OUR SARAWAK

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Persatuan
Kesusasteraan Sarawak

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Dedicated to the people of Sarawak

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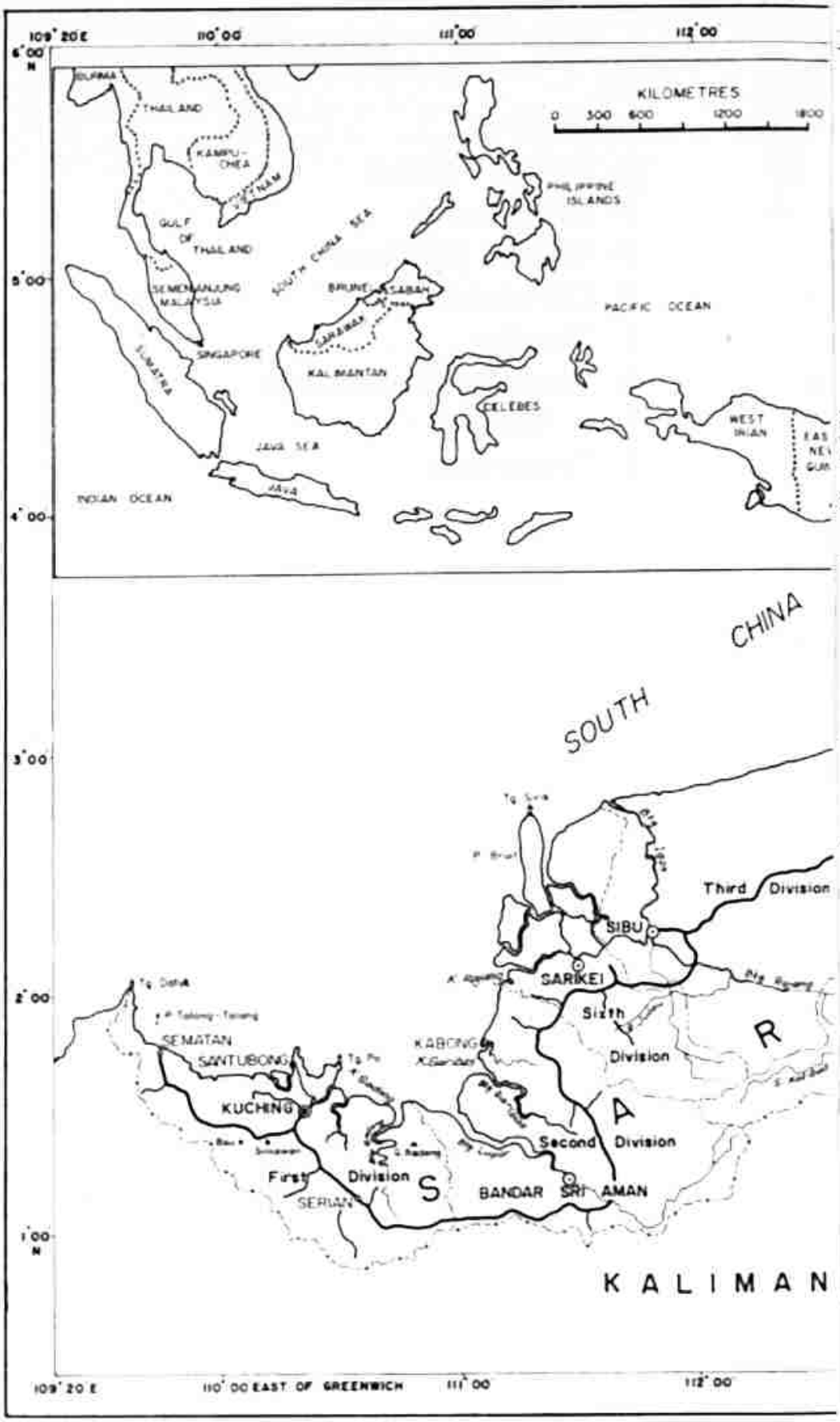
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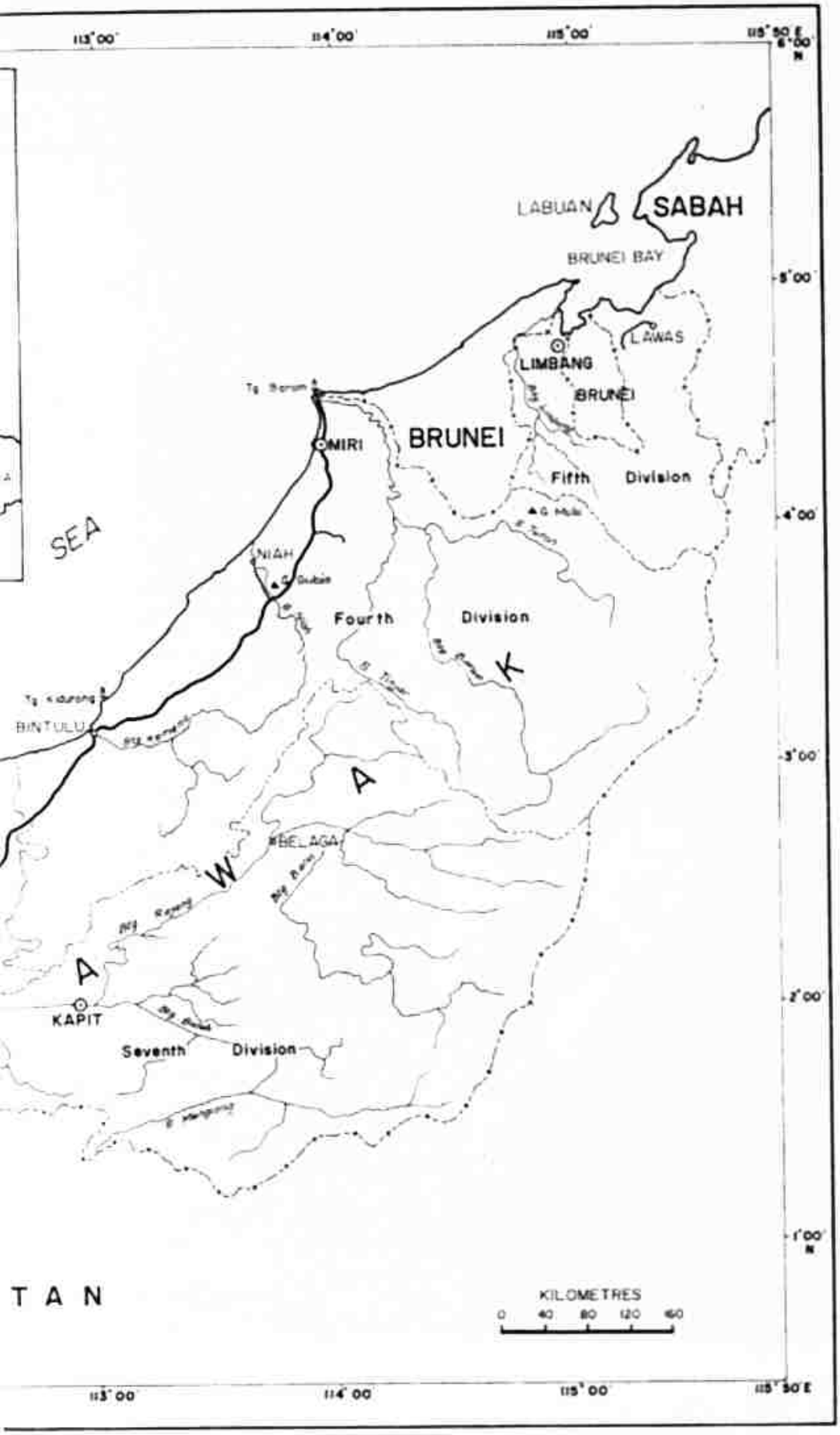
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Tuan Yang Terutama Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, SMN, DP, SPMJ, SIMP, SPMK, SSDK, SPMP, SPMS, SPDK, PNBS, LL.D. (Hon) (UKM), D. Sc. (Hon) (UPM).
Yang Di Pertua Negeri Sarawak

