⁵⁰

During the twelve months Sultan Ibrahim was out of Johore, the State Council on the advice of Anderson made grants of land to local applicants on terms similar to those of the Federated Malay States. On 2nd

March 1906 when Anderson came to know for sure that Sultan Ibrahim had made large concessions to Sir Frank Swettenham, Gow, Wilson & Co., and Guthrie & Co., he influenced the State Council members to send a telegram to the Sultan protesting against his failure to consult them before making such grants. At this point Anderson wrote to the Colonial Office suggesting the appointment of a British Resident. He proposed that this Resident should have the right to be a member of the Johore State Council. One factor which precipitated this action by Anderson was the large land concessions which Sultan Ibrahim was negotiating in London. Another reason for the above proposal was Anderson's desire to strengthen the position of the members of the Council of State vis-a-vis the Sultan when he returned from abroad.⁵¹ Though the Earl of Elgin, the Colonial Secretary, shelved the suggestion, he placed Sultan Ibrahim under the control of the High Commissioner. The Sultan had to consult and listen to the advice of the High Commissioner on the granting of concessions within Johore. Also, Sultan Ibrahim had to get the permission of the High Commissioner and the Secretary of State before leaving his country. Elgin threatened a change in the constitution of Johore for the administration of the country if Sultan Ibrahim failed to toe the line.⁵²

It was after this interview with Elgin that Sultan Ibrahim returned to rule his state constitutionally and along British lines with the advice of the High Commissioner. Deprived of all his private advisers except Mr. Buckley, Sultan Ibrahim paid more attention to the advice of the State Council which had the backing of Sir John Anderson. The State Council came to be increasingly guided by Anderson on its course of action on important matters of state, for example, the granting of concessions within Johore. In September 1906 the State Council passed new regulations for grant of land. These were based on the regulations of the Federated Malay States and had the approval of Anderson.⁵³ Sultan Ibrahim was helpless in the face of such an alliance without his private advisers — with Mr. Buckley also very much influenced by the High Commissioner.⁵⁴ Indicative of the changed situation and position of Sultan Ibrahim within Johore was his decision in January 1907 to revoke his large concession of 25,000 acres (made in 1905) to Mr. A.J. Barry, Consulting Engineer to the Johore Government. He told Mr. Barry that he did not have the power to grant such concessions of land without consulting the State Council. Now, Sultan Ibrahim wanted Mr. Barry to

apply and receive a land concession in Johore in accordance with the new regulations of 16th September, 1906.⁵⁵ On a hint from Anderson, Sultan Ibrahim reduced his allowance from \$20,000 to \$10,000 per month in 1910.⁵⁶

It was also on the suggestion and initiative of Anderson that Sultan Ibrahim accepted in 1909 a General Adviser for Johore. Deprived of his private advisers and imposed with a seconded British officer as General Adviser, Sultan Ibrahim found it necessary not only to listen to the General Adviser's counsel but also to rule his state constitutionally. Within two years of the General Adviser's appointment, Sultan Ibrahim found his control over the administrative system slipping into the hands of the General Adviser and other seconded British officers below him. Now Sultan Ibrahim, his Ministers, State Council members and administrative officers came to work closely in a combined effort to retain control of the Johore administrative system.⁵⁷

In 1910 Sultan Ibrahim had relinquished control of the Johore Treasury to Mr. D.G. Campbell, the General and Financial Adviser to Johore. In 1913, the Treasury had substantial balances. Sultan Ibrahim now wished to increase his allowance which had been reduced earlier. The only avenue of action open to him was the procedure outlined in the State Constitution. Sultan Ibrahim got the State Council to vote the increase of his allowance to \$20,000 a month as a birthday gift to him.⁵⁸ The State Council did this in the absence of the General Adviser who was in Muar. Neither the General Adviser nor the High Commissioner acquiesced in this increase.⁵⁹ With Colonial Office approval Sir Arthur Young requested Sultan Ibrahim to reduce his allowance to \$10,000.⁶⁰ Instead of acceding to the request, Sultan Ibrahim sent another resolution of the State Council upholding the increase in allowance which they had voted and declaring that their decision was voluntary.⁶¹ Neither the General Adviser nor the High Commissioner were taken in by this constitutional posture. In conjunction with this issue and other developments they convinced the Colonial Secretary that Sultan Ibrahim neither listened to the advice of the High Commissioner nor undertook to improve the administration of Johore. Convinced, the Colonial Secretary, Louis Harcourt, instructed the High Commissioner to sign a treaty with Sultan Ibrahim enlarging the powers of the General Adviser to those of a Resident.⁶²

Sultan Abu Bakar had deliberately designed the Johore Constitution

of 1895 to project an image of constitutional and efficient rule to the British while it camouflaged the autocratic rule of the Sultan of Johore. Sultan Abu Bakar had provided his son with the tools — in the Constitution and the private advisers — to be utilised to maintain the Sultan's independent and autocratic position in Johore affairs. But, he failed to give Sultan Ibrahim the necessary political education and experience to utilise their services to his political advantage. This failure proved to be crucial. Sultan Ibrahim displayed neither wisdom nor finesse in the administration of his state and his relationship with his British neighbours. During the first decade of his rule, Sultan Ibrahim made no effort to rule constitutionally or even maintain the facade of constitutional role. He openly violated important articles which restricted his freedom of action and imposed obligations on him as Ruler of Johore. He either failed to consult or ignored the advice of the constitutional, advisory bodies. However, when it suited his interest he did not hesitate to use them. Likewise, he exploited constitutional provisions which served his personal interests and pleasures. Instead of impressing the British with efficient, constitutional rule, he made apparent his unconstitutional and autocratic rule.

In these circumstances Anderson succeeded in establishing a rapport with the top officials of the Johore Government. Working through them and with the support of the Colonial Office, he brought Sultan Ibrahim under his control. Deprived of most of his private advisers, and personally warned by Secretary Elgin, Sultan Ibrahim temporarily ruled constitutionally and along lines advised by the High Commissioner. Following the appointment of the General Adviser and other seconded, British officers to Johore, both the Sultan and his Malay officers realised that control was slipping from their hands. Sultan Ibrahim's belated efforts to work in close co-operation with his officials and to camouflage his actions with an aura of constitutionality failed to impress the British. His unconstitutional rule in conjunction with other issues provided the British with the necessary "case" for extension of British control to Johore.

NOTES

- 1 Keith Sinclair, "Hobson and Lenin in Johore: Colonial Office policy towards British concessionaires and investors, 1878-1907", *Modern Asian Studies*, I, 4, 1967, pp 337-338.
- 2 That is to the descendants of Temenggongs Abdul Rahman, and Ibrahim, and Sultan Abu Bakar himself.
- 3 Article II to V. *The Constitution of the State of Johore*. Johore Archives, Johore Bahru.
- 4 *Ibid*. A male descendant of the Rulers of Johore can be disqualified on the basis of "insanity, blindness, dumbness or possessing some base qualities on account of which he would not be permitted by the Mohammedan law to become a Sovereign Ruler". Article III.
- 5 *Ibid*. The "Supporters of the Country" are defined as members of the two ranks, Ministers and Elders who are members of the State Council, and those persons who are qualified to vote, and "have the right to speech in the business of choosing, electing, and appointing the Sovereign, and in all matters of importance requiring the opinion and consideration of the public or the inhabitants of the country". Definition of Words. Part (Ha).
- 6 *Ibid*. Article XV.
- 7 *Ibid*. However, when fixing the allowance no account was to be taken of the income the Sovereign derived from his own personal properties and estates. Article XXV.
- 8 E. Thio. *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula*, p 101.
- 9 *Ibid*. Article XLII.
- 10 *Ibid*. Articles XXVIII — XLII.
- 11 *Ibid*. Article XLIX.
- 12 *Ibid*. Articles XLX — LVI.
- 13 *A Souvenir Commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of His Highness the Sultan of Johore, 1895-1955*, pp 14 and 18.
- 14 E. Thio also feels that Ibrahim spent more time in sports than in training for his role as Sultan. See E. Thio, "British Policy towards Johore: from advice to control". *JMBRAS* Vol XL Pt I, 1967, p 20.
- 15 In Article VIII of the Constitution of 1895 it is provided that "the 'heir-apparent' shall have no right whatever to take part in matters relating to the Government or the State unless it be by command of the Sovereign which shall be officially intimated to the Council of Ministers. The same restrictions apply to the 'heir-presumptive' and other members of the Sultan's family".
- 16 *A souvenir Commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of His Highness the Sultan Of Johore, 1895-1955*, pp 14-38.

- 17 These points are later developed in Chapters Four and Five of this book.
- 18 The Straits Govt. and the Colonial Office came to possess a copy of the Constitution in June, 1898. Tungku Mohamed Khalid sent the Straits Government a copy of it when requested. C0273/240. Confidential Despatch, J.A. Swettenham to J. Chamberlain, 7 June, 1898.
- 19 Another complaint by Tungku Khalid was that Sultan Ibrahim interfered in his private property at Tanjong Romania. C0273/240. Enclosure I in Confidential Despatch, J.A. Swettenham to J. Chamberlain, 7 June, 1898.
- 20 Article XXVI gave the Ruler of Johore with the advice and concurrence of the State Council the right to fix the allowance of his relatives, and stated who had the right to such allowance. But, it does not state that he had the right to stop these allowances.
- 21 *A Souvenir Commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of His Highness the Sultan Of Johore*, 1895-1955, pp 18.
- 22 C0273/240. Confidential Despatch, J.A. Swettenham to J. Chamberlain, 7 June, 1898.
- 23 C0273/240. Confidential Despatch, Frank Swettenham to Joseph Chamberlain, 19 October, 1903.
- 24 *Correspondence Re — the Appointment of the General Adviser*. Despatch, Sir John Anderson to Sultan Ibrahim, 4 February, 1910.
- 25 C0273/397. See Enclosure 2 in Confidential Despatch, Sir Arthur Young to Louis Harcourt, 14 October, 1913.
- 26 C0273/320. Confidential Despatch, Sir John Anderson to the Earl of Elgin, 20 February, 1906.
- 27 See reports on the Sultan's purchases of cars like the 16 h.p. Panhard and 160 h.p. Mercedes and also his horse racing in Singapore and overseas, *Malay Mail* issues 20th May, 1901, 15th May, 1902, 30th May, 1902, 28th September, 1904, 14th April, 1906 and others.
- 28 C0273/240. Confidential Despatch, J.A. Swettenham to J. Chamberlain, 9 June, 1898.
- 29 C0273/249. Letter, Robert Herbert to C.P. Lucas, 12 August, 1898.
- 30 E. Thio argues that the role of the local officials in the formulation of policy cannot be underestimated — especially that of the Governor. See Introduction in E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1910*, Vol. I.
- 31 E. Thio, *British Policy Towards Johore*, p 21.
- 32 *Ibid.* p 18.
- 33 See Chapters 3 and 4 of this book.
- 34 See also Chapters 3 and 4 for detailed discussion.
- 35 E. Thio, *British Policy Towards Johore*, p 33. See footnote 102.
- 36 *Johore State Secretariat Official Letter Book (1900-1902)*. Letter from Ibrahim b. Abdullah, Dato Bintara Dalam, to C.B. Buckley, 4 August,

- 1900.
- 37 C0273/274. Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Colonial Office, 26 September, 1901.
- 38 *Johore State Secretariat Official Letter Book (1900-1902)*. Letters, Ibrahim b. Abdullah, Dato Bintara Dalam, to Ernest E. Cleeve Esq., 15 November, 13 and 30 December, 1900.
- 39 C0273/306. Letter, Sir Robert Herbert to Under-Secretary Colonial Office, 1 March, 1904.
- 40 *Ibid.* See enclosed copy of letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Sir Robert Herbert, 20 February, 1904.
- 41 *Ibid.* See minutes on "Johore Railway" by C.P. Lucas, Sir Montague Ommanney, and Secretary Lyttelton, 2 March, 4 March, and 12 March, 1904 respectively.
- 42 C0273/301. Letter, Sir Robert Herbert to Sir Frank Swettenham 27 May, 1904.
- 43 C0273/313. Letter, Harry W. Lake, Secretary of the Johore Advisory Board, to Dato Mentri, Johore, 19 April, 1905.
- 44 C0273/312. Letter, Abdul Rahman to Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, Chairman of the Johore Advisory Board, 10 October, 1905.
- 45 *Ibid.* Letter, Harry W. Lake to Abdul Rahman, 20 October, 1905.
- 46 C0273/320. Telegram, Sir John Anderson to Earl of Elgin 2 March, 1906.
- 47 *A Souvenir Commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of His Highness the Sultan Of Johore, 1895-1955*, p 24.
- 48 C0273/324. Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Under-Secretary of State 7 June, 1906.
- 49 E. Thio, *British Policy Towards Johore*, p 31.
- 50 C0273/320. Confidential Despatch, Anderson to the Earl of Elgin, 2 March, 1906.
- 51 *Ibid.* Telegram, Anderson to Earl of Elgin, 2 March, 1906.
- 52 E. Thio, *British Policy Towards Johore*, pp 30-31.
- 53 C0273/330. Confidential Despatch, Anderson to the Earl of Elgin, 19 June, 1907.
- 54 C0273/326. Letter, Anderson to Lucas, 18 January, 1907.
- 55 C0273/330. See Enclosure H in Enclosure 1 of Confidential Despatch, Anderson to the Earl of Elgin, 19 June, 1907.
- 56 C0273/406. See minute by Mr. J. Robinson on "Administration of Johore, (2) The Sultan's Allowance", 20 April, 1914.
- 57 See Chapter Five for detailed discussion of this issue.
- 58 C0273/397. Enclosure 1 in Confidential Despatch, Sir Arthur Young to Louis Harcourt, 14 October, 1913.
- 59 *Ibid.* Confidential Despatch, Sir Arthur Young to Louis Harcourt, 14 October, 1913.

- 60 *Ibid.* Confidential Despatch, Louis Harcourt to Sir Arthur Young, 20 November, 1913.
- 61 C0273/406. Enclosure 2 in Confidential Despatch, Sir Arthur Young to Louis Harcourt, 18 March, 1914.
- 62 *Ibid.* Telegram, Louis Harcourt to Sir John Anderson, 28 April, 1914.

3

Johore-British Negotiations for Railway Construction in Johore, November 1899 — July 1904

The main purpose of this chapter is to narrate and examine the long and complicated negotiations between Johore and Britain to undertake railway construction in Johore. The study of the negotiations reveals growing British interest in Johore in contrast to the relative apathy during the last decade of the nineteenth century. This interest is seen to crystallise in the course of the negotiations which lasted from November, 1899 to July, 1904, into a British intention to take control of Johore in the near future. This becomes evident not only in the British determination to keep private entrepreneurs out of railway construction in Johore to facilitate smooth take over in the future but also in the constant resort to the threat of appointing a British officer in Johore in accordance with the provision of Article III of the 1885 Agreement. This officer was viewed not as a mere Consular Agent but more in the light of a British Resident exercising control over the Sultan.

Parallel to this development is the gradual change which became evident in the views which the Colonial Office staff held about the Johore Rulers. The Johore Rulers had been considered able administrators guided by British advice channelled through the High Commissioner. During the course of the negotiations Sultan Ibrahim came to be viewed as an inefficient administrator interested more in private financial gains than in the sustained economic development of his state. This view explained to the Colonial staff Sultan Ibrahim's efforts to strike an independent course and to engage private companies to undertake railway construction in Johore. They now understood the reason for the Sultan's reluctance to seek the advice and guidance of the High Commissioner. This change of opinion in the Colonial Office was brought about by the Sultan's own behaviour and Swettenham's representation and reports in the course of the negotiations. A direct consequence of this was the

growing desire among the Colonial staff to place Sultan Ibrahim under the influence and control of the High Commissioner.

Furthermore, the study of the negotiations reveals Sultan Ibrahim's desire to open up Johore to economic development by providing an essential infrastructure, railway transport. However, he and his officials preferred to undertake railway construction independently of British financial and other aid. This preference is manifested in their repeated attempts to secure capital and technical know-how through private British entrepreneurs despite better financial offers from the F.M.S. and the Colonial Office. Underlying this preference and motivating their efforts was the determination to keep railway construction within Johore a purely internal matter. The Sultan and his officials feared that allowing British participation or control in this internal matter would be a prelude to British take over and control of Johore ultimately.

It is wrong to assume that the idea of railway construction in Johore was initially and essentially British. Sultan Abu Bakar during his reign had given considerable thought to railway construction in Johore and had made efforts in that direction.

As early as 1866 Temenggong Abu Bakar turned to private entrepreneurs to give effect to his desire to construct railway lines within Johore with the aim of facilitating the economic development of Johore. However, the first scheme for railway construction in Johore was envisaged by Mr. G.C. Colleyer, Chief Engineer of the Straits Settlements. He proposed building a railway line to link the New Harbour first with Singapore and then with Tanjong Puteri. This proposal which was made in 1862 was not undertaken. In 1866, Paterson, Simons and Company took up the idea of railway construction. The Company was convinced that railways would greatly facilitate their export trade from Johore. Construction of the lines between Tanjong Puteri and Gunong Pulai was begun. White ants destroyed the sleepers and the Company gave up its efforts on the line. These attempts between 1862 and 1869 failed obviously due to lack of sustained interest and effort on the part of the initiators and the damage caused by white ants. British official interference apparently had no share in the failure of these abortive attempts. The Straits¹ Government had not formulated any policy as early as the 1860's on the question of railway construction in the Malay States which were still independent. In 1868, the Colonial Office had decided to continue the policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the Malay States.²

In 1872 Paterson, Simons and Company revived the idea of constructing railways in Johore. This time they planned to build a line running from Malacca in the north to Tanjong Puteri in the south. Though again construction works were started, the plan did not succeed. The Colonial Office came to know of this scheme but there is no evidence that it wrecked the effort.³ The next proposal for railway construction came in 1886 but the high estimated cost prevented the Johore Government from accepting it. In 1889 Sir Andrew Clarke, the ex-Governor of the Straits Settlements, and Punchard McTaggart, Lowther and Company obtained from Sultan Abu Bakar a concession to construct a line between Johore Bahru and Muar. This time the Colonial Office stepped in and got the Sultan to cancel the concession. By 1889 the Colonial Office had long abandoned the policy of non-interference in the Malay states. The Straits Government had formulated its policy on railway construction in the Malay states in the course of considering and approving railway construction in Perak and Selangor.⁴ During the period 1882-1883, the Governor of the Straits Settlement, Sir Frederick Weld, had come to the decision that the best method for railway construction in Selangor was for the state to undertake the venture. He was reluctant to permit private, commercial companies which would be monopolising and working the lines for their profit rather than in the interest of the State.⁵

In 1890 the only line so far constructed in Johore was that between Bandar Maharani in Muar and Parit Jawa in Padang. It was a very short line of nine miles. The first service on this line was begun in 1890. In the same year Sultan Abu Bakar revived the scheme to build a line between Johore Bahru and Muar. He paid engineers who were selected by the Straits Government to survey the line and submit a report to him.⁶ At this point, Sultan Abu Bakar only had a broad plan and not a scheme worked out in details. However, he sincerely hoped for British support — both from the Straits Government and the Colonial Office — when he had a feasible plan. He submitted the report made by the engineers to Governor Smith who told Sultan Abu Bakar that he intended to submit the report to the Colonial Secretary.⁷ It is not clear what became of this plan. Governor Charles Mitchell in 1896 made a vague reference to a scheme of Sultan Abu Bakar. This scheme he stated "proved impracticable" but without explaining why. It is obvious that Sultan Abu Bakar did not progress further with this line.

This was the Sultan's last effort. He died in June, 1895.

During the rule of Sultan Ibrahim, Frank Swettenham made the first proposal for railway construction in Johore in November, 1899,⁸ in conjunction with his plans to complete the north-south Main Trunk Railway line in the Malay Peninsular. As Resident-General of the F.M.S., Swettenham put before Governor Charles Mitchell proposals (and maps) to extend the line from Seremban in Negeri Sembilan to Johore Bahru in Johore. The first section of the proposed line, about fifty-six miles, was to run through Negri Sembilan — from Seremban to Gemas at the Negri Sembilan-Johore border. The next section of approximately one hundred and twenty miles would traverse Johore between Gemas and Johore Bahru. Swettenham sought Governor Mitchell's permission to interview or write to Sultan Ibrahim over this section of the proposed railway line.⁹

Earlier in 1896 having won his case for extension of railway construction in the F.M.S.,¹⁰ Swettenham had gone full swing into extending the existing lines in Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan to points of junction; thus constructing a continuous railway from Prai to Seremban. At the end of 1899 Swettenham anticipated work on this line to finish in 1902. Without wasting any time,¹¹ Swettenham wished to progress with the extension of the line from Seremban to Johore Bahru. At this juncture, he thought this extension would be ideal with the Colony also having started in 1899 construction work on the railway line running across the island of Singapore to a point opposite Johore Bahru. Furthermore, improved revenues due to the rise in the price of tin would, he calculated, favour his expensive project.¹² Agreeing that this was a favourable time to prepare the preliminaries for the proposed extension, Governor Mitchell gave Swettenham permission to discuss the issue of railway construction in Johore with Sultan Ibrahim.¹³

Immediately, in a personal conversation with Sultan Ibrahim, Swettenham broached the subject of railway construction in Johore. Having gained the impression that Sultan Ibrahim was in favour of the extension of the F.M.S. Trunk Railway line through Johore, Swettenham officially put his proposals to the Sultan on 7 November, 1899. He told the Sultan that the line would roughly be one hundred and twenty miles and cost \$7,200,000. If the Sultan wished to undertake the project, Swettenham put forward two alternatives. In the first alternative, Swettenham proposed that Johore at its own expense should begin con-

struction of the line in 1902 or earlier and carry it to completion. However, he suggested that on behalf of Johore the F.M.S. officers undertake the work while Johore provided the funds only. This Swettenham considered would be economical and convenient for the Sultan. In the second alternative he proposed that the F.M.S. should undertake the whole construction, find the funds and work the line as a section of the F.M.S. railway system. The Sultan, however, had to guarantee a small interest of 2% on the capital raised by the F.M.S. until such time as the section was able to return 5% on the capital.¹⁴ Sultan Ibrahim did not make a choice immediately. Rather, he promised Swettenham that he would carefully consider the alternatives. He suggested that decision should be deferred until the views of the Advisory Board on the proposals had been obtained.¹⁵

In the meantime Governor Mitchell had informed the Colonial Office of Swettenham's proposals by sending copies of Swettenham's letter and the maps.¹⁶ C.P. Lucas and Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, approved Swettenham's proposals.¹⁷ Immediately, C.P. Lucas unofficially informed Sir Robert Herbert, Chairman of the Johore Advisory Board, of these proposals with the purpose of ascertaining his views on these proposals. Though Sir Robert Herbert considered the loan of the capital at 2% liberal, he felt that Johore may find the annual interest a heavy charge on its revenue. He also warned that the Sultan may be reluctant to accept such financial assistance for fear that the independence of Johore may be compromised.¹⁸

In early February, 1900 Lucas officially wrote to the Advisory Board about Swettenham's proposals. He conveyed also Chamberlain's request that the Advisory Board recommend Swettenham's proposals to be considered favourably by Sultan Ibrahim. Chamberlain was of the opinion that the proposals were not only liberal but also advantageous commercially and otherwise to both Johore and the other Malay states. If acceptance was recommended, Chamberlain was willing to sanction arrangements to be made on behalf of the F.M.S.¹⁹ Being the private advisers of the Johore Sultan, the Johore Advisory Board placed the interest of Johore above those of the other Malay states. Therefore, when Chamberlain made his request, the Board postponed decision until assured that the revenues of Johore would be able to bear the financial burden of Swettenham's proposals.²⁰ This was in February, 1900.

In May, 1900 Sultan Ibrahim sent Abdul Rahman bin Andak to Lon-

don for the purpose of discussing not only Swettenham's proposal with the Advisory Board but also, as he claimed, any other schemes which the Board may recommend for the consideration of the Johore Government.²¹ But, at this juncture the Advisory Board had not received any proposals from entrepreneurs who desired to finance and undertake the construction of the line through Johore. It was more likely that Sultan Ibrahim sent Abdul Rahman to approach private entrepreneurs and companies to undertake railway construction in Johore. Obviously, this was motivated by the desire not to get financial or any other official, British assistance which would affect Johore's independent position in the future. This was evident also in the specific information asked of the Colonial Office by the Advisory Board following Abdul Rahman's arrival in London. Following discussions between Abdul Rahman and the Board, the Board asked specific information about the F.M.S. built railway lines in Province Wellesley. This information was sought because Swettenham in his second alternative of the proposal had suggested building a railway line through Johore as the F.M.S. had done in Province Wellesley — that is providing the whole capital and also working the line as a section of the F.M.S. railway system.

The Advisory Board wanted to know whether the Province Wellesley line was built on a lease, and if so what was the duration of the lease. In addition, it desired to know whether the Straits Settlements Government reserved any power of resumption, and who conducted the survey for the lines constructed. While asking information on these points, the Board also informed the Colonial Office of the Sultan's views on these points in relation to the proposed construction of the Johore railway line. It explicitly stated that the Sultan objected "to granting any freehold or unlimited rights within his Territory either to a Company or to a neighbouring State". Also, the Sultan desired to have the power of resumption after a reasonable period and on reasonable terms if the line was not constructed by Johore and was not originally the property of Johore.²² Obviously, Abdul Rahman was behind this move. But, this did not mean that the members of the Board were opposed to Sultan Ibrahim's efforts to safeguard the position of Johore or failed to understand his concern. Sir Robert Herbert in a private letter to one of his friends in the Colonial Office observed, "It is easy to understand the unwillingness of the Sultan to have another Government own a portion (however small a strip) of his territory".²³

An early reply to the questions of the Board was made possible by Swettenham's return to London on leave in September, 1900. Mr. E. Thorn of the Colonial Office found the replies to the questions. He stated that the F.M.S. had incorporated itself as an ordinary company in the railway transactions with the Straits Government. The line in Province Wellesley was surveyed and constructed on a lease, and the F.M.S. had freehold of the land occupied by the line. The Straits Government did not reserve any powers of resumption.²⁴ Swettenham confirmed that these facts were correct. Commenting on the possibility of Sultan Ibrahim wanting to reserve powers of resumption, Swettenham observed that if a company built the Johore line, it would ask more stringent terms than those requested by the F.M.S. Government. Probably annoyed by the possible conditions which Sultan Ibrahim may stipulate to the F.M.S. Government, Swettenham observed to Thorn that if the Sultan could find the capital and construct the line independently, "by all means let him do so". However, his proposals were still open and he was insistent that if the F.M.S. found the capital, constructed and worked the Johore line, the Sultan should give some reasonable security for their large investment. He did not expect the Johore line to pay as an internal railway but as a section of the main Trunk Railway line.²⁵ However, without touching on Swettenham's private observations, Lucas communicated the official answers to the Board's questions. He also stated Chamberlain's view that if the F.M.S. Government were required to finance, survey and construct the Johore line, Johore should concede terms similar to those given by the Straits Government.²⁶

During his stay in London, Swettenham discussed and finalised his proposal with the Board. No changes were made in the alternatives suggested. Swettenham impressed on the Board that his proposal was very generous and tried to influence it to accept the proposal. But, the Board delayed giving a definite reply. In April, 1901 the Sultan himself arrived in London to discuss the Johore line and other important matters.²⁷ Now, Swettenham urged an early decision as it would determine whether the Johore line was to be surveyed by the F.M.S. or not. He wished to avoid delay in doing the survey and also, if Sultan Ibrahim turned down the proposal, Swettenham stated that he wished to proceed with the extension between Seremban and Kuala Pilah.²⁸ So Chamberlain requested the Advisory Board to state its views on the proposal as soon as possible. In August, 1901 Sir Robert Herbert informed the Co-

lonial Office that the Sultan had decided to reject Swettenham's proposal on the Board's advice that Johore in its present financial position could not bear the financial burden that would result from accepting the proposal. However, the Sultan wished to find out whether it was possible under different financial arrangements to construct the Johore line as part and parcel of the larger scheme to develop Johore.²⁹

Obviously Sultan Ibrahim and his Advisory Board had deliberately withheld from the Colonial Office the real reason for rejecting Swettenham's proposal. Prior to his arrival in London in April, 1901, Sultan Ibrahim "had committed himself to the employment of Messrs. Pauling & Co. as contractors, and Messrs. Barry & Leslie as Engineers, in connection with the projected Railway".³⁰ Though the Advisory Board knew of this commitment and the Sultan's unwillingness to consider Swettenham's proposal, it had delayed its reply to the Colonial Office in the hope that it could influence Sultan Ibrahim to accept the proposal which it considered liberal and advantageous to Johore.³¹ Having failed in its efforts, it had to couch the rejection of the proposal in terms of Johore's financial position which it had first stated as the reason for being unable to give an immediate reply to Swettenham's proposal in February, 1900. Sultan Ibrahim would not have desired to reveal the real reason knowing that it would definitely antagonise both Swettenham and the Colonial staff and adversely affect his private plans for railway construction. Probably, he planned to finalise the details of the arrangements with his private entrepreneurs and then inform the Colonial Office at an opportune moment.

Though the Colonial Office received the rejection passively, Swettenham did not. He doubted the official reason given for rejecting his proposal. He was convinced that the Sultan's rejection was strongly motivated by the desire to remain free of British observation, interference and control — which the Sultan feared would follow the acceptance of his proposal. He suspected that the Sultan preferred private financiers and contractors undertaking the construction of the Johore section. This, he argued, would not only keep out the British but also provide the opportunity to satisfy the Sultan's, his officials' and private advisers' desire for some personal, financial gain — or "some pickings" as stated by a member of the Colonial staff — from the venture.³² Swettenham's suspicion was not completely baseless. He had heard rumours to the effect that Sultan Ibrahim attempted to raise £9,000,000

on bonds in England for the construction of the Johore line and had approached the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank for this purpose.³³ Furthermore, at a private interview with Swettenham, Dato Jaafar, the Mentri Besar of Johore, had expressed his suspicion that the Sultan had been advised by his European advisers and Malay officials to reject Swettenham's proposal as they feared that they would make no profit out of the railway project if it was undertaken by the F.M.S. Also, Swettenham learnt from Dato Jaafar that the State Council of Johore had advised the acceptance of his proposal on knowing that Sir Robert Herbert, Sir Cecil Smith and Secretary Chamberlain were in favour of it.³⁴

Despite the Sultan's rejection, Swettenham was not prepared either to abandon or delay the construction of the extension through Johore. He argued that now it was all the more important that the extension should be built because the Straits Government was nearly completing the construction of the railway line across the island of Singapore. Also, the Straits Government was making arrangements to connect the northern terminus of the line with Johore by a steam ferry service. Though Swettenham suspected that Sultan Ibrahim would like to engage private entrepreneurs and capitalists to undertake the railway construction, he felt that private capitalists could not be attracted to undertake the construction as Johore was not sufficiently developed for a railway to be a paying concern. He expected a private company to undertake this venture only if it was promised a good guarantee which would mean stricter terms than those asked by the F.M.S. When Johore had stated it could not afford to pay 2% interest on the F.M.S. loan, Swettenham argued, Johore could not be expected to guarantee a higher interest to a private company.