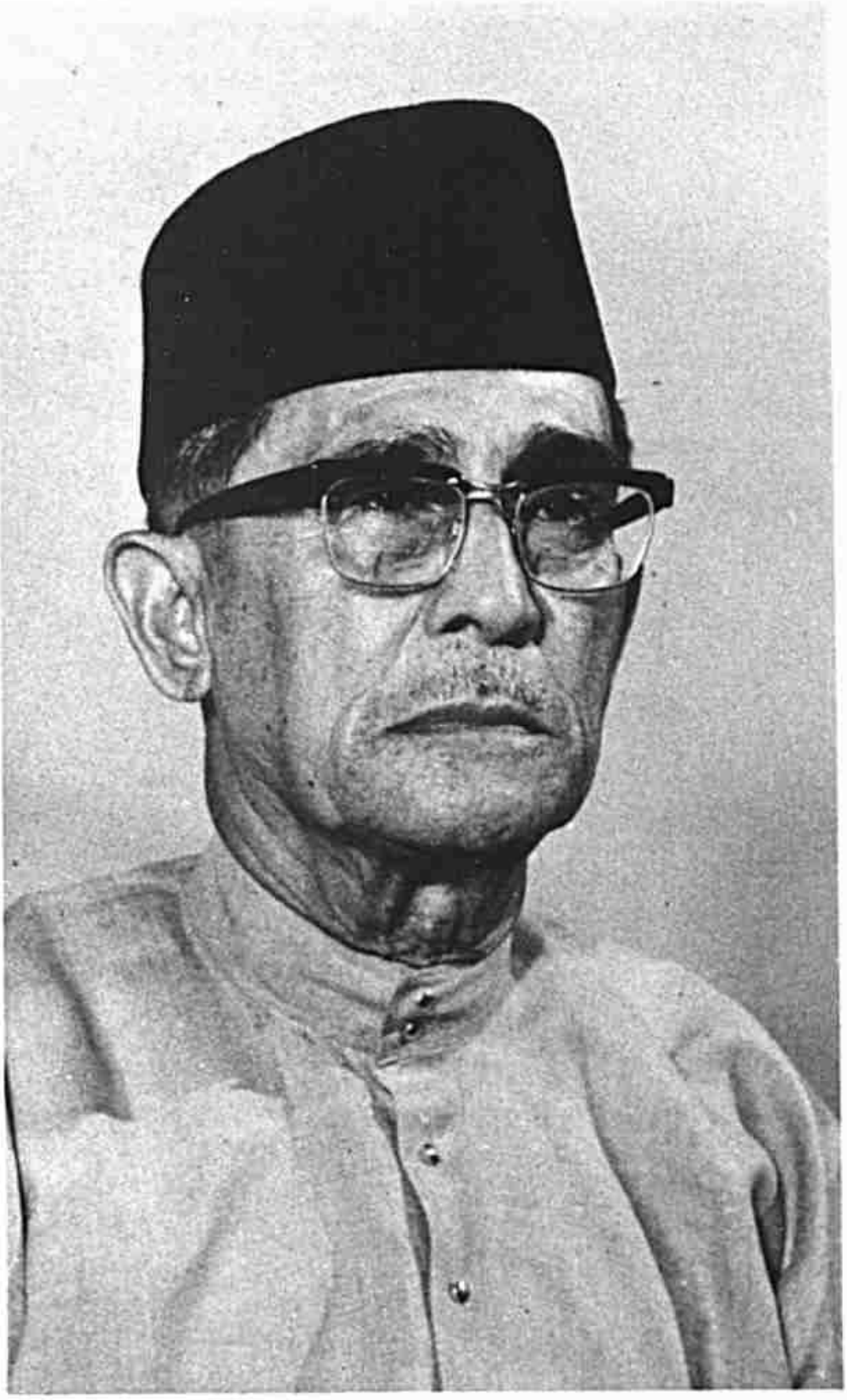
YAB Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, SSDK, SSAP, SPMS, SPMJ, DP, SPDK, SPCM, SPNS, DUPN, SSMT, DUNM.
The Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, Bapa Malaysia, the first Prime Minister of Malaya and Malaysia

YAB Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib bin Mahmud, DP, SPMJ, PGDK, Kt. WE (Thailand), KOU (Korea).
Chief Minister of Sarawak

YAB Tun Datu Abang Haji Openg bin Abang Sapi'ee, SMN, PNBS.

The First governor of Sarawak



YAB Tun Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Haji Bujang bin Tuanku Haji Othman, SMN, DP, PSM, SPMS, SPDK.
The Second Governor of Sarawak (during his term of office the title Governor was changed to Yang Di Pertua Negeri in 1975).

YAB Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Muhammad Salahuddin, SMN, DP, SPMP, SPDK.

The Third Yang Di Pertua Negeri Sarawak.

YAB Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein, SMN.
The Second Prime Minister of Malaysia.

YAB Tun Hussein Onn, SMN, DK (Joh.), DK (Sel), DK (Treng), DK (Kel), SPMJ, SIMP, SPCM, SSIJ, SPDK, DUPN, DP, SPNS, PIS.

The Third Prime Minister of Malaysia.

YB Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan, PNBS, PDK.
The First Chief Minister of Sarawak.

YB Datuk Tawi Sli, PNBS.
The Second Chief Minister of Sarawak.

Introduction

Sarawak has always been fascinating to historians, naturalists, anthropologists, writers in general and even politicians.

Its history is interesting, its flora and fauna are varied and wonderful.

The literature on many aspects of Sarawak life is quite substantial dating back from Chinese Middle Kingdom records of a thousand years ago to very recent political treatises.

In the compendium of essays that follows we find a varied series of chapters on some quaint and enthralling aspects of Sarawak life contributed by a distinguished group of writers who love the State, who try to understand its many twists and turns and to share their thoughts and findings with us, the readers.

Twenty years in Malaysia have brought many changes, physical and otherwise, and in the generality of things I would say that we made a good decision in 1963 when we opted to join the new Federation.

As one who has lived most of his life in Sarawak I have noticed changes in my friends and colleagues and fellow countrymen. The revolution of rising expectations is with us and for better or for worse we have to live with it. We change not simply because we want to change. We change because we want to be better.

This book is produced by the Sarawak Literary Society not only as a small contribution to the twentieth anniversary celebrations of Sarawak in Malaysia (1963 — 1983) but also with the hope and expectation that readers both local and foreign, will be able to understand Sarawak better, where we were, where we are and where we hope to be.

The first writer on the list, Dr. Robert Reece, is not only an accomplished researcher, writer and historian with many an academic distinction to his name but one who takes a particular and abiding interest in the affairs of Sarawak. He is the author of,

among other books, *The Name of Brooke* , a classic on the cession period in Sarawak's history wherein he recapitulates for us the whole array of political personalities and their deeds (or misdeeds) from the days of Datu Merpati to the recent past. Names which we are conscious of only dimly now come forth with clarity and character. He infuses drama into historial narration. Dr. Reece is a senior lecturer at Murdoch University, Perth, West Australia.

The second writer in our list, K.C. Jong, a reporter with the Borneo Bulletin, is a prolific and inquisitive chronicler of current events extraordinaire who never fails to surprise us with his knowledge of quaint historical details. What's in a name? The answer: a lot.

This leads me to the third chapter by Hj. Balia Munir. Hj. Balia would prefer his name not to be mentioned at all. Not for security reasons, mind you. It is characteristic of him to be a "background" man who does all the chores while the extroverts take all the credit. Loyalty is a faith with him. Hj. Balia was for a number of years Sarawak's Director of Information until he resigned to become Managing Director of Sarawak Press. His chapter "Winning the Peace" speaks well for the writer's ability.

Hj. Yusuf Heaton, the writer for the fourth chapter is an emigré from New Zealand who has become one of us in spite of his origin. Over the years that he has been with us he has become "native" and has embraced our ways with relish. He has a feel for this country the way no foreigner that I know of has.

The fifth chapter is the responsibility of three bright and promising young men who grew into manhood during the years that Sarawak has been in Malaysia. Wilfred Nissom is an educator turned politician and is the dynamite behind the success of the Bidayuh National Union. Aloysius Dris is Deputy Director of Information. Ding Seling is a lecturer at Batu Lintang Teachers College. They appear to have gone all over the place and racked their brains to present a picture of Sarawak as it presently is, as it speaks and reflects itself. The writers themselves reflect a growing political and social awareness among our young people. Each coming from a different community, they belong to my own generation — the observers of today and the activists of tomorrow, the spectators of today and the participants of tomorrow.

The person responsible for the sixth chapter, Paul Kadang, is a political scientist noted for writing the history of a major political party in Sarawak as thesis for his Masters' degree. He has a keen foresight, an imaginative mind and practicality that bodes well for the Iban community to which he belongs. Another member of the new and up-coming generation he is an enterprising young man with a lot of promise. Paul lectures part-time at the MARA Institute of Technology in Kuching.

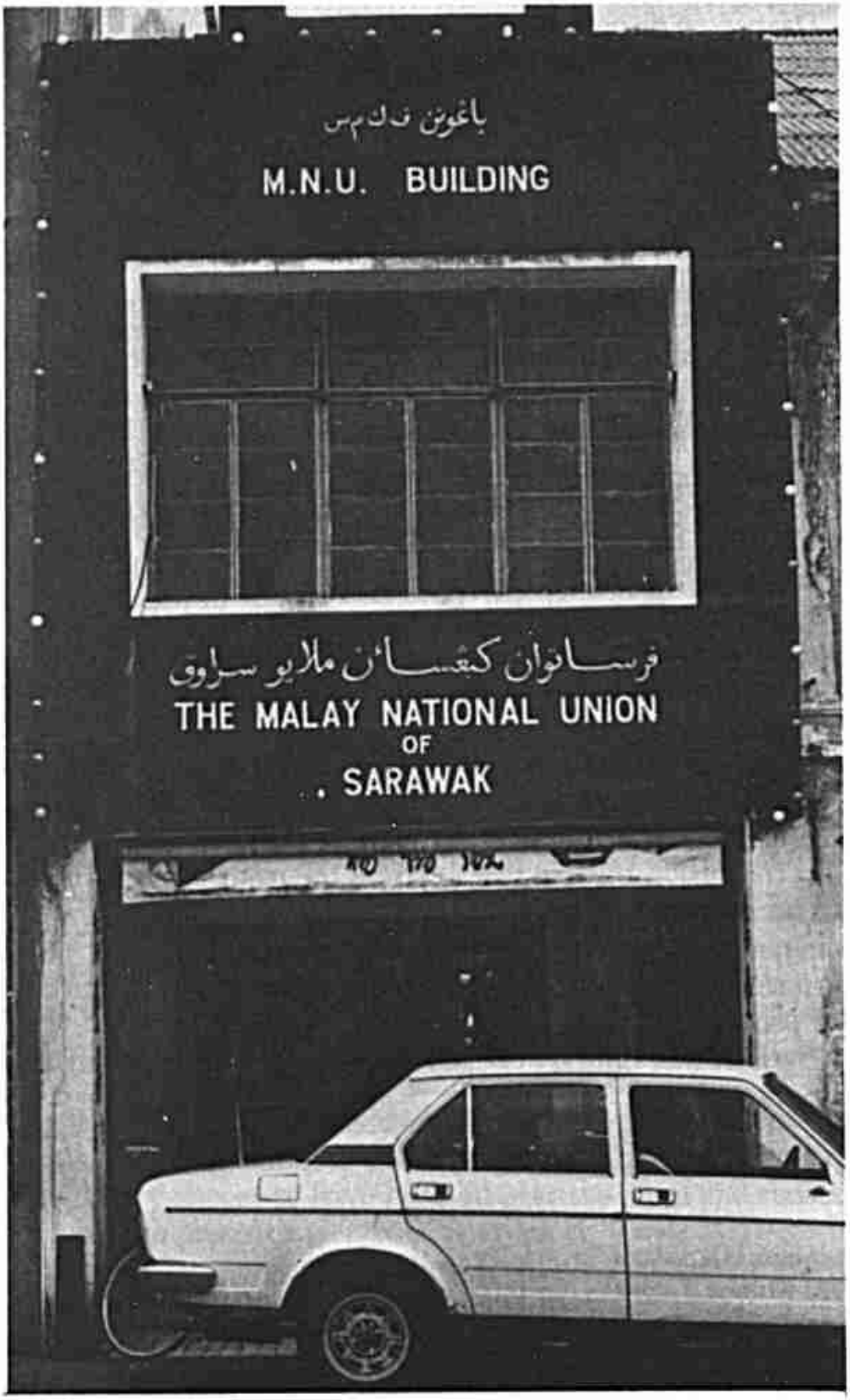
The last but not least of the writers is of course Datuk James Wong Kim Min, a distinguished politician, a poet, a hunter and a legislator of long standing. The greatest tribute you can give him, I think, is to say he was "present at the creation". Not the creation of the world, of course. (He is not that old.) But present and was an active participant in the creation of Malaysia. Largely a self-made man he has survived and overridden many a political turmoil. He has held high office in the land. Up and down he goes. His indomitable spirit never ebbs. Political differences are inevitable in a democracy like ours but even his political opponents admit he is a man of character who loves life and lives it to the full.

Being one of the few political "survivors" since pre-Malaysia days he can tell you, as he is telling you now, of what it takes to create and maintain Malaysia.

In conclusion I would like to stress the point that this book is not an apologia and neither is it meant to be. It is not so much a commentary on government as a chronicle of the people themselves. It is an attempt to capture the spirit and character of our people.

The Sarawak Literary Society dedicates this book to the people of Sarawak.

Adenan Hj. Satem
"Sri Muara Tuang"
Kuching
1983



The Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Sarawak Headquarters on Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg, Kuching.

Political Pioneers

by
Dr. Robert Reece

The Nationalists

The oral traditions of the Sarawak Malays focus on the exploits of Datu Merpati and his son Merpati Jepang from whom many Kuching Malays trace their descent. Datu Merpati came with his children to Sarawak where they established themselves as rulers of the river systems from the Sarawak River to the Rejang. According to tradition, Merpati Jepang married the daughter of Abang Adi of Santubong and settled first there and later at Lidah Tanah where the Sarawak River divides into two. Although the exploits of Datu Merpati and his son are the embroidery of folk romance, the general story is consistent with the historical likelihood that Minangkabau adventurers or merchants came to Sarawak from Sumatra during the Sri Vijaya period and intermarried with people of Melanau and other stock already living along the coast. What trials they endured will never be known, but they were the earliest pioneers of the Sarawak that we know today. Their settlements at Santubong and Lidah Tanah formed the nucleus of this now thriving state.

From the time of Datu Merpati until the final negotiation of Malaysia came a succession of figures — Malay, Iban and Chinese — who can be seen as political pioneers. Sarawak's political history is a complicated one and not all of these pioneers fought for the same cause. Until the 1930's there is no clear line of nationalist tradition that can be observed and celebrated. Nationalism implies the existence of nationhood, a unified political entity, and it would be difficult to see Sarawak as more than a loose federation of ethnic groups until the 1950's. Nevertheless, it is possible to learn a great deal from the actions of those who struggled to defend their people's interests and who contributed in different ways to the development of the State of Sarawak and its ultimate incorporation within the Federation of Malaysia.

Datu Patinggi Gapor, Pengiran Mahkota, Sharif Masahor, Rentap, Rakawi bin Yusuf, the Committee of Administration, Abang Haji Abdillah (later Datu Patinggi Abang Haji Abdillah) and Abang Haji Mustapha (later Datu Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha): these men did not have a great deal in common but their struggles illuminate the different phases of Sarawak's history and its evolution from an insignificant dependency of Sri Vijaya, Majapahit and Brunei to a prosperous and politically stable member of one of the world's most successful federal political systems.

It is possible to recognize six major phases of political struggle in Sarawak: the datus' rebellion against Brunei in the late 1830's; the many challenges to the extension of Brooke power in the nineteenth century; the emergence of a Malay nationalist movement in the 1930's; the anti-cession campaign against colonial rule after 1946; competition between political parties for popular support in the early 1960's; and finally the campaign to join Malaysia.

The Siniawan Rebellion

The tradition of Sarawak's independence goes back to the 1830's when the Sarawak datus rebelled against the authority of the Sultan of Brunei. The Siniawan rebellion has never been properly assessed and the only recorded account is the one given by James Brooke who was the principal beneficiary and by no means an impartial source. Until the 1820's, Brunei's interest in Sarawak had been limited to the collection of annual tribute. It was the chance discovery of antimony ore by some Brunei pengirans on their way to Singapore in 1823 that made Sarawak a focus of interest. Pengiran Indera Mahkota, the son of a Brunei pengiran who had settled and married at Sambas, was appointed Rajah or governor of Sarawak by the Sultan of Brunei who was anxious to obtain revenue from the export of antimony. Mahkota established a new capital at Kuching where a number of other Brunei pengirans also took up residence. One of these, Pengiran Usup, grandson of the Sultan, negotiated the sale of Sarawak to the brother of the Sultan of Sambas in about 1836. When Muda Hashim, then the effective ruler of Brunei, would not agree, Usup fomented a rebellion against Brunei authority by the Sarawak datus and the Bidayuh antimony miners. They were probably already disaffected due to the monopolization of the antimony

Pengiran Indera Mahkota

trade by the pengirans and the high price of goods imported from Singapore. Mahkota was either unable or unwilling to put down the rebellion and in 1837 Muda Hashim himself arrived to take charge of the situation. He enlisted the assistance of James Brooke and his crew against the Siniawan rebels who finally negotiated peace in December 1840.

Their leader Datu Patinggi Gapor, and the other datus involved were pardoned by Muda Hashim at Brooke's insistence and were reinstated by him when he became Rajah in September 1841. Gapor's daughter married Sharif Bujang, brother of Sharif Masahor of Sarikei, and it was no doubt through this connection that he became associated with opposition to Brooke. When the commission of inquiry, appointed by the British government to investigate complaints about the Brooke's actions, was sitting in Singapore in 1854, Datu Patinggi Gapor sensed Brooke's weakness and devised a scheme to kill all the Europeans in Sarawak and set himself up as rajah. He even signalled his intention by displaying a yellow flag and a yellow umbrella which were the exclusive insignia of royalty. However, the conspiracy was revealed to Brooke on his return from Singapore and Gapor was shipped off to Mecca and later banished to Malacca where he spent the rest of his life.

Pengiran Indera Mahkota

Pengiran Mahkota, the first rajah, was a man of outstanding talent and sophistication, an orator and a poet as well as a skilful politician. Shortly after meeting him for the first time in 1839, James Brooke wrote:

> His education has been more attended to than others of his rank. He both reads and writes his own language, and is well acquainted with the government, laws, and customs of Borneo.

Spenser St John, Brooke's private secretary who later acted as British Consul-General in Brunei, thought that he was 'the most talented man I met in Borneo'.

During his conversations with Brooke he revealed a shrewd sense of the competition between British and Dutch interests in Sarawak and the possibility of playing them off against each other. Keenly interested in developing gold mining as well as antimony, he had already been approached by the Dutch at Sambas with an offer of financial support. Pengiran Mahkota

inevitably clashed with Brooke when it became clear that the English adventurer had decided to establish himself permanently in Sarawak. Brooke's increasingly negative references to Pengiran Mahkota as an untrustworthy schemer reflect the fact that he saw him as his principal rival for power. Had it not been for the vital support given to Brooke by the British navy, Pengiran Mahkota would probably have become ruler of Sarawak under either Dutch or British protection. Sarawak's newly-discovered mineral wealth and its strategic position on the north-west coast of Borneo just beyond the Dutch sphere of influence made it the centre of a powerplay involving the Dutch, the British and the Brunei and Sambas pengirans.

By mid-1841, Brooke's admiration for Pengiran Mahkota had been replaced by deep antagonism arising from the fact that the Pengiran's influence on Muda Hashim was the chief obstacle to his ambition of taking over the government of Sarawak. This had been promised by Muda Hashim as a means of obtaining Brooke's assistance against the Siniawan rebels, but it is clear that the governor's delay in fulfilling the undertaking was largely due to pressure from Pengiran Mahkota who could probably see the long-term consequences. Brooke wrote: 'My greatest enemy I know to be Mahkota, who with a few other leading men, resists all my attempts to fulfil his (Muda Hashim's) engagements'. Brooke was finally obliged to use naked force to achieve his ambition. His yacht the *Royalist* was brought up the river to Muda Hashim's palace and all guns were trained on it. Declaring vengeance on Pengiran Mahkota whom he accused of an attempt to poison him, Brooke forced Muda Hashim and his people to choose between himself and the Pengiran for their loyalty. As Brooke recorded it,

> This demonstration tested public opinion, and two hundred of the natives immediately joined me, and not a single man joined Mahkota. This brought matters to a crisis. Mahkota was discarded, and I walked over the course. The day following the settlement, came the installation:- all the principal people were assembled, and the chop* being read to them, the rajah informed them that henceforward I was to hold the government. I expounded my principles to them, and really believe they are well pleased. We had great firing and rejoicing.