However, Swettenham was confident that Johore could pay the 2% interest asked by the F.M.S. Though he was aware that expenditure equalled revenue in Johore,³⁵ he pointed out that if the finances of Johore were better managed, and the Sultan and his officers denied themselves the large allowances they were drawing, Johore would be able to pay the requested interest. Once construction of the line was begun, Swettenham expected trade to be stimulated and consequently revenues to increase. In support of his claim, he reported that the Mentri Besar was also confident that Johore could from its present revenue meet the financial liability which would be imposed by the acceptance of his proposal. Also,

the Mentri Besar was opposed to private entrepreneurs undertaking the construction because he feared that this would result in greater financial responsibility which he knew Johore could not bear.³⁶

Swettenham felt that the Colonial Office should apply pressure on Sultan Ibrahim to accept his proposal. It was his contention that since British protection ensured Johore's independence and safety, Johore was obliged to listen to British advice. He claimed that Johore's present prosperity and revenues were due to European and Chinese capitalists of the Colony investing in Johore. He reported that the Mentri Besar held the view that in small matters involving the British and Johore, the Johore authorities could have a say but in important issues like railway construction Johore should accept British advice and decision. Swettenham advocated that if Sultan Ibrahim and his other Malay officers forgot their obligation to the British and refused to accept this proposal that the F.M.S. construct the Johore extension, then it would be advisable to effect the appointment of a British Agent to Johore as provided for in Article III of the Treaty of 1885.³⁷

Unaware of Swettenham's reaction to the rejection of his proposal, Sultan Ibrahim handed over the negotiations with Mr. Barry and his friends for the survey and construction of the Johore line to the Advisory Board.³⁸ He then left for Europe. Mr. G. Pauling and friends offered to provide the capital and construct the line. They proposed to construct and equip the Johore section between Johore's northern border and Singapore — approximately 120 miles — within three years, for an estimated cost of £1,000,000. For the capital advanced Johore had to pay £40,000 per annum interest which the Advisory Board was to guarantee. Mr. Pauling was willing to advance £100,000 to the Sultan to enable him to pay the interest on the capital for the first four years. The interest for this period was calculated to amount to £105,000.³⁹ However, this advance of £100,000 could be looked upon as a bribe to the Sultan to give railway construction in Johore to Mr. Pauling and friends. Also, it could be viewed as a private, financial gain for the Sultan from the deal or even as "pickings" from the Colonial Office point of view. Mr. Rutherford Harris on behalf of Mr. Pauling and friends sought the approval of Secretary Chamberlain for this scheme. Mr. Harris claimed to have secured the approval of the Sultan for this scheme and the Advisory Board's consent to guarantee the interest requested by Pauling.⁴⁰

Colonial Office reaction to Pauling's scheme was unfavourable. De-

spite differing in opinion on whether the F.M.S. or Pauling and Co. would construct the line more cheaply, the Colonial staff were unanimously agreed that it would be in the interest of the Colony, the F.M.S. and Johore for the F.M.S. to construct the line and to keep private companies out of Johore. The Colonial Office also sought the views of the Advisory Board and the Governor on Pauling's scheme. After reading Mr. Harris's letter, both Sir Robert Herbert and Sir Cecil Smith explicitly denied having agreed to guarantee the £40,000 interest as Mr. Harris had claimed. In fact they were not even considering to do so. However, both of them did not see eye to eye on the point of who should undertake the construction of the Johore line. Sir Cecil Smith favoured the F.M.S. But, Sir Robert Herbert felt that a private company may be able to build the line at a cheaper cost, with the capital being loaned by the F.M.S.⁴¹

While expressing their views on Pauling's scheme, Sir Robert Herbert, Sir Montague Ommanney, the Permanent Secretary, and Lucas made their respective suggestions on how the issue of railway construction in Johore could be best settled. Sir Robert Herbert proposed that either the Colony or the F.M.S. should advance the money to the Sultan. With this loan the Sultan could then employ a private contractor — Mr. Pauling, namely — who would undertake the construction of the line. Thus, Sir Robert Herbert sought to economise in two directions for Johore while trying to please two parties, simultaneously. The capital could be secured at a lower interest from either the F.M.S. or the Colony than from private financiers. On the other hand, the railway could be built more cheaply by Pauling than by the F.M.S. In proposing to take the loan from the British, he sought to accommodate the British aim of keeping private financiers and syndicates out of Johore. By suggesting the employment of Mr. Pauling as contractor, he was pandering to Sultan Ibrahim's sensitiveness to his independent position and his desire to keep the British out of Johore. To allay the Colonial Office fears of personal, financial gain by the Sultan and his informal advisers, Sir Robert Herbert proposed that the money be given to the Johore trustees — that is, Sir Cecil Smith and himself — who would see that the Johore line was constructed. If both Chamberlain and Swettenham had no objections to his proposals, he requested that Chamberlain direct Swettenham to recommend to the F.M.S. Government to make the loan to Johore.⁴²

However, Lucas had his own plans on how to tackle the question. He suggested that Chamberlain should arrange an interview with Sultan

Ibrahim and lay before him the three alternatives which he put forward with the aim of removing the Sultan's objections to the F.M.S. constructing the line. Aware that Sultan Ibrahim was averse to being indebted to any Malay state under British protection, Lucas in his first alternative suggested that Chamberlain should find out whether the Sultan had any objection to the Colony constructing the line and not the F.M.S. as Swettenham originally proposed. Bearing in mind that the Advisory Board had advised rejection of Swettenham's proposals on financial grounds, Lucas's next alternative was that Chamberlain should ascertain whether the Sultan would remove his objections to the F.M.S. building the line if ultimately part of the cost of construction was borne by the Colony. In his final alternative he proposed that Chamberlain should find out whether Sultan Ibrahim would accept Swettenham's proposals if he was assured that British construction of the Johore line was not a prelude to their annexation of Johore. Obviously, Lucas was aware that the Sultan feared this outcome. However, Lucas felt that Chamberlain should warn Sultan Ibrahim that the continuance of the present independent status depended entirely on the Sultan — that is, how he conducted relations with the British. On the other hand if the Sultan rejected all three alternatives, Lucas advised Chamberlain to inform the Sultan that he could either choose his own course of action or abandon the scheme altogether. But H.M. Government reserved the rights to take any steps if Imperial interests were involved.⁴³

It is very evident from Lucas's proposals that he was totally against private contractors building the line with money loaned either by the F.M.S. or the Colony. He wanted the British to control both the capital and the construction, and neither one was to be in the hands of Sultan Ibrahim and his private financiers or contractors. Lucas proposed for the British a position of total control or one of no involvement at all except as onlooking guardians of Imperial interests.

Sir Montague Ommanney was opposed to both postponement or abandonment of railway construction in Johore. He put forward two alternatives. In his first alternative, he suggested that the line should be constructed and managed either by the F.M.S. or the Colony. In his other alternative, Sir Montague Ommanney proposed that either the Colony or the F.M.S. should advance the money on a guarantee (2% interest and 1% sinking fund) which Johore could meet and therefore making it possible for the line to be constructed by Pauling & Co. But, the working of

the line was to be under the control of a Board which was to be composed in such a way that the confidence of the state advancing the capital was to be retained. Despite offering two alternatives, Sir Montague Ommanney showed his preference for the first one as it eliminated contractor's profit, and possibility of corruption, and ensured utilisation of the experienced staff of the F.M.S. Railway Administration. He was aware that Sultan Ibrahim would be opposed to the first alternative which placed both construction and management in British hands. Sir Montague Ommanney felt that this British control was justified by the fact that the F.M.S. owned most of the lines in the Peninsula, contributed about nine-tenths of the traffic and also because Singapore was terminus of the system. He also felt that the best means of overcoming the Sultan's objections would be by threatening the appointment of "a British Resident whom we have the power to appoint under the Agreement of 11th December, 1885".⁴⁴

This threat of appointing a British Resident was constantly suggested by the Colonial staff as a form of pressure to make the Sultan give in on important issues like railway construction. Actually the Agreement of 11th December, 1885 did not give the British the right to appoint a British Resident but only granted the right "to appoint a British officer as Agent to live within the State of Johore, having functions similar to those of a Consular Officer". On the issue of railway construction within Johore, the Sultan's power was restricted only in denying him the right to make concessions — for that matter any concession — to Europeans other than the British. If he made the railway concession to British subjects, the British Government had no basis for complaint or interference unless, of course, Imperial interest was affected. Members of the Colonial staff were aware that relations between Johore and Britain were governed by this Agreement of 1885. They knew that no clause in the Agreement stipulated that Sultan Ibrahim had to ask and act on British advice on the issue of railway construction in Johore. But, yet they expected Sultan Ibrahim to consult the British Government and go by its advice on the matter. This was because of the precedence created by Sultan Abu Bakar who, as it was shown earlier, had listened to British advice on the issue of railway construction during the last decade of his life. Sir Montague Ommanney reflected this attitude of the Colonial staff and expressed the necessity to make Sultan Ibrahim conscious of this obligation created by precedence when he minuted that, "The rail-

way question is of great importance to Johore, to the Straits and the Malay States. It is of the class in regard to which the Sultan like his predecessors is expected to be guided by the advice of H.M.G. and he must be made to understand this."⁴⁵

Having noted the views of his staff, Chamberlain desired an interview with the Sultan. Before making definite arrangements for the interview, Chamberlain wished to know the exact position of the Advisory Board. This was because Sir Robert Herbert and Sir Cecil Smith had not expressed a unanimous view on the issue. Chamberlain specifically wanted to know whether the Advisory Board wanted Pauling to build and work the Johore line or not. If it did, he wanted to know why it considered it advisable in the interest of Johore.⁴⁶ Sir Robert Herbert replied that the Advisory Board would like the F.M.S. to construct the line on terms provisionally agreed to between the Advisory Board and Swettenham when he visited England. However, he expressed doubt that the Sultan could be made to accept F.M.S. terms, and the Advisory Board was not prepared to press him too far for fear of losing whatever influence it had on him. Personally, Sir Robert Herbert felt that both F.M.S. and Pauling's estimated costs for constructing the Johore line were too high for Johore.⁴⁷

The Colonial Office failed in its effort to arrange a meeting between Chamberlain and Sultan Ibrahim. On the advice of Sir Robert Herbert,⁴⁸ the Colonial Office in January, 1902 informed Mr. Harris that the proposals of the syndicate could not be entertained as they were not in the interest of Johore.⁴⁹ However, Sir Robert Herbert was strongly against abandoning the scheme. Since Swettenham was willing to permit Johore to construct its own line, Sir Robert Herbert felt that an arrangement acceptable both to Swettenham and the Colonial Office could be arrived at. Briefly, he outlined the arrangement. Johore was to build its own railway. The F.M.S. Government was to pay to Johore a rental for working and running the main line traffic. The rental of approximately £11,000 a year was to be paid from the time survey on the line was begun.⁵⁰ Later, he added that any profits on through traffic on the Johore line were to be shared between Johore and the F.M.S.

Lucas felt that Swettenham should deal with Sir Robert Herbert's proposals.⁵¹ Ommanney, however, insisted that before considering the new proposals, the Colonial Office should deal with Sultan Ibrahim. As the members of the Advisory Board could not put their employer in place,

Ommanney proposed that a superior authority — that is, Chamberlain — should do so. He repeated his earlier suggestions that Chamberlain should impress on Sultan Ibrahim his obligation to be guided by the High Commissioner's advice and warn him that actions contrary to British interest may precipitate the appointment of a British Resident in Johore to protect British interest. He suggested that the opinion of Sir Cecil Smith who had been High Commissioner to the Malay States could be sought on this course of action.⁵² Chamberlain viewed Ommanney's suggestion that he should threaten Sultan Ibrahim as "a strong order." He knew that he could not threaten an independent ruler unless British imperial interests were involved. And, he was not too sure they were in the Sultan's interest to construct the Johore line privately. He was not opposed to seeking the opinion of Sir Cecil Smith. However, he, too, wished "to lay the whole matter before the Governor and ask his opinion."⁵³

When Sir Cecil Smith was consulted, he suggested that the Colonial Office should reply to Sir Robert Herbert's proposals stating, "that Mr. Chamberlain is not prepared to give facilities to any of the schemes at present proposed, not being convinced that they are in the interests of Johore, any more than of the Colony or the F.M.S. and until he is satisfied as to a scheme, he cannot hold out hope that he will allow connections to be made between the railway of the Colony and the F.M.S. and whatever railway may be contracted in Johore."⁵⁴ Smith agreed with Lucas and Chamberlain that it would be best to let Swettenham settle the issue with the Sultan. Therefore, he suggested that the Colonial Office should advise the Sultan to return to Johore and consult Swettenham personally. Both Ommanney and Chamberlain accepted Smith's suggestions but they felt that they should not threaten refusal to connect the F.M.S. lines to the Johore line as they were not confident that they could stand by it in the future.⁵⁵

In early February, 1902 the Advisory Board was given the Colonial Office reply — incorporating Smith's suggestions but dropping the threat. The contents were to be communicated to Sultan Ibrahim.⁵⁶ Simultaneously, Swettenham was informed of the Colonial Office advice to Sultan Ibrahim to seek the High Commissioner's advice on railway construction. Both Mr. Harris's and Sir Robert Herbert's proposals were communicated to Swettenham. However, Swettenham was directed to advise Sultan Ibrahim, "to adopt whatever course appears to be most

conducive to the interest, not only of Johore but also of the F.M.S. and of the Colony."⁵⁷

Swettenham rejected Sir Robert Herbert's proposals. He expected that a line built privately and at a cheaper cost would incur heavy losses. He was unwilling to commit the F.M.S. to bearing the losses on the working of the Johore line. He also decided that since it was not advantageous to the F.M.S. to join on "to a light and cheaply constructed railway, where heavy locomotives and trains might not be able to run with safety," the Sultan must either meet F.M.S. requirements in standard or face the possibility of the Johore line proving a failure without F.M.S. through traffic. Swettenham explicitly stated that the Sultan and his friends would not be able to meet the required standard and their effort at railway construction in Johore would end in failure as had Sultan Abu Bakar's schemes.⁵⁸

For several reasons Swettenham was doubtful that Sultan Ibrahim would turn to him for advice on the railway negotiations. First, he was aware that Sultan Ibrahim did not have the habit of seeking the advice of British officials on Johore affairs. Second, Swettenham knew that Sultan Ibrahim rejected the advice of his own State Council unless, of course, its advice tallied with his views. Third, Sultan Ibrahim who had initially turned to the Advisory Board for help on the issue was now returning to Johore having rejected its advice to accept the F.M.S. offer. Of this, Swettenham was aware. Last, but not least, Swettenham admitted that personally he had very little influence over this young, Malay potentate. So Swettenham did not anticipate to change the Sultan's course of action on the railway issue. The most he hoped for was to discuss the details of Sultan Ibrahim's negotiations and to put the facts of the British case for his decision on the Johore railway question to the Sultan. Thus, he informed the Colonial Office of his position in March, 1902.⁵⁹

Now, Chamberlain felt that it was time that the Colonial Office also made a definite decision on the issue. Before doing so, Chamberlain desired to know how far Sultan Ibrahim had progressed in his private negotiations. Communicating Swettenham's views and decision on the negotiations, the Colonial Office requested this information of the Advisory Board. The Colonial staff were anxious to know whether Sultan Ibrahim had made the railway concession or not.⁶⁰ Faced with Swettenham's decision and Chamberlain's request, the Advisory Board for the first time placed all the cards on the table. Sir Robert Herbert

informed the Colonial Office about the Sultan's negotiations with Pauling and his decision to reject Swettenham's proposals prior to his arrival in London in April, 1901. He confessed also the Board's failure to influence the Sultan to change his decision. However, in February, 1902 the Board successfully persuaded Sultan Ibrahim to limit the extent of the line to be constructed by the private contractors to fifty miles with the purpose of finding out what the construction and management of this short line would cost Johore. At present the Board was considering the draft contract which had been drawn up between Sultan Ibrahim and Messrs. Pauling and Co. for the construction of railways "from Johore Bahru to the south bank of the River Kelambu (or such other point as may be fixed)." Also, under the Board's examination were specifications, proposals for providing the required capital — probably by the issue of Johore State Bonds secured by hypothecation of the Farm Revenues — and the cost per mile for the line.⁶¹

Sir Robert Herbert was well aware that the Johore line could succeed only as a section of the F.M.S. trunk line. Swettenham had refused F.M.S. through traffic on the basis that the Johore line would be inferior in quality to the F.M.S. lines. To deny Swettenham this premise for refusal Sir Robert Herbert assured the Colonial staff that the Johore line would be "fully equal in quality to the Railways in F.M.S.," and costing about £8,000 to £10,000 per mile. To convince the Colonial staff, the Board proposed to submit the contract and specification for the Johore line to a reputed, civil engineer — to be approved by the Colonial Secretary — for his assessment of the quality of the line. It was the Board's pious hope that once the constructed line of fifty miles met Swettenham's approval, he would permit the extension of the F.M.S. line to the Negri Sembilan-Johore border to meet the extension of this section of the Johore line.⁶²

Contrary to expectations, the reaction of the Colonial staff to Sultan Ibrahim's private plans was hostile. The Under Secretary, Lucas, proposed that Chamberlain's disapproval of Sultan Ibrahim's course of action should be explicitly stated and no recognition should be given to the plan proposed by the Board to get the Colonial Office approval for the Johore line. He strongly felt that now Sultan Ibrahim should be warned by Swettenham not to expect British "co-operation on the lines which he has against the best advice laid down for himself."⁶³ Lucas considered that at this stage the Colonial Office should plainly clarify its

stand on the question of private construction of the Johore line. For, if the Sultan and the Advisory Board failed to take the warning and still continued with their private plans, refusing to co-operate with the F.M.S., Lucas anticipated active British interference in Johore by means of a consul or Resident. And failure to heed the warning, he reasoned, would justify the interference.⁶⁴

This was an illogical reasoning with no legal basis as Sultan Ibrahim was not bound by any treaty to listen to Colonial Office advice or warning in a purely internal issue like railway construction in Johore. However, it was accepted by the Permanent Secretary, Ommanney, who like other members of the Colonial staff expected Sultan Ibrahim to heed British advice or warning as his predecessors had done, or accept the drastic consequence of active, British interference. Unwilling to sacrifice control over the Johore section of the Trunk line which he considered vital to the prosperity of the whole Malay Peninsula, Ommanney desired to give Swettenham the discretion to deal effectively with the Sultan whom he described as "this disreputable small potentate."⁶⁵ However, he approved of Lucas's suggested course of action, commenting that it "is not at all too strong in the circumstances."⁶⁶ Any objective observer would have commented to the contrary. Secretary Chamberlain completely agreed with his permanent staff.⁶⁷ The Advisory Board was informed of Chamberlain's disapproval of Sultan Ibrahim's course of action, his refusal to recognise the Board's plan for the Colonial Office approval of the contract and specifications for the Johore line, and his warning not to expect British co-operation on the lines.⁶⁸ Simultaneously, Swettenham was informed of these decisions and instructed to warn Sultan Ibrahim not to expect British co-operation on the Johore lines.⁶⁹ This was in June, 1902.

In the same month of June Sultan Ibrahim returned to Johore. Now initiative for railway construction in Johore had passed into his hands. It was his turn to approach Swettenham. However, it was not to get approval of the scheme but rather to secure his consent to link the F.M.S. Trunk line to the Johore line when it was completed. Immediately after his return Sultan Ibrahim informed Swettenham of his arrangements with British railway contractors and financiers in London for the construction of the Johore line. As negotiations with them were nearing completion, he expressed his anxiety to ascertain whether the F.M.S. Government was willing to link its railways with the Johore line. Bearing in

mind Swettenham's decision not to link the F.M.S. line with the Johore line which he believed would be inferior in quality, both Sultan Ibrahim and the syndicate sought to convince Swettenham that the Johore line would be of the same quality as the F.M.S. line and thus remove his main objection to the connection. With this end in mind they made three concessions to the F.M.S. Government. Sultan Ibrahim communicated these concessions to Swettenham. First, a Railway Engineer appointed by the Colonial Office was to approve the railway specifications before adoption. Second, a Railway Engineer nominated by the Colonial Office was to pass the construction before it was accepted by the Johore Government. Third, the financiers were to assure the Colonial Office that the finance required for the above conditions to be fulfilled would be provided.⁷⁰

These concessions met with Swettenham's approval as they assured him that the Johore line would be of good quality. But, he withheld his opinion from Sultan Ibrahim until he had seen the terms of the agreement between the Sultan and the syndicate. Naturally, he wished to know how the terms which were acceptable to Sultan Ibrahim differed from those of his proposals. Also, he did not wish to commit the F.M.S. Government to connecting the F.M.S. lines to the Johore line without the assurance that the entire Johore line would be satisfactorily completed within the agreed time limit. Therefore, Swettenham sought further information from Sultan Ibrahim; viz: the amount of capital to be raised; the terms of advance, interest, and repayment; dates for commencement and completion of the line; whether the line was to be Company or State property; and statistical evidence for Johore Government's ability to pay interest and undertake other conditions of the contract.⁷¹ The information sought would not only give Swettenham an idea of how serious the Sultan and the syndicate were about completing the line, but also how reasonable were the terms of the contract and what hold the syndicate would have over the Sultan and State of Johore.

Sultan Ibrahim answered Swettenham's questions and gave him the requested information. £1,000,000 was to be raised for the railway and advanced to Johore at 5% interest and 1% Sinking Fund. Work on the line was to commence immediately after agreement was reached. The line was to be completely built within five years and it was to be Johore property. The Sultan submitted to Swettenham figures showing Revenue and Expenditure of Johore for the first quarter of 1902. A memo-

randum on the finance of Johore in relation to the Johore railway by the State Secretary, Dato Mohammed, was also submitted.⁷²

It was obvious to Swettenham that Sultan Ibrahim and the syndicate desired to satisfy him on the finance and construction of the Johore line. Swettenham felt that the Sultan had changed his attitude towards the British at Singapore. He found Sultan Ibrahim willing to comply with his suggestions. He attributed the change to Captain Lawson (representative sent out from London by the syndicate) who had informed the Sultan that capital for the railway could not be raised unless he secured British Government approval.⁷³ However, Swettenham's own decision not to link the F.M.S. line to the Johore line, the Colonial Office warning not to expect British co-operation, and the knowledge that the Johore line could not succeed without F.M.S. through traffic probably had their share in the Sultan's change of attitude. Swettenham did not let this change pass unexploited in the interest of the F.M.S. He now thought in terms of an F.M.S. share in the loan to Johore and in the control of the Johore line.

Initially, Swettenham had considered the possibility of the F.M.S. loaning Johore the whole amount of capital at 4%. He soon discovered that the Sultan was not keen as he was committed to the syndicate. But, later he had learnt from Captain Lawson that the syndicate was prepared to allow the F.M.S. to provide half the loan. So Swettenham wrote to Chamberlain that he was now prepared to accept Pauling's scheme as he was assured that the Johore line would be comparable in quality to the F.M.S. lines, and that Johore would be able to bear the financial burden imposed by the interest on the loan. He felt that the acceptance of this scheme would be advantageous to the British as the construction of the Johore section would complete the north-south Trunk line. However, he proposed that the F.M.S. should contribute half the loan at the same guarantee — 5% interest and 1% Sinking Fund — which was offered to the syndicate. This not only would be a safe and good investment for F.M.S. money but also would mean a basis to demand for some control over the Johore lines. Swettenham suggested that the F.M.S. should seek representation on the Board of Control for the share of the loan it contributed. Swettenham was quite confident that if the Colonial Office put forward his suggestions to the Sultan, he would accept them.⁷⁴

Knowing that Lucas and Ommanney largely influenced Chamberlain's decisions on the affairs of the Malay States, and probably antici-

pating their opposition to the participation of private enterprise in the venture, Swettenham felt the need to convince these officials to accept his recent proposals. In his private letters to Lucas and Ommanney, Swettenham stated his preference for his recent proposals rather than those of 1899. He considered the new proposals a good investment of F.M.S. money. However, Swettenham's main argument was that the F.M.S. should have some control over the Johore line which he expected to be linked to and worked in conjunction with the F.M.S. lines. Also, he played on the imperial ambitions of Lucas and Ommanney to win their approval. He wrote, "Our interest in this line will do more to establish our political influence in the State than anything else."⁷⁵ Remembering his earlier argument that private loans to Johore faced the risk of being squandered to line the private pockets of the Sultan, his Malay officials, and private advisers, Swettenham claimed that the new financial arrangement would give Johore, "less loan money for following the like of sycophants."⁷⁶ Though Lucas considered Swettenham's recent proposals far more satisfactory than Sultan Ibrahim's earlier arrangements with the syndicate,⁷⁷ Ommanney looked upon any arrangement in which the syndicate gained a footing in Johore as unsatisfactory.⁷⁸

Surprisingly the Advisory Board objected to Swettenham's suggestion that the syndicate should provide half the loan. It wanted the syndicate completely out of the new scheme. Lucas agreed with the Board on this point. Now, the Board proposed that the F.M.S. should provide half the required capital at 3% interest and 1% Sinking Fund.⁷⁹ The other half was to be secured by Sultan Ibrahim from private sources but on the same terms as offered to the F.M.S. If the Sultan failed to do so, the F.M.S. was to provide the whole amount. On 26 August, 1902 Lucas wired these proposals to Swettenham.⁸⁰ Swettenham did not react favourably to the last-minute objection and suggestion of the Board as Sultan Ibrahim had already accepted Swettenham's proposals of July, 1902.⁸¹ Unable to understand the Board's objection to the participation of the London financiers, he was doubtful that Sultan Ibrahim would accept the Board's suggestions and was sceptical of the Board's ability to influence the ruler to do so. Furthermore, he stated that the F.M.S. did not desire more than half share in the loan as they had to meet the expenses of the 50 miles extension from Seremban to Gemas. After consulting the Resident-General of the F.M.S., Swettenham agreed that the F.M.S. would accept 4% interest and 1% Sinking Fund if no other sub-

scribers of the loan were guaranteed more.⁸²

Financial considerations underlay the Board's objection to the syndicate providing half the loan. First, the guarantee asked by the syndicate was too high. Second, the Board feared that repayment of the loan would be affected as the price of silver had fallen. Johore was a silver country and the loan would be made in gold. Third, it was not as confident as Swettenham that in its present financial condition Johore could bear the liability of 5% interest on the railway loan.⁸³ To do so, Sir Robert Herbert wrote, the Sultan "would have to reduce everything to starvation point for at least six to eight years." This, in his opinion, would not only affect development in Johore but also impair the maintenance of public works in good condition and the efficiency of the Johore administration.⁸⁴

The Board was aware that Swettenham was taking advantage of Sultan Ibrahim's pride in his independence and his poor business sense.⁸⁵ Swettenham wanted for the F.M.S. the same interest that was to be guaranteed to the syndicate. But, the Board observed that in his proposals of 1899 Swettenham had asked for a 2% interest on the F.M.S. loan.⁸⁶ It was apparent to the Board that the syndicate's participation gave Swettenham good grounds to request an equally high interest for the F.M.S. share. Once the syndicate was removed the basis for comparison and demand for similar interest rates would be removed also.

The Colonial Office decided to convey to Swettenham the Board's objections, but leaving the final decision to him.

At this crucial point of the negotiations at the end of September, 1902, Sultan Ibrahim announced his intention to visit Europe.⁸⁷ Both the Colonial Office and the Board were appalled by the Sultans' decision. Sir Robert Herbert was of the opinion that Johore should be spared the Sultan's riotous living in Europe.⁸⁸ Swettenham, the Board and the Colonial Office were unanimously agreed that Sultan Ibrahim should settle the railway issue before sailing to Europe. To speed up negotiations before the Sultan's departure, the Colonial Office telegraphed to Swettenham the Board's objections. Also, it instructed Swettenham to advise Sultan Ibrahim to remain in Johore until the railway issue was settled. Swettenham was also informed that he was to make the final decision on the question after careful consideration of the Board's objections.⁸⁹

Swettenham, however, was still sceptical that Sultan Ibrahim would

accept the final proposals of the Board. Therefore, he sought to know in advance what was his next step in the event that Sultan Ibrahim turned down the Board's proposals. In such a case, Swettenham inquired whether the Imperial Government would consider making the loan to Johore.⁹⁰

On the same day that Swettenham framed these questions, Sultan Ibrahim modified his consent to Swettenham's proposals. First, he stipulated that the F.M.S. contribution of half the capital was subject to agreement by the Syndicate. Second, he clarified that the functions of the proposed Board of Control would be to settle any disputes that arose between the two governments and not control the Johore lines. He explicitly stated that control of the Johore lines when completed was to be in the hands of the Johore Government alone.⁹¹

Faced with Swettenham's queries, the Board's objections, and the Sultan's latest modifications, the Colonial staff for the first time in the course of the negotiations took the initiative to make the decision which they had so far left to Swettenham. They decided that the F.M.S. were to advance the whole capital at 3% interest but without Sinking Fund. The Colonial staff considered that the F.M.S. advancing the whole capital would serve two long term purposes. One, it would remove the syndicate from the scene and thus facilitate the take over of the terminal section in the future. Second, it would give the F.M.S. a basis to claim "the practical control of the working" of the Johore line. Though the F.M.S. were denied the security of a Sinking Fund, they were to share in the profits of the line with Johore. However, the share of profits received by the F.M.S. would go to reduce the amount of capital Johore owed to the F.M.S.⁹² Thus, the Colonial staff kept the private syndicate out of Johore while simultaneously removing the Board's objections and meeting its requests. But, it had made no concession to the wishes of Sultan Ibrahim and the interests of his private friends.

However, the Colonial staff anticipated difficulties from Sultan Ibrahim. So, they gave specific instructions to Swettenham how to handle the Sultan if he proved difficult. If Sultan Ibrahim refused to comply with the Colonial Office decisions, Swettenham was given the power to threaten him that steps would be taken, "to put in force the provisions of Article 3 of the Agreement of 11th December, 1885 by the appointment of a British officer to reside at his capital."⁹³ Ommanney, from whom the suggestion had originated, was well aware that the powers of the

British officer were limited and could not greatly affect the position of the Sultan in Johore. But, he had learnt from Sir Cecil Smith that the Sultan would consider the appointment of even a Consular officer "a long step in the direction of the loss of his independence."⁹⁴ So the Colonial staff knew that the warning to appoint a British officer to Johore would in itself constitute an effective threat to Sultan Ibrahim who coveted his independent position. Obviously, they felt that this would compel Sultan Ibrahim to accept their decisions.

But, the Colonial staff did not want the Sultan humiliated in any way. They knew that the Sultan would lose face if all his previous suggestions were brushed aside and the Colonial Office decisions were forced on him. Rather, they planned to first source the approval of the Sultan and Swettenham, unofficially, and then get the Advisory Board to make the Sultan put forward their decisions as his own proposals for the acceptance of the F.M.S. and the Colonial Office. Thus, the Colonial staff would achieve their purpose while saving the pride of the Sultan. So, Swettenham was instructed to put the proposals to the Sultan, unofficially, and secure his views.⁹⁵

Thus advised, Swettenham met Sultan Ibrahim and Dato Mohammed in early December, 1902. He put to them the Colonial Office proposals which he had slightly modified. The capital was to be completely provided by the F.M.S. at 3% without Sinking Fund. But the F.M.S. were to receive 4% interest as soon as the Johore railways paid 4% profits. Only when the profits exceeded 4% were they to be equally shared between the F.M.S. and the Johore Governments, and the F.M.S. share to go to the reduction of the capital loaned. Swettenham reserved to the F.M.S. the right to supervise all work in connection with the survey and construction of the Johore line. The F.M.S. Government was given the right to make the decision whether the work was to be done by the F.M.S. Railway Department or to be let out on contract. Swettenham dropped the Colonial Office decision to leave the nominal control of the Johore line to the Sultan while the F.M.S. had control of the practical working. In place, he proposed a Board of Control in which the F.M.S. were to have at least equal representation. Direction of traffic and the general management of the railway was to rest with the Board of Control.⁹⁶

Initially, Sultan Ibrahim showed anxiety on the issue of the management of the railway. He wished to keep the F.M.S. completely out of it. Dato Mohammed desired that the loan should be made in silver and not

in gold as had been suggested. But no serious objections were raised by either of them and Swettenham found no cause to threaten the enforcement of Article III of the 1885 Treaty.⁹⁷ Soon after Sultan Ibrahim accepted the proposals in toto.⁹⁸

Having accepted the British proposals Sultan Ibrahim could not continue his negotiations with the private contractors and engineers. Early in January 1903 these circumstances compelled him to wire to the Advisory Board to stop making further arrangements with Messrs. Pauling & Co., and Messrs. Barry and Leslie who were the Consulting Engineers. Both Abdul Rahman and Sir Robert Herbert were unhappy about this decision as they feared that a breach of promise on the part of the Sultan would lead to a public scandal which would be detrimental to future efforts to obtain private financiers and contractors to participate in the development of Johore. Both approached Lucas on this point and urged him to let Pauling have the contract for railway construction.⁹⁹ Lucas remained uninfluenced. He preferred the F.M.S. Government to undertake construction and in the event of letting out the work on contract, he was against giving it to Pauling without the competition of other tenders. He advised that the Sultan should release himself from the promise by compensating Pauling.¹⁰⁰

Soon Pauling & Co. came to know of the Sultan's negotiations with Swettenham. They informed Sultan Ibrahim that they would sue him for breach of promise if the contract for railway construction in Johore were not given to them and given to the F.M.S. instead. Pauling offered to construct the line to the satisfaction of the F.M.S. engineers and expressed his desire to send out his representative to discuss the details with Sultan Ibrahim and Swettenham.¹⁰¹ This threat and offer made no impact on the Sultan. He proceeded with his arrangements with Swettenham. Without even mentioning his promise to Pauling, he let Swettenham to go as far as drawing up the draft convention of the Johore State Railway, the official name for the Johore line. Sultan Ibrahim promised to discuss this draft convention with Swettenham in early February.¹⁰²

The Sultan failed to keep his promise due to his change of mind. During the second or third week of February Abdul Rahman returned to Johore. He came with new attractive proposals from Pauling and friends. They were willing to find half the capital required for railway construction at 3% interest without even going to the public.¹⁰³ At this juncture,

the Sultan received a letter from the Advisory Board. It disclosed to him that the Board had been legally advised that it had no defence against Pauling if he took legal action as he had threatened earlier. Also the Board had been warned that Pauling would claim heavy damages. Furthermore, it expressed the fear that the subject of Pauling may be brought up in Parliament resulting in publicity and causing great damage to the names of both the Board and the Sultan in the business circles of London. This, in effect, would mean that in future neither the Board nor the Sultan could confidently approach London business circles for capital for development programmes in Johore as their confidence in both would be shaken by the cancellation of the Pauling contract. Therefore, the Board suggested to the Sultan that since the F.M.S. had the option of letting the construction on contract, Pauling should be given the contract.¹⁰⁴ Abdul Rahman's dominating influence, the Advisory Board's sound arguments, and the Sultan's own desire to deny the F.M.S. a basis for complete control or management of the Johore line and to retain the confidence of the London business circles undoubtedly influenced Sultan Ibrahim's change of mind in the cause of the month of February.