* The document signed by Muda Hashim which transferred the government of Sarawak to Brooke.

Shortly afterwards Brooke obtained confirmation of his position from the Sultan of Brunei and it was only then that he felt confident enough to banish Mahkota and his followers.

Unwilling to accept defeat, Mahkota joined forces with Sharif Sahap at Patusan near Simanggang. Sharif Sahap and his brother Sharif Mullah were the sons of an Arab who had married a daughter of the Sultan of Brunei and had been appointed by him to govern the Skrang. Sahap, in turn, was appointed by Muda Hashim to govern Sadong and he achieved great influence amongst the Ibans of the Batang Lupar. Brooke had been favourably impressed when he met him in 1839:

> His power, they say, equals his family, as he is, in some measure, independent; and were he to instigate the Sadung country to take arms against Borneo (Brunei), it is very probable he would overthrow the government, and make himself Sultan of Borneo.

However, he soon realized that in order to survive he would have to break the alliance between the Malays and the Ibans of the Batang Lupar and Saribas and it was primarily for this reason that he called on the assistance of his old friend Captain Henry Keppel of H.M.S. *Dido* who visited Kuching in 1844. An expedition of boats from the *Dido* and an East India Company steamer *Phlegethon* destroyed Sahap's stronghold and captured Pengiran Mahkota after he had fled to the house of Sharif Mullah on the Undup.

Released on Brooke's order, Pengiran Mahkota returned to Brunei where he quickly achieved the position of Chief Adviser to the Sultan and continued his campaign to unseat Brooke. He was no doubt responsible for the Sultan's defiance of Brooke in 1845, which led to yet another act of 'gunboat diplomacy' by the Royal Navy. Keppel's commander, Admiral Thomas Cochrane, used the full force of his China Station flotilla to attack Brunei and force the Sultan to sign a treaty ceding Labuan to the British. Pengiran Mahkota had bitterly opposed this idea and in *Syair Rakis*, his political testament written in later years, he reflected on his efforts to prevent Europeans from gaining a foothold on the coast of north-western Borneo.

Pulau Labuan diminta segera
Akan tempat tiang bendera
Di sana tempat berkira-kira
Dari Sarawak ke Singapura

Dagang terchengang mendengarkan titah
Hati di dalam sangat gelabah
Labuan itu bukannya mudah
Alamat negeri di bawah perintah

Pengiran Mahkota favoured increased trade but he could see the consequences of European territorial ambition in Borneo. In his own way, Pengiran Mahkota was a Borneo patriot who had the gift of political foresight. Unfortunately, his vilification by the Brooke court historians continues to obscure his real achievement.

Sharif Masahor

With Pengiran Mahkota's departure from Sarawak and the defeat of Sharif Sahap, leadership of the anti-Brooke forces was inherited by Sharif Masahor, a man from Igan who was related to the Melanaus, Kanowits and other peoples of the Rejang. Appointed governor of Sarikei by the Sultan of Brunei in 1849, he was retained as headman by James Brooke when the Sultan ceded the area in 1853. Strongly opposed to Brooke's expansionist policy, Masahor led a force of Iban warriors to Mukah in 1855 to expel Pengiran Matusin (who supported Brooke's plan to take over the sago-producing district) and reinstate his own brother-in-law, Pengiran Nipa. For this action he was deposed as governor of Sarikei by Charles Brooke but his outstanding ability and leadership were too useful to be passed over and in 1857 James Brooke restored him to his old position.

In 1859 Charles Fox and Henry Steele, the only Brooke officers in the Third Division, were murdered at Kanowit and although Masahor energetically assisted Charles Brooke in capturing and executing a number of men believed to have been involved, the Tuan Muda later held him responsible for the conspiracy. The outbreak of the Indian Mutiny and a bloody revolt against the Dutch at Banjarmasin in the same year reduced the tiny European population of Sarawak to a state of panic and Masahor was cast as the arch-conspirator plotting with a man claiming to be the heir

Sharif Masahor

apparent of Brunei and with the exiled Datu Patinggi Gapor to overthrow the Raj. How much truth was in this is difficult to say, but in February 1860 Charles Brooke intercepted Masahor off the Sadong coast and sank his boat with cannon fire in a deliberate attempt to dispose of him. Masahor managed to escape to Mukah and Brunei where he complained to the British consul and gave his own version of events surrounding the murder of Fox and Steele.

Infuriated at Masahor's escape, Charles Brooke and a force of 150 Iban warboats destroyed the houses of Masahor's supporters at Igan and Sarikei, killing sixty four people. When Pengiran Nipa refused to open up Mukah to Kuching's sago traders, an expedition was sent to persuade him but the fortifications there proved too strong and in the meantime Masahor had succeeded in obtaining diplomatic assistance from Governor Edwardes at Labuan. However, the British government would not support Edwardes and in 1861 James Brooke obtained a letter from the Sultan of Brunei to the Mukah chiefs ordering them to receive the Rajah and to expel Masahor and the Brunei pengirans loyal to him. A few months later he visited Brunei again and obtained the cession not only of the sago districts but of the entire coast as far as Cape Kidurong.

The collapse of gold mining after 1857 had cost Brooke most of his revenue and control of the sago trade was crucial if his government was to remain viable. Annexation of the sago districts also meant that Masahor had no base from which to challenge Brooke. Masahor went into exile in Singapore where he received a small pension from the Sarawak government and exercised his skill in boat building. According to someone who met him in 1876, he was 'a fine specimen of a Malay and must have been a Hercules in his time'. In 1879, Masahor was one of Tengku Alam's commanders in the Johore war against Temenggong Abu Bakar.

It is difficult in retrospect to judge whether Masahor merited all the suspicions and accusations heaped upon him by the Brookes and their supporters. Certainly his denial of complicity in the Kanowit murders has the ring of truth about it. But there can be no doubt that he provided the main focus of opposition to Brooke expansion during the 1850's. His network of support along the Rejang and his close links with the down-river Ibans provided a strong political base. Like Sharif Sahap and Sharif

Mullah, he had the ability to inspire and organize a native coalition of resistance to the Brookes. Consequently, he had to be destroyed.

Rentap

One of Masahor's Iban allies was Rentap of Skrang. Rentap had first come into conflict with Brooke forces in 1844 when the boats of *Dido* and *Phlegethon* entered the Skrang to destroy the longhouses of Ibans involved in coastal raiding. Rentap himself is reputed to have led raids as far as Sambas where his party massacred a boatload of people including the nephew of the Sultan. Although the Skrang Ibans at this stage possessed neither fortifications nor firearms, they managed to ambush and kill Datu Patinggi Ali and twenty-nine of his party. The Skrang and Saribas raiders suffered terrible losses at the hands of Admiral Farquhar's ships when they were caught in 1849 at Beting Maru near the mouths of the Saribas and Krian rivers, but it seems unlikely that Rentap was present. Rentap next came into prominence in 1853 when he led a large party of warboats down the Skrang to the newly established fort. Brooke's aim was to bring the whole of the upper Batang Lupar region under his control and his strategy was to enlist the aid of the down-river tribes in the vicinity of the fort to subdue the raiders. Rentap's followers managed to kill one of the Brooke officers at Skrang but were driven off by the down-river Ibans who were now loyal to Brooke. Nevertheless, Rentap's prestige amongst the Ibans of the Skrang and Saribas grew quickly and during the following ten years, James Brooke authorised no less than four expeditions against him. In 1854 a government party led by the Rajah's elder nephew, Brooke Brooke, captured Rentap's longhouse on the Sungei Lang and wounded Rentap himself. However, he managed to retreat to the relative inaccessibility of Gunong Sadok.

In June 1857 James Brooke launched yet another expedition against Rentap whose heavily fortified longhouse at Sadok was now a symbol of resistance for the Ibans. As Charles Brooke testified:

> Their legends and songs make mention of it as being the Grand Mount, toward which no enemy dare venture; and our arch-enemy Rentap has been located on it since the fall of Sungei Lang.

Rentap's Lumbong, at Bukit Sibau. (Lumbong is a tomb or funerary house set up for a man who has died and been buried far from home, or for a man of a leading family).

> Here he was supported by the Skrang Dayaks located in the interior, and also by the inhabitants of the interior of Saribas, who offered every aid and assistance so long as he occupied this eyrie . . . and to which they all might, in case of need, retire to find a haven from the stranger's rule, which thwarted their head-hunting propensities. He was called Rajah Ulu . . ., and was the centre of all the opposition to the rule of the Rajah of Sarawak.

A government force of 4,000 men reached the summit of Sadok but were obliged to retreat. Yet another expedition in 1858, this time armed with a small mortar, was also unsuccessful. 'Bring all your fire guns from Europe', Rentap's followers shouted to the retreating forces, 'we are not afraid of you'. However, one of Rentap's most powerful allies from the Saribas, Aji, was killed and this was to have serious consequences for his future support. While Charles Brooke was leading the third and final expedition to Sadok in 1861, taking with him a brass howitzer specially made in Kuching and a number of Chinese labourers to clear a path for it, two more of Rentap's key allies surrendered. The howitzer managed to smash Rentap's defences and he was forced to take shelter in the mountains at the head of the Katibas, Kanowit and Skrang rivers where he died shortly afterwards.