Sultan Ibrahim manifested this change of mind when once again he proposed some alterations to the arrangements made in December, 1902. One of his new suggestions was that Messrs: Pauling & Co. were to be given the contract for the construction of the Johore line as promised formerly by him and on terms agreed on by Pauling and the Johore Government. Next, he proposed to retain Messrs: Barry and Leslie as Consulting Engineers of Johore for supervising the construction of the Johore railway. However, the F.M.S. Engineers were still given the right to pass the work. His last proposition was that the F.M.S. should provide at most half or three-quarters of the capital while the syndicate was to secure the rest. Thus Sultan Ibrahim sought to avoid breaking his promise to any concerned party, and the ensuing detrimental publicity.¹⁰⁵

Sultan Ibrahim offered also another alternative to Swettenham. In this second alternative he proposed that Pauling & Co. should construct half the Johore line while the F.M.S. undertook the construction of the other half. He suggested that Pauling should construct the North Section and the F.M.S. the South Section. Half the capital was to be provided by the syndicate and the other half by the F.M.S. Again, the F.M.S. was given the right to supervise and pass the whole railway. The constantly vacillating Sultan shifted the blame for this change of mind to

the Advisory Board. He informed Swettenham that the Board had failed to communicate these attractive proposals made by Pauling and the syndicate and that he had learnt of them recently from Abdul Rahman on his return.¹⁰⁶

Swettenham, however, did not find the Sultan's proposals attractive. He rejected them completely. He was unwilling to give Pauling and Co. the contract and to employ Messrs: Barry and Leslie as Consulting Engineers for a railway to be financed by the F.M.S. Now, he was firm that the F.M.S. should loan the whole capital or have no share in it. The Sultan's change of mind put Swettenham in an uncompromising and unco-operative mood. Ostensibly, Swettenham freed Sultan Ibrahim from his acceptance of the proposals in December, 1902. He gave him the freedom to proceed with his private negotiations. However, Swettenham informed the Sultan that he did not wish to enter into any arrangements with him as long as his earlier arrangements with Pauling & Co. and Messrs: Barry and Leslie stood in the way. At this point Swettenham felt the necessity to warn the Sultan that in the event of him constructing the Johore line independently without the F.M.S. co-operation, the Sultan could not expect F.M.S. assurance that it would join its lines to the Johore line when completed.¹⁰⁷

Swettenham's threat made its impact on Sultan Ibrahim. He realised that Swettenham wanted for the F.M.S. a position of complete control not only of the construction and management of the Johore line but also the disbursement of the loan. Sultan Ibrahim sarcastically observed to Swettenham, "without these powers Johore would stand by as almost a mere spectator outside the arena of action with the privilege of paying 3% and giving its general revenue as security for the money borrowed to be spent by others."¹⁰⁸ However, he was aware that it was futile to ignore Swettenham's warning as the Johore line would not be lucrative as an independent line, and, more important still, Pauling and his syndicate would not be forthcoming with their capital in such circumstances. Therefore, Sultan Ibrahim had no other course but assure Swettenham that he would not undertake to construct and work the Johore line independently of the F.M.S. even if capital was available from private sources. He begged Swettenham to reconsider his recent proposals.¹⁰⁹

Swettenham stood by his earlier rejection. He was determined to secure for the F.M.S. full control of the construction and preponderating influence in the management of the Johore railway. Both these, he con-

tended, would enable the achievement of the British aim of seeing that the capital would be spent "on the soundest principle". But to Sultan Ibrahim he cited other flimsy reasons for his rejection.¹¹⁰ Sultan Ibrahim now desired to discuss his proposals personally with Swettenham. Swettenham who now knew of the Sultan's commitments to his friends agreed to see the Sultan. But before meeting him, Swettenham suggested to Sultan Ibrahim that he should consider withdrawing honourably from his promises to Messrs: Pauling & Co., and Messrs: Barry & Leslie and without involving himself in any legal entanglements. If Sultan Ibrahim found it possible, Swettenham suggested that he should reconsider the proposals agreed to in December, 1902. Once again he impressed on Sultan Ibrahim that the F.M.S. could not assure him of connecting its lines to the Johore line if it was not built by the F.M.S. itself.¹¹¹ The interview proved to be a victory for Swettenham. Sultan Ibrahim agreed to seek release from his promises to Pauling & Co. and Messrs: Barry and Leslie. He desired Swettenham to do this on his behalf.¹¹² Soon after this interview, on 23rd March, 1903 Sultan Ibrahim sailed for Australia after instructing the Advisory Board to find a way out of the difficulty,¹¹³ and empowering the Mentri Besar in the capacity of Pemangku Raja to settle the railway question on his behalf.¹¹⁴ His sudden departure to Australia signified not only an escape from the embarrassment which would ensue from his breach of promise but also a capitulation to British pressure and defeat in his aim of keeping the British completely out of Johore affairs.

The Colonial Office approved Swettenham's negotiations with Sultan Ibrahim. Swettenham now set out to get the Sultan released from his promises to Pauling & Co. and Messrs: Barry and Leslie. He sought the co-operation of Sir Robert Herbert to approach these men. When approached Pauling informed Sir Robert Herbert that he and his friends were willing to release the Sultan from his promise, "if Sir F. Swettenham can agree with his representatives on the terms of a sub-contract for Pauling & Co. to do such works and supply such materials as will be given out to a Contractor."¹¹⁵ The Board therefore proposed to Swettenham that the F.M.S. should give a sub-contract to Pauling & Co. to undertake "a greater part of the work," and that Messrs: Barry and Leslie should be employed by the Sultan on a fixed salary. These proposals were communicated to Swettenham to make his own decision, unprejudiced by the views of the Colonial staff.¹¹⁶

In the meantime the Board arranged with Swettenham for him to meet Pauling to come to some form of arrangement acceptable to both the F.M.S. and the Johore Sultan. Simultaneously,¹¹⁷ Swettenham proceeded to draw up the draft of the Convention to be signed by the F.M.S. and the Johore Sultan. He also drew up a Proviso stating that the Convention was to take effect only after the Sultan had been released from his promise to Pauling. As Swettenham was due to go on leave in October, he desired to get both the Convention and the Proviso signed by Sultan Ibrahim before his departure. The Sultan was still in Australia but Swettenham expected his return in October. Therefore, Swettenham sought permission from the Colonial Office to proceed as he had planned.¹¹⁸ The Colonial staff had no objection to this course as they understood Swettenham's fear that the Sultan may change his mind again. But, Sir Robert Herbert was opposed to this move because he feared that if Pauling came to know that the Convention had been signed prior to settlement with him, he may prove difficult.¹¹⁹ He felt Swettenham should wait until he had conferred with the Board and settled the Pauling complication when he came to London in October.¹²⁰ In the meantime Pauling had suggested to the Board that monetary compensation could settle their claims. This Sir Robert Herbert felt was to the advantage of Johore.¹²¹ The Colonial Office was agreeable to this postponement.¹²²

The Advisory Board did not find Swettenham agreeable to its suggestion. But Swettenham at this juncture did not know of Pauling's suggestion of monetary compensation. Though Swettenham had no serious objection to delaying the signing of the Convention, he was still for signing it before he left in October.¹²³

The letting out of the Johore Revenue Farms at an increased rent which would realise an increase of £40,000 a year in the Johore Revenue led to speculation among the Johore Malays that this would enable Johore to pay the interest on the railway loan from private sources and to construct the line as it pleased with the aid of private contractors but without any British interference.¹²⁴ These factors caused Swettenham to fear that the Sultan on his return may be influenced to turn once again to Pauling and his friends. He wished to prevent this by binding the Sultan to their earlier agreement as soon as he returned from Australia.

The Board acknowledged that it was wise to bind the Sultan in some way in case he contemplated reopening negotiations with Pauling. However, it was against signing the Convention for fear of ruining the chances

of securing easier terms of settlement with Pauling. So it suggested to Swettenham that he should secure from the Sultan express authority to modify the Convention where necessary and for the Board to sign the Convention in London on behalf of the Sultan — after the Pauling claims were settled. The Sultan was to sign a further copy of the Convention later.¹²⁵ Both the Colonial Office and Swettenham agreed to these suggestions.¹²⁶

Swettenham was due in England on leave in October but he postponed his departure till November. In late October Sultan Ibrahim returned from Australia. Swettenham most probably saw Sultan Ibrahim and secured his approval to the suggestion of the Board. In addition he probably secured the Sultan's permission for the F.M.S. men to proceed with survey work for the railway line in Johore. So before his departure, Swettenham instructed W.H. Treacher, Resident-General of the F.M.S. to proceed with the survey in Johore.¹²⁷ On Swettenham's departure in November, 1903, Taylor became the Acting High Commissioner. Soon after in January, 1904 Sultan Ibrahim left for Europe. This meant that for the first time all the parties involved in the railway negotiations were in Europe.

Sultan Ibrahim professed that his main reason for leaving Johore again so soon, for Europe this time, was to settle the Johore railway question.¹²⁸ But his actions did not match his words. Instead of going directly to London, Sultan Ibrahim stopped in Paris. During the Sultan's absence from Johore, Taylor had trouble trying to proceed with the survey in Johore. In December, 1903 when the Sultan was still in Johore, Taylor had written to him about the proposed survey work. The Sultan, however, had left for Europe without giving a definite reply.¹²⁹ The Colonial Office on the other hand had instructed Taylor that the survey should proceed as scheduled by Swettenham. But when Taylor requested the co-operation of the Johore officials, the Pemangku Raja expressed the view that the survey should not commence until agreement had been finally reached on the Johore railway issue.¹³⁰ This made it necessary to contact Sultan Ibrahim in Paris.

Another factor also influenced this decision. Alfred Lyttelton had replaced Chamberlain as the new Colonial Secretary and Sir John Anderson was being sent out to fill the post of High Commissioner following Swettenham's retirement. Lyttelton wanted the Johore Railway Convention to be signed before Anderson left for Singapore.¹³¹ So Sul-

tan Ibrahim had to be contacted and requested to come to London to sign the Convention. But Sultan Ibrahim did not comply with this request. He wanted to await the arrival of three of the members of his State Council to consult them before deciding on such an important step as signing the Convention. The issue of survey in Johore was also to be decided in a meeting with the Advisory Board after the arrival of his Council members.¹³²

Sultan Ibrahim's delay tactics aroused hostile reactions among the Colonial staff, especially in Lucas. Feelings may have been aggravated by their knowledge of the state of affairs, within Johore, gathered from Swettenham's report following his pre-departure tour of Johore Bahru.¹³³ Lucas suggested that Lyttelton should write to Sultan Ibrahim asking him to come to London for an immediate interview. If the Sultan complied and came to London, Lucas suggested that Swettenham should see him first and get his signature to the Convention. If Sultan Ibrahim ignored Lyttelton's request, Lucas suggested resorting to the familiar threat of appointing a British Agent in Johore. This time, however, Lucas explicitly stated that the consular functions of the British Agent was in time to develop into those of a British Resident exercising control over the Sultan. The reasons that were to justify such action were the Sultan's failure to sign the Convention, to countenance the Colonial Secretary's request to be in London, and the Sultan contemplating a year's absence from Johore. These had to take the place of the usual British justification of maladministration which they could not cite as they learnt from Swettenham's report.¹³⁴ The other members of the Colonial staff agreed with Lucas's suggestions.

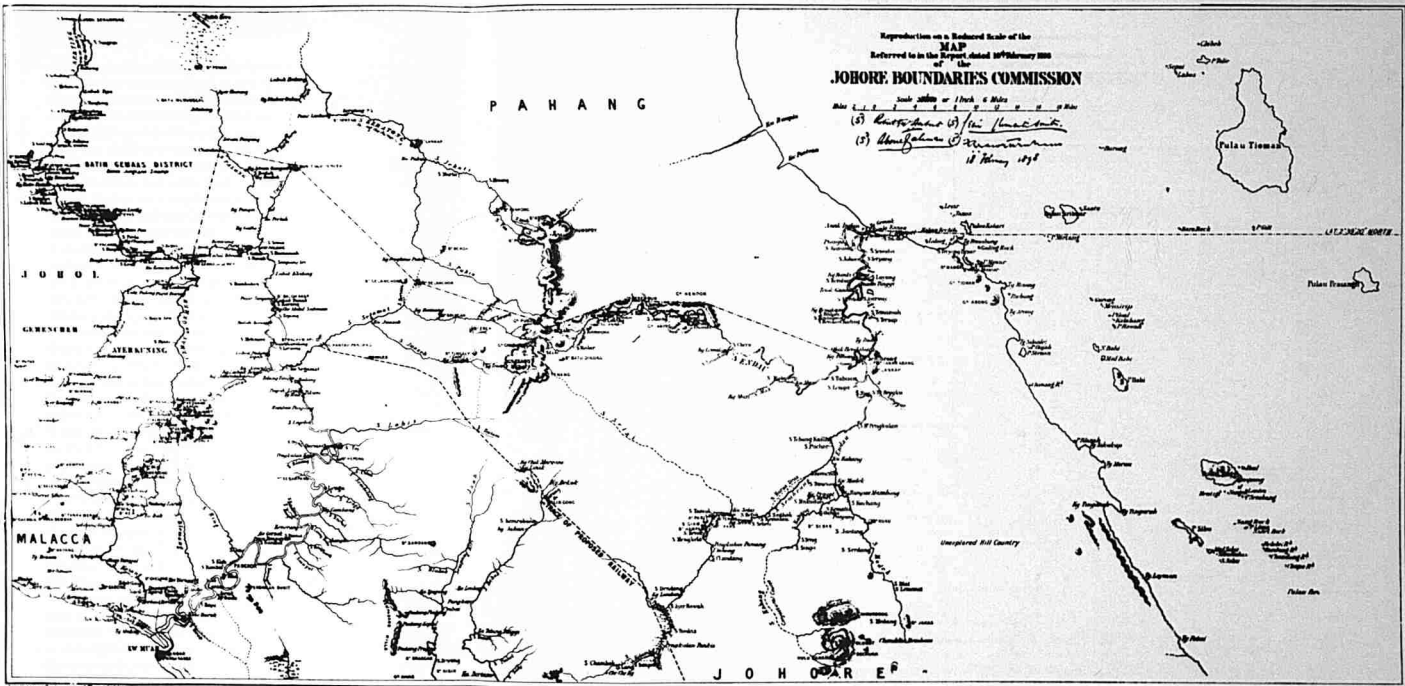
Lyttelton favoured the proposition that Sultan Ibrahim should be asked to come to London for an interview.¹³⁵ In early March Sultan Ibrahim complied and appeared in London — thus denying the Colonial staff the opportunity to threaten him with the appointment of the British Agent. On 11 March, 1904 Sultan Ibrahim met Lyttelton in the presence of Robert Herbert, Ommannay, Anderson, Swettenham, Johnson and Lucas. At this interview Sultan Ibrahim definitely agreed to sign the Johore Railway Convention as soon as his three Council members arrived in London. He also explicitly consented to the F.M.S. proceeding with the survey in Johore.¹³⁶

After negotiations reached this point, Sultan Ibrahim neither changed his mind nor resorted to delay tactics. The Colonial Office now had to

contend with demands and delays from the Advisory Board and the three Council members. Members of the Advisory Board made changes which were in line with the general agreement of the Convention agreed to by Sultan Ibrahim and Swettenham. But Abdul Rahman not only pressed for alterations which were inconsistent with the general agreement but also instigated and induced the other Council members to do likewise. Though Sultan Ibrahim was present at the earlier meetings of the Board and the members, he was unable to check Abdul Rahman. Rather, Robert Herbert had the impression that Sultan Ibrahim was afraid of Abdul Rahman.¹³⁷

Amendments and alterations proposed by the members of the Board and the Council were discussed and finalised with Swettenham who kept the Colonial Office informed and who was also aware of the Colonial Office views on the proposed amendments.¹³⁸ Most of the alterations were comparatively minor, except for two on which both the Colonial staff and Swettenham were determined to see that F.M.S. interests were secured. These two amendments concerned the repayment of the loan and the composition of the Board of Control. The Advisory Board wanted to reserve for Johore the right and freedom to decide when it wished to repay the loan in part or in full, after a certain period of time. Lucas felt that if Johore was given the right and freedom to decide this, the F.M.S. should also be given the right and freedom to decide to call for the repayment of the loan after a certain date. Both Ommanney and Lyttelton were insistent that it should be made clear that despite repayment of the loan, the F.M.S. would still retain control and running power of the Johore State Railway.¹³⁹ It was finally agreed to by both parties that until after 1925 Johore was not bound to pay or the F.M.S. bound to accept any part of the loan. But, if both parties agreed, repayment could be made at an earlier date.¹⁴⁰

The other important alteration proposed by the Advisory Board was that the Board of Control should be composed of two representatives from Johore and two representatives from the F.M.S. Earlier Sultan Ibrahim had agreed that the F.M.S. was to have three representatives while Johore had two. Swettenham was opposed to equal representation on the Board. He argued that since the F.M.S. was taking all the financial risk, the F.M.S. should have more representatives on the Board. He also observed that Johore did not have the trained men to sit on the Board. In reality Swettenham feared that equal representation would



Surveyors Office No. 25/11/98

Photographed at the Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton, 1898.

give rise to endless bickering. The Colonial staff agreed with his arguments as they too were all out to give the F.M.S. a majority strength to ensure control of the Board and control of the Johore State Railway ultimately.¹⁴¹ It was finally decided that the F.M.S. should have three representatives while Johore had two.¹⁴²

It was at this juncture of the negotiations when Sir Robert Herbert and the other members of the Advisory Board were fighting for the interest of Johore that Lucas observed that the Advisory Board and Sir Robert Herbert were largely responsible for the difficulties that arose over the Johore Railway Convention. Also, he pointed out that the Advisory Board usurped the role of the High Commissioner in Singapore as the medium of communication with the Colonial Office. This denied the High Commissioner the power and opportunity to influence, advise and guide the Johore Sultan as Swettenham and members of the Colonial staff, like Ommanney, greatly desired. To curb the Sultan's independence and to place him directly under the guidance of the High Commissioner, Lucas realised that it was necessary to remove the Advisory Board from the scene. So he suggested that the Advisory Board should be dissolved at the first opportunity that arose.¹⁴³

At the end of June, Sultan Ibrahim came to London prepared to sign the Convention when the Advisory Board gave the greenlight that it was safe to do so. The Johore Railway Convention was ready for initialling. It was signed by Sultan Ibrahim for Johore and Sir Frank Swettenham for the F.M.S. on 11 July, 1904. This brought to a close the protracted negotiations between Swettenham, Sultan Ibrahim, the Colonial staff and the Advisory Board.

The Convention was in every respect a victory for both Swettenham and the Colonial Office. Swettenham's dream to bring about the construction of a railway line from the north to the south of the Malay Peninsula was to be realised when construction of the Johore State Railway was to be begun in October, 1904. The survey, construction, control, and working of the Railway was in F.M.S. hands. Construction work was to be given on contract when the F.M.S. thought fit, and even then it was to be open to public tender and not given to any specific contractor.¹⁴⁴ This meant Pauling & Co. were not promised the contract as Sultan Ibrahim and the Advisory Board greatly desired. Pauling & Co. released Sultan Ibrahim from his promise for a monetary compensation of £15,000. For this purpose Sultan Ibrahim obtained a second and

separate loan of £15,000 at 3% interest from the F.M.S., and signed another agreement to repay this loan in five annual instalments of £3,000, commencing in 1905.¹⁴⁵ Messrs: Barry and Leslie also released Sultan Ibrahim for a monetary compensation of £1,500 which the Johore authorities paid.¹⁴⁶ Thus, both Swettenham and the Colonial staff successfully kept private contractors out of Johore — an effort in which the British officials were to continue in the following years. The desire to keep Johore intact for official British entry and development was first apparent in these railway negotiations.

For Sultan Ibrahim and his Malay officers — especially Abdul Rahman — the Convention was a defeat. They failed in their efforts to keep railway construction in Johore a purely internal matter, uninvolving their British neighbours. Their attempts to carry out the construction, independent of British aid, proved useless in the face of the British threat that they may not connect the F.M.S. line to the Johore line if it was not constructed by the F.M.S. Efforts to obtain a preponderating influence in the construction, management and working of the railway were also fruitless. This overwhelming defeat in their efforts signified really their failure to achieve their ultimate aim of preventing British entry into Johore, and British interference in Johore affairs. Control over railway construction in Johore was the first internal development which Sultan Ibrahim let slip into British hands. And, this was definitely not the last internal matter over which the Sultan was to lose control to the British.

Undoubtedly the Colonial Office came to focus more attention on Johore during the years of the negotiations. Swettenham was largely responsible for the interest it displayed. Desiring to complete the construction of the north-south Trunk Railway in the Malay Peninsula and wanting for the F.M.S. a position of complete control in the construction and management of the Johore section, Swettenham had to justify his demands to the Colonial Office. He had to present sound and convincing arguments why construction and management should not remain in the hands of the Johore Sultan. This resulted in Swettenham feeding into the Colonial Office appropriate information on the Sultan and Johore matters. Thus the Colonial Office now came to know more about Sultan Ibrahim and to some extent the state of affairs in Johore than it had between 1895 and 1899.

To achieve his aim Swettenham had to change the impression the Colonial Office had of the Johore Sultans in two respects — that is, the

Sultans as rulers who had the interest of their state at heart and who turned to the High Commissioner for advice and guidance in the administration of their state. He concentrated on portraying Sultan Ibrahim as a ruler who was motivated by self-interest and guided by his private advisers. Swettenham repeatedly alleged that Sultan Ibrahim desired to secure capital and contractors for constructing the Johore section from private sources rather than from the F.M.S. because he wanted to line his private purse and avoid official British observation and interference in Johore. Swettenham explained that Sultan Ibrahim feared that he would neither profit personally nor prevent British observation if F.M.S. loaned the capital and undertook the construction of the Johore line. Also, he claimed that Sultan Ibrahim was encouraged in this direction by his private advisers — both Malay officials in Johore and his European friends in Singapore — as they too hoped to profit from this venture and were well aware that they could not hope to if the F.M.S. controlled both construction and management. Furthermore, Swettenham informed the Colonial Office that it was these private advisers who instilled in Sultan Ibrahim a consciousness of his independent status and influenced him against seeking the advice of the High Commissioner as it would be detrimental to their own position vis-a-vis the Sultan. He impressed on the Colonial staff that the Johore Sultans were obliged to listen to British advice on an important issue like railway construction as the Johore Sultans owed their position and prosperity to the British and their subjects — especially the Chinese — in the Colony, respectively.

The Colonial staff — especially Lucas and Ommanney — were soon convinced that Sultan Ibrahim unlike his predecessors was neither motivated by state interest nor guided by the High Commissioner's advice. They firmly believed that Sultan Ibrahim's efforts to secure capital and technical aid from private entrepreneurs like Messrs: Pauling & Co. were motivated by the desire for personal, financial gain. This prejudice partially explains their refusal to approve any scheme in which private capitalists and contractors participated.

Another important factor also influenced the decision to keep private entrepreneurs out of the railway venture in Johore. The Colonial Office was influenced by long term British interests in Johore. Especially Lucas and Ommanney anticipated British intervention and take over of the administration in Johore in the future. When the take over

was decided, they wanted the take over of the administration of the Johore State Railway to be a smooth and easy process. They feared that it would be complicated and difficult if private companies were involved either in the financing and construction or in the management of the railway. Implicit in this decision to prevent private participation was the desire to keep private entrepreneurs completely out of Johore and thus prevent them from plundering the state of its potential wealth. Rather, they wanted to keep Johore intact for future British economic development and profitability — a motive which becomes explicit in the ensuing years over the issue of land concessions which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Simultaneously the Colonial staff became aware that Sultan Ibrahim largely chose to act independently and without guidance from the High Commissioner. They realised the need to place him under the influence of the High Commissioner. Swettenham's statements had their role in effecting this realisation. Contributing to it were the Sultan's own behaviour during the course of the negotiations — his constant changes of mind about British proposals and his resort to delay tactics — and the role of the Johore Advisory Board. Unlike Swettenham, Lucas did not attribute Sultan Ibrahim's reluctance to take the advice of the High Commissioner to his private advisers in Johore and Singapore. Lucas was of the opinion that the Advisory Board had usurped the roles of the High Commissioner as the medium of communication with the Colonial Office and as the Sultan's adviser. So he advocated that the Advisory Board should be removed at the first opportunity and thus force Sultan Ibrahim to turn to the High Commissioner in order to communicate with the Colonial Office. In this manner he hoped to bring Sultan Ibrahim under the High Commissioner's influence and guidance. This would also deny Sultan Ibrahim competent agents in London to secure private capital and technical aid. The chances of private entrepreneurs entering Johore would be reduced and the High Commissioner would not aid him in this direction. Rather, he would deter the Sultan.

British interest in Johore grew in the context of the first major step in the direction of economic development — railway construction for the opening up of the country. The British who had been content to let Sultan Ibrahim rule as he pleased between 1895 and 1899 were not willing to be mere onlookers when the first major economic development was proposed. They wanted to control this development and secure the

ensuing prosperity for themselves and not permit the private entrepreneurs to exploit it. It was in this context of desiring to control the Sultan and the development in his state that both Lucas and Ommanney constantly resorted to the threat of enforcing the provisions of Article III of the 1885 Treaty. They came to view the British officer to be so appointed not as a Consular Agent but as a British Resident exercising control over the Sultan and safeguarding British interests in Johore. The lack of a substantial case for such a step, the moderating influence of the Colonial Secretaries — Chamberlain and Lyttelton —, and the ultimate British success in the Railway Convention prevented this eventuality between 1899 and 1904.

NOTES

- 1 However it would be pertinent to bear in mind that in India British policy between 1849 and 1869 was to permit private English companies to undertake the building and management of the railways. See Josef Silverstein, "Railroads in Burma, and India", *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 5 No. 1 March, 1964, p. 18.
- 2 Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, pp. 63-65.
- 3 Khoo Kay Kim, "Johore in the Nineteenth Century: A Brief Survey," p. 90.
- 4 The Perak line between Port Weld and Taiping, opened in 1885, was constructed by the state, financed by state revenues. The line between Kuala Lumpur and Klang in Selangor was constructed by the state from its revenue and loans from the Straits Settlements and Perak. See Chai Hon-Chan *The Development of British Malaya 1896-1909*, pp. 180-181.
- 5 Jagjit Singh Sidhu, "Railways in Selangor 1882-1886," *J.M.B.R.A.S.* Volume 38, Part 1, 1965, pp. 6-8.
- 6 The Advisory Board did not take this effort by Sultan Abu Bakar seriously. They had procured the services of the Straits Government consulting engineers to prevent Sultan Abu Bakar turning to private entrepreneurs. See Keith Sinclair, *op cit*, p. 349.
- 7 *Johore State Secretariat: Official Letter Book, 1885-1893*, Letters, Sultan Abu Bakar to Cecil C. Smith, 22 and 27 June, 1892.
- 8 Earlier in 1896 Swettenham had implied an extension of the railway line through Johore, though he had not specifically proposed it. In his ambitious plan to push on the extension of all the existing lines to points of

junction and thus form one continuous railway line from Prai to Port Dickson, he had considered, "the possibility of its ultimate extension to Singapore."

C0273/215, Despatch, C.B. Mitchell to J. Chamberlain, 24 June, 1896.

- 9 C0273/252. See Enclosure in Despatch, C.B. Mitchell to J. Chamberlain, 9 November, 1899.
- 10 Mitchell was essentially opposed to Swettenham's proposals to construct railway lines in the F.M.S. by raising loans. The Governor felt that railway construction should be slowly undertaken with the state revenues financing the work. He also did not subscribe to Swettenham's contention that railways open up agricultural country. However Chamberlain's strong support won Swettenham his case.
C0273/215, Despatch, Mitchell to Chamberlain, 24 June, 1896.
C0273/218, Despatch, Mitchell to Chamberlain, 6 November, 1896. See also Chai Hon-Chan, *op cit.*, pp. 182-187, and E. Thio, "Some Aspects of the Federation of the Malay States 1896-1910," *JMBRAS* Vol 40 Pt 2, 1967, p. 7.
- 11 From experience Swettenham knew that the preparation of the surveys and estimates would take about one to two years.
C0273/252. See Enclosure in Despatch, Mitchell to Chamberlain, 9 November, 1899.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 *Ibid.* Despatch, Mitchell to Chamberlain, 9 November, 1899.
- 14 273/252. See Enclosure I in Despatch, Mitchell to Chamberlain, 30 November, 1899.
- 15 *Ibid.* See Enclosure II.
- 16 *Ibid.* Despatch, Mitchell to Chamberlain, 9 November, 1899 and enclosures.
- 17 *Ibid.* See minutes by C.P. Lucas on "Railway to Johore," 31, 1, 1900.
- 18 *Ibid.* Sir Robert Herbert to C.P. Lucas, 21 December, 1899.
- 19 *Despatches from the Secretary of State to the High Commissioner, F.M.S., 1897-1911*, Letter, C.P. Lucas to Chairman of the Advisory Board, 3 February, 1900.
- 20 *Ibid.* Letter, Robert Herbert to Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 23 February, 1900.
- 21 C0273/261. See Enclosure I in Despatch, J.A. Swettenham to Chamberlain, 14 May, 1900.
- 22 *Despatches from the Secretary of State to the High Commissioner, F.M.S., 1897-1911*. Letter, Robert Herbert to Under-Secretary of State, August, 1900.
- 23 C0273/265. Letter, Sir Robert Herbert to Colonial Office, 10 September, 1900.

- 24 *Ibid.* See minutes by E. Thorn on "Railway from Seremban to Johore Bahru," 30 August, 1900.
- 25 *Ibid.* Letter, Swettenham to Thorn, 2 September, 1900.
- 26 *Ibid.* Letter, Lucas to Robert Herbert, 4 September, 1900.
- 27 *The Malay Mail*, 16 April, 1901. The report states that the Sultan was asked to go to London. It is not clearly stated that the request was made by the Colonial Office. The Colonial Secretary may have asked the Sultan to come to London following the great racing scandal which led to the resignation of his membership in the Singapore Sporting Club in January, 1901. See *Malay Mail*, 25 January, 1901.
- 28 C0273/273, Letter, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 13 June, 1901.
- 29 *Despatches from the Secretary of State to the High Commissioner, F.M.S., 1897-1911*, Letter, Robert Herbert to Under-Secretary of State, 17 August, 1901.
- 30 C0273/288, Confidential Letter, Robert Herbert to Under-Secretary of State, 24 May, 1902.
Mr. George Pauling had come to Johore in the latter part of 1900 and while staying as the Sultan's guest had negotiated this arrangement.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 C0273/274, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 26 September, 1901.
- 33 C0273/277, Letter, Swettenham to Thorn, 23 October, 1901.
- 34 C0273/274, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 26 September, 1901.
- 35 C0273/266, See minute by C.P. Lucas on "Expenditure of Johore," 11 August, 1900 and Enclosure.
- 36 C0273/274, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 26 September, 1901.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 *Ibid.* Letter, Cecil Smith to Thorn, 20 September, 1901.
- 39 C0273/277, Letter, Mr. Rutherford Harris to Chamberlain, 16 November, 1901.
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 C0273/277, See minutes on "Johore Railway" by Mr. Thorn, 21 October, 1901, Mr. Lucas, 28 November, 1901, and Sir Montague Ommanney, 28 November, 1901.
- 42 *Ibid.* See minute by Mr. Lucas, 28 November, 1901.
C0273/289, See Memorandum by Robert Herbert, 13 November, 1901.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 C0273/277, See minute by Sir M. Ommanney, 28 November, 1901.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 C0273/277, See minute by J. Chamberlain, 1 December, 1901.

- 47 *Ibid.* See minute by Lucas, 2 December, 1901.
- 48 C0273/289, Letter, Robert Herbert to Lucas, 8 January, 1902.
- 49 *Ibid.* Letter, Colonial Office to Mr. Harris, 16 January, 1902.
- 50 C0273/289, Letter, Robert Herbert to Lucas, 8 January, 1902.
- 51 *Ibid.* See minute by Lucas on "Johore Railway," 23 and 24 January, 1902.
- 52 C0273/288, See minute by Ommanney on "Johore Railway," 20 January, 1902.
- 53 *Ibid.* See minute by Chamberlain on "Johore Railway," 31 January, 1902.
- 54 C0273/289, See minute by Lucas, 5 February, 1902.
- 55 *Ibid.* See minutes by Ommanney and Chamberlain, 11 and 12 February, 1902.
- 56 C0273/288, Letter, Lucas to Robert Herbert, 15 February, 1902.
- 57 *Ibid.* Secret Despatch, Colonial Office to Swettenham, 14 February, 1902.
- 58 C0273/282, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Colonial Office, 24 March, 1904.
- 59 C0273/282, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Colonial Office, 24 March, 1904.
- 60 *Ibid.* Confidential Letter, Lucas to Robert Herbert, 7 May, 1902.
- 61 C0273/288, Confidential Letter, Robert Herbert to Under-Secretary of State, 24 May, 1902.
- 62 *Ibid.*
- 63 C0273/288, See minute by Lucas on "Johore Railway," 28 May, 1902.
- 64 *Ibid.*
- 65 C0273/288, See minute by Ommanney on "Johore Railway," 3 June, 1902.
- 66 *Ibid.*
- 67 C0273/288, See minute by Chamberlain on "Johore Railway," 3 June, 1902.
- 68 C0273/288, Confidential Letter, Lucas to Robert Herbert, 10 June, 1902.
- 69 *Ibid.* Secret Despatch, Lucas to Swettenham, 10 June, 1902.
- 70 C0273/282, See Enclosure in Despatch, Swettenham to Colonial Office, undated.
- 71 *Ibid.* See Enclosure 2, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 25 July, 1902.
- 72 C0273/282, See Enclosure 3, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 25 July, 1902.
- 73 *Ibid.* Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 25 July, 1902.
- 74 *Ibid.*
- 75 C0273/282, Letter, Swettenham to Lucas, 26 July, 1902.
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 C0273/282, See minute by Lucas on "Johore Railway," 23 July, 1902.

- 78 *Ibid.* See minute by Ommanney on "Johore Railway," 24 July, 1902.
- 79 In fact later, the Advisory Board hoped that Chamberlain after fully knowing Johore's financial position would get the F.M.S. to give the whole loan of £1,250,000 at 3% interest, without any Sinking Fund, as paying a Sinking Fund would leave a deficit of £14,000 p.a. for Johore. C0273/288, Enclosure, Letter, Robert Herbert to Lucas, 30 September, 1902.
- 80 C0273/282, Telegram, Lucas to Swettenham, 26 August, 1902.
- 81 *Ibid.* Telegram, Swettenham to Colonial Office, 14 August, 1902.
- 82 C0273/282, Telegram, Swettenham to Colonial Office, 28 August and 2 September, 1902.
- 83 Johore revenue was estimated to be £135,600. The amount that could be spared for railway was estimated around £36,000. If the loan of £1,250,000 was provided at 5% interest, Johore would face an annual deficit of £26,500. C0273/288, See Enclosed Memorandum, Harry W. Lake to Under-Secretary of State, 19 September, 1902. Later both Robert Herbert and Cecil Smith pointed out that the Sultan was indebted to the Chinese and others in Johore.
- 84 *Ibid.*
- 85 C0273/289, See Enclosure, Letter, Cecil Smith to Lucas, 5 September, 1902.
- 86 The Colonial Office considered this a misconception of the proposals. According to it the proposal was that Johore should pay 2% interest on initial capital loan when net receipts were insufficient to pay 5% interest.
- 87 It is not clear why Sultan Ibrahim decided to do so. Like most of his other trips to Europe, it was most probably for pleasure.
- 88 C0273/288, Letter, Robert Herbert to Lucas, 2 October, 1902.
- 89 *Ibid.* Telegram, Colonial Office to Swettenham, 6 October, 1902.
- 90 C0273/284, Telegram, Swettenham to Colonial Office, 9 October, 1902.
- 91 C0273/284, See Enclosure, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Colonial Office, 16 December, 1902.
- 92 C0273/288, See minutes on "Johore Railways," by Ommanney and Chamberlain, 10 and 14 October, 1902, respectively.
- 93 C0273/284, Secret Despatch, Chamberlain to Swettenham, 17 October, 1902.
- 94 C0273/288, See minutes on "Johore Railways," by Ommanney, 10 October, 1902.
- 95 C0273/284, Secret Despatch, Chamberlain to Swettenham, 17 October, 1902.
- 96 *Ibid.* Enclosure B, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 16 December, 1902.
- 97 C0273/284, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 16 Decem-

- ber, 1902.
- 98 *Ibid.* Telegram, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 18 December, 1902.
- 99 C0273/284, Letter, Robert Herbert to Lucas, 9 January, 1903 and also Minutes by Lucas on "Johore Railway," 23 January, 1903.
- 100 *Ibid.* Letter, Lucas to Robert Herbert, 10 January, 1903.
- 101 C0273/293, See Enclosure 4, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 5 March, 1903.
- 102 *Letter Book: Johore State Secretariat*, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Swettenham, 11 February, 1903.
- 103 *Ibid.* Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Swettenham, 28 February, 1903.
- 104 C0273/293, Enclosure 4, Secret Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 16 March, 1903.
- 105 *Letter Book: Johore State Secretariat*, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Swettenham, 28 February, 1903.
- 106 *Ibid.*
- 107 *Letter Book: Johore State Secretariat*, Letter, Swettenham to Sultan Ibrahim, 2 March, 1903.
- 108 *Ibid.* Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Swettenham, 12 March, 1903.
- 109 *Ibid.*
- 110 His reasons were that Barry's specification was unsatisfactory, that he had heard discreditable accounts of the North Borneo Co. Railway which was built by Pauling, and that no provisions had been made for repayment of the loan except through revenue from the railway.
- 111 *Letter Book: Johore State Secretariat*, Letter, Swettenham to Sultan Ibrahim, 13 March, 1903.
- 112 *Ibid.* Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Swettenham, 21 March, 1903.
- 113 *Ibid.* Letter, Abdul Rahman to Robert Herbert, 22 March, 1903.
- 114 C0273/297, Letter, Robert Herbert to Colonial Office, 13 May, 1903.
- 115 *Ibid.* Enclosed Memorandum, Letter, Robert Herbert to Colonial Office, 13 May, 1903.
- 116 C0273/297, See minutes on "Johore Railway," by R.E. Stubbs, 14 May, 1903, Lucas, 16 and 21 May, 1903, Ommanney, 18 May, 1903, Onslow, 20 May, 1903, and Chamberlain 20 May, 1903.
- 117 C0273/294, See Enclosure, Confidential Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 3 August, 1903.
- 118 *Ibid.* Confidential Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 8 July, 1903.
- 119 C0273/294, See minutes on "Johore Railway," by Lucas, 11 August, 1903.
- 120 C0273/297, Enclosure, Letter, Advisory Board to Colonial Office, 29 July, 1903.
- 121 C0273/294, Letter, Robert Herbert to Lucas, 27 July, 1903.
- 122 C0273/294, Minute on "Johore Railway," by Lucas, 11 August, 1903.

- 123 *Ibid.*, Telegram, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 14 August, 1903.
- 124 C0273/294, Confidential Despatches, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 4 July, and 3 August, 1903.
- 125 *Ibid.*, Letter, Robert Herbert to Lucas, 22 August, 1903.
- 126 C0273/295, Telegram, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 23 August, 1903 and Minutes by Stubbs and Lucas, 24 August, 1903.
- 127 C0273/301, See Enclosure C, Dispatch, Taylor to Lyttelton, 16 February, 1904.
- 128 C0273/306, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Robert Herbert, 20 February, 1904.
- 129 C0273/301, See Enclosure E, Letter, Taylor to Lyttelton, 16 February, 1904.
- 130 *Ibid.*, Telegram, Taylor to Lyttelton, 1 February, 1904.
- 131 C0273/307, Letter, Lucas to Sultan Ibrahim, 18 February, 1904.
- 132 C0273/306, See Enclosure, Letter, Advisory Board to Colonial Office.
- 133 This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.
- 134 *Ibid.*, See minutes by Lucas on "Johore Railway," 2 March, 1904.
- 135 C0273/306, See minutes by Lyttelton on "Johore Railway," 5 March, 1904.
- 136 *Ibid.*, See minutes by Lucas on "Johore Railway," 12 March, 1904.
- 137 C0273/301, Letter, Robert Herbert to Frank Swettenham, 27 May, 1904.
- 138 C0273/306, Letter, Swettenham to Robert Herbert, 1 June, 1904. Also see Minutes by Lucas on "Johore Railway Convention," 15 June, 1904.
- 139 *Ibid.*, See minutes by Lucas, 15 June, 1904, Ommanney, 16 June, 1904, and Lyttelton, 17 June, 1904.
- 140 C0273/306, Johore Railway Convention, 11 July, 1904, Article XVII (3).
- 141 *Ibid.*, See minutes by Lucas on "Johore Railway Convention," 15 June, 1904.
- 142 C0273/306, Johore Railway Convention, Article XXV.
- 143 *Ibid.*, See minutes by Lucas on "Johore Railway Convention," 15 June, 1904.
- 144 C0273/306, Johore Railway Convention, Article XIII.
- 145 *Ibid.*, Agreement for loan of £15,000, October, 1904.
- 146 *Letter Book: Johore State Secretariat, 1902-1909*, Letter, Abdul Rahman to Robert Herbert, 30 April, 1903.

4

British Interference in Johore Administration, 1903 — 1909

Proposals for railway construction had roused greater British interest in Johore. This interest had developed into a desire not only to undertake, control, and benefit from this major economic development but also to establish political control in Johore. To effect this the British sought justification in maladministration in Johore. Thus interest in economic development widened into interest in the general administration of Johore. Attempts were made in 1903 to secure sufficient evidence to build a case of maladministration in Johore. This led to an inquiry into the state of the Johore Forces and an inspection of the administrative centre, Johore Bahru, by Frank Swettenham. Ironically, Swettenham did not produce sufficient evidence to help build a case of maladministration, and did not advocate British interference at this juncture. Though British efforts to establish political control were not fruitful, their interest in Johore was sustained.

British interest in Johore increased during the years 1905 to 1909. Railway construction in Johore led to the next stage in the economic development of the country — the opening up of virgin, jungle land to cultivation. Rubber cultivation which was becoming popular and profitable in the F.M.S., led to British concessionaires like Frank Swettenham seeking grants of large blocks of land in Johore. For this they approached Sultan Ibrahim and succeeded in obtaining large concessions. Once again the British were unwilling to be mere spectators. They wished to control this economic development. The High Commissioner, Sir John Anderson, wished to see that land grants in Johore were made on F.M.S. terms in order to streamline and facilitate administration when the British took over in the future. The Colonial Office was keen that British capitalists should benefit from this development. They were determined to prevent the Sultan and the private entrepreneurs from exploiting the

state for their own profit.

To control the granting of large concessions, the British had to exercise effective influence over Sultan Ibrahim. The Colonial staff and the High Commissioner realised that their influence would be insignificant beside that exercised by the Sultan's private advisers — the Johore Advisory Board, Abdul Rahman, C.B. Buckley and his firm, Messrs: Rodyk and Davidson. To bring Sultan Ibrahim under the High Commissioner's influence while the Sultan was in Johore and under the Colonial Office influence while in London, these sources of private advice had to be removed. Both the Colonial Office and the High Commissioner successfully exploited opportune opportunities to secure the abolition of the Advisory Board, and the dismissal of Abdul Rahman, Buckley and his firm from the Sultan's services in the course of the period from 1905 to 1909. Simultaneously, both spared no efforts to bring Sultan Ibrahim under their influence and control.

However, the British were not satisfied with achieving their objectives by isolated instances of interference, and exercise of influence and control over Sultan Ibrahim. Their ultimate aim was to exercise immediate, complete, and continued control over Johore administration and its future economic development. To achieve this, the Sultan and his state had to be placed under a British officer. The Colonial staff who had only threatened to appoint a British Agent in the course of the railway negotiations, were now prepared to take the step at the earliest possible opportunity. As the High Commissioner was of the opinion that the Agent with consular functions would not serve British interest in Johore, he was not in favour of the appointment. Rather, he wanted the appointment of a Resident with a seat in the State Council and the right to inspect public buildings. Also, he did not want the Resident to be imposed on the Sultan and his officials. Instead, he desired the appointment of the Resident to result from a move within Johore. Thus, he hoped to secure the goodwill and co-operation of the Johore Malays. His confidence in the possibility of such a development is partially explained by the rapport he established with the Mentri Besar, the State Secretary and other members of the State Council while the Sultan was absent from Johore. However, in the latter part of the decade Anderson came to exert considerable influence over Sultan Ibrahim. He temporarily secured Sultan Ibrahim's co-operation and overcame his aversion to British advice. It was probably in this atmosphere that Anderson

secured the revocation of the land concession to Mr. A.J. Barry and the formal abolition of the Advisory Board. Anderson's next achievement was getting Sultan Ibrahim to initial a Railway Agreement in March, 1908 giving the F.M.S. the power to work the completed railway section between Gemas and Segamat. Crowning these achievements was Anderson's diplomatic manoeuvre which got Sultan Ibrahim to formally request the appointment of a British officer to Johore. This officer was tactfully termed General Adviser not Resident. But whether the General Adviser exercised the desired control or not remained to be seen in the ensuing years.

However, in this chapter I am going to examine in detail the growing British interest in Johore and the various means and steps considered and taken to bring Sultan Ibrahim and Johore under British control — culminating in the appointment of the General Adviser in 1909.

In April, 1902 when Sultan Ibrahim was in London, he agreed with the Advisory Board's view that some form of arrangement had to be made between Johore and the British for the systematic co-operation of the Johore Forces and the Imperial Forces for the defence of Singapore and the Malay Peninsula.¹ Before committing Johore to any agreement, however, Sultan Ibrahim wanted the Johore Forces to be reorganised and their military standards improved. Colonel Tompkins was duly appointed the Commanding Officer and entrusted with the task. Few months later Secretary Chamberlain sought information on the progress that had been so far made in the reorganisation and improvement of the Johore Forces. Also, he desired to know when the Johore Forces would be ready to serve as a contingent with the Singapore Garrison. He directed Swettenham to secure information on these points.

At an interview Sultan Ibrahim informed Swettenham that the Johore Forces were not ready to serve with the Singapore Garrison as the Forces were neither reorganised nor sufficiently trained. This, he complained, was due to Colonel Tompkin's inability to both train and reorganise his Forces. Furthermore, he claimed that many Malays resigned from the Forces due to their dislike of Colonel Tompkin. However, he discussed with Swettenham the difficulties which he encountered in the reorganisation of his army² and sought Swettenham's advice on the course he should take in the future. Swettenham suggested that a contingent of the Malay States Guides could be stationed at Johore. This would solve defence problems for Johore. For the British it would ensure uniformity

in the defence arrangements for the Peninsula and place authority for defence arrangements completely in British hands. Sultan Ibrahim did not wish to have a foreign army on his soil. Knowing the implications of having one, he turned down Swettenham's suggestion.

The Colonial Office was disappointed with not only the Sultan's rejection of Swettenham's proposition but also the condition of the Johore Forces. Unwilling to give up, the Colonial Office approached the Advisory Board to reconsider the proposition. Also, it sought definite information from the Board regarding the future of the Johore Forces and the possibility of them serving in conjunction with the Singapore Garrison. Though not very well informed on the subject, the Board informed the Colonial Office that the Johore Forces were in a very bad condition. It stated that Colonel Tompkins had made negligible progress in the direction of reorganisation and improvement of the Forces. Therefore, it was of the opinion that there was the possibility that a new commanding officer would be appointed soon. Despite its knowledge of the poor state of the Johore Forces, the Board was not in favour of recommending the reconsideration of Swettenham's proposal to Sultan Ibrahim. Rather, it expressed the view that the stationing of a contingent of the Malay States Guides in Johore would not only precipitate friction but also undermine the discipline of the contingent, due to the bad example of the Forces.³ This was a poor excuse to camouflage its knowledge of the Sultan's opposition to any move which infringed on Johore's sovereignty. Though members of the Colonial staff like Ommanney viewed the condition of the Johore Forces as "another symptom of the rotten state of Johore,"⁴ they accepted with resignation that they could do nothing about both at this stage.

In July, 1903 when Swettenham learnt of the Board's decision not to recommend his proposal to Sultan Ibrahim, he did not accept it with similar despair. He felt that the British Government had to do something not only about the Johore Forces but also about Sultan Ibrahim. This feeling was not provoked by the issue of the Forces alone. More important still the financially strengthened position of Johore and the effect it may have on the course of the railway negotiations motivated Swettenham's decision. Swettenham was unconvinced that the continued poor condition of the Forces was totally due to Colonel Tompkin's inability. Cause for the failure was to be found in Sultan Ibrahim's unwillingness to sufficiently finance the enrolling, equipping, housing, and

training of members of the Forces. The salaries of enrolled men were largely in arrears. He felt that Sultan Ibrahim had formed the Forces more for display than for defence purposes. This was evident from the tasks which the Johore Forces performed. They were used to form a guard of honour at appropriate functions, to guard public buildings and to do police work. Swettenham informed the Colonial Office that even the task of policing the vast and populated state could not be effectively carried out if not for the fact that the Chinese population maintained law and order among themselves without interference from the Malays.

Swettenham took this opportunity to press home his opinion of Sultan Ibrahim. He explicitly stated that Sultan Ibrahim's main concern was gratifying his personal whims and fancies. Neither the affairs of Johore nor aiding the British in the defence of their Colony and the Peninsula states preoccupied the Sultan, to the same degree. Personal interest, Swettenham argued, was the reason why Sultan Ibrahim opposed any move which would compromise his independent position or even lead to questions about his private expenditure. Furthermore, this factor also accounted for Sultan Ibrahim's reluctance to heed the Governor's advice. Within Johore, Sultan Ibrahim was an autocratic ruler. Both the Europeans and Malays in his service were not bold enough to advise or check Sultan Ibrahim despite their realisation of the unsatisfactory conditions within Johore. Rather, Sultan Ibrahim sought and acted upon the advice given by his European friends in Singapore. Swettenham claimed that it was these Europeans who encouraged Sultan Ibrahim to rule autocratically within Johore and ignore the advice of the Governor. This they did to secure their vested interests in Johore. Swettenham bluntly told the Colonial staff that their beliefs about Sultan Abu Bakar and Sultan Ibrahim as admirable rulers of Johore and loyal friends of the British Government were wrong. Sultan Abu Bakar had possessed a few good qualities. Even these Sultan Ibrahim lacked — probably due, in Swettenham's opinion, to his "mixed parentage."⁵

The Colonial staff got the message that some form of British control had to be exercised over Johore and its Sultan — without Swettenham having to explicitly say so. R.E. Stubbs voiced the general feeling of the Colonial staff that the issue was no longer restricted to the specific question of the role of the Johore Forces in the defence of the Colony and the Malay States. Now it raised the "wider question of how long can we allow the State to be left in the hands of its very undesirable Sultan?"⁶

Stubbs suggested enforcing Article III of the Agreement of 1885. He was aware that the powers of the British Agent to be so appointed were very restricted. Yet, he was confident that, "when the thin end of the wedge is in, there can be little doubt that it would need only a few years to bring Johore into the Federation."⁷ However, the Colonial staff decided to shelve decision on this matter until Swettenham's arrival in London in August, 1903. Then, they hoped to discuss seriously the question of the appointment of a British officer to Johore and come to a decision.⁸

Chamberlain agreed with the decision of his permanent staff. He pointed out that for British interference in Johore to be effected a more definite case than the present conditions in Johore, was necessary.⁹ Mr. Collins, a member of the Colonial staff, in casting about for a more solid case came up with the suggestion that the failure on the part of Sultan Ibrahim to maintain the Johore Forces in good condition and ready to serve with the Singapore Garrison as a breach of Article I of the Agreement of 1885.¹⁰ Article I in a sub-clause provides that both the British and Johore Governments would co-operate in the joint defence of their territories. Obviously, Mr. Collins was stretching the meaning of the clause to build a stronger case for British interference out of the issue of the poor conditions of the Johore Forces. Despite being aware that the interpretation of the clause was far-fetched, Stubbs too considered using this argument if Sultan Ibrahim proved unmanageable.¹¹

At this juncture when the Colonial staff was looking around for a strong case to justify British interference in Johore, Sir Cecil Smith's suggestion that Swettenham should visit Johore Bahru and report on conditions there was most welcome. Sultan Ibrahim's personal conduct in Australia during his visit there precipitated Smith's suggestion. Smith learnt in July, 1903 that Sultan Ibrahim was at this time "disporting himself in Australia with a 'gaiety' lady whom he styles Sultana."¹² This led to Smith's decision that it was time that the Colonial Office took some action in Johore. To do so, it was important that the Colonial Office should be well informed of conditions within Johore. Convinced that Swettenham would be most competent to judge, Smith suggested that before Swettenham came on leave, he should make a friendly visit and learn of the conditions in Johore — especially about the progress made in the development of the country, and how the police, gaol, hospital and schools were maintained and functioned.

Simultaneously, Swettenham also drew the attention of the Colonial Office to administrative conditions within Johore. He did this in the hope of convincing the Colonial Secretary that despite increased revenue and consequent ability to pay a higher interest on railway loans, Johore should not be allowed to take a private loan from Pauling and Co. at a higher interest rate. Swettenham argued that Johore needed the extra revenue which it now earned from letting out the Johore Revenue Farms at a higher rent, for financing its own development, settling its debts and organising and equipping the Johore Forces. In this context his concluding observation to Chamberlain was that "the system of administration in Johore leaves a great deal to be desired."¹³

In his despatch Swettenham enclosed a memorandum put up by Mr. C.T. Hare, Secretary for Chinese affairs in the F.M.S. Mr. Hare observed that Sultan Ibrahim and his Malay officers were just nominal rulers and administrators of Johore. Real power, he contended, rested in the hands of an oligarchy of rich Johore Chinese, and Singapore professionals and traders who were largely English. Mr. Hare claimed that this oligarchy influenced Sultan Ibrahim to prevent the entry of the Straits Chinese and Chinese of all other clans from China — except the Teo Chiu — into Johore. The English professionals and traders like Mr. Buckley and Mr. Thomas Shelford feared that the entry of the Straits Chinese into Johore would soon entail British interference on their subjects' behalf. This they wished to prevent. Mr. Hare observed that the Teo Chiu Chinese in Johore were wasting the best agricultural land in the interior by reckless and wasteful methods of cultivation of pepper, gambier and tapioca. He contended that the construction of the Johore State Railway would accelerate the process unless prevented by British interference. Therefore, in his memorandum Mr. Hare recommended the appointment of a British Agent in Johore not only to prevent detrimental methods of cultivation but also "to break up this Teo Chiu cabal, and introduce the Singapore and Malacca Chinese with their superior intelligence and introduce the Cantonese and Hakkas to exploit tin mining land."¹⁴ Such a step, Mr. Hare believed, would pave the way for Johore to join the F.M.S.

However, before the arrival of Swettenham's despatch, Chamberlain sent his instructions to Swettenham directing him to make a friendly visit to Johore and submit a report on what he saw and learnt. Accordingly, Swettenham visited Johore Bahru on 16 September, 1903. Dur-

ing his visit Swettenham inspected the Government office, Magistrate's Court, Chief Police Station, hospital, prison, school and Post Office. He requested for permission to visit the Treasury but Sultan Ibrahim warded this off with lame excuses. In October, 1903 Swettenham submitted to Chamberlain his report and a memorandum by his Secretary, Mr. G.A. Rosanquet.

Swettenham's report was a masterpiece in the art of balance. Swettenham subtly balanced his criticisms of the administrative organs, the officers and the ruler with his compliments. Thus, he gave Chamberlain neither the satisfaction that Johore was well administered nor the necessary strong case of gross maladministration to justify British interference in Johore.

Swettenham criticised the manner in which the Government offices, Audit office, hospital, Public Works and municipality were run. Except for the hospital, he considered these offices as mere showpieces where no real work was carried out. The hospital was badly managed. Swettenham condemned the school building and the site on which it stood. The teaching did not meet with his approval though the results were better than he expected. The administrative organs which received Swettenham's approbation were the Land Office, Prison, Central Police Station and the Magistrate's Court. He also approved of the roads he had seen in Johore Bahru — though he stated that he had heard that the roads outside Johore Bahru were of poor condition. Swettenham's general conclusion was that he "was favourably impressed" with what he had seen in Johore Bahru. However, he added that since the Sultan ran the whole administration, what he saw "in one day in a year is no criterion how he will make things go in the other 364."¹⁵

In his observations on the officers, Swettenham stressed the fact that no one dared to question the Sultan's decisions or actions as his power was absolute within Johore. Some officers of senior age and long associated with Johore and Sultan Ibrahim — like the Mentri Besar and Mr. Campbell Ker — did give sound advice. But Sultan Ibrahim ignored their advice. On the other hand, those who ill-advised Sultan Ibrahim, according to Swettenham, like Abdul Rahman and Captain Daud were heard. Swettenham felt that Dato Mohammed, Acting State Secretary, was an honest and clever man but too weak either to exert his influence or resist association with his stronger colleagues, Abdul Rahman and Captain Daud. Furthermore, Sultan Ibrahim was advised and assisted

by European firms and lawyers in Singapore. They led him in the path of independence — especially independence of the Singapore authorities. Complementing this state of affairs was the position of the Chinese community in Johore. The Chinese governed their affairs without interference from the Malays who perpetrated this situation by maintaining a "conspiracy of silence." In the face of such evidence, Swettenham stated that, "there is no doubt that the so called administration of Johore is a farce but the personnel is just clever enough to make it look like reality to the general spectator."¹⁶

Swettenham described Sultan Ibrahim as a self-willed, capricious, and reckless person. He observed that Sultan Ibrahim often misbehaved in public — for example, when he got drunk and danced in the street in front of a hotel in Colombo. In his moments of generosity Sultan Ibrahim consented to the employment of certain Europeans in his service. These men were neither efficient nor outstanding. But generally, Swettenham claimed, Sultan Ibrahim was mean where money was concerned. Often, he would not keep to his bargain about the terms of employment. This resulted in his European employees leaving after short service — especially if they could not tolerate the Sultan's treatment of them. However, Swettenham felt that despite such a disposition, Sultan Ibrahim in his official capacity would neither be cruel nor gravely unjust. Also, personally Swettenham found Sultan Ibrahim to be "an amiable person who can make himself both agreeable and amusing when he likes."¹⁷

Having made his observations and assessments of the Sultan, his officers and the administrative organs of Johore, Swettenham concluded that "if Johore is regarded as simply a Malay State with an independent Ruler, administered by Malay officers, I can see very little cause to interfere with the present regime."¹⁸ Though he admitted that a case could be made that under the present administration Johore and its population suffered and also that Singapore was affected due to lack of development in Johore, Swettenham was convinced that it would be difficult to make out a strong case for British interference in the internal administration of Johore.

The Colonial staff accepted this conclusion. Stubbs observed that since this was the situation, Johore affairs had to be allowed to drift for sometime.¹⁹ Ommanney acknowledged that so long as Sultan Ibrahim maintained a "semblance of administration," the British could not justify their interference in terms of maladministration. However, he con-

sidered using the personal misconduct of the Sultan himself as the reason for interference. But Swettenham, in an interview with Ommanney, convinced him that the time was not opportune for British interference. Rather, Swettenham suggested that the Colonial Office defer its decision to interfere to a later period.²⁰

It is not clear why Swettenham did not recommend immediate interference. As an imperialist one would have expected him to find the necessary evidence and advocate British expansion into Johore — thus, adding yet another feather to his long and distinguished colonial service in the Malay Peninsula. One is led to suspect whether the concession of land which Swettenham secured from Sultan Ibrahim in 1905 had in any way influenced Swettenham's decision at the end of 1903. The fact that he prematurely retired from the Colonial service in 1903 adds to the suspicion. Very little information is available about this land concession. Sultan Ibrahim gave Swettenham the right to select and hold 25,000 acres of agricultural land within Johore. This grant was formally made on 14 November, 1905. It was later claimed that Sultan Ibrahim while in England in 1905 had approached Swettenham to open up land in and introduce capital into Johore. It was for this purpose that this grant with extremely favourable conditions was made — claimed an employee of the Company which Swettenham formed to develop the land.²¹

In October, 1905 a new company, the Anglo-Malay Rubber Co. Ltd, was formed — it brought together eight properties in Negri Sembilan and Selangor. To the Board of this company was appointed Sir Frank Swettenham. The London-based company which was behind this rubber venture was Harrisons and Crosfield Ltd which had bought shares worth £ 1000/- in the Pataling Rubber Estate Syndicate Ltd as early as 1903. In February, 1906 Harrisons and Crosfield Ltd had bought shares worth £ 1000/- in the Pataling Rubber Estate Syndicate Ltd as early as 1903. In February, 1906 Harrisons and Crossfield Ltd arranged for the floatation of Swettenham's 25,000 acre concession. This company was called the Rubber Estates of Johore Ltd.²² Other than this, it is not clear when the negotiations for this deal began and how. So it is not possible to say conclusively on this evidence that the land concession influenced Swettenham's decision. Neither can one completely overrule without even a consideration the possibility that the deal may have influenced the decision.

Following the decision to let matters drift, the Colonial Office found

no cause to raise the subject of Johore administration until after March, 1905. This may be partially accounted for by the fact that the concerned, crucial personalities were absent from the local scene for sometime. Swettenham had left for England on leave in October, 1903 and soon after retired from the Colonial service. Returning from his Australian trip in October, 1903, Sultan Ibrahim left for Europe in January, 1904. The new High Commissioner, Sir John Anderson, did not come out to Singapore until April, 1905. Abdul Rahman was with the Sultan. Also, in the absence of Sultan Ibrahim and Abdul Rahman, Anderson got on well with the *Mentri Besar* and the Acting State Secretary, Dato Mohammed, who listened to Anderson's advice but without compromising the independent status of Johore. In such circumstances Anderson did not find it necessary to complain or draw the attention of the Colonial Office to conditions within Johore. Furthermore, Sultan Ibrahim gave no cause to the Colonial Office to focus its attention on him or his administration. The dressing down which he received at his interview with Lyttelton in March, 1904 had a sobering effect on him. Following this he was co-operative in the railway negotiations, too. Lacking a substantial case, the British were satisfied with the influence they came to exert on the Sultan and the internal affairs of Johore. This temporarily relaxed their probing into the administration of Johore.

However, in the ensuing years the British became very interested in another economic development within Johore — the alienation of large areas of land for rubber cultivation and other purposes. The period, 1903 to 1906, was extremely important in the development of rubber cultivation in Peninsula Malaya. Having established itself as a viable alternative, commercial crop to coffee in the last decade of the nineteenth century, rubber cultivation attracted the attention of both the British government and public sector. The most important factor which secured government and private investor interest in rubber cultivation from 1903 onwards was the sustained price increase for rubber — especially cultivated rubber in contrast to the wild rubber exported from Brazil. In 1905 cultivated rubber fetched a higher price than wild rubber. These developments led to a change in policy in the FMS which wished to diversify the economy and move away from its heavy dependence on tin mining for its revenues. Officials in the FMS and Colonial Office realised that encouraging rubber cultivation would contribute to an increase in land value which in turn would substantially increase official rev-

enue. At this juncture the FMS government instituted a loan scheme to help these private planters. The demand for capital outstripped what the FMS government could provide. British mercantile houses which were based in Singapore and having links with London took advantage of this situation. They offered to serve as agents to raise capital for the rubber planters in Malaya. Companies were floated in London and they gave glowing prospects of profit from rubber cultivation in Malaya. Despite initial doubts about the investments, these companies declared good dividends; thanks to rubber fetching higher prices. This, in turn, encouraged greater interest in rubber cultivation which led to a demand for virgin jungle land.

While the FMS government and the Colonial Office were committed to encouraging the expansion of rubber cultivation, they were wary of speculators and those who lacked the capital to open up virgin jungle land. Undoubtedly, land in the other independent Malay states was suitable for rubber cultivation. British planters and investors turned to Johore which was close to Singapore and better known in London than any of the other independent Malay states. Johore which did not have a policy which discouraged speculators and those without capital provided an attractive alternative to the private planter and speculator. Sultan Ibrahim was equally keen to open up Johore to rubber cultivation, which, he knew, would contribute to increased revenues. Unlike the FMS, Johore lacked capital to entice the private planter with loans. Sultan Ibrahim was well aware of the vital role which outside capital would play in the development of his state. Therefore, in 1906, he made concessions to two companies, the Malay Peninsula (Johore) Rubber Concessions Ltd and the Rubber Estates of Johore Ltd, on terms which were attractive compared to those offered by the FMS government. Especially interesting are the terms and privileges offered to the Rubber Estates of Johore Ltd which paid £10,000/- in shares to Sir Frank Swettenham who was the concession-holder. The rental per acre for this land was 30 cents while the rental per acre for land in the FMS (between 1904 and 1906) was \$1/-. Swettenham paid no initial premium for his concession but concessionaires in the FMS had to pay \$3/- per acre for land which was near the road and \$2/- per acre for land which was located away from roads. While the FMS imposed export duty on rubber, Swettenham was exempted from this in Johore. In addition, Sultan Ibrahim gave an undertaking not to make any concession on similar terms for the next seven

years, beginning in November, 1905. All the same, the following years saw the floatation of 28 sterling companies and some dollar companies which invested in rubber cultivation in Johore. The Colonial Office made known its disapproval of Sultan Ibrahim making these concessions and tried to restrain him. The officials in the Colonial Office wanted to preserve Johore for the benefit of future exploitation by British capital. Simultaneously, they wanted to prevent Sultan Ibrahim and the private entrepreneurs exploiting the land and people of Johore for their personal gain.²³ Initially, British influence in this development was negligible if not nil. Rather, Sultan Ibrahim was largely advised and assisted in the granting of land concessions by the Advisory Board and Abdul Rahman. The Colonial staff had become impatient with both these sources of advice for the Sultan, in the course of the railway negotiations. In fact Lucas had suggested in June, 1904 that when the opportunity arose the dissolution of the Advisory Board should be secured. This, he felt, would enable the High Commissioner to play his role of adviser to the Sultan. Likewise, the Colonial staff soon came to feel that the removal of Abdul Rahman would make Sultan Ibrahim less prone to actions independent of British advice and contrary to British interests.

In March, 1905 the Colonial staff was provided with the opportunity to bring about the abolition of the Advisory Board. At this time Sir Cecil Smith learnt of Sir Robert Herbert's intention of resigning from the Board on grounds of ill-health. Though Herbert's health was failing, his real reason for wanting to resign was his dissatisfaction with Sultan Ibrahim's treatment of the Board. Both Herbert and Smith were not happy that the Sultan had appointed in 1904 Sir Charles Evan Smith and Colonel A. Durand as members of the Board without consulting them. Smith was also contemplating resignation. But, he was aware that if Herbert resigned, Sultan Ibrahim may offer the chairmanship of the Board to him. Smith felt that if he accepted and stayed on, it would serve British interests. So, he wrote to the Colonial Office asking whether his acceptance would be of use to them. However, he suggested to the Colonial staff that they should secure the abolition of the Board using Herbert's resignation as the opportune moment.²⁴

Stubbs, Lucas, Ommanney and Lyttelton were all for the abolition of the Board as this would achieve their aim of placing Sultan Ibrahim under the control of the High Commissioner. Ommanney was suspicious of the two new members whom he viewed as promoters of the

interests of Pauling and Co. The Colonial staff unanimously decided to ask the opinion of Sir John Anderson. They also requested him to suggest the abolition of the Board to the Sultan and apply pressure if he proved adamant in his refusal to do so.²⁵ Though Anderson admitted that the Board served no useful purpose, he was not prepared in May, 1905 to pressure the Sultan to abolish the Board.²⁶ But the Colonial Office did not relax its decision. It redirected Anderson to suggest the abolition of the Board to Sultan Ibrahim when the opportunity arose.²⁷

Meanwhile the relationship between the Sultan and his Board worsened and finally led to the unanimous resignation of the Board in October, 1905. In May, 1905 Herbert died. As anticipated Sultan Ibrahim offered the chairmanship to Smith. He accepted it. The issue which precipitated the unanimous resignation of the Board was Colonial Office objection to a concession made by Sultan Ibrahim. Sometime in 1904 the Board arranged with a group of financiers in London to form a company — The Johore State Corporation Limited — for the development of Johore.²⁸ The financiers stipulated two important conditions. One condition was that no other company was to receive a similar concession for the next twenty years. The other condition was that the Colonial Office should be informed of the concession granted and the interest guaranteed to them by Sultan Ibrahim.²⁹ Accordingly when arrangements were finalised, the Board informed the Colonial Office about the concession. The Colonial Office objected to the concession. Ommanney felt that this concession conferred a "... close monopoly of everything on which the progress of the state depends..."³⁰ When the Colonial Office communicated its objection to the concession, the Board suspended negotiations pending further instructions from Sultan Ibrahim.³¹ It was at this time that Herbert died and Smith succeeded him as chairman. Sultan Ibrahim now hoped that Smith, using his influence in the Colonial Office, would be able to get the Colonial Office to revoke its objection to the concession.³²

However, Sultan Ibrahim conveyed a different impression to Anderson. In a private conversation Anderson observed to Sultan Ibrahim that such a monopolistic concession would inhibit the Sultan's freedom to develop his state. Also, he intimated to him that he, the Sultan, should undertake the responsibility of developing his state and not shift it to the Board which had involved him in difficulties with the Colonial Office in the past. Sultan Ibrahim led Anderson to understand that he considered

the concession dead due to Colonial Office objection.³³

Sultan Ibrahim may have displayed this co-operative and submissive attitude to secure Anderson's services to effect his presentation in court in London when he made his next visit in the latter part of 1905. In June, 1905 he sent the Mentri Besar to see Anderson with the request that the High Commissioner should secure Colonial Office co-operation and approval for his presentation. Anderson later claimed that other than requesting Sultan Ibrahim's presentation in court, the Mentri Besar also suggested that the Sultan should be asked to leave the administration of Johore in the hands of the Mentri Besar and the State Council who were to be advised by the High Commissioner. Anderson considered this a good proposition. He felt that Sultan Ibrahim should retire and live permanently in Europe, leaving administration in the hands of the Mentri Besar and the State Secretary. So Anderson wrote to the Colonial Office to consider presenting Sultan Ibrahim to the King, despite his scandalous conduct, if he agreed to the above propositions. Anderson was optimistic that Sultan Ibrahim would accept these propositions when he put them to him prior to Sultan Ibrahim's departure to Europe. Also, he planned to suggest to the Sultan the abolition of the Advisory Board.³⁴ But the Colonial Office did not approve his propositions. Also, it decided to wait and see if Sultan Ibrahim arrived in London with a clean slate before making a decision about his presentation to the King.³⁵

When his efforts to get himself presented at the English court failed, Sultan Ibrahim turned his attention to the concession. Both he and Abdul Rahman blamed the Advisory Board for the hitch in the negotiations. Furthermore, Abdul Rahman pointed out to the Board that their move to get the approval of the Colonial Secretary to the concession would affect all negotiations for making concessions in future. He argued that the Colonial Office would interpret this step as an acknowledgement by Johore authorities that by the 1885 Agreement Johore did not have "the full powers of an independent state in the matter of concessions even to British subjects but is bound before granting any concession to submit it for approval to the British Government."³⁶ He accused the Board of having compromised the independence of Johore — the very thing they had been appointed to preserve. Now, the Sultan wanted the Board to rectify its mistake and he felt that their long experience in dealing with the Colonial Office qualified them to know the best means of doing

so. Also, he expected them to get the Colonial Office to withdraw its objection to the concession.³⁷

The Board denied these allegations. It claimed that it had merely notified the Colonial Office as required by the conditions stipulated by the financiers and had not sought Colonial Office approval. It stated that any decision concerning the concession had to be arrived at by discussion between the Sultan and the High Commissioner. This meant the Board was not going to undertake the responsibility of seeing that Colonial Office objection was revoked.³⁸

Meanwhile Sultan Ibrahim and Abdul Rahman decided to dispense with the services of the present members of the Board. In October, 1905 Sultan Ibrahim informed the Board that the State Council had decided to prune the membership and the establishment of the Board as an economising measure. Without seeming to force the decision on them, he sought the members' suggestions on what steps should be taken to enforce the decision. Aware of the implications of the Council's decision³⁹ and also of Sultan Ibrahim's tactics, the members unanimously resigned on 20 October.⁴⁰ Thus, unofficially the Board was temporarily dissolved. Obviously, Sultan Ibrahim was using the State Council to dispense with the members whom he found were proving — increasingly so — to be informants of the Colonial Office and thus a stumbling block to his granting of land concessions. Immediately after the unanimous resignation of the members, Sultan Ibrahim appointed Abdul Rahman and E.F. Turner⁴¹ as the new members of the Board. There was the vague possibility that the membership may be increased by one or two in the future.⁴² Sultan Ibrahim knew that these two members would not keep the Colonial Office informed of his actions as members like Herbert and Smith had done of out of old loyalty. Rather, they would work for his interest and that of Johore in dealings with the British.