Rentap's motives in challenging Brooke authority were traditional in their origin. The Brooke policy of restricting Iban migration upset the dynamic of Iban culture which depended on access to new land for farming. Raiding along the coasts of Borneo was also an important outlet for Iban energy and enterprise and forged strong links with the Malays with whom they traded and allied themselves. Rentap and his followers fought to maintain a way to life which had gone on virtually uninterrupted since the first waves of Iban migration to Sarawak in the sixteenth century. Rentap's own stature as a leader did not derive from a position of power in Iban society, which lacked any kind of political hierarchy, but from his network of kinsmen whose loyalty could be called upon. It was these links which made Rentap such a powerful adversary.

The other threat to James Brooke's position came from the Hakka Chinese gold miners who had come from Dutch Borneo at the Rajah's encouragement to work in the Bau area. The Bau kongsi was patterned on those which had developed from workers' cooperatives into semi-autonomous states in the Montrado area until the imposition of Dutch authority challenged

their survival. Nor were they any more willing to accept Brooke's authority, especially when it meant paying taxes from which they derived little benefit and recognizing the superior authority of his courts. It might have been possible for the kongsi to have co-existed peacefully with Brooke government had it not been for Brooke's arrogant determination to enforce his own system of law. The 1857 'Chinese Rebellion', as it has been traditionally referred to by historians, was little more than an attempt by the kongsi to install a government in Kuching which would be more sympathetic to its autonomous traditions. The scheme of government offered by the President of the kongsi placed each ethnic community under its own leader, an arrangement which might well have been practicable if James Brooke had not succeeded in mustering sufficient support to drive the miners back to Bau. The kongsi paid a heavy price for its action, losing about one thousand lives, and the cessation of mining seriously reduced Sarawak's revenue. In retrospect the kongsi leaders can be seen to have been fighting for their own autonomy against the encroaching power of Brooke government.

The Nine Cardinal Principles

The period from the 1880's until the 1930's was one of gradual economic progress and modernization under a paternalistic administration devised by Charles Brooke. Politics, such as it was, consisted of intrigues within the Brooke family over the succession and jockeying for power and influence within the Sarawak Administrative Service. Vestigial Iban opposition to the Brookes lingered on during the 1920's and 1930's in the Second Division in what was known as 'Asun's Rebellion'. Iban and Chinese smallholder interests were seriously affected by the Brooke administration's decision to join the International Rubber Restriction Agreement in 1934. However, there were as yet no formal channels for the expression of people's views. Grassroots political action took the form of Penghulu Asun's refusal to pay taxes and the demonstration by Chinese tappers at Batu Kawa in 1939 against the rubber restriction regulations. Any move towards political change was in the hands of Europeans.

In January 1941 Vyner Brooke surprised everyone by announcing that Sarawak was to have a written constitution — the old constitution had consisted of nothing more than the political

wills of James Brooke and Charles Brooke which set out the line of succession of the Raj. In his proclamation, Vyner emphasised that the Constitution would set in train a process leading to ultimate self-government.

> I have always been positive, as was my father, that it was never the intention of Sir James Brooke to establish a line of Absolute Rulers. What he set out to do was to protect the Natives of Sarawak, the real but backward owners of this land, from exploitation and oppression, until such time as they could govern themselves . . .

This idea of trusteeship was set out in the preamble of the Constitution, later known as 'The Nine Cardinal Principles', which also promised eventual self government.

The actual purpose of the Constitution had very little to do with any desire to involve the peoples of Sarawak in the affairs of government. As far as Vyner Brooke was concerned, it indicated his increasing lack of interest in Sarawak and his desire to make financial provision for his family's future. The senior officials of the Committee of Administration devised it as a means of controling Vyner's capricious actions and providing the more centralized and bureaucratic system of administration which they had been gradually introducing since the mid-1930's. In return, Vyner received $1,000,000 from the Treasury and guarantees of financial security for the future. At the same time, the Constitution was intended to defuse British pressure on Sarawak to accept a British Resident and adopt a system of administration similar to that of the Malay States where effective sovereignty lay with the British government. There were consultations with some Malay Native Officers and the senior Kapitan China, Ong Tiang Swee, and provision was made for an enlarged Council Negri and Supreme Council with a greater degree of indigenous representation. However, effective decision-making still rested with the Committee of Administration who were as yet unchallenged by indigenous opinion.

Malay Nationalism in Sarawak

Political parties did not appear until after the war, although there were clear signs of political consciousness amongst the Malays

well before then. The first signs of Sarawak Malay nationalism appeared in the 1930's with the emergence of a new group of educated Malays from non-aristocratic backgrounds. Their newspaper, *Fajar Sarawak*, and their establishment of the Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Sarawak in 1939 reflected a Malay nationalism which was primarily expressed in terms of culture and religion and the socio-economic uplifting of the Malays as a community. Their struggle, as they saw it, was to prevent the Malays from being left behind by the other races as economic change offered new commercial opportunities. Rakawi bin Yusuf and his associates believed that Brooke rule had really only benefited the perabangan class and made veiled criticisms of the datus in their newspaper. Without the support of the perabangan, however, it could not survive financially and the voice of Malay nationalism was not heard again until 1939 with the registration of the Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Sarawak. Even then, the patronage of the datus was necessary before the Brooke officials would give their approval.

Through the formation of the Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Sarawak, Rakawi's group also became involved in important discussions which foreshadowed the establishment of Malaysia more than twenty years later. In December 1940 Abang Haji Zaini, Edham bin Bojeng and Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor attended the second annual congress of Malay Persatuan at the Malay Teachers' Union Headquarters in Singapore. Representatives of the Peninsular Persatuan included such prominent figures as Dato Onn bin Jafar, Mohd. Ishak bin Haji Mohd., Dr Ismail and Ibrahim bin Ya'akub. The meeting decided to link all the persatuans in one united movement and plans were made for the formalization of this goal. More importantly, there were extended discussions about a political federation to include the Malay States, Singapore, Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo. One of the Sarawak representatives even suggested a Malay national anthem. It was thought that the constituent states would have a better chance of negotiating independence with Britain in such a form. However, the war interrupted this grand scheme and in the immediate postwar years the Malayan Union and the cession of Sarawak diverted attention from the pan-Malayan or Malaysian concept. Not until the early 1960's was the idea revived.

Abang Haji Abdullah, the Datu Patinggi and seventeenth hereditary chieftain of the Sarawak Malays, in full official uniform. From the announcement of cession until his death in November 1946 he was the figurehead of the anti-cession movement.

The Anti-Cession Movement

There was only one meeting of the newly reconstituted Council Negri and Supreme Council before the Japanese invasion in December 1941. Nevertheless, the Nine Cardinal Principles became something like a Bill of Rights or Declaration of Independence for the more politically conscious and were frequently invoked during the late 1940's and 1950's as a political charter protecting the rights and freedoms of the people of Sarawak. The stated objective of the post-war anti-cession movement was to revive Sarawak's independence under the constitutional system enshrined in this document.

At first sight, the anti-cession struggle might appear to have been a conservative movement dedicated to the restoration of Brooke rule and the return of the post-war *status quo*. The anti-cession parties' close links with Anthony Brooke and his father and their repeated requests to the British government to repeal the cession suggest a loyalist or royalist motivation. No doubt there were some anti-cessionists who were primarily concerned with reviving Brooke rule and its personal style of government. However, many young activists came to see the restoration of Brooke rule as the only means of regaining Sarawak's historical independence. Restoration of the Brookes under the terms of the 1941 Constitution would have theoretically made possible a form of indigenous self-government with Anthony Brooke as no more than a figurehead. Indeed, the Constitution made explicit provision for the possibility of a Malay Rajah. Datu Patinggi Abang Haji Abdillah, who led the anti-cessionist movement and who traced his ancestry back through sixteen hereditary chieftains to Merpati Jepang, was already an old man of eighty-six when Vyner Brooke announced the cession of Sarawak in February 1946. It would certainly have been in his personal interests to accept cession as a fait accompli and cooperate with the new colonial government which was anxious to enlist his support as the most senior datu. He would have provided the appearance of legitimacy which the cession arrangements so clearly lacked. His refusal cost him his place in the Supreme Council and his government pension, but his courageous example inspired the membership of the Malay National Union and the Sarawak Dayak Association and provided them with the moral authority to pursue their struggle. In spite of Vyner Brooke's at-

tempts to discredit him, he continued to press the British government to repeal the cession. In one of his last messages before his death he told Bertram Brooke: 'Harimau mati meninggal belang, gajah mati meninggal tulang, manusia mati meninggalkan nama'. The spirit of self-sacrifice which he represented was not lost. In February 1947 more than 338 Malay government employees resigned their position in protest against an official circular directing them not to take part in political activity. Since there were very few opportunities for employment for Malays outside government service, resignation was an agonizing decision for those with families. Many received strong assurances of support from their wives before they took the momentous step. Some efforts were made to begin cooperative ventures based on provident fund payments and a number of sekolah ra'ayat were established in Kuching and Sibu by resigned schoolteachers like Chegu Lily Eberwein. However, times were difficult and people like Haji Ahmad Zaidell, Haji Su'aut Tahir and Mohd. M'amon bin Nor were forced to sell off what little property they had in order to survive.