Soon the Colonial Office was informed of the unanimous resignation of the old members and the appointment of the new.⁴³ These developments were interpreted by the Colonial staff as manifestations of Sultan Ibrahim's intention to disregard British wishes in the future. Also, they realised that these new members would not keep them informed of developments as the old members had done. Now they felt that Sultan Ibrahim should be explicitly told that in future he was to act according to the advice of the High Commissioner when in Johore and of the Colonial Office when in London. This decision could be more effectively

implemented, in their opinion, only if the Board were completely dissolved. So they decided that the Colonial Office should now refuse recognition of the new appointments and request the formal abolition of the Board.⁴⁴ In early November, 1905 the Colonial Office communicated these and other decisions to Sultan Ibrahim. First, the Colonial Office advised the abolition of the Advisory Board. It informed its decision not to take cognizance of the Board even if it continued to exist. Next, it made explicit its decision that the Colonial Office would communicate with Sultan Ibrahim only through the High Commissioner in future. Finally, it stated its decision to grant authority to the High Commissioner to appoint a British Agent when he thought fit.⁴⁵

Anderson was also informed of these Colonial Office decisions. Anderson stipulated that if he was to be adviser to Sultan Ibrahim, he expected to be consulted before Sultan Ibrahim granted any concessions to firms and syndicates in London. But, Anderson did not expect Sultan Ibrahim to comply with this condition. Therefore, he informed the Colonial Office that he proposed to continue with his present practice of friendly advice until some issue cropped up and warranted his intervention. Furthermore, he was surprisingly unenthusiastic about appointing a British Agent in Johore. He contended that an Agent with only consular powers would not be able to learn anything about internal matters due to the conspiracy of silence among the Chinese and Malays. Also, he could not keep the Sultan in order. These, the Agent could do only if he was made a member of the State Council and permitted to examine public buildings. But, Anderson knew that Sultan Ibrahim would not grant these powers to the Agent unless he was forced to do so. And, there was no justification to force these concessions from Sultan Ibrahim. Anderson felt that the Agent would be of use probably in the future when Europeans would increasingly flock into Johore to take up rubber cultivation. The Agent would serve no useful purpose now in December, 1905. So Anderson rejected the Colonial Office suggestion to appoint an Agent. It was not that he was without ideas of British expansion into Johore. At this point Anderson was optimistic that the Johore authorities would not be able to pay the railway charges when the Johore line was opened for public use. This, in Anderson's calculations, would provide the necessary excuse for decisive British action in Johore.⁴⁶

Once again the Colonial Office had to shelve a decision on the issue of appointing a British Agent to Johore until the High Commissioner

came on leave to London. Then, the Colonial staff hoped to discuss and decide on the issue. They did not wish to force their decision on Anderson.⁴⁷

It was not long before Anderson himself decided that the time was opportune for decisive action i.e. the appointment of a British Resident to Johore. Two important developments during the first two months of 1906 precipitated this decision on his part. In a meeting which Anderson arranged with the *Mentri Besar* and the Assistant State Secretary of Johore, he learnt of Sultan Ibrahim's demand that he be paid a special allowance of \$40,000 a month. The State Council had sanctioned the payment of this allowance until the end of 1905. In the Estimates of 1906 the State Council had provided only for the usual allowance of \$20,000 for the Sultan and the maintenance of his palace. But, Sultan Ibrahim insisted that the State Council also vote him the special allowance while he was abroad. Anderson advised the *Mentri Besar* and the Assistant State Secretary to firmly resist the Sultan's request. They agreed but felt it would be more effective if Anderson spoke to Sultan Ibrahim about this when he went on leave to London. Anderson took this opportunity to ask their views on the question of appointing a British Resident in Johore. Reluctant to commit themselves, they told Anderson that they managed Johore affairs well in the absence of the Sultan. Anderson pointed out to them that the presence of a Resident would be useful when Sultan Ibrahim returned from abroad. They agreed. Following this meeting, Anderson decided that if the return of Sultan Ibrahim to Johore was certain, an experienced officer was to be appointed Resident of Johore. He chose Mr. D.G. Campbell who was Resident of *Negri Sembilan* for the post. He sent a despatch to the Earl of Elgin, the Colonial Secretary, informing him that he was leaving instructions with Mr. William Taylor, the Acting High Commissioner, to appoint Campbell as Resident when Sultan Ibrahim's return was certain.⁴⁸

A much more significant and decisive development was the increasing demand for land for rubber planting in Johore. In response to local applications, the Johore authorities made land grants. On Anderson's advice they adopted for these land grants terms similar to those applied in the F.M.S. Simultaneously, Sultan Ibrahim in England was making large concessions of land on terms which he thought fit. As Sultan Ibrahim did this without prior consultation with the home authorities, Anderson anticipated a clash of grants and consequent confusion in land

administration in the future. Soon Anderson came to know of Sultan Ibrahim's concessions to Swettenham, Gow, Wilson and Co., and Guthrie and Co. He was positively aghast at Sultan Ibrahim "granting improvident and reckless concessions with terms which are certain to hamper future administration in Johore."⁴⁹ Immediately, Anderson got the State Council members to send a telegram to Sultan Ibrahim protesting against his failure to consult them before making such grants. Simultaneously, he telegraphed Elgin requesting him to see the Sultan personally and warn him against making any more concessions. Anderson also wanted Elgin to hint to Sultan Ibrahim that Campbell would be appointed Resident of Johore. Furthermore, Elgin was to request Sultan Ibrahim to appoint the Resident a member of the State Council. This Anderson felt would enable the Resident to give the State Council support against the Sultan.⁵⁰

Anderson's decision to appoint a Resident to Johore was considerably influenced by his desire to rally support for the State Council members against Sultan Ibrahim when he returned to Johore. This desire may have partially motivated Anderson's request that the Resident should be appointed a member of the State Council. In the absence of Sultan Ibrahim and Abdul Rahman, Anderson had won the confidence of the *Mentri Besar* and the Assistant State Secretary. Anderson soon came to exercise influence not only over these two officials but also, through them, over the other members of the State Council. It was to retain this confidence and to shore-up the newly induced courage in the State Council that Anderson most probably found it necessary not only to appoint a Resident but also to make him a member of the State Council. Of course, Anderson would have been fully aware of the other benefits of such an appointment — especially a knowledge and the possibility of modifying the concessions made by Sultan Ibrahim, when they came up for approval in the State Council. Also, the Resident would strengthen the position of the State Council vis-a-vis the Sultan, in the future.

Anderson's telegraph which preceded his earlier despatch in its arrival at the Colonial Office, surprised the Colonial staff. They were aware that the 1885 Agreement made no provisions for the appointment of a Resident in Johore and his subsequent appointment to the State Council. They knew that Sultan Ibrahim had strong grounds to refuse both appointments. Furthermore, the Colonial staff anticipated embarrassment on the issue of the Sultan's recent land concessions. This would

undoubtedly drag Swettenham into the picture. The Colonial staff could not openly call to suspect the motives of Swettenham as they had done with the past concessionaires of Johore. This would be damaging to the image of an ex-“High Commissioner whom all the Malay princes were taught to look upon as their guide, philosopher and friend.”⁵¹ This may affect the image of the High Commissioner and in consequence the aura of authority which surrounded him. Also, Elgin could not ask Sultan Ibrahim to stop giving concessions without explaining why. The Colonial staff acknowledged that their best and true reason was that they “don’t want the bloom rubbed off the plum before it falls into the British lap ...”⁵² It was hardly possible to state this selfish reason to Sultan Ibrahim. Therefore, Lucas, Ommanney and Elgin unanimously decided that there was no point in Elgin seeing Sultan Ibrahim immediately. Rather, they decided that the interview should be postponed until Anderson’s arrival in London.⁵³ So, Sultan Ibrahim was also requested to delay his return to Johore till then.⁵⁴

On 3 April, 1906 Elgin met Sultan Ibrahim, Abdul Rahman and Anderson. In this meeting Elgin impressed on Sultan Ibrahim three things. One, Sultan Ibrahim was to administer Johore along British lines and not contrary to British view. When the British Government considered it appropriate to give advice, Sultan Ibrahim was expected to accept it and act accordingly. Two, Sultan Ibrahim was to consult the High Commissioner before granting concessions. When the High Commissioner gave advice pertaining to the proposed concessions, Sultan Ibrahim was to heed them. Three, the British Government strongly disapproved of Sultan Ibrahim’s constant absence from Johore for long periods of time. Elgin advised Sultan Ibrahim to return home as soon as possible. In future, Sultan Ibrahim was obliged to get permission from the High Commissioner and the Colonial Secretary before leaving Johore. If Sultan Ibrahim refused to toe the line on the above matters, Elgin threatened a change in the constitution of Johore for the administration of the country.⁵⁵ Elgin also pressured Sultan Ibrahim to completely do away with his Advisory Board. He approved Sultan Ibrahim’s concession to Swettenham and to Gow, Wilson and Co. but forced Sultan Ibrahim to cancel his concession to Guthrie and Co.⁵⁶

Following his interview with Elgin, Sultan Ibrahim changed his arrogant and independent attitude towards the British to a more submissive and co-operative one. But, despite agreeing to follow the advice of

Elgin on all the important points, he did not yield to British pressure to completely abolish the Advisory Board. Instead he decided to retain the Board in its reduced form.⁵⁷ Neither was Sultan Ibrahim anxious to leave Europe and return to Johore. On different pretexts he postponed his departure for Johore several times.⁵⁸ On the first occasion Anderson tried to get the Colonial Office to retire Sultan Ibrahim permanently in Europe, if he had no sound explanation.⁵⁹ But the Colonial Office was not prepared to take so drastic an action for the minor fault of procrastination⁶⁰ Anderson did not press the matter further. Later, he changed his attitude to Sultan Ibrahim's reluctance to return. He requested the Colonial Office not to press Sultan Ibrahim too hard about returning as he did not wish to have a sulky ruler on his hands.⁶¹ However, Sultan Ibrahim left for Johore in July, 1906 despite the fact that he had sent back Abdul Rahman in June with the authority to conduct the affairs of Johore Government in his absence.⁶²

Neither Anderson nor the Colonial staff approved of Abdul Rahman's influence over Sultan Ibrahim and the internal affairs of Johore. Both were aware that Abdul Rahman had to be removed if their efforts to bring Sultan Ibrahim and Johore under their influence were to be realized. It was not long before Anderson got the opportunity to remove the dominating personality of Abdul Rahman from the Johore scene. At the end of 1906 the contract letting out the Opium and Spirit Farms of Johore came up for renewal. Instead of renewing the old contract letting out the farms to the same person, Abdul Rahman got Sultan Ibrahim to promise the farms to a new applicant — a Chinese of his choice. It had been usual in the past years for the Singapore and Johore farms to be let out to the same person. This practice was adopted to prevent smuggling. But now Abdul Rahman arranged to let the farms out to a new man who did not have the contract for the Singapore Farms. When Anderson came to know of this, he objected. He went a step further and told Sultan Ibrahim that in the event of a "war of smuggling" between the Johore and Singapore Farmers he would be forced to support the Singapore Farmer. This in effect would mean a large loss. This jolted Sultan Ibrahim into realising the seriousness of the situation.

Anderson arranged a meeting with Sultan Ibrahim, the *Mentri Besar* and the State Secretary to discuss the issue. He expressly forbade Abdul Rahman's presence at this meeting. The issue was amicably settled. Following this settlement Abdul Rahman attempted to clear himself of

any blame. He now claimed that when he made his arrangements with the new Chinese contractor, he had understood that Anderson would settle matters with the old one. When Anderson heard this, he immediately wrote to Sultan Ibrahim accusing Abdul Rahman of trying to create trouble between the Johore and Straits Settlements Governments. Simultaneously, he met and discussed with Buckley and Shelford the necessity to remove Abdul Rahman from Johore. Anderson successfully convinced both men that it was time Abdul Rahman went. Soon after he met Sultan Ibrahim in Buckley's presence and convinced him that it was time that he dispensed with Abdul Rahman's services as they were not conducive to good relations between Johore and the Straits Settlements. In the meantime Abdul Rahman got wind of these developments. He tried with the help of Mr. A.J. Barry to put matters right with Anderson and Sultan Ibrahim. He failed. Sultan Ibrahim after consulting with the Mentri Besar and others in his service decided to pension off Abdul Rahman with a yearly allowance of £1,000.⁶³

Anderson was aware of the implications when he secured the dismissal of Abdul Rahman in January, 1907. He had no doubt that Abdul Rahman was the strongest supporter in Sultan Ibrahim's fight to remain free of any influence which the British desired to exercise over Sultan Ibrahim and the internal affairs of Johore. Also, Abdul Rahman had been the brains behind many abortive schemes to develop Johore with large concessions to private British investors — both in railway construction and development of land. Anderson knew that if he wanted to break Sultan Ibrahim's resistance to advice and influence from the British — especially from him as High Commissioner, — Abdul Rahman had to go. Simultaneously, he felt that if Abdul Rahman remained he might soon create a situation which the British could use as an excuse to enter and exercise control in Johore. But in January, 1907 Anderson held the view that British take over should be initiated as a result of a movement from within Johore rather than imposed from without. He knew that this would take time but he did not mind waiting, "till the plum is ripe from natural causes than to hasten it artificially."⁶⁴ Alternatively, he hoped that British planters moving into Johore to take up rubber cultivation would create a situation which would make British intervention necessary if not imperative. Thus, he felt that the British aim of extending their control to Johore would be achieved without antagonising the Johore Malays.

The Colonial staff were happy to see Abdul Rahman removed from Sultan Ibrahim's services. Swettenham had constantly referred to Abdul Rahman's role in Johore in his despatches. Therefore, the officials underestimated neither his ability nor his influence over Sultan Ibrahim. They also suspected him of wanting to line his pocket in conjunction with Sultan Ibrahim at the expense of Johore and its people. They also knew that this "evil genius" — as they described him — was a strong competitor for the Sultan's ears not only in Johore but also in London. They were relieved "to be rid of him"⁶⁵ and pleased to see the influence of the High Commissioner over Sultan Ibrahim gaining ground.

Anderson had won his first decisive battle in his fight to exercise greater influence and control over Sultan Ibrahim and Johore affairs. He was to find Sultan Ibrahim more amenable and manageable for the next two or three years. Anderson was aware of this for he now felt that he had Sultan Ibrahim "fairly well in hand" and even came to like him.⁶⁶ Symptomatic of Anderson's increasing influence over Sultan Ibrahim were his achievements in the course of the period 1907 to 1909. And, despite failing to secure the appointment of a Resident to Johore and his appointment to the State Council in 1906, Anderson retained the confidence of the State Council members in him and their courage to take actions which were contrary to Sultan Ibrahim's wishes — as evidenced in the decision concerning the land concession to Mr. A.J. Barry and the formal abolition of the Advisory Board.

Soon after Abdul Rahman's dismissal Sultan Ibrahim decided on the advice of Buckley to revoke the land grant which he had made to Barry and his co-concessionaire. He now directed Barry to apply for land grant in Johore according to the new regulations of 16 September, 1906. He also intimated to Barry that he did not have the power to grant such land concessions without the consent of the State Council.⁶⁷ This came as a shock to Barry who was at this juncture on the point of sailing to Europe. Barry tried to see Sultan Ibrahim to convince him that the concession was valid, and there was no ground for revoking it. Sultan Ibrahim did not wish to be involved in the issue further. He directed Buckley, his Financial Adviser, and Messrs. Rodyk and Davidson who were in charge of his Land Department, to settle the matter for him.⁶⁸

The beginnings of this concession to Barry and his friend are to be found in the year 1903. In November, 1903 Abdul Rahman and Dato Mohammed petitioned Sultan Ibrahim to grant them 10,000 acres of

land for agricultural purposes. They desired this grant to be made in perpetuity and all fees payable to the Johore Government to be waived.⁶⁹ Sultan Ibrahim granted their requests. They received 10,000 to 13,800 acres of land.⁷⁰ Subsequently, Sultan Ibrahim increased the grant by another 10,000 acres. In November, 1905 Abdul Rahman signed a declaration to the effect that both Dato Mohammed and he held the 20,000 acres in trust for themselves, and for Mr. A.J. Barry and Mr. J.L. Smart. Sultan Ibrahim endorsed this declaration and stated that he intended the four people mentioned in the declaration "to benefit in equal shares by the said complete Grant of 20,000 acres."⁷¹ In January, 1906 Sultan Ibrahim declared that the export and ad valores duty on the produce from the above land would be 1% on rubber produce and on other produce the current rate in Johore.⁷² In August, 1906 Sultan Ibrahim increased the grant by 5,000 acres, half for himself and the other half for one Anderson Pendek.⁷³ In October, 1906 after discussion with Barry, Sultan Ibrahim asked Abdul Rahman to return 10,000 acres of land originally granted and take in exchange land in another site.⁷⁴ In this exchange Barry and Mr. Scott-Murray, the Resident Engineer of the Johore State Railway got for themselves 5,000 acres. The next development was Sultan Ibrahim informing Barry in January, 1907 that he was revoking his concession and requesting Barry to apply and obtain a land grant according to the new regulations.

As Sultan Ibrahim had decided to let Buckley and his firm handle the matter for him, Barry wrote to Buckley explaining the validity of his claim.⁷⁵ In reply Barry was informed that the grant to Abdul Rahman and Dato Mohammed was made on the understanding that they develop the land immediately. Since they had not attempted to do so for three years, the Johore Government considered the right of these two men under the grant to have lapsed. However, since Barry and partner were attempting to develop their share without floating a company or even attempting to sell it to a company, the Johore Government was willing to grant them their share of 5,000 acres. But Barry had to pay the normal rate of quit rent and 2 1/2% ad valorem duty on export products. The Johore Government retained the right to take possession of uncultivated land on its own terms. In other respects the land grant to Barry and partner was to take the form of normal agricultural leases.⁷⁶ This offer was made to Barry and his partner in March, 1907, on the condition that they "accepted this arrangement in full satisfaction of any claim they

may have against the Sultan personally or against the Government of Johore under the concession."⁷⁷ The State Council endorsed this offer. The decision to make this offer was made after Sultan Ibrahim, Buckley and Dato Mohammed had sought Anderson's view on it. Sultan Ibrahim was a passive participant in the discussion. He agreed to do whatever the High Commissioner advised on the issue.

Barry tried to change this decision by approaching the Colonial Office. It proved to be less sympathetic to his cause. Fiddes of the Colonial staff felt that if Barry did not accept the above offer, it should be revoked completely, giving Barry and partner nothing.⁷⁸ The issue dragged on but neither the Colonial Office nor the High Commissioner made any attempt to revise the decision made in March, 1907. Both the Sultan and the State Council remained silent having accepted the High Commissioner's advice. Barry had no choice but accept the grant in November, 1907 — the only change being the increase in the acreage of land granted to 7,500 acres.⁷⁹

While the issue of Barry's concession dragged on the protracted existence of the Advisory Board was terminated. In July, 1907 Dato Mohammed officially informed Mr. E.H. Turner and Colonel Durand that the Johore Government had decided to abolish the Advisory Board after taking into consideration the advice given by Lyttelton, Elgin and Anderson regarding the Board.⁸⁰ Sultan Ibrahim personally wrote to these two members explaining the decision. Turner was retained as solicitor to the Sultan and the Johore Government.⁸¹ The Colonial Office when informed of the decision acknowledged it without comments. As far as the Colonial Office was concerned, it was a long overdue one.

Though Anderson was not obviously involved in these developments, one cannot but suspect his influence behind the scenes. Knowing Anderson's attitude towards Sultan Ibrahim's large concessions on liberal terms and the influence he came to exercise over Sultan Ibrahim during this period, one is led to suspect that Anderson rather than Buckley advised the revocation of the concession to Barry. Also, Anderson felt strongly that land grants should be made on terms similar to the F.M.S. and had explicitly told Barry that different terms would lead to difficulties and abuses in the future. Both Sultan Ibrahim and the State Council acted as advised by Anderson not only regarding the concession but also the abolition of the Advisory Board. One cannot credit the decision to abolish the Board either to the Council's or Sultan Ibrahim's initiative,

knowing the past role of the Council and Sultan Ibrahim's reluctance to completely do away with the Board. Ironically, Anderson resorted to the same tactic which Sultan Ibrahim had used in the past. Anderson also used the State Council to cloak his decisions and not assume responsibility for them.

Anderson's next victory was with Sultan Ibrahim himself. The railway section between Gemas and Segamat was opened for public use on 1 March, 1908.⁸² Following this on 12 March Anderson successfully got Sultan Ibrahim to sign an agreement with the Acting Resident-General of the F.M.S. giving the F.M.S. Railway Administration the powers of working the line. Thus, the Board of Control provided for in the Railway Convention was dropped in the operation of the 17 miles of line within Johore between Gemas and Segamat. The Agreement also provided that if both parties agreed the Agreement was to apply to other sub-sections of the Johore State Railway as their construction was completed and became ready for public use.⁸³ Anderson seems to have achieved this agreement on the quiet and without much fuss. Both Swettenham and the Colonial staff had tried to do away with the Board of Control in 1903 and 1904 but had failed as neither Sultan Ibrahim nor his advisers — especially the Board and Abdul Rahman — desired to give up Johore's rights in the running of the Johore line. But now with the Board abolished, Abdul Rahman dismissed, and Sultan Ibrahim broken in, Anderson found no difficulty in obtaining control of the operation of the Johore Section for the F.M.S.

Following this in August-September, 1908 the Crown Agents and the Colonial staff decided to dispense with the services of the Consulting Engineers where general advice for the construction of the Johore State Railway was concerned. The Consulting Engineers were to be referred to on two aspects: one, on difficult technical questions and, two, on details of new lines to be constructed. Otherwise, general supervision of the Johore State Railway was to be left in the hands of the F.M.S. authorities.⁸⁴

The tentacles of British control were definitely spreading out over important spheres of internal administration, — land concessions, railway construction and operation, — especially if they affected British long-term interests in Johore. Anderson had well in hand the chief sources of political and administrative power in the country — the Sultan and the State Council. It only remained for the British to appoint an officer

for the supervision and control of these sources of political power and economic wealth, and for the reorganisation of the Johore administrative system under his direction along British lines to achieve optimum results in these spheres.

The appointment of a British officer to Johore was achieved by February, 1910. The appointment was informally discussed by Anderson and Sultan Ibrahim in September, 1909 at the birthday dinner for Sultan Ibrahim. Most probably Anderson broached the subject of appointing a British officer to Johore to advise the Sultan on internal administration and may have suggested Mr. D.G. Campbell for the post. Finding the Sultan agreeable he sought Campbell's consent to accept the post. When Campbell agreed to serve in Johore for an annual salary of £1,500 with free furnished quarters, Anderson informed Sultan Ibrahim that Campbell had agreed to the terms and to accept the appointment.⁸⁵ But, when Anderson informed the Colonial Office about the appointment, he stated that Sultan Ibrahim requested it.⁸⁶ This is improbable. It is highly unlikely that Sultan Ibrahim would have on his own initiative opened this touchy question. He was well aware that the presence of a British officer in Johore would mean close supervision of and consequent inhibitions to his actions, if not control. This would compromise his independent and sovereign status within Johore as the appointment of Residents had affected the status of the Malay rulers in the F.M.S. However, Sultan Ibrahim was in no position to prevent or object to the appointment at this stage. Lacking the support and advice of his past, private advisers, and fearing the consequence of resisting the High Commissioner's advice, Sultan Ibrahim agreed to the appointment of a British officer to be termed General Adviser. Anderson certainly had effected the appointment without antagonising either the Sultan or his subjects. But it is highly improbable that it was the result of a movement from within as Anderson had hoped, and now sought to represent it to the Colonial Office.

Once the appointment of the General Adviser was agreed upon, the services of Buckley who had been general and financial adviser to the Sultan and the State Council, were found to be redundant. Buckley had to be tactfully dismissed but Sultan Ibrahim was at a loss as to how to do it. So he approached Anderson for help.⁸⁷ Anderson willingly obliged. First, he drafted a letter to Buckley explaining the necessity for the appointment of the General Adviser. He explained that the *Mentri Besar*

was old and that there was the possibility of something happening to the State Secretary. Therefore, the Sultan would be in a difficult predicament without reliable officers to help him in the administration of Johore. The fact that Buckley resided in Singapore and not in Johore did not make matters easier. This letter was rewritten by Sultan Ibrahim as his own and sent to Buckley. Following this, Anderson personally saw Buckley and explained matters to him.⁸⁸ The Colonial Office was informed of these developments. It gladly approved the appointment of the General Adviser to Johore.⁸⁹ In January, 1910 Campbell took up his post in Johore and was confirmed in his post the next month.⁹⁰

British desire to extend their control to Johore by the appointment of a British officer had been manifest as early as 1903 when negotiations for railway construction were in progress. After seven long years this desire materialised with the appointment of the General Adviser. Various factors explain the initial delay and the later success. In the latter part of 1903 the Colonial Office wished to appoint a British Agent to Johore. But, it lacked a substantial case to justify British interference in Johore affairs. First, the Colonial staff considered using the issue of the poor condition of the Johore Forces but soon acknowledged that it did not provide the necessary strong case. Next, the Colonial staff grabbed the opportunity provided by Sir Cecil Smith when he suggested that Swettenham should visit Johore and report on conditions there. They hoped that Swettenham would come up with sufficient evidence of maladministration to warrant British intervention. However, Swettenham did not make out a case of maladministration in his report. Rather, he advocated that the Colonial Office should wait to interfere later at an opportune moment. The Colonial Office which was usually influenced by the views and decisions of the man on the spot accepted Swettenham's suggestion.

Between the end of 1903 and mid-1909 the British did not seriously consider appointing a British officer to Johore. Following Lyttelton's reprimand in early 1904 of Sultan Ibrahim's behaviour, Sultan Ibrahim proved to be more co-operative and yielded to British demands. The British successfully established their control over railway construction in Johore by the Railway Convention of July, 1904. Having gained control of this major economic development they were not anxious to appoint a British officer to exercise control over Johore generally. Also, for a considerable part of this period the main personalities involved

were absent from the local scene. The drama shifted to the European stage, thus, temporarily diverting attention from the internal administration of Johore. When Anderson finally came to take Swettenham's place as High Commissioner, he found the absence of Sultan Ibrahim and Abdul Rahman conducive to establishing his influence over the Mentri Besar and the Acting State Secretary, and through them over the State Council. Thus, Anderson came to exert considerable influence over Johore affairs during the latter part of 1904 and early 1905. The satisfaction of the Colonial Office and the High Commissioner in having some control over Sultan Ibrahim and Johore affairs respectively, accounts for the temporary lapse in their desire to appoint a British officer to Johore.

This satisfaction was short-lived for both the Colonial Office and the High Commissioner. The next major economic development in Johore — land alienation for rubber cultivation — rekindled their desire to establish control over Johore. The Colonial staff wished to prevent the exploitation of Johore by Sultan Ibrahim and private entrepreneurs. They were determined to preserve Johore intact for exploitation by British capital when they took control. Anderson desired to control land alienation so that it could be made on terms similar to the F.M.S. Thus, he hoped to streamline land administration along British lines, making future British take over easy and uncomplicated. However, it was the Colonial staff which first suggested in December, 1905 the appointment of the British Agent to Johore. When it came to know of the unanimous resignation of the Advisory Board over the issue of a land concession, the Colonial Office instructed Anderson to appoint the Agent when he thought fit. But the High Commissioner and the Colonial staff did not see eye to eye on different aspects of the appointment. First, Anderson felt that the appointment of a British Agent at this juncture would serve no useful purpose. Rather, he would be a stumbling block when the British wished to establish their control over Johore. He opined that the Agent would be useful at a later date when British planters would increasingly flock into Johore to take up rubber planting. Second, Anderson wanted the British officer to enjoy wider powers than the consular powers provided for by the Agreement of 1885. He wanted the officer to be appointed a member of the State Council and have the right to examine public buildings in Johore. This, Anderson knew, the Sultan would not easily grant. Anderson did not seem perturbed about passing up this opportunity to appoint an Agent to Johore for he was confident that the

British would have an opportunity to establish effective British control when the Johore Railway was opened, and Johore would not be able to meet the charges for the railway. So Anderson decided not to use the authority he was granted by the Colonial Office in November, 1905 to appoint an Agent to Johore when he thought fit.

Not long after in February, 1906 Anderson decided that it was time to appoint a British Resident — not an Agent — to Johore. This decision was made when Anderson came to know that Sultan Ibrahim, now in England, was making large concessions on liberal terms to English concessionaires without prior consultation with the Johore Authorities. In the Sultan's absence, Anderson advised the State Council to make land grants to local applicants on terms similar to the F.M.S. ones. Anderson felt that Sultan Ibrahim's concessions would not only conflict with local grants but also make future land administration difficult due to different terms. So he got the State Council to protest against the Sultan's concessions. Having won the confidence of the members and having induced them to courageously protest against the Sultan, Anderson wished to retain their confidence and courage. Sultan Ibrahim's impending return from England led Anderson to decide that it was time to appoint a British Resident to Johore, and secure the Resident's appointment to the State Council. He felt that the presence of the Resident would strengthen the position of the State Council against the Sultan. When he suggested the appointment of a Resident to Johore, the Colonial Office was not keen. Unlike Anderson, the Colonial staff were not concerned about rallying support for the State Council against the Sultan. Also, they knew that there was no legal basis for appointing a Resident to Johore and securing his appointment to the State Council. By treaty they could only request the appointment of a British Agent. So this suggestion by Anderson was shelved.

However, Anderson's suggestion that the Colonial Secretary should personally see Sultan Ibrahim regarding the concessions was accepted. At the interview in Anderson's presence, Elgin clearly stated British stand on three important issues: British advice, concessions, and Sultan Ibrahim's absence from Johore. Sultan Ibrahim was expected to listen and act according to British advice given by either the Colonial Office or the High Commissioner. The High Commissioner's advice on proposed concessions was to be taken into consideration. Sultan Ibrahim was to get the permission of the Colonial Secretary and the High Com-

missioner before leaving Johore. Elgin threatened Sultan Ibrahim that he would not hesitate to make constitutional changes for the administration of Johore if the Sultan ignored his advice on these points. The appointment of a British officer was implied but not explicitly stated at this interview in April, 1906 despite Anderson's earlier suggestion.

This proved to be the turning point in British-Johore relations. Following Elgin's warning Sultan Ibrahim's attitude to British advice changed. He and the State Council accepted the High Commissioner's counsel on various internal matters. On Anderson's advice Sultan Ibrahim retired Abdul Rahman from his service. Also, he revoked the land concession to Barry. The Johore Advisory Board was also formally abolished. Next, Anderson got Sultan Ibrahim to sign the Railway Agreement of 1908, while the Colonial Office curtailed the powers of the Johore Consulting Engineers. Crowning these achievement was the appointment of the General Adviser. As Sultan Ibrahim largely accepted British advice and met their requests, both the Colonial Office and the High Commissioner found no cause to raise the issue of appointing a British officer to Johore in the course of the years 1907 to 1909. Apparently, they were satisfied with the influence they exercised over Sultan Ibrahim and Johore affairs.

As early as January, 1907 Anderson had come to hold the view that the appointment of the British officer to Johore should be the result of a movement from within Johore. This, he felt, would retain the goodwill and co-operation of the Johore Malays and he was willing to wait "till the plum is ripe from natural causes than to hasten it artificially."⁹¹ He therefore did not advocate British intervention using as excuse any issue which could be so exploited. Anderson felt that if the officer was imposed on Johore from without by the British, the Johore Malays may be antagonised. He had now discarded his old contentions that the failure of Johore to meet the railway payments or the creation of a crisis by the British planters who moved into Johore would provide the British with the necessary excuse for extending their control to Johore. Obviously, Anderson waited for the move to be made by his friends in the State Council. But, they never requested the appointment of a British officer to Johore. Finally, Anderson had to take the initiative in 1909 when he suggested the appointment to Sultan Ibrahim. Anderson attempted to present the appointment of the General Adviser as a response to a request made by the Sultan. This is highly improbable as Sultan Ibrahim

was well aware of the implications to have made such a request. It is most likely it was the result of Anderson's suggestion which Sultan Ibrahim accepted as he had done other suggestions of Anderson's in the preceding years.

Sultan Ibrahim's weakened position in 1909 made it difficult to resist Anderson's suggestions which were more in the nature of advice. Sultan Ibrahim's decision to get rid of the old members of the Advisory Board over disagreement over a land concession issue and to appoint new members was the first factor which weakened his position vis-a-vis the British. This decision gave the Colonial Office the opportunity to demand its complete abolition. When Sultan Ibrahim refused to comply, the Colonial Office denied the reconstituted Board recognition. When Sultan Ibrahim accepted the unanimous resignation of the old members, he lost not only their experienced advice but also their influential negotiating power with the Colonial Office. Their service as the medium of communication between the Colonial Office and Sultan Ibrahim had been significant in cushioning the impact of the different views of both parties and accommodating their respective interests. Thus, they prevented friction and open clashes between both parties. This was lost when the Colonial Office refused recognition of the new Board.

Sultan Ibrahim's frequent and prolonged absences from Johore during the years 1904 to 1906 further weakened his position. His absences provided the Colonial Office with a solid complaint against Sultan Ibrahim that he was not giving sufficient attention to his task of ruling Johore. Much more significant was the fact that Sultan Ibrahim's — and with him Abdul Rahman's — absence gave Anderson ample opportunity to establish a good rapport with the members of the State Council. When Sultan Ibrahim returned to Johore he had to face this alliance between the State Council and the High Commissioner. It was this alliance which probably effected the revocation of the land concession to Barry and the formal abolition of the Johore Advisory Board.

Soon Anderson won over Sultan Ibrahim's private advisers in Singapore, namely, Buckley and Shelford. It was with their co-operation that Anderson secured the dismissal of Abdul Rahman. Abdul Rahman's removal from Johore was undoubtedly a weakening factor in Sultan Ibrahim's position. Abdul Rahman was an intelligent and experienced statesman and diplomat who had fought hard to maintain the independent status of his state and ruler. Having lost the services of two crucial

sources of advice — the Advisory Board and Abdul Rahman — and the support of his constitutional and private advisers — the State Council, and Buckley and Shelford — Sultan Ibrahim stood alone. He was not in a strong position to resist British demands — demands which were sometimes supported by his own State Council and private advisers. Even if he wanted to resist them independently he was faced with Elgin's threat of constitutional change for the administration of Johore if he refused to listen to British advice.

The factors which weakened the position of Sultan Ibrahim strengthened that of the British — especially the High Commissioner and eventually made possible the appointment of a British officer to Johore. Obviously, the British considered the appointment as the extension of British control to Johore. Whether it was so in reality remained to be seen in the ensuing five years.

NOTES

- 1 *C0273/297*, Letter, Robert Herbert to Under-Secretary of State, 16 April, 1903.
- 2 His army consisted of 295 men — 175 stationed at Johore Bahru and the remaining 120 at Muar.
C0273/284, Despatch, Swettenham to the Colonial Office, 5 December, 1902.
- 3 *C0273/297*, Letter, Robert Herbert to Under-Secretary of State, 16 April, 1903.
- 4 *Ibid.* See minute on "Forces of Johore" by Ommanney, 20 April, 1903.
- 5 *C0273/294*, Confidential Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 4 July, 1904.
- 6 *Ibid.* See Minutes on "Johore Forces and general state of affairs in Johore," by Stubbs, 5 August, 1903.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 *C0273/294*, See Minutes on "Johore Forces and general state of affairs in Johore," by Ommanney, 10 August, 1903.
- 9 *Ibid.* See Minutes by Chamberlain, 11 August, 1903.
- 10 *C0273/294*, See Minutes by Collins, 25 September, 1903.
- 11 *Ibid.* See Minutes by Stubbs, 26 September, 1903.
- 12 *C0273/298*, Letter, Cecil Smith to Lucas, 23 July, 1903.
- 13 *C0273/294*, Confidential Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 3 August, 1903.
- 14 *Ibid.* Enclosed Memorandum by Mr. C.T. Hare on "Note on Johore Af-

- fairs."
- 15 C0273/295, Confidential Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 19 October, 1903.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 C0273/295, Confidential Despatch, Swettenham to Chamberlain, 19 October, 1903.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 C0273/295, See Minutes on "Johore" by Stubbs, 11 November, 1903.
- 20 *Ibid.* See Minutes on "Johore" by Ommanney, 19 November, 1903.
- 21 *General Adviser's Files, Johore State Secretariat, G.A. File 158/1911.* Letter, Secretarial Dept. of the Rubber Estates of Johore to General Adviser, 14 January, 1912. See also enclosed Grant.
- 22 J.H. Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya, 1876-1922*, (Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1973), p81-82.
- 23 *Ibid.*, pp. 14-92.
- 24 C0273/316, Letter, Smith to Lucas, 29 March, 1905.
- 25 *Ibid.* See Minutes on "Johore Advisory Board," by Stubbs (30 March), Lucas (31 March), Ommanney (31 March), and Lyttelton (1 April, 1905).
- 26 C0273/311, Confidential Despatch, Anderson to Lyttelton, 4 May, 1905.
- 27 *Ibid.*, Confidential Despatch, Lyttelton to Anderson, 15 June 1905.
- 28 The company "was to have a capital of £110,000, with 100,000 5 per cent preference shares of £1 and 200,000 1/- shares. The Sultan's 'share of the plunder' (a description used in the Crown Law Office) was to be 100,000 of the latter deferred shares." The interest guaranteed by the Johore Government was 5% on the preference shares. As security for payment, the Government mortgaged the revenue of the state. The company agreed to launch an Agricultural Bank with a capital of £35,000. It was to undertake also the construction of harbours, roads or railways and mining. K. Sinclair, "Hobson and Lenin in Johore: Colonial Office policy towards British concessionaires and investors, 1878-1907," *Modern Asian Studies* 1, 4, 1967, p. 342.
- 29 C0273/316, Letter, E. Erlanger to Lyttelton, 24 May, 1905.
- 30 *Ibid.* See Minutes on "Johore Development Company" by Ommanney, 27 May, 1905.
- 31 C0273/313, Letter, Harry W. Lake to Dato Mentri, 19 April, 1905.
- 32 C0273/311, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Smith, 14 June, 1905.
- 33 Simultaneously, Anderson learnt from a representative of the London financiers that since the British objected to the concession, the financiers would withdraw from the concession completely.
- C0273/312, Confidential Despatch, Anderson to Lyttelton, 27 June, 1905.
- 34 C0273/312, Secret Despatch, Anderson to Lyttelton, 27 June, 1905.
- 35 *Ibid.* See Minutes on "Visit of Sultan of Johore to England," by Stubbs

- (26 July), Lucas (29 July), and Ommanney (31 July, 1905).
- 36 C0273/313, Letter, Abdul Rahman to Smith, 13 July, 1905.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 C0273/313, Letter, Lake to Abdul Rahman, 20 October, 1905.
- 39 *Ibid.*, Letter, Abdul Rahman to Smith, 10 October, 1905.
- 40 C0273/313, Letter, Lake to Abdul Rahman, 20 October, 1905.
- 41 E.F. Turner had been personal solicitor to both Sultan Abu Bakar and Sultan Ibrahim.
- 42 C0273/316, Letter, Abdul Rahman to the Under Secretary of State, 2 November, 1905.
- 43 C0273/313, Letter, Smith to the Under Secretary of State, 21 October, 1905 and Letter, Abdul Rahman to the Under Secretary of State, 2 November, 1905.
- 44 *Ibid.*, See Minutes on "Resignation of the Board" by Stubbs (25 October), Fiddes (25 October) and Ommanney (31 October 1905).
C0273/316, See Minutes on "Advisory Board," by Stubbs (3 November), Ommanney (4 November), Lucas (4 November) and Lyttelton (6 November, 1905).
- 45 C0273/316, Letter, Lucas to Abdul Rahman, 9 November, 1905.
- 46 C0273/312, Secret Despatch, Anderson to Earl of Elgin, 26 December, 1905.
- 47 *Ibid.*, See Minutes on "Appointment of British Agent" by Stubbs (23 January) and Lucas (23 January, 1906).
- 48 C0273/320, Confidential Despatch, Anderson to Earl of Elgin, 20 February, 1906.
- 49 *Ibid.*, Telegram, Anderson to Earl of Elgin, 2 March, 1906.
- 50 *Ibid.*
- 51 C0273/320, See Minutes on "Johore Concessions" by Fiddes, 2 March, 1906.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 C0273/320, See Minutes on "Johore Concessions" by Lucas (3 March), Ommanney (3 March) and Elgin (6 March, 1906).
- 54 *Ibid.*, Letter, Elgin to Sultan Ibrahim, 7 March, 1906.
- 55 E. Thio, British Policy towards Johore: from advice to control, *JMBRAS* Vol. XL, Pt 2, 1967, pp 30-31.
- 56 K. Sinclair, "The British Advance in Johore, 1885-1914," *JMBRAS* Vol. XL, Pt 1, p. 102.
- 57 C0273/324, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Elgin, 26 April, 1906.
- 58 *Ibid.*, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to the Under Secretary of State, 7 June, 1906.
- 59 C0273/320, Telegram, Anderson to Elgin, 12 June, 1906.
- 60 *Ibid.*, See Minutes on "Sultan of Johore," by Stubbs, Lucas, Fiddes and Ommanney, 13 and 14 March, 1906.

- 61 E. Thio, British Policy Towards Johore: From Advice to Control, *JMBRAS* Vol. XL, Pt. 1, 1967, p 31.
- 62 C0273/324, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to the Under Secretary of State, 7 June, 1906.
Also, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Abdul Rahman, 2 June, 1906.
- 63 C0273/326, Secret Despatch, Anderson to Elgin, 18 January, 1907. See also Enclosure.
And, Letter, Anderson to Lucas, 18 January, 1907.
- 64 C0273/326, Letter, Anderson to Lucas, 18 January, 1907.
- 65 *Ibid.*, See Minutes on "Affairs of Johore," by Stubbs, 20 February, 1907.
- 66 *Ibid.*, Letter, Anderson to Lucas, 18 January, 1907.
- 67 C0273/330, Enclosure H in Enclosure I, Confidential Despatch, Anderson to Elgin, 19 June, 1907.
- 68 *Ibid.*, Enclosures J and K.
- 69 *Ibid.*, Enclosure A.
- 70 *Ibid.*, Enclosure B.
- 71 *Ibid.*, Enclosure E.
- 72 *Ibid.*, Enclosure D.
- 73 *Ibid.*, Enclosure F.
- 74 *Ibid.*, Enclosure G.
- 75 *Ibid.*, Enclosure K.
- 76 *Ibid.*, Letter, Rodyk & Davidson to Dato Sri Amar d'Raja, Dato Moham-med, Smart and Barry, 16 March, 1907.
- 77 C0273/330, Confidential Despatch, Anderson to Elgin, 19 June, 1907.
- 78 *Ibid.*, See Minutes on "Concessions to Barry," by Fiddes, 19 July, 1907.
- 79 C0273/334, Letter, Barry to Anderson, 20 November, 1907.
- 80 C0273/331, Enclosure 1, Despatch, Anderson to Elgin, 4 July, 1907.
- 81 *Ibid.*, Sub-Enclosures 1 and 2, Despatch, Anderson to Elgin, 25 September, 1907.
- 82 C0273/339, Despatch, Anderson to Elgin, 12 March, 1908.
- 83 *Ibid.*, Enclosure 1.
- 84 C0273/342, See correspondence and minutes on "Johore Railway Construction," August and September, 1908.
- 85 *State Secretary's Files, Johore State Secretariat, File No: 21.* Private letter, Anderson to Sultan Ibrahim, 28 September, 1909.
- 86 C0273/351, Telegram, Anderson to Colonial Secretary, 16 October, 1909.
- 87 *State Secretary's Files, File No: 21.* Private letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Anderson, 4 October, 1909.
- 88 *Ibid.*, Letter, Anderson to Sultan Ibrahim, 16 October, 1907. See also Enclosure.
- 89 C0273/351, Telegram, Anderson to Colonial Secretary, 16 October, 1909. See also Minutes on "Adviser to Johore Government" by Collins (10

- October) and Lord Crewe (20 October, 1909).
- 90 C0273/362, Enclosure I, Confidential Despatch, Anderson to Crewe, 9 March, 1910.
- 91 C0273/326, Letter, Anderson to Lucas, 18 January, 1907.

5

The Struggle for Control, 1910—1914

In the past years the Colonial Office had viewed the appointment of a British officer to Johore as synonymous with the extension of British control over Johore. Apparently in January, 1910 when Mr. D.G. Campbell assumed duty as General Adviser of Johore, both the Colonial Office and the High Commissioner interpreted it as the formal establishment of British control over Johore. However, neither the nature and terms of the appointment nor the subsequent relationship between the Sultan and the General Adviser subscribe to this view. Unlike the appointment of Residents to the F.M.S. the appointment of the General Adviser to Johore did not in effect mean the establishment of British control.

The appointment of the General Adviser differed from that of the Resident in some respects. First, the General Adviser was appointed as a result of mutual agreement between the High Commissioner and the Sultan. The agreement was verbal and there was no written document or treaty like the Pangkor Agreement. This meant the appointment of the General Adviser lacked a legal basis. Second, the British officer appointed to Johore was termed General Adviser and not Resident. The significance lies not in the difference in the titles but the implications behind them. In the case of the Resident, the Sultan of the Malay State was bound to ask and accept the advice of the Resident on all administrative matters except those touching on Malay religion and custom. Since the British officer appointed to Johore was not a Resident, by implication the Sultan was not similarly bound to the same obligations. The title, General Adviser, was taken from Siam. Chulalongkorn employed European officers to modernise and improve Siamese administration. He was not bound to ask or accept their advice on administrative matters. Therefore, the title, General Adviser, could similarly imply that Sultan Ibrahim employed this British officer to modernise and improve

Johore administration, without binding himself to ask and accept his advice on it. Third, no understanding was reached between Anderson and Sultan Ibrahim about the functions and powers of the General Adviser within Johore. No legal document outlined the duties and powers of the General Adviser as the Pangkor Agreement had done with those of the Resident.

However, it is interesting and significant to know that the State Secretary and the *Mentri Besar* of Johore had drawn up a memorandum in November, 1909 on the appointment of the General Adviser. Both men viewed Campbell's appointment as similar to that of Buckley — as General Adviser, Financial Adviser and Honorary Member of the State Council when it met to discuss state affairs. In their view, the General Adviser's functions were to give advice on governmental matters and make his suggestions regarding them. Next, the General Adviser was to inspect all offices and districts and put forward his suggestions. Finally, he was to advise on the administrative set up and the drawing up of laws. Both the State Secretary and the *Mentri Besar* planned to discuss and finalise the above points with the Sultan and the High Commissioner. However, there is no evidence that they discussed the memorandum with Sultan Ibrahim or Anderson or got any of the points agreed to by either men.¹

Though Anderson had suggested the appointment of the General Adviser to Johore and had selected Campbell for the post, it had been officially made to appear to the general public that Sultan Ibrahim had requested for the services of a British officer. And, when the High Commissioner recommended Campbell, the Sultan had accepted and appointed him General Adviser. Though the terms of service were discussed and fixed by the Sultan and the High Commissioner, it was the Sultan who put them into effect. The Johore Government paid the salary, allowance, and pension for Campbell. Also, it provided for his official residence in Johore Bahru.² Officially Campbell was an officer in the service of the Johore Government, expressly responsible to the Sultan and not the High Commissioner though seconded from the F.M.S.

The ambivalent nature and terms of the appointment gave rise to different conceptions of the role of the General Adviser in Johore. The British — the High Commissioner and the Colonial Office — viewed it essentially as an extension of British control. To them this meant placing the Sultan under the control of the British officer and reorganising

Johore administration along British lines. Campbell who came to Johore from his previous post of Resident of Negri Sembilan held a similar view of his task in Johore. Naturally, he expected Sultan Ibrahim to ask and accept his advice on administrative matters. But Sultan Ibrahim and his Malay officers did not view Campbell's appointment in the same light as the British. The lack of a legal agreement, the different title, and the failure to define the functions and powers of the General Adviser probably led Sultan Ibrahim to look upon Campbell as an English officer in his service. He was certainly aware that Campbell was imposed on him by the High Commissioner to improve Johore administration, watch his movements and guard British interests. However, he did not feel bound to ask and accept the General Adviser's advice on all administrative matters. He did ask advice when he thought fit but not otherwise. Likewise, the Malay officials like the Mentri Besar and the State Secretary did not consider the General Adviser equivalent to the Resident. It is more likely that Campbell in their conception was equivalent to Buckley. Campbell was there to give necessary advice and suggestions on administrative matters. Obviously, they did not expect Campbell to completely take over the running of the administration as the Residents had done in the F.M.S.

Basically, these different conceptions of the British and Malay authorities of the role of the General Adviser in Johore led first to friction and then to a struggle for control within Johore. Of course, initially there were cordial relations. But this was short-lived. The General Adviser and his colleagues in Johore in their attempt to reorganise Johore administration and raise it to F.M.S. standards tended to replace Malay administrative procedures and personnel with British i.e. F.M.S. — procedures and officials. Not only Sultan Ibrahim but also his Malay officials felt their positions and power within Johore threatened by these administrative changes. Slowly, they opposed any move which undermined the Malay administrative set-up and consequently their position and power. Naturally the Malay officials allied themselves with the Sultan to resist such changes by the General Adviser and his colleagues. Changes which did not affect them were accepted either passively or enthusiastically.

In this struggle between the Malay and British administrative factions, the Malay faction was initially victorious due to the support given them by the Sultan. However, this victory was short-lived. The General

Adviser soon enlisted the support of the High Commissioner for his faction. This placed the British faction in a stronger position in late 1913 and early 1914. Exploiting the issues of maladministration in the Johore Bahru Prison, Sultan Ibrahim's reluctance to employ sufficient personnel for development, and his refusal to reduce his increased allowance as advised by the High Commissioner, both Campbell and Sir Arthur Young won the approval of the Colonial Secretary to their proposal to request Sultan Ibrahim to sign an agreement enlarging the powers of the General Adviser to those of the Resident. Faced with the strong coalition of the General Adviser, High Commissioner and Colonial Secretary, Sultan Ibrahim and his officers agreed to the proposal, thus ultimately conceding defeat in the struggle to retain control of Johore administration.

In this chapter I propose to narrate and discuss British efforts to reorganise Johore administration and the ensuing struggle for real control within Johore between the British and Malay factions.

During his first year of service in Johore, Campbell had the co-operation and support of Sultan Ibrahim in his initial efforts to improve administration. On his arrival at Johore Bahru, Campbell was taken around and shown all the offices and public buildings by Dato Mohammed, the State Secretary.³ Soon after in February, 1910 Sultan Ibrahim appointed Campbell as Financial Adviser and Commissioner of Lands, Mines and Surveys.⁴ At this juncture these posts were crucial ones in Johore. Applications for land for rubber cultivation and mining projects were pouring into Johore. This was a consequence of the rubber boom and profitable tin mining in the F.M.S. and the opening of the Johore State Railway for public use in 1909. Also, companies were being floated in England to open rubber estates in Johore. Last but not least, the rubber trees which had been planted in Johore since 1905 were attaining tapping age around this time.⁵ Now when there were prospects of an increase in the demand for land and consequently an increase in revenue, it is surprising that Sultan Ibrahim should have relinquished control over land alienation and the Treasury which he had administered since his take over in 1898.

One probable reason why Sultan Ibrahim handed over the administration of the Treasury and the Land, Mines and Surveys Department to Campbell may have been because he looked upon Campbell as replacing Buckley. Buckley had been Financial Adviser and his firm, Messrs:

Rodyk and Davidson had been in charge of the Johore Land Department. So when Campbell took office and Buckley was dismissed, Sultan Ibrahim handed the work Buckley and his firm had done to Campbell. Campbell claimed in late 1913 that Sultan Ibrahim relinquished control of the Treasury to him because he wanted the British to fill up the nearly empty Treasury of Johore.⁶ Probably Campbell was right. Sultan Ibrahim was shrewd where finance was concerned. He may have placed Campbell in charge of Treasury administration to improve its poor financial condition. Likewise, Sultan Ibrahim also accepted Campbell's services and advice for reorganising the financially important aspects of Johore administration.

This is evident in the establishment of the branch office of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank in Johore. In March, 1910 negotiations between Campbell and the Manager of the Singapore branch were begun. Later Campbell counselled Sultan Ibrahim on the negotiations and the establishment of the branch office. Agreement was reached quickly. The Johore Government committed itself to keep its current balances with the Johore branch and allow it to carry out its business — though the right to call for tenders was not surrendered by the Johore Government.⁷ Both Sultan Ibrahim and Campbell knew that banking facilities were essential to the rubber planters. Aware that the planters were soon going to be the chief source of revenue in Johore, Campbell focused attention on their needs. Armed with the same knowledge Sultan Ibrahim did not hinder Campbell's work in the interest of the planters.

In Campbell's view an efficient Survey Department was essential to make possible quick and accurate grants of land to planters and miners. When the Johore Surveyor, Mr. Sermit, completed his contract with the Johore Government, Campbell took the opportunity to recommend to Sultan Ibrahim the employment of Mr. Griffith who was then serving in Negri Sembilan. On this recommendation, in April, 1910 Sultan Ibrahim requested Anderson to second this officer to take charge of the Johore Survey Department.⁸ In September, 1910 Mr. Griffith took up his post as Superintendent of Revenue Survey.⁹ Around this time, Sultan Ibrahim felt that the alienation of land for rubber cultivation made it imperative to make a complete survey of Johore. For this, in June, he sought the services of the Triangulation Branch of the F.M.S. Survey Department.¹⁰ Anderson secured the services of the Triangulation Branch for Sultan Ibrahim.¹¹

A major step in the direction of administrative reorganisation and improvement was taken in July, 1910. On the advice of Campbell, Sultan Ibrahim requested Anderson to second from the F.M.S. service four more officers to serve in Johore. The professed reason for requesting their services was his desire, "to administer Johore on the lines of the British colony ..."¹² Simultaneously, he hoped that his own officers would be trained in the modern methods of administration and later carry on administration efficiently. To achieve both these ends, the F.M.S. officials who were to be seconded to Johore had to possess a good knowledge of their administrative work and of the Malay language.

The first officer requested — Judge and Legal Adviser — had three specific functions to perform. He had to advise the Johore Government on legal questions, sit in court with the Malay Hakim or Judge in cases which involved Europeans, and finally draft enactments for submission to the State Council. Second, Sultan Ibrahim requested for an Assistant General Adviser to be stationed at Muar. He had to take charge of the Muar Land Office, and in general perform the functions which Campbell did in Johore Bahru. Third, a Commissioner of Customs was required. He was to completely reorganise the Customs Department, and the method of collecting duties from the old "farming" method to a modern procedure. Finally, Sultan Ibrahim sought the services of a Collector of Land Revenue. He was to be posted at Batu Pahat. He had to take charge of the Land Office and the local Treasury. When required he had to sit in court with the Malay Magistrates.¹³

By December, 1910 it was arranged that these four officers were to be loaned to the Johore Government. While accepting their services, Sultan Ibrahim made it clear to Anderson that their appointments in Johore were not to be considered permanent. Either their period of service should be fixed or the High Commissioner undertake to remove them or allow Sultan Ibrahim to remove them if he found them unsuitable for the posts, or if he and his people found them "not acceptable."¹⁴ Mr. S.W. Simmons took up the post of Commissioner of Customs. Mr. A.S. Jelf was appointed Assistant General Adviser at Muar. Mr. M.H. Whitley became Judge and Legal Adviser and Mr. J.L. Humphreys, Collector of Land Revenue, Batu Pahat. Thus, by the end of 1910 Campbell, with the co-operation of Sultan Ibrahim, had successfully brought seconded British officials from the F.M.S. to hold some of the crucial posts in the Johore administrative service. Except for the post of Judge and Legal

Adviser, the others involved the question of revenue and finance in Johore. Though Campbell could not claim to have made significant administrative changes during 1910, he had lined up the men for this in the near future. Also, administrative reorganisation was not to be centered at Johore Bahru but to be extended to the districts — especially, the financially important districts of Muar and Batu Pahat.

In September, 1910 Campbell brought out the first Gazette of the Johore Government. Other than gazetting the new appointments, it officially publicized the new enactments which Campbell had initiated and the Sultan-in-Council had passed. They were the Amendment Enactment to the Railway Enactment of 1908, the Land Enactment and the Enactment for the Imposition of Customs.¹⁵ Significantly, Campbell had made the necessary legal provisions for his personnel to make unhindered the required reorganisation and improvements in the two important spheres of land and revenue administration. These affected the financially important sectors of the Johore population — the planters, miners, importers and exporters. Even Anderson commented that the issuing of the Gazette marked, "a new stage in the development of the administration of Johore."¹⁶

Other than making these preparatory steps for administrative reorganisation in the following years, Campbell during 1910 attempted to participate in Malay administration and influence certain decisions. This he achieved by regularly attending the weekly meetings of the State Council, held on Wednesdays. As Commissioner of Lands and Mines, he made grants to applicants. These grants had to be approved by the State Council when presented to them by the Commissioner. The minutes of the State Council show that the Council approved these grants often, if not always.¹⁷ Campbell also focused attention on prison administration and education but no definite programmes were drawn up for these during 1910.¹⁸ It is apparent that Campbell had performed his duties with the co-operation of Sultan Ibrahim, and his Malay officers. Sultan Ibrahim had listened to advice given by Campbell on various issues. In fact, Sultan Ibrahim himself claimed to "work splendidly" with Campbell — though one has to bear in mind that his statement was also for public consumption.¹⁹ However, there is no evidence of friction in their relationship or resistance on the part of Sultan Ibrahim and his officers to steps taken by Campbell and his colleagues during their first year of service in Johore.

Various factors explain the initial good relations between the Malay elite and the seconded British officials in Johore. First, Campbell had only made new appointments and legal provisions for future work and had not attempted to do away with the existing Malay systems or to replace Malay officials with British ones. This meant the position and power of the Malay ruling elite remained unaffected, thus giving no cause for complaint or resistance. Second, Sultan Ibrahim and his Malay officers did not resent the new appointments to important administrative posts because they viewed the British officials' stay in Johore as temporary. They hoped to learn the art of efficient administration from these men and dispense with them once the Malay officers were ready to carry on independently. Therefore, at this initial stage the Malay officials did not regard the British officials either as rivals to or usurpers of their position and power within Johore. Third, the Malay ruling elite had yet to experience the full long-term impact and significance of the changes which the British planned to introduce. Lack of foresight partially explained their initial complaisance. Fourth, so far the changes which the General Adviser planned to introduce were in the administration of land and revenue. Sultan Ibrahim and his officers knew that these changes were directly or indirectly geared to improve the financial position of Johore. Naturally, they would not have been averse to an increase in the dwindling Treasury balance. Fifth, as Sultan Ibrahim was ill for the greater part of 1910, both Sultan Ibrahim and Campbell could not have worked closely together. This reduced the chances of friction between them. Finally, Sultan Ibrahim would not have wished for the arrangement between him and Anderson to fail in the first year of its working out — probably fully aware that such a failure would lead to the introduction of the Residential system with greater British control.

The first signs of friction became evident in 1911 when administrative reorganisation was begun at the state and district levels. But this did not mean that Sultan Ibrahim and his officers opposed all efforts at reorganisation. British efforts to reorganise the Johore Customs Department met with no opposition. Campbell's advice on the repayment of the railway loan was also accepted by Sultan Ibrahim. However, his efforts to improve the administration of the Johore Bahru Prison failed to enlist co-operation from the Sultan. Though administrative reorganisation in Muar did not immediately rouse opposition, its subsequent impact and consequence did later affect Mr. Jelf's position in Johore.

Though Campbell had not made significant administrative changes prior to 1911, he had replaced the old "farming out" system of collecting duties on pepper and gambier with a new arrangement in May, 1910. By this arrangement duties on pepper and gambier were collected at Singapore on the weight declared by the exporter to the Singapore Gambier and Pepper Society. Mr. Simmons, the Commissioner of Customs, discovered that this arrangement had many loopholes which the exporters of pepper and gambier could exploit to their advantage but detrimental to the Johore Government in terms of the revenue collected. He objected to some serious defects in this arrangement. Among them were the failure to collect duties on the commodities before they left Johore, failure to officially and accurately ascertain the weight of produce exported, thus resulting in cheating in the weight declared, arrears in the collection of duties and the practice of "basi" or rebate.²⁰ In September, 1911 Simmons submitted his observations to the Johore Government and proposed a change in the system of collecting duties on gambier and pepper. The Johore Government agreed with the changes and a new system was introduced in Johore in October, 1911.

According to the new system exporters of gambier and pepper were to receive the same treatment as those of other produce. They had to declare the exact weight of pepper and gambier and pay duties on them prior to exportation to Singapore. Simmons ensured that the new system corrected the defects and eliminated the abuses of the old system. This meant that the Johore Government was not deprived of any portion of its revenue from the export of pepper and gambier. Collection of arrears was also speeded up. In short the Johore Government earned more revenue than before in duties from these exports in proportion to the quantity exported.²¹

Simmons also improved the collection of duties on the rubber and tapioca exported from Johore. He did not make any drastic changes but improved the existing systems by introducing some new features and modifying some existing practices. The payment of duties on exported rubber was in arrears due to the practice of calculating the due duty on the sale price of rubber. This required the export of rubber first, and the duty was calculated after the sale note was produced. Thus, there was a lapse of one or two months between the exportation of rubber and the collection of duty. From February, 1911 Simmons issued fortnightly lists which fixed the price of various grades of rubber for the following

fortnight. This enabled the authorities to calculate the duty due on the price quoted in the list and thus collect the duty before the rubber left the country. Simultaneously, Simmons effected the transfer of the Johore Bahru Customs Office from its old site to a new one opposite the railway station. He utilised the staff of the Chandu Office to effectively carry out the functions of the Customs Office. These changes resulted in a 500% increase in revenue collected at Johore Bahru on rubber and tapioca.²² Similarly, Simmons improved revenue earning from the import of spirits by introducing a new system of revenue collection on imported spirits into Johore.²³

With a view to improve the functioning of the Customs Department in the whole of Johore, Simmons visited various districts and submitted reports and recommendations. Where he felt that branch offices were unprofitable or unnecessary, he recommended that they should be shut down. As a result branch offices at Parit Jawa, Sungei Edros, and Bukit Kepong were closed in March, 1911. This he felt would effect savings on establishment. Simultaneously, he recommended opening new branches at strategic places where they would serve profitably. As a result branch offices were opened at Pasir Gudang, Bekok, Pontian, Benut and Berang in March-April, 1911. To see that duties were collected efficiently, Simmons instructed District Officers to make frequent rounds of inspection. To get efficient and honest work from his staff he revised their poor salaries to a more attractive scale. While driving at efficiency, he also aimed for uniformity in administration. He ensured that all districts were administered along the same lines. He instructed District Officers to keep accounts according to a uniform method. He fixed tariffs and published them in a table-form in the Gazette of June, 1911 in order to prevent different tariffs being imposed in different districts.²⁴

Simmons' reorganisation of the Johore Customs Department to achieve efficiency and uniformity was ultimately aimed at maximising revenue and minimising expenditure for the Johore Government. As such it is not surprising that there is no evidence of friction between the Malay ruling elite and the British officials. Moreover, Simmons had been expressly appointed to reorganise the Customs Department and reform the outdated methods of duty collection. How Simmons recruited his English personnel or how he worked with his staff in general is not evident from the sources. Some of his Malay officers won his appreciation. Apparently, he had the co-operation of both the Malay ruling elite

and his general staff. It is significant to note that his reforms affected largely the Chinese and Europeans, and not the Malay population. His reforms, of the systems of collecting duties on exports of gambier and pepper, and on imports of spirits affected the Chinese. His stricter enforcement of collecting duties prior to exportation of rubber largely affected the Europeans. Complaints from these sectors came directly to the General Adviser and did not go to Sultan Ibrahim or his officers. Therefore, there was no basis for complaint or opposition from the Malay ruling elite. However, it would be more accurate to say that the picture was one of active co-operation than one of passive acceptance due to lack of a substantial case for resistance on the part of the Malay ruling elite.

Despite Campbell's fear that Sultan Ibrahim would utilise for his personal gratification the substantial balance which the Johore Treasury had acquired in the past year, Sultan Ibrahim proved agreeable to Campbell's suggestion that the money should be used to repay the railway loan. Prior to Anderson's departure to England, Campbell had discussed the issue with him and had got his approval.²⁵ Therefore in April, 1911 Campbell advised Sultan Ibrahim to request the High Commissioner to grant permission to Johore to repay its debt to the F.M.S.²⁶ With Colonial Office approval the Acting High Commissioner, Mr. Brockman, agreed to accept the repayment. It was arranged that Johore would pay its first instalment of \$250,000 in June, 1911.²⁷

Campbell and Jelf were not as fortunate in their efforts to reorganise aspects of administration at the district level. Jelf was not only Assistant General Adviser but also Land Officer at Muar. His attention was largely focused on reform and reorganisation of the administration of land. Land was increasingly becoming the chief source of revenue as a result of the alienation of land for rubber cultivation and the maturing of the planted trees for tapping. Early in 1911 Jelf brought into force the new Land Enactment which introduced a new system of annual rent for land. This was a radical change from the old system in which land was sold outright for payment. The enactment also required landholders to have titles to their land. This could be done by entry in the Mukim Registrar. This necessitated many landholders whose land had maturing crops to make applications for such titles. Jelf took steps to see that all holdings had titles or other written authority.