The anti-cession movement was in many ways a nationalist phenomenon. From 1946 until the mid-1950's the struggle to repeal cession absorbed the energies of most of the more politically aware Malays and Ibans, particularly in the First Division and the Sibu area. A striking feature of the movement, however, was its isolation from parallel developments in Malaya and Indonesia. The success of the Malay nationalists in bringing down the Malayan Union in 1948 and the expulsion of the Dutch by the Indonesion nationalists in 1949 helped to fire the enthusiasm of the anti-cessionists but there was little direct influence. The tactics of the Malay National Union and the Sarawak Dayak Association from the outset were to work through 'proper channels': to appeal to British justice and the Atlantic Charter which had been designed to protect the rights of small nations. This 'constitutional' or legalistic approach was strongly advocated by Anthony Brooke who had been banned from returning to Sarawak by the new colonial government and had established himself in Singapore. His policy was also to separate the anti-cession movement from developments in Malaya and Indonesia in the belief that this would make the cause more acceptable to British M.P.s and newspaper editors. Cables and petitions were sent

off to the British Prime Minister and to King George VI, only to be passed to the Colonial Office for a bland reply. The policy of the Colonial Office and colonial government officials was to ignore the anti-cessionists in the hope that the movement would simply fade away. They completely underestimated the organizational strength of the anti-cession parties and the dedication of their leading members who made great personal sacrifices in their work for the cause. While an expensive public relations programme proclaimed the virtues of the colonial government, the anti-cessionists were systematically harassed by the police.

When it became clear that 'constitutional' tactics were not advancing the cause, effective leadership of the movement passed to the Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu in Sibu and a group of young activists within it. The assassination of Governor Duncan Stewart by Rosli bin Dhoby, a seventeen year old student teacher, in December 1949 was a desperate attempt to focus world attention on a nationalist movement which was losing its momentum after years of expensive and fruitless appeals through 'proper channels'. The subsequent banning of the Pergerakan Pemuda and the execution of Rosli and three of the conspirators by a vindictive colonial government finally caused the movement to lie low. Nevertheless, the Malay National Union kept the old Sarawak flag flying and its faithful secretary-general, Mohd. Johari bin Anang, remained in office until his death in 1963.

Unlike the earlier struggles in Sarawak history, the anti-cession movement was not a localized phenomenon. Although the Malay National Union in Kuching and the Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu in Sibu provided the two main centres of activity, branches were formed in most towns with a Malay population and the movement took on a pan-Sarawak dimension. Anti-cession became a popular ideology and contributed a great deal towards Sarawak's emergence as a political entity. For the first time, there was an issue which transcended localized interests and suggested a national awareness.

Political Parties

While the anti-cession movement raised the political consciousness of many Malays, their preoccupation with restoring independence meant that for some time they expressed little interest in the affairs of the colonial government. No attempt was

Lily Eberwein

Datu Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha

The arrest of Rosli bin Dhoby in Sibu.

YB Puan Hajjah Hafsah Harun, JMN, PPT, SKN, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Sarawak. (She is the daughter of Lily Eberwein).

Tan Sri Datuk Haji Su'aut Tahir, PSM, PNBS, ABS, PPN

YB Datuk Tra Zenhder, PNBS, the first lady member of Council Negeri (Dewan Undangan Negeri), Sarawak.

YB Datuk Dr. Sockalingam, PNBS, OSS, first Speaker of the Council Negeri (Dewan Undangan Negeri), Sarawak. Sockalingam Avenue, off Green Road in Kuching, is named after him.

made to keep the British government to its 1946 promise that steps would be taken to introduce representative government. The first Sarawak initiative in this direction came from Khoo Peng Loong, an unofficial member of the Council Negri, who moved a motion in 1956 calling upon the Queen to grant a new constitution. When it was finally enacted later that year, the constitution allowed for an unofficial majority in the Council Negri but the governor was still left with wide discretionary powers. Out of this the Sarawak United People's Party was subsequently formed by Ong Kee Hui (now Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui) and Stephen Yong (now Datuk Amar Stephen Yong) in 1959, and in 1960 Parti Negara Sarawak was formed by Datu Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha. In Sibu, Ahmad Zaidi Adruce (now Datuk Ahmad Zaidi Adruce) also revived the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak which had originally been formed as the youth wing of the Malay National Union.

Among the educated older Malays at that time, Abang Haji Mustapha attended St Joseph's School before spending some years in Singapore and the Middle East. He had a spectacularly successful career in the Sarawak Constabulary and was appointed as its first indigenous Assistant Commissioner in 1939. Accepting the inevitability of cession and believing that it would lead to improved conditions and opportunities for all races, Abang Haji Mustapha found himself leading an embattled minority within Malay politics during the cession controversy. Now that the passions of those days have subsided, it can be acknowledged that he, too, was acting on the basis of principle. Parti Negara Sarawak, which was largely financed by his own money, was an attempt to unite not just the Malays but all the indigenous peoples of Sarawak in one political movement.

The party which reflected the anti-cession tradition was Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA) which was formed in 1961 on the initiative of Abdul Rahman bin Ya'kub (now Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub) and Abdul Taib bin Mahmud (now Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib bin Mahmud). Both Abdul Rahman and Abdul Taib were civil servants at the time and did not formally join the party until 1963, but they provided its intellectual drive from the outset. Datuk Tuanku Bujang, a veteran Native Officer from Sibu, became party chairman and prominent amongst the leadership were such noted anti-ces-

sion figures as Haji Su'aut Tahir, Ajibah binte Abol (later Datuk Ajibah Abol), Ustaz Mohd. Mortadza bin Hj. Daud and Haji Busrah, Imam of the Indian Mosque. As well as their anti-cession links which had distanced them from the colonial government, the younger members of BARJASA tended to be Muslim activists from non-aristocratic backgrounds. They inherited the mantle of cultural nationalism and Muslim reform which had been assumed by Rakawi's group in the 1930's.

The formation of political parties and their experience in Council Negri and municipal affairs assisted Sarawak's emergence as a unitary state. Strong ties were developed with the Parti Ra'ayat in Brunei and UPKO in Sabah and the idea of a northern Borneo federation was widely canvassed. Supported by many British colonial officials and by a growing sense of common interests made possible through better communications, the idea was firmly established before the first Malaysia proposals were made by Tunku Abdul Rahman in May 1961. Meetings took place between people like Ong Kee Hui from Sarawak and Donald Stephens from Sabah to plan a common strategy.

Although the supporters of a northern Borneo federation, among them Sarawak students in Britain and New Zealand, were not necessarily opposed to ultimate membership of Malaysia, they saw the federation as an important intermediary step which would allow the Borneo states to make up some of the political experience already gained by Malayan and Singapore leaders like Tunku Abdul Rahman and Lee Kuan Yew. As it happened, outside events put an end to this possibility. President Sukarno's threat to destroy Malaysia and the Philippine claim to Sabah raised the vital question of security. Lee Kuan Yew campaigned to persuade the Bornean leaders to join the federation. The promise of development funds was also influential at this point when Sarawak and Sabah had not really begun to exploit their natural resources systematically.

During these years an important role was played by Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, a young lawyer who had worked his way up from modest origins to a senior position in the colonial administration. He made a point of clutivating the more promising senior Malay students and encouraging them to participate in political life. It was his influence which persuaded some of them to enter the political arena and accept responsibility

for the moulding of Sarawak's future. He was also active in countering the suspicions some people had about the Malaysia proposal. Another figure who assisted in winning support for the Malaysia concept was Temenggong Jugah whose designation as Paramount Chief of the Ibans by the colonial government acknowledged the considerable authority he enjoyed amongst his people. Apai, as he was affectionately known, had fought with the Allied SRD forces against the retreating Japanese during the final months of the war and was noted both for his physical courage and his skill as an orator.

Sarawak's entry into Malaysia in 1963 brought to an end its experience of colonial rule. At the same time, this development acknowledged Sarawak's pre-colonial existence as an independent state with its own historical traditions. The anti-cession movement had invoked these traditions and its members saw Malaysia as the fulfilment of their campaign for independence. Members of the pro-cession group, particularly the Datu Bandar, were also active in promoting Malaysia whose advent was to heal in time the wounds suffered during the years of the cession controversy. The final merger of the two Malay parties through the instrumentality of Hj Abdul Rahman Ya'kub was a major step towards the rationalization and strengthening of Sarawak's political system and its effective participation in the wider political entity of Malaysia.

The negotiations on the terms of membership of Sarawak and Sabah were a salutary reminder that Sarawak, like the peninsular states, possessed its own political personality and historical traditions. Sarawak's geographical size, the diversity of its ethnic groups, and its difficulties of communication and its basically smallholder economy continue to ensure that there will always be issues and interests unique to itself. Its political life also continues to reflect an ethnic ratio different from that of the peninsular states. Multi-racial parties have been the rule rather than the exception and it is significant that the first steps towards the Barisan Nasional were initiated in Sarawak in 1970 when Chief Minister Datuk Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub engineered the coalition between Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Sarawak and the Sarawak United People's Party. This was a leap of the political imagination which brought Sarawak and its leadership to the forefront of national political life.

The distinctive personality and character of Sarawak as a state have been retained. At the same time, this personality or identity has been easily reconciled with membership of the wider political grouping of Malaysia. As the fruits of that twenty year association are now enjoyed, it is timely to think of those who first turned the soil.

Living Names

by
K.C. Jong

Merdeka! Merdeka! The people of Sarawak shouted aloud more than 20 years ago.

Through the efforts of many political leaders, and the wisdom of Tunku Abdul Rahman, Bapa Malaysia, Sarawak gained independence without bloodshed, though in the subsequent defence of independence many guns were fired and lives lost.

Merdeka brings changes in all fields... politics, the economy, the people, and the government. The changes even affect the naming of roads, bridges, towns, roundabouts, and buildings. The changes are still in progress.