Maintenance of land which was occupied by coconut, arecanut and

fruit plantations also engaged Jelf's attention. He discovered that the drains ("parits") dug to drain water from these lands were not properly maintained. This could mean the ruin of acres of fertile land. Jelf appointed inspectors whose task was to inspect the maintenance of these drains. Simultaneously, the Collector of Land Revenue was invested with the power to punish those who failed to comply with the orders of the inspectors. Jelf also attempted to centralise all land work at Bandar Maharani, the main town of the Muar District. Land work done at Bukit Kepong and Parit Jawa District offices was shifted to the District office at Bandar Maharani by the end of 1911.²⁸

While reorganising land administration in Muar,²⁹ Jelf recommended the abolition of two old but existing systems of Malay land administration. They were the Commission system and the Kangchu system. The Commission system permitted the penghulus a 5% commission on transfers of land and other work, and also to take a small fee for certain services. They were authorised by the Sultan to do this work and obtain the fees and commissions for themselves, but were not paid any salary. Jelf objected to this system for two reasons. One, he discovered that the Government could not and did not exercise any control over the penghulus. Two, the penghulus could and did make use of their authority to make money. Jelf, therefore, recommended that the penghulus should be appointed government servants and paid fixed salaries. This he felt would ensure governmental control of the penghulus and their work. Furthermore, it would guarantee the efficient operation of the new Land Enactment in Muar.

Remnants of the Kangchu system were still evident in Muar in 1911. The Chinese plantations which in the past had been cultivated with pepper and gambier or tapioca were now being replanted with rubber. The new Land Enactment required plantations to have titles approved and recognised by the British authorities in Johore. But the Kangchu system had endowed the Chinese planters with a different sort of land titles — the 'Surats Sungai'. The clash between the Malay system of administering Chinese landholding and the British system of doing so was obvious. However, despite possessing 'Surats Sungai' some of the Chinese planters adapted themselves to the new situation and applied for new titles for their land. Jelf encountered difficulties in granting land to fresh applicants because he did not know the exact position and extent of Chinese landholding under the Kangchu system. He was often faced

with counterclaims by Chinese landholders with 'Surats Sungai', after he had made new grants to fresh applicants. Consequently, Jelf objected to this old Kangchu system remaining in practice.³⁰

Jelf's criticism of the Commission and Kangchu systems was an indirect criticism of Malay land administration. His recommendations to abolish them and to replace them with British procedures affected the Malay ruling elite. Also, for the first time the incidence of British reform and reorganisation was felt by the Malay section of the population. Neither the ruling elite nor the subjects opposed Jelf's reforms immediately. Their resentment and opposition found their way to Sultan Ibrahim who requested Jelf's removal in 1912³¹ on the grounds that he failed to understand and get along with the Malays.³² Sultan Ibrahim himself would not have been sorry to get rid of Jelf whose reforms also undermined his authority. Abolishing the Commission and Kangchu systems meant removing land administration from his direct control and placing it in the hands of the District Officers. This also meant loss of certain amount of personal autocratic power to authorise or refuse penghulus the right to serve him and thus earn a living.

Sultan Ibrahim also did not welcome Campbell's interest in the administration of the Johore Bahru Prison. In June, 1910 Campbell wrote to Sultan Ibrahim expressing his dissatisfaction with the way the Johore Bahru Prison was administered. Unsatisfactory response from Sultan Ibrahim led Campbell to drop the subject for sometime. In June, 1911 some prisoners escaped from the prison hospital. Mr. Brockman interviewed Sultan Ibrahim on this incident and in general on the efficiency of prison administration. Sultan Ibrahim admitted to inefficiency and suggested placing the administration of the Johore Bahru Prison under a European. This officer was to be both Chief of Prison and of Police. However, Sultan Ibrahim's immediate actions were closing down the prison hospital and removing prison administration from the authority of the Johore Government. He ordered patients to be treated in their cells in future and placed prison administration in the hands of the Johore Military Force. These arrangements did not meet with Campbell's approval.

In September, 1911 Campbell wrote to Sir Arthur Young, the High Commissioner, about Johore administration generally, and the Johore Bahru Prison administration specifically. He criticised the prison wardens who carried canes and did not hesitate to use them. Prisoners were

made to work hard. He also stated that Sultan Ibrahim utilised prison labour on his private estates. The new High Commissioner did not take any immediate action on this subject — he took action only in 1913.³³

Campbell found that Sultan Ibrahim chose to ignore his advice on administrative reorganisation when it clashed with his own interest. He was also sensitive about relinquishing control of prison administration. Sultan Ibrahim was resisting both change and consequent loss of control in a sphere which affected his private interest. This was the beginning of the struggle for control in Johore between the Malay and British factions. The struggle gained momentum and was more apparent in the following two years.

Before going on leave in January, 1912 Campbell discussed with Sultan Ibrahim conditions in the Johore Bahru Prison and also future arrangements for its administration. He advised Sultan Ibrahim to request for a seconded British officer from the F.M.S. or S.S. to take charge of prison administration and also the Police Force in Johore. Sultan Ibrahim agreed to do so. Campbell informed Sultan Ibrahim that Mr. J.B. Elcum who was to be Acting General Adviser in his absence was experienced in prison administration. So he advised Sultan Ibrahim to make use of Elcum's experience and ability to reorganise the Johore Bahru Prison.³⁴ As agreed to, Sultan Ibrahim requested Young to second an F.M.S. officer to Johore to take up the post of Superintendent of Police and Prisons. Mr. G.P. Cuscaden who had been Assistant Commissioner of Police in the F.M.S. was seconded to Johore.³⁵ Elcum who was now Acting General Adviser felt that Cuscaden would not have the time to devote himself to two tasks simultaneously. So he advised Sultan Ibrahim that Cuscaden should be appointed Superintendent of Police only, and another officer should be secured for supervising administration and improvement of the Johore Bahru Prison. So Sultan Ibrahim appointed Cuscaden as Superintendent of Police only.³⁶ But he made no effort immediately or even later to place prison administration under an European officer.

However, immediately after Elcum reported for duty, Sultan Ibrahim requested him to visit the prisons in Johore Bahru and Bandar Maharani, report on the conditions and make suitable recommendations for their improvement. Elcum visited both prisons and submitted his report and recommendations to the Johore Government in April, 1912.³⁷ Elcum was satisfied with the conditions in and the administration of the Bandar

Maharani Prison which Jelf had reorganised in 1911. So he made no recommendations for its improvement. However, Elcum was critical of conditions in the Johore Bahru Prison and also of its administration.

Elcum severely criticised the practice of treating all prisoners alike, whether they were petty offenders or hardened criminals. He disapproved of the practice of similarly fettering, employing, and imprisoning all of them in the same cells. He pointed out the failure of the prison administrators to give the prisoners a medical check up when they first came in. Also, he was critical of the indiscriminate assignment of prisoners to hard labour or use of fetters without taking their health into consideration. He was dissatisfied that prisoners were treated in their cells while the repaired prison hospital stood closed. Elcum disapproved of the practice of wardens carrying only canes and no other protection for he felt that while the wardens may be tempted to use the canes unnecessarily, they were not adequately armed against the prisoners. He also pointed out that prisoners could not by good behaviour earn a remission of a portion of their sentence or escape hard labour.

In his recommendations, Elcum advocated that long and short term prisoners should be kept separate both day and night to prevent any communication between them. He felt that prisoners should be medically examined on entry and treated in the prison hospital — not in their cells — when ill. Elcum suggested the abolition of the use of canes and recommended arming the wardens more effectively. He recommended that a trained warden seconded from the F.M.S. should take charge of the Johore Bahru Gaol. Elcum desired that the rules sanctioned by the Sultan-in-Council should be put into effect. He advocated the establishment of a separate Civil Prison in Johore.³⁸

Sultan Ibrahim did not accept Elcum's recommendations in toto. He was unwilling to stop the use of canes and to arm the wardens more effectively. Neither did he consent to the establishment of a Civil Prison. Also, he rejected the suggestion that the Johore Bahru Prison should be placed under a trained warden from the F.M.S. Sultan Ibrahim accepted the rest of Elcum's recommendations in May, 1912.³⁹ During the latter half of 1912 the Johore Military Force attempted to put into effect some of Elcum's recommendations which were approved by Sultan Ibrahim. Medical examination of prisoners on admission to determine their fitness for work came into practice. But the Military authorities made no move to put the Prison Hospital to use, stating that they had no authority

from Sultan Ibrahim to do so. The use of leg irons was abandoned.⁴⁰ On the issue of prison administration, Sultan Ibrahim made it apparent that he was not anxious to relinquish control to a seconded British officer. He was unwilling to remove prison administration from the hands of the Johore Military Forces and place it in those of a warden seconded from the F.M.S. However, he was not completely opposed to improvement or reorganisation even at this stage. This is apparent, not only in his acceptance of some of Elcum's recommendations for improving prison administration but also his schemes for improving the efficiency of the clerical staff⁴¹ and the education of the Malay boys in Johore.⁴²

While Sultan Ibrahim was reluctant to relinquish control over Johore administration, Campbell and Elcum were anxious that seconded British officers serving in Johore should be under the authority of the General Adviser and not under the Sultan. They wanted the status of these seconded officers to be defined. Campbell had not found an opportunity to raise the subject with the High Commissioner. However, in early 1912 the High Commissioner himself had directed Elcum that in future all European officers for service in Johore were to be recruited only by secondment from the F.M.S. and the S.S. Elcum agreed to follow this policy.⁴³ In mid-1912 differences arose between the State Commissioners of Muar and Batu Pahat on the one hand and English Heads of Department in Johore on the other. Elcum now felt that it was necessary to define the position of these seconded officers in Johore. So on 3 August Elcum wrote to Young requesting him to get Sultan Ibrahim's consent to place the seconded officers under the authority and control of the General Adviser. However, Sultan Ibrahim could have some say regarding their appointment, removal, pay, and long leave. To strengthen his case for this request Elcum informed Young that most of the European officers felt insecure and dissatisfied under Sultan Ibrahim's control.⁴⁴ The simultaneous arrival of the Colonial Secretary's telegraph regarding the affairs of a British officer in Johore service proved beneficial to Elcum's cause.

Mr. H.E. Bryne who was the Chief Engineer of Johore was on leave in England between April and September, 1912. In his absence Sultan Ibrahim brought certain charges against him and requested Young to remove him from Johore. Bryne got wind of these developments through private sources and approached the Colonial Secretary for assistance. The Colonial Secretary gave him the assurance that the High Commis-

sioner will give him "full opportunity of replying charges before taking action." Then he duly informed Young by telegram the assurance he had given Bryne and stressed the importance of the High Commissioner supporting European officers when faced with difficult situations in Johore.⁴⁵

The High Commissioner agreed with Elcum that it was necessary to define the status of the European officers in Johore. In early September he asked Elcum to draw up regulations about their position in Johore and submit these for his consideration. Elcum felt that detailed regulations "would be a mistake" at this point when the atmosphere in Johore was tense due to worsening relations between the Malay ruling elite and the British officers. Instead, he proposed a general understanding with Sultan Ibrahim. He also suggested to Young that Sultan Ibrahim should be requested to approve a circular giving directions to European officers.⁴⁶ This circular declared that European officers were in future to "look generally to the General Adviser for their instructions ...". It directed them to make their applications for absence from headquarters, for short leave and for leave for tour of inspection to the General Adviser. They were ordered to inform the General Adviser about their movements. Collectors of Land Revenue were directed to correspond directly with the General Adviser as Commissioner of Lands and not through State Commissioners. Heads of Departments — that is Heads of the Legal Adviser's Office, the Customs Department, the Police Department and the Public Works Department — were specifically stated as not being under the authority of the State Commissioners.⁴⁷ Though Elcum avoided detailed regulations in the desire to prevent the worsening of relations between the Malay and British factions, in the circular he certainly did not mince his words. Apparently, the struggle for control was no longer behind the scenes. It was slowly coming into the open. In this struggle the British faction led by the General Adviser was increasingly resorting to the device of using the position and power of the High Commissioner to gain their ends vis-a-vis the Sultan and his officials. And the Colonial Office expressly wanted the High Commissioner to stand by the seconded officials in Johore.

However, the High Commissioner stepped in only if the General Adviser sought his assistance and if the issues involved British interests and were not a purely internal matter. In 1911 when leasing out the Johore State Railway to the F.M.S., Sultan Ibrahim agreed to an ambi-

tious scheme to build 324 miles of feeder roads to the main railway. He sanctioned the expenditure of \$120,000 in the 1911 Estimates for their construction. Work began on the construction of the road between Mersing and Batu Pahat. Though in 1912 Sultan Ibrahim sanctioned expenditure of \$75,000 for the project, he was unwilling to sanction further expenditure once the voted amount was spent by April, 1912. Both Mr. W.B.Y. Draper, Acting Chief Engineer when Bryne was on leave, and Bryne found Sultan Ibrahim and his officials reluctant to sanction further expenditure — even to revoke the balance of \$79,494 from 1911. Even Elcum could not get the Johore Government to sanction further expenditure. So he turned to the High Commissioner for help. At an interview Young told Sultan Ibrahim that he was obliged to provide the required funds for the project. After this Sultan Ibrahim reluctantly sanctioned the expenditure of \$30,000. Bryne faced similar delay and frustration in his attempt to install a filter plant in Johore Bahru in 1913. But Sultan Ibrahim conceded to the installation finally. Elcum had not sought Young's assistance in this purely internal matter which did not involve British interest.⁴⁸

Sultan Ibrahim had given in on the above two issues which involved development and expenditure of money. But when it came to the question of control in internal administration, Sultan Ibrahim adamantly refused to concede to the British faction. In 1911 Sultan Ibrahim had agreed to place the construction of the extension of the Muar Government Railway and the addition of rolling stocks under the direct supervision of the Public Works Department. The Sultan-in-Council approved in 1911 the first instalment of \$36,000 for the extension under the Public Works Department Budget for 1912. Bryne then placed the necessary orders for 4 miles of the extension and 8 set of bogeys and other things. The work proceeded smoothly until March, 1912 when the Muar State Commissioner, Dato Abdullah, started interfering. At first Bryne dismissed his interventions as petty annoyance. On 26 March without referring to the Public Works Department Dato Abdullah wrote to the Johore Government requesting an additional special provision of money for constructing trucks. This sum was to be under his control. But, Bryne had been given \$20,000 for rolling stock. So the State Secretary referred the matter to Bryne who informed him that he had placed his orders for bogeys and still had in hand \$7,358.50 to meet the cost of body building on the bogeys when they arrived. This, he stated, would

provide the required four trucks. As a result, the Johore Government turned down Dato Abdullah's request.⁴⁹

Following this Dato Abdullah declared that the Traffic Manager of the Muar Government Railway was under his control and direction. He told Bryne that he would not permit the Traffic Manager to assist him in his work. When Bryne was on leave, the District Public Works Department Engineer, Mr. L.H.J. Willson, could get nothing done by the Traffic Manager. In June, 1912 the Traffic Manager officially refused to assist Willson without instructions from Dato Abdullah. Willson now wished to know under whose control was the Traffic Manager. Sultan Ibrahim evaded decision by replying that the issue should await resolution until the return of Bryne. Following his return Bryne raised the question in December. In his letter to Sultan Ibrahim he pointed out that the whole railway extension had been placed under his charge, unreservedly. Only on this condition, Bryne stated, he was willing to continue with the work on the extension. However, on 24 December Sultan Ibrahim decided that the Muar Railway Department — which in reality meant the Traffic Manager and the State Commissioner — should have sole control of the extension work in future.⁵⁰ In this struggle Bryne had turned neither to Elcum nor to Young. The Sultan understandably supported his Malay officer and reposed control in his hands instead of letting it slip into British hands.

Undoubtedly the year 1912 proved crucial for the working out of the arrangement of 1909. Sultan Ibrahim and his Malay officers made apparent their objection and resistance to administrative reorganisation which in effect meant displacing them from their positions of power and control. Also, Sultan Ibrahim showed reluctance not only to effect changes which affected his private interests but also meant expenditure of the increasing Treasury balance. Campbell later claimed that Sultan Ibrahim with the intention of saving for future personal use refused to employ sufficient personnel and permit expenditure on development programmes within Johore.⁵¹ As a result of these attitudes on the part of the Sultan and his officers, the seconded British officers experienced irritating interference, delay and frustration in their development and reorganisation work. This was a new experience for them. They had not encountered such a situation in the S.S. or the F.M.S. Simultaneously, they were not happy under the authority of the Sultan. The General Adviser sought to assist them in their work and to bring them under

his direct authority. To do both, he had to resort to the assistance of the High Commissioner who secured these ends for them by bringing his influence to bear on Sultan Ibrahim. In the course of 1912 the struggle for control had slowly erupted into the open.⁵² Both the General Adviser and the High Commissioner realised in the ensuing year that the struggle had to be resolved and in favour of the British faction if administrative reorganisation and British control in Johore were to be effective.

Despite being aware of the fact that the relationship between the Malay ruling elite and the seconded British officers had deteriorated during his absence in 1912, on his return to duty Campbell continued with the task of modernising and improving administration within Johore. First, he focused attention on the existing schools in Johore — one at Johore Bahru and the other at Bandar Maharani. With the approval of the Johore Government, Campbell planned to have both these schools examined and reported for efficiency. He requested the High Commissioner to procure the services of the Education Department of the Colony.⁵³ The Director and Headmaster of Raffles Institution were sent to Johore to examine and report on these schools. Their major criticism was the lack of "the right class of teachers."⁵⁴ Both Campbell and Sultan Ibrahim agreed to remedy this by getting good, new staff. Simultaneously, they also looked for staff for the boarding school to be opened in Johore Bahru — Elcum had recommended this in 1912. Campbell and Young agreed with Sultan Ibrahim's proposal that his solicitor, E.F. Turner, should first choose the headmaster and then both of them could choose the rest of the staff.⁵⁵

Next, Campbell turned his attention to the Forest Department in Johore. He directed Simmons to report on the Department and its branches, and submit suitable recommendations for administrative reorganisation and improvement. Simmons carried out his task meticulously and submitted both his criticisms and recommendations to Campbell in August, 1913.⁵⁶ These efforts which were undertaken in the earlier part of 1913 did not arouse either opposition or resistance from the Malay ruling elite. Sultan Ibrahim was keen to improve English education in Johore. Also, both the education and forest departments were not very important in the traditional administrative system of Johore. Their reorganisation involved neither overthrow of established traditional systems nor the consequent loss of position and power by Malay officers. Last

but not least, Sultan Ibrahim's private interests were not involved in them as in the administration of the Johore Bahru Prison which next engaged Campbell's attention.

On 26 June, 1913 when Campbell saw the Medical Report on the Johore Bahru Prison, he realised that British advice on prison administration was being deliberately ignored. He learnt that prisoners were being medically treated in their cells; prisoners were sent to work without reference to the Medical officer or his report on the prisoners; and leg irons were used for all Keh and Hokkien prisoners. Though the two prison hospitals had been repaired and secured, they were not used due to lack of authorisation from Sultan Ibrahim. Campbell protested about these shortcomings to Sultan Ibrahim. On the pretext of being ill, Sultan Ibrahim gave no definite reply but promised to see Campbell once he was better. When no official reply was made to his protest, Campbell put the issue before Young and informed Sultan Ibrahim of this move.

In presenting the case to Young, Campbell detailed British efforts to improve prison administration and their subsequent failure due to Sultan Ibrahim's attitude and his control over prison administration. He restated the malpractices he had detailed in 1912. Campbell suggested that an independent body should be appointed to enquire into the treatment of prisoners in the gaol, the nature and ability of the courts which sentenced them, and what became of prisoners who were pardoned by Sultan Ibrahim.⁵⁷ Convinced by Campbell, Young decided to appoint a commission. He duly informed Sultan Ibrahim of his decision to appoint a commission to report, and make recommendations to bring prison administration up to civilised standards.⁵⁸

Sultan Ibrahim refuted Campbell's charges. He explained that prisoners did not work on his estates but at the Race Course nearby. He had changed their location from the town to the Race Course to prevent their access to things like penknives. Under his direction and the administration of the Johore Military Force, the prison showed a clean record of no trouble among the prisoners. However, he blamed Campbell and Elcum for their failure to draw up prison rules and regulations. He contended that if Campbell had patiently awaited his recovery, he would have discussed with him the new scheme for prison administration. In his opinion the prison required administrative improvement, not a commission of inquiry. To achieve this, he proposed drafting a new scheme and rules, and making financial provisions — all this as soon as possible.

The scheme and rules were to be submitted to the State Council and the High Commissioner for their approval. All this was to be done in co-operation with the General Adviser.⁵⁹

Young was not placated by Sultan Ibrahim's explanations and promises. His interview with Campbell on 1 August convinced him that Sultan Ibrahim knew of the abuses in prison administration and permitted them to continue. Agreeing with Sultan Ibrahim that what was required was administrative improvement, he still considered it essential to ascertain whether it was Campbell who had failed in his duty or whether it was the Johore Government which allowed the maladministration to continue. He felt that the commission would establish the validity of Campbell's charges against Sultan Ibrahim, and once and for all settle British suspicions. But Young was not prepared to argue further with Sultan Ibrahim. Rather, he timely reminded Sultan Ibrahim of Elgin's advice in April, 1906. He refreshed Sultan Ibrahim's memory that Elgin had clarified that the administration of Johore was a matter in which Great Britain as her neighbour was very interested. Now, he explained the interest was greater due to being brought closer by railway communication. Elgin had also stressed that Johore administration should be in general conformity with British views and that Sultan Ibrahim was expected to listen to British advice when given. In this context Young then advised Sultan Ibrahim to accept the appointment of the commission and also render it every facility to carry out its inquiries.⁶⁰

When Young manipulated the issue to assume such a context, Sultan Ibrahim had no other course but accept Young's decision. On 9 October Sultan Ibrahim issued a Proclamation enabling "the Commission to take evidence under oath and secure the attendance of witnesses in its enquiry into the Johore Bahru Prison administration during the period 1910 to 1913."⁶¹ Soon after Young appointed the members of the Commission. On Sultan Ibrahim's request, Mr. M.H. Whitley, the Legal Adviser of Johore, was accepted as the Johore Government representative.⁶² Young briefed the Commission on its task. First, it was to carry out a full inquiry into the administration of the Johore Bahru Prison for the past three years. Second, it was to find out "the circumstances in which prisoners are imprisoned in this prison". Third, it was to establish the types of tasks the prisoners serving different sentences had to perform. Fourth, it was to inquire into the punishments meted out for the different offences, and whether they were authorised by the Prison rules and regu-

lations. Fifth, it was to inquire into the cause of the common diseases among prisoners and also the provisions made for their treatment and care of the sick. Sixth, it was to find out how prisoners may and do earn remissions of their sentences, and if there were any conditions attached to these remissions and what these conditions were. The Commission was empowered to inquire into any new issues which arose during the investigations.⁶³

While the issue of prison administration occupied Campbell and Young, the Johore State Council in its sitting of 21 July passed a resolution increasing Sultan Ibrahim's allowance from \$10,000 to \$20,000 per month to take effect from August, 1913. This the Council members described as an expression of their appreciation of Sultan Ibrahim's service to his state for the past eighteen years during which he had brought peace and prosperity. They considered this increase justified as Johore's revenue was increasing from year to year. The increase was their birthday gift to Sultan Ibrahim on his fortieth birthday which would fall on 17 September, 1913. When informed of this increase Sultan Ibrahim gladly accepted it. Immediately, he informed Young of the State Council's resolution and his acceptance of it.⁶⁴ Young and Campbell were not pleased about it.

Campbell explained to Young that the Council had voted the increase during his absence. An extraordinary meeting of the Council had been fixed on a day when he planned to be at Muar. The Council had convened "to deal with arrangements for the Sultan's birthday."⁶⁵ Obviously, Campbell had not expected an increase of the Sultan's allowance to be part of the birthday arrangements. But, Campbell did not blame the members for this move. Instead he was convinced that the whole procedure was masterminded by Sultan Ibrahim. The members were mere puppets in Sultan Ibrahim's hands and they did as they were directed. Young accepted this explanation. He also felt that the question should have been referred to him by Sultan Ibrahim. The Sultan's failure to do so was interpreted by Young as an attempt by him to show his independence of the British Government — especially after the pressure exerted on him on the issue of prison administration.⁶⁶

On the surface the question of increased allowance for Sultan Ibrahim looked deceptively simple and straightforward. In 1910 on the advice of Anderson, Sultan Ibrahim had offered to reduce his allowance by half provided the half he gave up would be used for military purposes. This

was when the State Treasury was on the verge of bankruptcy. In 1913 when the Treasury had large balances the State Council considered it fit to increase Sultan Ibrahim's allowance to the original sum. The members claimed to know of Sultan Ibrahim's financial difficulties and on this basis decided on the increase. This may have been the picture in the minds of Sultan Ibrahim and the members. But Campbell and Young saw it in a different light. Campbell argued that the large Treasury balance was effected by Sultan Ibrahim by accepting modern British methods of revenue administration but simultaneously preventing British attempts to employ adequate staff to develop Johore. He was convinced that the State Council had been manipulated by Sultan Ibrahim to get the increase voted. Further, he pointed out the fact that while Sultan Ibrahim received sufficient income from the State and his private estates, his expenditure was practically none. This was because the Government bore his charges like maintenance of the palace and Tyersall, payment of the Regalia Guard and expenses of his eldest son in England. On this basis Campbell objected to Sultan Ibrahim drawing the increased allowance.

Young accepted Campbell's arguments on all points except one. He wanted Campbell to furnish him with evidence for his charge that Sultan Ibrahim prevented the employment of sufficient personnel to develop Johore. Young interpreted Sultan Ibrahim's failure to refer the increase to him as a show of Sultan Ibrahim's independence of the British. Thus, the simple issue brought to the fore two broader and crucial questions. The first question was whether Sultan Ibrahim administered Johore along lines of British advice. Next, Sultan Ibrahim's attitude towards the High Commissioner was queried. Ironically, in 1906 Elgin had explicitly stated the Colonial Office stand on these two questions.

Early in October Campbell exploited to the advantage of the British faction in Johore the opportunity provided by Young's request to provide evidence that Sultan Ibrahim frustrated British attempts to employ adequate staff for the development of Johore. First, he tried to convince Young that the system of administration prevalent in Johore was not constitutional monarchy as the British Government was led to believe. Rather, Sultan Ibrahim ruled autocratically. In theory, the Johore Constitution provided that the State was to be administered by the Sultan and the State Council. In practice, the Council played no active role; it did not even check the actions of Sultan Ibrahim. In reality it became a

cloak to certain actions which Sultan Ibrahim did not wish to be known as emanating from him. The members were afraid to be independent and critical of the Sultan's actions as this would probably bring about their dismissal. The members were chosen and appointed by the Sultan and they held office at his pleasure. The position of the administrative officers was similar to that of the members. The Sultan delegated no powers to his officers and therefore nothing could be done without reference to him for his approval. To act in opposition to Sultan Ibrahim's desire meant dismissal ultimately. Furthermore, these officers had to be in the good books of Sultan Ibrahim's favourites. Antagonising these favourites could lead to their downfall. So all officers from the State Secretary and Heads of Departments downwards sought not to tread on anyone's toes as they could never know who was Sultan Ibrahim's favourite at a particular time. The best way was to do nothing significant in administration. Campbell portrayed Sultan Ibrahim as an absolute autocrat, controlling all power and completely dominating administration.⁶⁷

A natural inference from such a state of affairs would be that Sultan Ibrahim was a determined and dominating personality. But Campbell described him as a man who could not fix his attention on any subject for long, and therefore unable to master details or any issue thoroughly. Campbell also described Sultan Ibrahim as mentally lazy and stated that decisions were not arrived at after long deliberations and careful thinking. Sultan Ibrahim's decisions were moulded by his "caprice of the moment." So Campbell argued it was inevitable that the day to day administration was left to the State Secretary, Heads of Departments and others. But where his private interests were involved, Sultan Ibrahim intervened and directed them to act in his interests, ignoring that of the public.

Next, Campbell enlightened Young on how Sultan Ibrahim treated him as his General Adviser. In Sultan Ibrahim's view the role of the General Adviser was to give advice when asked. However, Campbell admitted that whenever Sultan Ibrahim sought his advice, he acted on the advice given. But Campbell contended that if Sultan Ibrahim anticipated that the advice the General Adviser would give would be contrary to his intended course of action, then Sultan Ibrahim avoided asking the General Adviser's advice. In practice, Campbell explained, he did not advise the Sultan on all questions of administration. In fact, he dis-

cretely chose those issues on which he knew his advice would definitely not be totally rejected. This Campbell claimed to do because he had no defined powers in Johore and therefore did not wish to weaken or totally lose what influence he had on Sultan Ibrahim by being tactless. Also, his position in the State Council was ineffective as Sultan Ibrahim absented himself from the meetings if he wished to avoid Campbell's arguments and protests. Sultan Ibrahim was not easily accessible for meetings and discussions to both the General Adviser and the State Secretary. So all matters went through Sultan Ibrahim's Private Secretary.

Finally, Campbell gave instances of Sultan Ibrahim's interference in British attempts to develop Johore. These were in the installation of the Filter Plant in Johore Bahru, the construction of the Batu Pahat-Mersing Road, and the extension of the Muar Government Railway. He also quoted other minor cases of intervention as in the choice of tenders by contractors for constructing or repairing public buildings. He reminded Young of Sultan Ibrahim's attempts to get Jelf and Bryne dismissed from his service. Though Sultan Ibrahim was obstructive in the expenditure of money for public and development works, he did not fail to appreciate the work of the British officers. He was fully aware, Campbell claimed, that the Treasury was full due to British efforts, and therefore had no settled policy of opposition to them or their work. He was satisfied that their projects for development provided the finance to gratify his personal likes and interests. But when they attempted to develop Johore in the interest of the public, he grudged the expenditure.⁶⁸

Endorsing and supporting Campbell's contentions, Young wrote to Louis Harcourt, the Colonial Secretary, about Sultan Ibrahim's increased allowance. He pointed out that Article 25 of the Johore Constitution provided that the allowance fixed by the State Council from time to time should be "reasonable, adequate, and suitable to the rank, position and dignity of the ruler." Young suggested to Harcourt that he should be empowered to tell Sultan Ibrahim "that His Majesty's Government cannot admit that the occasion of H.H.'s 40th birthday is sufficient reason as given in the resolution for the large increase of his allowance."⁶⁹ Further, he wished to be permitted to tell Sultan Ibrahim that until it can be adequately proved that the old allowance of \$10,000 was inadequate to the Sultan's rank, His Majesty's Government will not approve or permit the present increase.

The Colonial staff were unanimously agreed that Sultan Ibrahim could

not draw the increased allowance. But they were unconvinced by Campbell's argument that Sultan Ibrahim seriously hindered development. They did not consider that Campbell's evidence made "a satisfactory case for drastic measures." However, this did not mean they seriously objected to taking strong measures for they anticipated the report by the Prison Commission to give them the necessary case of maladministration.⁷⁰ In late November, 1913 Harcourt instructed Young to inform Sultan Ibrahim to reduce the increased allowance.⁷¹

When informed of the Colonial Office's decision, Sultan Ibrahim wisely put the matter before the State Council. The Council once again decided that the Sultan should be given the increase. It explained that in Sultan Ibrahim's financial position the \$120,000 per annum allowance was inadequate to his dignity. They also declared that the increase was their voluntary decision,⁷² thus implicitly denying the charge that Sultan Ibrahim initiated it. On 31 December Sultan Ibrahim informed Young of the Council's decision. He reminded Young of the many attempts he, Elcum and Campbell had approached him for a loan for himself (Sultan Ibrahim).⁷³

Now Young realised that directing Sultan Ibrahim and Johore administration through advice was no longer effective. Sultan Ibrahim had come to the stage where he defied not only the advice of the General Adviser and the High Commissioner but also that of the Colonial Secretary. Also, the working out of the 1909 arrangement showed that Sultan Ibrahim was not a man to easily relinquish his control over Johore to seconded British officers. The appointment of the General Adviser on a basis of mutual agreement did not work out like the appointment of a Resident on a treaty basis in the F.M.S. To ensure that Sultan Ibrahim listened to British advice and to bring Johore administration up to F.M.S. standards Young realised that it was essential to make Sultan Ibrahim sign a treaty defining the position and power of the General Adviser in Johore and the Sultan's obligations to him and the British. But before this could be done the Colonial Office had to be convinced so that permission to do so would be granted. This both Campbell and Young set out to do in early 1914.

The Prison Commission submitted its report and recommendations to the High Commissioner in January, 1914. Among other things it established that under the supervision of Sultan Ibrahim and the administration of the Johore Military Force from July, 1911 to the present, gross

abuses had been prevalent. It proved Campbell's charges to be valid.⁷⁴ Among its recommendations the most significant one was that the powers of the General Adviser should be enlarged in order to enable him to remedy abuses in other administrative departments also. This gave Young the opportunity to open with Sultan Ibrahim the subject of enlarging the powers of the General Adviser. In early February he sent a copy of the Report to Sultan Ibrahim and simultaneously requested to know whether Sultan Ibrahim would carry out the Commission's recommendations.⁷⁵

Sultan Ibrahim's immediate response was to disclaim all responsibility for the inefficient prison administration. He shifted the blame to Elcum and Campbell who, Sultan Ibrahim claimed, had failed to draw up and submit the rules and regulations in time. This, he explained, was the reason why no steps were taken to improve prison administration. Also, he saw the employment of convict labour on his estates in a different light. He argued that he paid these ex-convicts normal wages and they could leave his service when they desired. He informed Young that he had placed the Commission's recommendations before his Government and had to wait before making a reply.⁷⁶ On 12 March Sultan Ibrahim informed Young that his Government approved the adoption of all recommendations except two: viz, the appointment of a European officer as Superintendent of the Johore Bahru Prison and the extension of the General Adviser's powers which the Government thought were sufficiently extensive.⁷⁷ The Sultan and his Malay officers adamantly resisted any loss of control of power to the British faction.