Independence is an historic occasion. It is notable that some roads in Sarawak are named Jalan Merdeka, to mark the occasion. There is one such road in Kuching, another in Sibu, and another in Sarikei.

Though the roads named Jalan Merdeka are not the main roads, they nevertheless remind the people that Sarawak is an independent state.

Datu Patinggi Ali

Sarawak people have always been known for their strong sense of independence. They had in the past fought against rule by foreigners.

Datu Patinggi Ali, together with the other Malay leaders, led the Malays, Dayaks and the Chinese living in Siniawan and Bau area to fight against the Brunei Governor in Sarawak before the arrival of James Brooke.

Datu Patinggi Ali was the direct descendant of Raja Jarom, the first ruler of Sarawak 12 generations before Ali was born.

Datu Patinggi Ali contributed a great deal to the restoration of law and order under James Brooke. There is one main road in the Malay kampungs in Kuching named after him. There are several

other roads and one school named after his sons and son-in-law.

Datu Patinggi Ali's eldest son Datu Bandar Mohammed Lana was the first person to raise funds to build the then new and large mosque in Kuching in 1848.

Haji Mataim

The fourth Imam of the Mesjid Besar was Datu Patinggi Ali's fourth son, Haji Mohammed Aim, or Mataim who died in 1898. There is a Jalan Hj. Mataim in Kuching.

While Datu Patinggi Ali was James Brooke's right hand man, James had a great Brunei friend, Pengiran Badruddin who in many ways helped him to secure his rule of Sarawak.

Badruddin

Pengiran Badruddin came to Sarawak in the 1830's to help Pengiran Mahkota put down the Patinggi Ali's rebellion. He had fought side by side with James Brooke in the attack on Datu Patinggi Ali's main fort at Belidah. He greatly impressed the Englishman with his courage.

In 1842, when James Brooke went to Brunei to get the Sultan's confirmation of his installation as Rajah, it was through Pengiran Badruddin's influence that Sultan Omar Ali gave his consent.

One day before the two great friends parted, James Brooke gave Pengiran Badruddin his signet ring and said this to him: "If you are ever in danger when I am not with you, send me this ring; wherever I am, I will answer your call."

Badruddin's support for the Sarawak Rajah had however angered the other Pengirans in the Brunei Court. When James Brooke heard of Badruddin's precarious position he persuaded a British warship to visit Brunei; he went along also, in the latter part of 1845, in order to show the Sultan of Brunei of his support for Pengiran Badruddin.

But, two days after James Brooke left Brunei his friend, Pengiran Usup, who was the key figure in the plot against Badruddin, launched an attack on the Pengiran and his family. The attack failed.

However, Pengiran Badruddin could not escape from the second attack a year later when an increasing number of Pengirans in the Brunei Court turned against him and Rajah Muda Hashim.

The Pengiran fought bravely until he was badly wounded. His left wrist was broken, his shoulder and chest cut, and his head and face slashed.

The Pengiran then withdrew into his house and barred the door. He ordered his attendant Japar to escape and take the signet ring to James Brooke.

Japar slipped from the house through an aperture in the floor, dropped into the water and swam to safety.

In the house, the Pengiran called together his family members, and ignited a keg of gun powder which he had strewn about himself and his family and blew themselves into pieces.

Japar eventually reached Sarawak about three months later. He told all the sad news to James Brooke. Brooke was anxious to punish Badruddin's killers.

A British fleet arrived timely in Sarawak. The Rajah sent the fleet to Brunei to wage war against the Sultan. There was a short exchange of fire when the fleet arrived at Brunei. The British navy accompanied by James Brooke himself captured Brunei and the Sultan and his Court fled into the jungle.

James Brooke then formed a provisional government in Brunei until the Sultan's return.

Back in Sarawak, the Rajah named one of the roads after Pengiran Badruddin to commemorate their great friendship. Badruddin Road still stands today, reminding us of Sarawak's connection with Brunei.

Crookshank

When James Brooke became Sarawak's new Rajah, he had a small number of European officers to help him establish his administration. The most important officer was Arthur Chichester Crookshank, a distant cousin of James Brooke, who came to Sarawak in 1843 and served in the state until 1873 when he retired. He served in the British navy before he arrived in Sarawak in March 1843 to become the Police Magistrate.

Crookshank had taken part in several expeditions against those Dayaks who rose against the Rajah. In August 1854, he accompanied James Brooke in one expedition against the Skrang Dayaks.

In late 1856, when James Brooke was away in London, Crookshank was placed in charge of the government. There was a

rumour that the Chinese gold miners in Bau were planning to attack Kuching. Crookshank took precautions to man the stockade, which constituted the only defence, with a garrison of men. When the Rajah returned in early 1857, Crookshank told him of the rumours but James Brooke did not believe that such a rebellion would occur. Nevertheless, the insurrection did take place.

Crookshank's house was one of the targets of the Chinese miners. He and his wife were awakened at midnight when the miners attacked the Rajah's house nearby. The couple dashed out of the house but were cut down by the waiting miners. Both were badly injured. His wife was left on the ground outside the house for dead while Crookshank escaped to a nearby Malay house, and later joined James Brooke.

Both Crookshank and his wife recovered from their injuries. His wife, who was only 17, was rescued by the Anglican Bishop, McDougall.

In 1869, Crookshank was again placed in charge of the government when the Rajah was in England. One of his last tasks this time was cracking down on the Chinese secret society in Bau. The society had been waging 'war' against the Brooke Government. It murdered a government informer. Crookshank had all the headmen of the society arrested. They were put to long term imprisonment; and were deported from Sarawak after they had served their sentences.

Crookshank held the Government Chief Secretary's office from 1863 until his retirement in 1873, that is 110 years ago. He died in 1891.

The service of this important administrator in the early history of Sarawak is remembered by a road named after him. The road has a Chinese name, "Cock-fighting Hill". In the old days the area the road passed through was a place for cock fighting.

Rentap

Although James Brooke had a hard time, but not a lasting one, with the Chinese uprising, he had long and tough battles against Rentap, the great Iban warrior.

If you walk into the town of Betong in the Second Division of Sarawak, you will find a road named Rentap. And when you sit down in the coffeeshop chatting with the Iban elders, they will tell

you endless stories of their hero Rentap, who had led the people in the Second Division, particularly from Skrang and Saribas to drive away the White Rajah in order to maintain their way of life and freedom.

Rentap was born in Skrang, and spent most of his life fighting against the White Rajahs.

Rentap was first known as a fighting man of Orang Kaya Pemancha Dana Bayang, the principal leader of the Saribas Ibans before the arrival of James Brooke. A warrior and a leader, Dana Bayang had led his men in many sea expeditions along the coast of Sarawak and Dutch Borneo. Apparently Rentap also took part in many of these expeditions.

When Dana Bayang became too old, Rentap succeeded him as leader of the old man's forces. His bravery had earned him a name as a great war leader among the Saribas Ibans and Malays.

Rentap also took part in the great battle of Beting Maru on July 31, 1849 in which James Brooke defeated the main Iban war parties. But when he saw it was a losing battle, Rentap quietly withdrew up the Saribas, then to Skrang where he had built a stockade at Karangan Peris. His first battle against James Brooke was fought on August 19, 1844. He won the battle, and killed the leader of the advance party of James Brooke's forces, Datu Patinggi Ali and two English officers.

To check Rentap's activities, James Brooke built a fort at Nanga Skrang. The Iban leader decided to capture the fort. Early in 1853, he gathered and led his men to attack it. Under strong fire from the guns at the fort, Rentap was driven back. In December the same year, James Brooke went to Skrang intending to meet Rentap for a peace talk. But the Iban hero refused to meet him. "Aku enggai betemu enggau orang putih," ("I will never meet the white man,") declared Rentap.

The Rajah organised an expedition against Rentap in August 1854 with a force of 7,000 men. His forces used 4-pounder and 3-pounder guns and rockets to attack Rentap's fort built on the ridge of a hill surrounded by steep slopes. Rentap returned fire with their small cannons. The Rajah's forces captured Rentap's fort after several exchanges of gunfire. Rentap escaped with his men and withdrew to Bukit Sadok where he built his stronghold on top of the mountain.

Iban legends say that Bukit Sadok was a mountain so inaccessi-

ble and so protected by legendary characters that no enemy would ever dare to attack it.

The Rajah would never allow a second ruler to exist in Sarawak. He organised an attack on Rentap in June 1857. The forces were led by Charles Brooke. The 4,000 men reached the foot of Rentap's fort. They started the attack on mid-day on June 15. Rentap did not return fire at the advancing forces until they were a few yards from the walls of the fort. His men threw stones and spears that fell on the heads of the attacking party forcing them to retreat. The government forces then withdrew down the mountain the next morning. The expedition had failed.

In 1858, Charles Brooke commanded another expedition against Rentap. They brought along a 6-pounder gun. 50 rounds of shell were fired. Rentap did not return fire. But when the attacking party advanced, his men fired, forcing them to withdraw. It was again a total failure.

On September 16, 1861, that is 102 years before the independence of Sarawak, Charles Brooke led the third expedition against Rentap. A special gun, named Bujang Sadok, a 12-pounder gun cast in Kuching, was carried by 60 men up the mountain to a position opposite Rentap's fort, in addition to 6-pounder guns. The forces also included 20 Chinese workers for road construction and a section of Sidiboys or Negros specially trained for combat battle, plus thousands of Dayaks and Malay fighters.