Young now found it imperative to carefully plan his strategy to see that the Colonial staff's views were moulded to the advantage of the General Adviser but detrimental to Sultan Ibrahim. He planned it such that information on different issues concerning Sultan Ibrahim was quickly fed to the Colonial Office within a matter of three days. To ensure that his first despatch made the desired impact of completely undermining the Colonial staff's confidence in Sultan Ibrahim's administration, Young chose to discuss the issue of prison administration. Copies of the Commission Report, evidence and exhibits were enclosed in the first despatch. In this confidential despatch of 17 March, he stressed the fact that the Commission had undoubtedly established that Sultan Ibrahim was responsible for maladministration in the Johore Bahru Prison. Simultaneously, Young defended both Campbell and Elcum against Sultan Ibrahim's accusation that they were responsible for hav-

ing failed to take initiative in advising administrative improvements. He also informed the Colonial staff of the Johore Government's decision not to appoint a seconded officer to the post of Superintendent of Johore Bahru Prison as recommended by the Commission.⁷⁸

In the second despatch of 18 March Young dealt with the issue of the increase in Sultan Ibrahim's allowance. He had learnt from Sultan Ibrahim of the State Council's refusal to rescind its resolution increasing the allowance. Probably as part of his strategy to influence the Colonial staff, he communicated Sultan Ibrahim's reply of December, 1913 to the Colonial Office only now i.e. March, 1914. In his despatch Young strove to convince the Colonial staff that Sultan Ibrahim not only squandered the State revenue for private interests but also adamantly ignored British advice. He explained to Harcourt that Sultan Ibrahim had no public expenditure as these were met by the State. Yet he got into debt and this Young could neither understand nor explain. However, Young expressed his doubt that the State Council voted the increase of allowance on its own initiative. He pointed out that though the revenue of Johore was not high its ruler drew a much higher allowance than rulers of the F.M.S. or Kedah or Kelantan. Finally, Young interpreted Sultan Ibrahim's continued drawing of the increased allowance as signifying his defiance of British advice.⁷⁹

In his final despatch of 19 March Young argued his case for the extension of the General Adviser's powers. He claimed that Sultan Ibrahim's rule had deteriorated since Elgin's warning in 1906. The Sultan had become increasingly autocratic and refused to listen to the High Commissioner's advice. Sultan Ibrahim's defiance of British advice soon manifested in his employment of Raja Ali of Rhio-Lingga as "Ketua Ugama" in Johore.⁸⁰ Young enlightened the Colonial staff that as in prison administration so also in judicial administration Sultan Ibrahim had interfered to secure his personal interests. From his experience over the past years, Young observed that Sultan Ibrahim was a very selfish ruler who looked after his interests rather than those of the subjects. Thus, he worked up to the conclusion that Sultan Ibrahim had neither administered Johore as he had promised Elgin nor did he respect British advice. Furthermore, the arrangement of 1909 was not completely successful. Young felt that this was an opportune moment to place the Johore Government on a more solid basis.⁸¹

Having laid the foundation for a favourable reception, Young out-

lined his most important proposals. He suggested that the 1909 arrangement should be changed such that the General Adviser was to be accepted by Johore as the representative of the British Government, responsible to the High Commissioner — thus no longer being a seconded officer under the Sultan. Next, he recommended that the Sultan should be bound to ask and act on the advice of the General Adviser on all questions except those involving Malay religion and custom. Also, the General Adviser should be empowered to collect and control all revenues, and through his advice regulate the general administration of the country. Finally, Young recommended that the State Council should be reorganised. The members were to be appointed or dismissed with the full approval of Her Majesty's Government. Young knew that Sultan Ibrahim would not accept these changes without pressure. So he suggested to Harcourt that he be empowered to inform Sultan Ibrahim that the only alternative to acceptance was Sultan Ibrahim's removal from Johore. However, he felt that Sultan Ibrahim would not strongly oppose these changes if the outward signs of change were minimised.⁸²

Both the General Adviser and the Legal Adviser submitted memoranda supporting Young's contention and proposals. Whitley in his memorandum on judicial administration in Johore argued that despite the appointment of a Legal Adviser and British magistrates in Johore during 1910 and 1911, they only presided in cases which involved Europeans and not any others. So he pointed out that the Malay magistrates still retained full control of the courts during the period 1910 to 1914 as they had prior to 1909. Whitley explained that under the Malay magistrates the courts did not function competently and swiftly. So most foreigners went to the Colony to transact business. He considered this a serious drawback for a developing country like Johore. If its present prosperity was to be maintained Johore needed an efficient judicial system to cater to the needs of foreign planters and immigrants. Despite some improvements in the past four years Whitley was pessimistic about future progress. From experience he knew that the Malay magistrates lacked the incentive to be efficient. In their world efficiency was not the passport to promotion. Therefore, Whitley felt that it was hopeless to expect to reform the judicial service through the Malays. If substantial improvement was to be effected in judicial administration, the British officers have to be given a dominating influence in the courts. He was sure that the Malay magistrates would be happy to share their heavy

load of work with their British counterparts — though the senior Malay officials may not approve of this willingly. But the real and serious obstacle to this change would be Sultan Ibrahim. With Malay Magistrates, Sultan Ibrahim could interfere to impose his will in cases which affected his interests. This would be difficult once the British officials took over.⁸³

Campbell's memorandum enlightened the Colonial staff on Sultan Ibrahim's attitude towards his State and its administration. He admitted that Sultan Ibrahim listened to his advice and co-operated in improving administration until the Treasury was filled. But after this — that is since 1912 — Sultan Ibrahim was reluctant to listen to his advice and was antagonistic to the British Government. Campbell argued that though there had been some administrative improvements during the past four years, it was not possible in the future unless administration was placed in good hands and the personal element of the Sultan was eliminated or reduced considerably. He stated that Sultan Ibrahim maintained only a semblance of proper administration which he failed to supervise closely. Sultan Ibrahim was satisfied if the revenue was collected and did not interfere in the work of the Malay officers unless it affected his private interests. Campbell explained that this state of affairs prevailed because Sultan Ibrahim considered Johore — with all its administrative branches — as his private property to be administered to his benefit. This was far from the British officers' concept of a civilised state. In their view a civilised government steadily kept in view the welfare of its subjects and worked for their betterment on a settled plan. So where Malay officials acquiesced in Sultan Ibrahim's interference in administration to secure his personal interest, the British officers due to their concept, and experience in other states — the F.M.S. and S.S. largely — questioned Sultan Ibrahim's interventions. Such questioning was unheard of among the Malays. These contradicting concepts resulted in friction between the Malay ruling elite and the British officers. Campbell warned that the British Government could not expect to remedy the lack of real administration and co-ordination of the different administrative departments with just advice from a British officer. To achieve this, he considered it essential to reduce — if possible completely remove — the presence of the Sultan. The only alternative to this step was for the Sultan to accept a British Resident and act on his advice.⁸⁴

The despatches and memoranda from Young had the desired effect

on the Colonial staff. Mr. J. Robinson, a member of the staff, was of the opinion that the Prison Commission's Report was sufficient to demand British interference. The memoranda by Campbell and Whitley made it imperative. Robinson was convinced that Sultan Ibrahim had abandoned his attempt at administrative improvement and also disregarded British advice — thus coming back to the position of 1906. He felt that since Sultan Ibrahim had not taken Elgin's warning seriously, he should be made to realise how serious the British Government had been. Therefore, Robinson advocated that Young should be directed to request Sultan Ibrahim to accept a Resident. Sultan Ibrahim was to enter into an agreement with the British Government. However, Robinson felt that Young should achieve this without any loss of dignity to Sultan Ibrahim.⁸⁵ The rest of the staff agreed with these suggestions.⁸⁶

At the end of April Harcourt instructed Young to request Sultan Ibrahim to sign an agreement with the British Government widening the powers of the General Adviser to those enjoyed by the Resident. However, Harcourt was anxious that Sultan Ibrahim should not lose his dignity and the respect of his people in the process. Therefore, he suggested that the whole procedure should be so arranged to give the impression that the decision to widen the powers of the General Adviser and to sign the agreement came from Sultan Ibrahim himself. On the question of refunding the increased allowance which Sultan Ibrahim had so far drawn, Harcourt thought it best not to insist. In fact, he advised that Sultan Ibrahim should be permitted to draw the increased allowance until the end of the financial year.⁸⁷ Harcourt and his staff had thus resolved the internal struggle, reposing power and control in the hands of the British officers in Johore.

Young wasted no time in communicating Harcourt's decisions to Sultan Ibrahim. On 1 May, 1914 Young personally informed Sultan Ibrahim of Harcourt's instructions. He showed the Sultan the draft agreement he had drawn up. Also, Young put forward Harcourt's suggestion to prevent loss of dignity. Following discussions with Dato Mohammed and Campbell, Sultan Ibrahim agreed to sign the agreement after certain points were clarified.⁸⁸ On 11 May Sultan Ibrahim wrote to Young requesting Article III of the 1885 to be modified. By this modified article instead of an Agent, a General Adviser with extended powers was to be appointed to Johore. The official reasons for this request were his poor health and the possibility of his travelling abroad for a long period prob-

ably in the future.⁸⁹

In the second letter of 11 May Sultan Ibrahim clarified certain points of policy. He requested that in the event of differences of opinion between himself and the General Adviser, the views of the State Council should also be submitted with those of the General Adviser to the High Commissioner. He desired that the boarding school which he had established to educate Malays to be maintained. Also, he wanted preference to be given to available, qualified Johore Malays in employment in the Johore administrative service. He requested that both Malay and British in the service should be treated equally. These were probably Sultan Ibrahim's officers' own wishes and such conditions were not stipulated either by the Malay Rulers or the British when treaties were signed to introduce the Residential system in the F.M.S. Two other points clarified in the letter were probably suggested by Young and Campbell, in line with F.M.S. policy. One, the High Commissioner was to approve the appointment of British officers as members of the State Council, Executive Council and the Judicial Bench. Sultan Ibrahim also hoped that there would be no objection to appointing members from the unofficial British community. Two, British officers were to be appointed or seconded to the Johore Service with the approval of the High Commissioner. But once they were appointed Sultan Ibrahim requested that they should be considered Johore officers and wear the Johore white uniform. Also, Sultan Ibrahim wished to retain the power to dismiss any officer whose work failed to satisfy him. The Sultan still wished to retain his authority with the staff and Johore's identity as distinct from the F.M.S.⁹⁰

Young agreed to all these requests. On 12 May, 1914 Sultan Ibrahim signed the Agreement repealing Article III of the 1885 Agreement and substituting the provisions made by the sixth, eighth and tenth articles of the Pangkor Agreement. Though the term General Adviser was retained, the British officer was endowed with the powers enjoyed by the Resident. In substance, this new agreement introduced the Residential System into Johore and resolved the internal struggle for control. The British faction under the General Adviser was now placed in control of Johore administration in no uncertain terms.

Various factors account for the ultimate victory of the British faction in gaining control and the failure of the Malay ruling elite to retain control of Johore administration. The united stand of the General Adviser,

his seconded British officers, the High Commissioner and the Colonial staff was fundamental to British victory. For once both the men in the local scene and the men in the Colonial Office saw eye to eye on crucial points regarding the British officer appointed to Johore. They agreed on the powers which the officer was to enjoy and when these powers were to be conferred on the officer. This agreement avoided delay in the introduction of the Residential system into Johore — in effect if not in name. Lack of agreement on these points by these men had led to several postponements in the past years. Following the appointment of the General Adviser and seconded British officers, the British were ideally situated within Johore to observe at close quarters Sultan Ibrahim's administration of Johore. They were able to collect abundant evidence against Sultan Ibrahim and his administration and channel these through the High Commissioner to the Colonial Office. The information and evidence were fed in, in such a manner as to completely undermine any confidence the Colonial staff had in Sultan Ibrahim and his administration.

Fortunately for the General Adviser and his officers the Prison Commission produced evidence of maladministration in the Johore Bahru Prison. Maladministration was the only case which the Colonial Office was prepared to use as justification for the introduction of the Residential system into Johore as in the other Malay states. The Colonial Office had sought for such a case of maladministration in Johore from as early as 1903. When the Report of the Prison Commission proved that Sultan Ibrahim had condoned maladministration in the Johore Bahru Prison the Colonial Office exploited it as a case of maladministration in Johore to justify its demand that the General Adviser's powers should be extended to those enjoyed by a Resident. In reality maladministration was neither the common nor dominating feature of Sultan Ibrahim's administration of Johore. Maladministration was proved in the insignificant sphere of prison administration in Johore Bahru and suspected in judicial administration. In reality lack of efficient administration was a serious and common defect in nearly all sphere's of administration under Sultan Ibrahim and his Malay officers.

Though Sultan Ibrahim and his officers accepted the services of the General Adviser and the seconded British officials, they did not make a serious effort to learn the art of efficient administration as they had proposed to in 1910. They permitted these British officers to reorganise

certain departments of administration but they themselves did not undertake to reorganise and improve the administration of departments under their control. Nor did they completely put into effect British recommendations for improving some of their departments. A good example was Sultan Ibrahim and the Johore Military Force. They made no effort to reorganise on their own accord the Johore Bahru Prison administration which was under their control. Later when Elcum and the Prison Commission submitted recommendations for reorganisation, neither of these recommendations were completely accepted and put into effect. Thus the Malay ruling elite provided the British faction with a substantial case which they exploited to their advantage. The Sultan failed to realise that the British would not hesitate to exploit any evidence of maladministration in Johore as they had done in other Malay states. He, therefore, did not take pains to impress on the British that he was a good administrator or to see that at least an appearance of reorganisation and efficient administration was maintained for the benefit of his British officers.

The task of keeping up appearances was made more difficult for Sultan Ibrahim by British presence within Johore. Sultan Ibrahim had successfully put up a facade of efficient administration for Swettenham's benefit for one day, in 1903. But he was unable to maintain a similar facade successfully throughout the year, and year after year for the General Adviser and his officers. At close quarters and face to face with realities the British officers who were on constant vigilance found many defects not only in Sultan Ibrahim's administration of Johore but also his personal behaviour. However, had Sultan Ibrahim sought to satisfy British requests for economic development within Johore, these defects may have been overlooked. But his failure to do so spurred on British ambition to achieve control of Johore administration. To achieve this end the British exploited the defects in Sultan Ibrahim's administration and personal behaviour. Sultan Ibrahim obviously failed to seriously weigh and consider the significance of British presence within Johore and their observation at close quarters of him and his administration.

Sultan Ibrahim was neither diplomatic nor wise in his relations with the High Commissioner and the Colonial Office. He did not cultivate the friendship and goodwill of either the High Commissioner or the Colonial Secretary and his staff. Instead, Sultan Ibrahim by his independent actions which were contrary to British advice had progressively an-

tagonised Sir Arthur Young, Sir Louis Harcourt and the Colonial staff. The Sultan carried his independent stand too far. He did not know when and what British advice he could reject without too strong repercussions from the British. At this critical juncture he lacked sound advisers among his Malay officers. Rather than advising Sultan Ibrahim to act cautiously and wisely, the Malay officers acted as he directed them. Thus, when the Sultan and his officers blundered on the issue of prison administration neither the High Commissioner nor the Colonial Secretary and his staff were inclined to defend their actions or support their position against the British faction in Johore.

NOTES

- 1 *State Secretary's Files*, No: 21, Correspondence Re the appointment of Mr. Campbell as the General Adviser of Johore. See memorandum by Dato Mohammed titled, "Peringatan", 22 November, 1909.
- 2 *Ibid.* Correspondence between Anderson and Sultan Ibrahim, 28 September and 4 October, 1909.
- 3 *Ibid.* Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Dato Mohammed, 1 January, 1910.
- 4 *State Secretary's Files*, No: 21, Letter, Anderson to Sultan Ibrahim, 4 February, 1910.
- 5 *The Malay Mail, 1909 to 1910*. See reports of companies floated in London and of estates which had begun tapping rubber as far as Johore was concerned.
- 6 C0273/397, Enclosure II, Confidential Despatch, Arthur Young to Louis Harcourt, 14 October, 1913.
- 7 *General Adviser's File*, 3/1910, Letter, S. Baket to D. Campbell, 4 March, 1910 and letter, Campbell to Manager, Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, 8 March, 1910.
- 8 *Johore State Secretariat Letter Book, 1909-1911*, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Anderson, 4 April, 1910.
- 9 *Ibid.* Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Anderson, 11 September, 1910.
- 10 *Ibid.* Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Anderson, 12 June, 1910.
- 11 *Ibid.* Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Anderson, 24 July, 1910.
- 12 *Ibid.* Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Anderson, 21 July, 1910.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 *Ibid.* Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Anderson, 17 December, 1910.
- 15 *The Malay Mail*, 24 September, 1910.

- 16 *Despatches from the High Commissioner to the Secretary of State, F.M.S.*, Letter, Anderson to Colonial Secretary, 3 October, 1910.
- 17 C0273/397, Enclosure II, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 14 October, 1913.
Also see *Minutes of State Council Meetings, Johore*, 1910.
- 18 *The Malay Mail*, 22 September, 1910.
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 By this practice 10% was deducted from the total weight of the consignment declared. At first it had been an understanding between planter and trader. But with passage of time, the weight declared to the Singapore Gambier and Pepper Society was also 10% less than the actual weight of the consignment. This meant a substantial loss of revenue to the Johore Government. *General Adviser's File*, 41/1912, Report on the Johore Customs Department for 1911 by the Commissioner of Customs.
- 21
- | Year | Approximate Weight
of Gambier Exported
Pikuls | Approximate Weight
of Pepper Exported
Pikuls | Duty Credited
to revenue
\$ |
|------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1909 | 306,455 | 90,580 | 156,500 |
| 1910 | 262,598 | 76,452 | 137,882 |
| 1911 | 212,386 | 47,512 | 175,969 |
- Figures are from the Report of the Commissioner of Customs, cited above.
- 22 *General Adviser's File*, 41/1912, Report on the Johore Customs Department for 1911 by the Commissioner of Customs.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 C0273/379, Letter, Anderson to Mr. Collins, 19 May, 1911.
- 26 *Johore State Secretariat Letter Book, 1909-1911*, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to High Commissioner, 30 April, 1911.
- 27 *Ibid.*, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to High Commissioner, 21 June, 1911.
- 28 *General Adviser's File*, 72/1912, Report on the Muar Division, State of Johore, for 1911 by A.S. Jelf.
- 29 Jelf also reorganised prison administration and the Municipal Department in Muar without any overt resistance from the Malays.
- 30 *General Adviser's File*, 72/1912, Report on the Muar Division, State of Johore, for 1911 by A.S. Jelf.
- 31 C0273/397, Enclosure II, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 14 October, 1913.
- 32 Jelf submitted two memoranda in 1912. One arguing against the reduction of duties on rubber and copra exported from Johore, and the other recommending the reorganisation of the penghulu system in Muar. *General Adviser's File*, 172/1912, Memorandum: Johore Export Duties by Jelf and *General Adviser's File*, 185/1912, Memorandum on "Penghulus",

13 August, 1912.

- 33 C0273/396, Confidential Despatch, Sir Arthur Young to Louis Harcourt, 7 August, 1913 and Enclosure I.
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 *Despatches from the High Commissioner to the Secretary of State, F.M.S., 1897-1915*, Despatch, Young to Secretary of State, 27 March, 1912.
- 36 C0273/396, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 7 August, 1913.
- 37 *General Adviser's File*, 88/1912, Letter, Elcum to the State Secretary, Johore, 14 April, 1912.
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- 47 *Ibid.* See Enclosed Circular.
- 48 C0273/397, See Number 2 of sub-enclosure of Enclosure II, Confidential Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 14 October, 1913.
- 49 *Ibid.* See Number 6 of Sub-enclosure of Enclosure II.
- 50 *Ibid.*
- 51 C0273/397, Enclosure II, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 14 October, 1913.
- 52 There were rumours of difference of opinion between the Sultan and the General Adviser. Newspapers like the *Straits Echo* and *The Malay Mail* voiced these rumours and suspicions in February, 1913. *The Malay Mail*, 20 February, 1913.
- 53 *General Adviser's File*, 104/1913, Letter, Campbell to Secretary to the High Commissioner, 7 June, 1913.
- 54 Both British administrators in Malaya and the Malay Rulers were concerned about "the right class of teachers" to teach their children and the children of their subjects. See Khasnor bte Johan, *The Malay College, Kuala Kangsar, 1905-1941: British Policy of Education for Employment*

- in the *F.M.S.* (M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya), especially pp. 100-115.
- 55 *General Adviser's File*, 104/1913, Letter, Sultan Ibrahim to Young, 7 September, 1913.
- 56 *General Adviser's File*, 159/1913, Letter, Simmons to Campbell, 7 August, 1913, and enclosed report and memorandum.
- 57 C0273/396, Enclosure I, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 7 August, 1913.
- 58 *Ibid*, Enclosure II in above despatch.
- 59 *Ibid*, Enclosure IV.
- 60 C0273/396, Enclosure V, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 7 August, 1913.
- 61 C0273/396, Enclosure I, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 13 October, 1913.
- 62 The others were Sir William Hyndman-Jones, Chief Justice of the S.S., Lieutenant Colonel William Edward White, Commanding the 3rd Brahmans, and Edmund Burnside, Acting British Resident of Selangor.
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- 68 *Ibid*.
- 69 C0273/397, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 14 October, 1913.
- 70 *Ibid*, See minutes on "Increase of allowance of Sultan of Johore," by R. Griffin (11 November), Collins (13 November), Fiddes (13 November) and Anderson 14 November, 1914.
- 71 *Ibid*, Confidential Despatch, Harcourt to Young, 20 November, 1913.
- 72 C0273/406, Enclosure II, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 18 March, 1914.
- 73 *Ibid*.
- 74 Life sentence prisoners were treated brutally. All prisoners were fettered. There was no discrimination in the treatment of long-term and short-term prisoners. Sultan Ibrahim between 1910 and 1913 had pardoned 115 prisoners on the understanding that they work on his private estates. Prisoners were caned.
- 75 C0273/406, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 17 March, 1914.
- 76 *Ibid*, Enclosure I, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 17 March, 1914.

- 77 *Ibid.* Enclosure II in above despatch.
- 78 C0273/406, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 17 March, 1914.
- 79 *Ibid.* Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 18 March, 1914.
- 80 Raja Ali was charged with intriguing against the Dutch Government in the East Indies. So the Dutch representative in Singapore protested to the High Commissioner. When Young queried Sultan Ibrahim, he revealed that he intended to retain Raja Ali in the post as long as he did not disturb the public peace.
- 81 C0273/406, Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 19 March, 1914.
- 82 *Ibid.*
- 83 C0273/406, Enclosure I, Young to Harcourt, 19 March, 1914.
- 84 *Ibid.* Enclosure II in above despatch.
- 85 C0273/406, See Minute on "Administration of Johore" by J. Robinson, 20 April, 1914.
- 86 *Ibid.* See Minutes by Griffin (21 April), Fiddes (22 April), Anderson (23 April), Lord Emmot (23 April), and Harcourt (24 April, 1914). There were differences of opinion among the staff on the other issues: viz, the Raja Ali case, Sultan Ibrahim's increased allowance, and dethronement of Sultan Ibrahim.
- 87 C0273/406, Telegram and Confidential Despatch, Harcourt to Young, 28 April and 7 May, 1914, respectively.
- 88 *Ibid.* Confidential Despatch, Young to Harcourt, 14 May, 1914.
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Conclusion

After securing sovereignty over Singapore and binding the Johore rulers against correspondence or alliance with any foreign power by the Treaty of 2 August, 1824, the British had no interest in Johore or its affairs at this juncture. This was because Johore had not proved to be important commercially or economically. Between 1840 and 1850 Johore attracted Chinese immigrants who undertook pepper and gambier cultivation. Some private British residents in Singapore participated in the export trade of these two products. A consequence of these developments was larger revenue for Tun Ibrahim. This led to a political dispute for control in Johore and a share in the increasing revenues. The British stepped in to resolve the dispute between Tun Ibrahim and Tengku Ali. By the Treaty of 1855 they settled the dispute in favour of Tun Ibrahim whom they considered to be a more efficient administrator. Following this settlement the British were content to let political and administrative power repose in Tun Ibrahim and Abu Bakar until as late as 1880. This was partially accounted for by the willingness of these two rulers to be guided by British advice on crucial political, economic and administrative matters. Another important factor which explains British attitude to Johore during this period was the lack of large scale, economic development within Johore.

After 1880 the influence of private British advisers on Abu Bakar seemed to wax stronger — even stronger than that of the Governor. With their encouragement Abu Bakar seriously considered large scale, economic development and made monopolistic and large concessions to British entrepreneurs to achieve this end. At this juncture the British Government showed greater interest in the internal affairs of Johore. However, Governor Weld's efforts to use Abu Bakar's association with and concessions to private British entrepreneurs, and evidence of judicial maladministration in Johore as excuse to extend British control to Johore did not evoke keen response from the Colonial staff. The Colonial staff were confident that Abu Bakar would still listen to British advice on these issues in the last resort. And, he did. He cancelled his concessions to private entrepreneurs on the advice of the Colonial Secretary and thus stayed large scale, economic development within Johore.

The Colonial Office now was able to rest assured that Johore's potentialities would remain unexploited for some time.

Not underestimating Weld's determination to extend British control to Johore, Abu Bakar immediately took steps to safeguard Johore's independent status. In a treaty signed with the British in 1885 Abu Bakar assured his loyalty to Britain. He placed the conduct of Johore's foreign relations in British hands. He agreed to consult the British and get their approval before making concessions to foreigners. However, he confirmed his independent status with British recognition of his use of the title, Sultan. Soon after he diplomatically warded off Weld's efforts to effect the appointment of the British Agent to Johore. He used his private advisers and friends in London and Singapore to achieve this end. Fearing future British entry into Johore on the pretext of maladministration, Sultan Abu Bakar wisely erected for the benefit of his neighbours a facade of constitutional, efficient, and progressive rule in Johore. Constitutionally he made sure that Johore remained in the hands of his descendants and did not fall into those of other royal, Malay families or any foreign power. These safeguards served their purpose temporarily.

When Sultan Ibrahim succeeded Sultan Abu Bakar in 1895, he failed to use these safeguards to his advantage. He lacked both the political astuteness and experience to realise at the beginning of his reign that it was essential to keep up appearances for the benefit of his British neighbours. Sultan Abu Bakar was partially responsible for this. He failed to give Sultan Ibrahim the proper education and training, and sufficient experience in the art of diplomacy and internal administration. Rather, Sultan Abu Bakar directed his son's interest to travel, sport and military training, all of which occupied a large part of Sultan Ibrahim's time and energy, and took a large share of Johore's revenue. Much more fatal was Sultan Abu Bakar's failure to entrench constitutional rule in Johore. Also, he made no serious effort to establish modern administrative methods in practice. Both the constitutional and the modern administrative departments had been introduced to serve more as a facade to autocratic rule than to be put to practical use. When Sultan Ibrahim assumed power, he resorted to autocratic rather than constitutional rule. He did not even bother to maintain a facade of constitutional rule. Unlike Sultan Abu Bakar, Sultan Ibrahim did not calculate his actions in terms of their impact on the British and future consequences. He did not take the trouble

to see that the departments functioned efficiently. He pursued his interests — travel, sport, and the Johore Military Forces. These failings later provided the loopholes which the British exploited to effect their entry into Johore. However, at this juncture, though known to the British, these failings did not evoke any concern for Johore or its people — as they were to do later. For the first five years Sultan Ibrahim ruled as he pleased — autocratically, unconstitutionally, and inefficiently. The British were satisfied to be mere onlookers as long as their long term, imperial interests in Johore were unaffected.

But, when Sultan Ibrahim turned down Swettenham's proposals for railway construction in Johore and approached private British entrepreneurs and capitalists for the same purpose, the British were no longer content to be mere onlookers and guardians of imperial interests. They were determined to undertake this first major, economic development within Johore. They wanted control of finance, construction and management of the Johore State Railway. The ostensible reasons for these demands were to ensure that the railway constructed would be comparable in standard to the F.M.S. lines and to prevent Sultan Ibrahim and his private advisers lining their private pockets from this venture. The real reason was to prevent the entry of private entrepreneurs into Johore and thus avoid difficulties of take over of railway administration when the British extended their control to Johore in the future. With these long term ideas in mind the Colonial staff vetoed all Sultan Ibrahim's proposals which involved private capital and technical know-how, and placed control of the railway in the Sultan's hands. When negotiation and persuasion failed to achieve their ends, the British threatened Sultan Ibrahim that they would not join the F.M.S. lines to the Johore line when it was completed. This threat and advice from Lyttelton in 1904 forced Sultan Ibrahim to give in to British demands which were incorporated in the Johore Railway Convention. Private entrepreneurs, Messrs. Pauling & Co. and Messrs. Barry & Leslie were kept out with monetary compensations paid by the Johore authorities.

It was during the railway negotiations that British interest in Johore developed into a definite desire to extend their control to Johore. This desire was expressed in the frequent and repeated suggestions by members of the Colonial staff that Sultan Ibrahim should be threatened with the appointment of a British Agent to Johore if he did not accept British proposals for railway construction in Johore. They were aware that the

Agent would enjoy only consular powers. Yet, some viewed it as the wedge to force British entry into Johore, and others were optimistic that the Agent's powers would develop into those enjoyed by a Resident. But, the Colonial Secretary did not resort to such a threat as he lacked valid justification for interference in Johore administration — Swettenham's inquiry into the Johore Military Force and conditions in Johore Bahru failed to produce the necessary case of maladministration.

However, the Colonial Secretary was as keen as the rest of his staff that Sultan Ibrahim should turn to the High Commissioner for advice on such matters as granting concessions for economic development within Johore. During the course of the railway negotiations the Colonial staff realised that the Johore Advisory Board had usurped the role of the High Commissioner as intermediary between the Sultan and the Colonial Office, and as adviser to the Sultan. They were fully aware that it was through the Board that Sultan Ibrahim negotiated with private entrepreneurs. The Colonial staff were therefore determined to secure the dissolution of the Board at the first opportunity in the future. Thus, they hoped to force Sultan Ibrahim to turn to the High Commissioner not only for communication with the Colonial Office but also for advice on important issues like granting concessions in Johore.

In 1905 Sultan Ibrahim through the Board negotiated a concession for rubber cultivation. Simultaneously, Sultan Ibrahim granted thousands of acres of land on liberal terms to Swettenham, Gow Wilson & Co., and Guthrie & Co. The Colonial officials realised that Johore was on the verge of large scale, economic development. No longer were they content to be spectators while Sultan Ibrahim and the private entrepreneurs exploited Johore's potentialities. Now, they were determined to keep out private enterprise in order to keep Johore and its potentialities intact for future exploitation along lines established in the FMS. When the Board informed the Colonial Office of the concession it was negotiating on behalf of Sultan Ibrahim, the Colonial staff naturally advised cancellation of the concession. Sultan Ibrahim and Abdul Rahman held the Board responsible for this eventually. Suspicious of and dissatisfied with the members, they secured the unanimous resignation of the members in October, 1905 by tactfully using the State Council. Thus, they played into the hands of the Colonial staff who were happy to see the dissolution of the Board. But, Sultan Ibrahim appointed Abdul Rahman and Turner as new members. The Colonial staff refuse recog-

dition to the Board any longer. They forced Sultan Ibrahim to communicate with the Colonial Office via the High Commissioner. Sultan Ibrahim lost an invaluable source of experienced advice. However, the Board's role was dual and its loyalty to Sultan Ibrahim questionable. Quite often it had acted as informant of Sultan Ibrahim's secret negotiations to the Colonial Office. The old loyalty to the Colonial Office of men like Sir Cecil Smith was apparent when they considered British interests before acting on behalf of Sultan Ibrahim.

In early 1906 Elgin personally advised Sultan Ibrahim to officially abolish the Board and to be guided by the High Commissioner. He explicitly warned Sultan Ibrahim that he would not hesitate to effect a constitutional change for the administration of Johore if the Sultan did not return home as soon as possible and administer along lines of British advice. With economic development progressing from railway construction to rubber cultivation on a large scale, British desire crystallised into determination to extend British control to Johore. The Colonial staff no longer looked upon the appointment of the British office as a mere threat but as a real step in the direction of establishing control in Johore. However, lack of agreement between the High Commissioner and the Colonial staff on the powers to be enjoyed by this officer and the absence of a substantial case of maladministration in Johore prevented the appointment in 1906. Having deprived Sultan Ibrahim of the Board's service and advice, and having pressured the Sultan to be guided by the High Commissioner, the Colonial staff rested in the conviction that Johore would be protected from indiscriminate private exploitation and preserved for future development as outlined by FMS policy.

Their conviction was not in vain. During Sultan Ibrahim's long absence, Anderson had won the confidence and co-operation of the *Mentri Besar*, the State Secretary and other members of the State Council except Abdul Rahman who was also abroad. He also made Sultan Ibrahim's private advisers — Buckley and Shelford — see Johore affairs from his viewpoint. When Sultan Ibrahim returned to Johore in 1906 he stood alone except for Abdul Rahman. Anderson secured Abdul Rahman's dismissal by January, 1907. This was a great loss to Sultan Ibrahim in his effort to stand independent of British advice. On his own Sultan Ibrahim did not display the same spirit of independence. Anderson advised Sultan Ibrahim and Buckley to revoke the liberal, land concession to Barry and in place offer to grant land according to the new FMS

regulations of September, 1906. Sultan Ibrahim revoked the concession and let Buckley and the State Council make the new grant. The Council and Buckley acted as Anderson advised them. In 1908 Sultan Ibrahim signed an Agreement giving the F.M.S. Railway Administration the powers of working the Johore line. Apparently, Anderson's influence over Sultan Ibrahim and the State Council — the sources of political and administrative power and initiators of economic development within Johore — had grown very strong by the end of 1908.

Control of these sources of power was the ultimate goal of the British government. But, they still lacked a valid case to justify the extension of their control to Johore. The only avenue left was to get Sultan Ibrahim to request British assistance in internal administration. Anderson successfully achieved this and Campbell was appointed General Adviser in 1910. In the view of the Colonial Office this was the beginning of extension of control in practice, though there was no legal agreement to the effect. The British officers expected to control and effectualise administrative reorganisation and economic development. But, Sultan Ibrahim and his officers looked upon the General Adviser and his officers as advisers and instructors in the art of administration. These differing concepts led to the struggle for control within Johore. The British officers found that they were not given a free hand in reorganisation and development. Sultan Ibrahim and his officers resented and resisted reorganisation which in effect meant loss of control to the British officers. Sultan Ibrahim was reluctant to sacrifice private interests and to permit expenditure of revenues for development projects. He still sought to gratify his own desires. However, he now tried to cloak his actions with an aura of constitutionality. But the British were by this time convinced that Sultan Ibrahim's was autocratic rule aimed at gratifying his whims and fancies, and guarding his private interests. The British now realised that control of revenues, expenditure, and administration was essential if they were going to successfully exploit the resources which they had so persistently preserved. Utilising the evidence of maladministration in the insignificant sphere of prison administration the British pressured Sultan Ibrahim to sign the Agreement enlarging the powers of the General Adviser to those enjoyed by a Resident. Thus, in 1914, was inaugurated the era of British rule in Johore.

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