At 7.30 a.m. on October 28, the 12-pounder gun was fired. 17 shells were fired before the carriage gave way. However, the shells had already damaged the strong fort. When Rentap saw the attacking party storming into the fort through the gaps under cover of volleys of musketry, he and his men retreated from the other side of Bukit Sadok. Charles Brooke captured the deserted fort. Fuel was heaped about the stockade and it was set on fire. In 10 minutes, a column of fire like a volcano eruption shot up into the sky, visible for miles and miles away marking the end of Rentap's war against the White ruler.

The Iban hero retreated to Bukit Lanjak at the head-waters of Skrang,Lemanak and Engkari.Later, he moved down to Entabai near Kanowit where he died a few years later. He was then about 70 years old.

Temenggong Koh (1870-1956)

In the 19th Century Rentap tried to drive away foreign rule in

Temenggong Koh

order to maintain the Iban way of life. In the 20th Century Temenggong Koh another great leader of the Iban people worked to change the livelihood of his people, and played a key role in peace-making between the rival groups of Dayaks in the old days.

This paramount chief of the Ibans is today remembered by the people by a road in Kapit named after him. Temenggong Koh had in his life time brought great changes to the livelihood of his people.

Temenggong Koh served the Rajah in many expeditions against Ibans who fought against the government or took part in pirate activities. The expeditions included one in 1897 and 1904 against Bantin; and the 1902 dreadful cholera expediton during which a few thousand members of the Rajah's forces died of the epidemic. In 1907 he took part in the great peace making in Kapit between the Rajah and Bantin.

When rubber was introduced to Sarawak, Temenggong Koh was the first Iban to lead his community to plant rubber in Kapit in 1913. Many Ibans in and around Kapit planted rubber trees. This move eventually led to the improved livelihood of the Iban people. For his leadership and loyalty, he was made a Penghulu.

In 1924, Penghulu Koh was largely responsible for the success of the great peace making held in Kapit between the Ibans of Upper Rejang and its tributaries; and the Kayan, Kenyah and Baloi people who lived on both sides of the border between Sarawak and Dutch Borneo. Fighting between the rival groups had been going on for many years. The Dutch Government and the Rajah were eager to put an end to the wars. But they found it very difficult to decide on how to set about making peace. Nevertheless through the relentless efforts of Penghulu Koh, the important peace making agreement was reached.

On November 13, Koh assembled 4,000 Ibans in Kapit. The next day, the Captain of the Dutch Indies Army and officials arrived. Then came the Kayan, Kenyah ; and Baloi people in 95 boats. The grand ceremony was finally concluded on November 16 in front of Rajah Charles Brooke.

After the ceremony, Penghulu Koh received a valuable jar from the Rajah; and was made Temenggong, the paramount chief of the Ibans.

Rubber price dropped very low in 1932, due to world wide economic recession. But the Ibans did not understand this. Instead

they blamed the Rajah for reducing the price. In protest, the Ibans in Kanowit and nearby districts, led by Penghulu Asun, revolted against the Rajah. Temenggong Koh did not join them. He advised the group to stop the war against the government.

Shortly after the chief was made Temenggong, he was appointed a member of the Council Negri, and held the office until after the Second World War.

When the Allied Special Task Force arrived at Kapit, the Temenggong organised his men to join the force to fight the Japanese army. He even flew in an Australian plane in 1945 to guide the air-force on a bombing raid on the Japanese army base at Song and Kanowit. After the war when the Cession Plan was proposed, he supported the Rajah's move.

The Temenggong was honoured by the British King in 1946, when he was made a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for his services during the war. In 1953, he was presented with the Queen's Medal for Chiefs.

When Radio Sarawak began to broadcast in 1954, he came to Kuching to make several broadcasts to his people. He retired from active leadership of the Iban people in 1955. He died on November 4, 1956 at the age of 86. He was succeeded by Tun Temenggong Jugah as the paramount chief of the Ibans.

Temenggong Koh's son Kenneth Kanyan is now an Iban leader-in-the-making. He was Political Secretary to the Malaysian Prime Minister for several years. Later, he became a member of the Malaysian Senate.

The Ongs

Ong Ewe Hai (1830-1889)
Ong Tiang Swee (1864-1950)
Ong Kwan Hin (1896-1982)
Ong Hap Leong (1901-1975)
Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui.

While the late Temenggong Koh changed the livelihood of the Ibans, Ong Tiang Swee, a Hokkien played a key role in leading the Chinese in the economic development of Sarawak, as well as making the Chinese a recognised Community. Some of his descendents have equally been active as leaders of the Chinese. When you drive around Kuching, you will find many roads and buildings named after prominent Hokkien Chinese. There are

Ong Tiang Swee

Ong Ewe Hai

Mrs. Ong Ewe Hai

Ong Hap Leong

Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui, PMN, PNBS, PGDK

four roads and one street in Kuching named after the Ong family. Without doubt, it is one of the most honoured families in the state.

One of the prominent Chinese leaders in the early Brooke rule was Ong Ewe Hai who came to Kuching in 1847 when he was only 17 years old. But in 10 years, he became a leading businessman with shops not only in Kuching, but also in Singapore. He was involved in sago processing, exports of pepper and other commodities. In return, he imported textiles and other necessities to meet the demand of the Kuching market. He first named his shop Kee Chiang Ewe Hai Company. In 1872, he renamed it Ewe Hai Company.

A greater part of Kuching was destroyed by fire in 1884. The fire-gutted shops were rebuilt in the next two years. Ong Ewe Hai rebuilt a street of 40-unit double storey shops and the street was named after him.

Ong Ewe Hai was later made Kapitan China, the official leader of the Chinese community acting as government advisor on Chinese affairs. He was the first Chinese to be so appointed.

Later in 1871 he formed the Hokkien Association as a representative body for the community. He was the chairman until his death in Singapore in June 9, 1889 at the age of 59.

His son Tiang Swee succeeded him. Ong Tiang Swee's wealth and prominence surpassed his father's. He was made chairman of the Hokkien Association and Kapitan China when his father died. In 1911 the Rajah set up the Chinese Court, he was appointed the Chief Magistrate and held the office till 1921 when the court was dissolved and discontinued.

He was made advisor to the Rajah on opium farm which was set up in 1924; and on rubber export controlled by the Sarawak Rubber Export Board set up in 1926. He was appointed a member of the Committee of Administration to rule Sarawak when the Rajah had his holidays in 1923. He remained in that Committee until 1946. By then Ong Tiang Swee was already a member of the Council Negri and a life member of the Supreme Council.

Earlier in 1911 he was the chief organiser in the setting up of the Hokkien Free School in Kuching; and gave valuable advice to the Rajah on the establishment of the Kuching Sanitary and Municipal Advisory Council, now known as Kuching Municipal Council.

Ong Tiang Swee's great service to the Chinese community and the government was recognised by the Rajah who bestowed on him the Companion of the Order of the Star of Sarawak. He was the first person in Sarawak, and the first Chinese to receive such an honour on September 26, 1928.

During the Japanese occupation of Sarawak, Ong Tiang Swee and his family risked torture and death to help the Australians and British prisoners-of-war in Kuching. He smuggled food and other things into the POW camp at Batu Lintang. After the war, the British Government honoured him with the Order of the British Empire.

Just before the war, his son Ong Hap Leong was made a member of the Counil Negri and later a member of the Supreme Council. This created history with father and son both being members of Council Negri and the Supreme Council.

In 1929, when the Chinese talked of forming a state body to represent the interest of the traders, Ong Tiang Swee was one of the key members; and he was elected the first president of the Sarawak Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Earlier in 1911, he also led the Chinese traders to form a Chinese Chamber of Merchants which dissolved 10 years later.

He died on October 19, 1950 at the age of 86.

One of his sons Ong Kwan Hin was for a number of years Kapitan China succeeding his father. He was chairman of the Hokkien Association from 1948 to 1958.

Ong Kwan Hin's son, Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui, a graduate in agriculture, is another prominent Chinese leader from the Ong family. In the early days, he worked with the Agriculture Department, then became a bank officer and secretary of a firm. In 1953 he was appointed councillor of the Kuching Sanitary and Municipal Advisory Council. He was president of the Council from 1959 to 1965.

He was appointed a member of the Council Negri in 1955. The following year, he was made a member of the Supreme Council carrying on the tradition of his uncle, grandfather and great-grandfather.

He was elected a member of Malaysian Parliament in the 1963 general elections. He retained the seat till 1982 when he retired from active politics.

In 1959, with the support of others, Ong Kee Hui formed and

led the first political party in Sarawak, the Sarawak United People's Party. He relinquished the party chairmanship in 1982.

When he led SUPP to join two other parties to form the Coalition Government of Sarawak in 1970, he was made a Minister of the Malaysian Cabinet. His last appointment in the Federal Cabinet was as Minister of Science, Technology and Environment.

In Kuching there is a Hokkien Road, Ewe Hai Street, Ong Tiang Swee Road, Ong Kwan Hin Road, Ong Hap Leong Road and Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui Road, in recognition of the services of the Hokkien community and the Ong family.

Wong Nai Siong (1849-1924)

While the Ong family did great services to the Chinese community in Kuching and to the government, Wong Nai Siong developed the jungle land in Sibu and Sungei Merah, and introduced to Sarawak the Foochow people.

In Sibu, a street and a Chinese secondary school were named after him.

He was born in Southern China in 1849 and came to Singapore in early 1900. There he learned of the Rajah's appeal for Chinese labourers to open up the lands in Rejang.

Rajah Charles Brooke had in 1880 issued a proclamation inviting Chinese companies to bring settlers with wives and children numbering not less than 300 to develop the Rejang basin.

Wong Nai Siong found his way to Kuching. With the help of Ong Tiang Swee, he met the Rajah and concluded an agreement with him in late July 1900 for the import of 1,000 Foochow to settle in the Rejang basin.

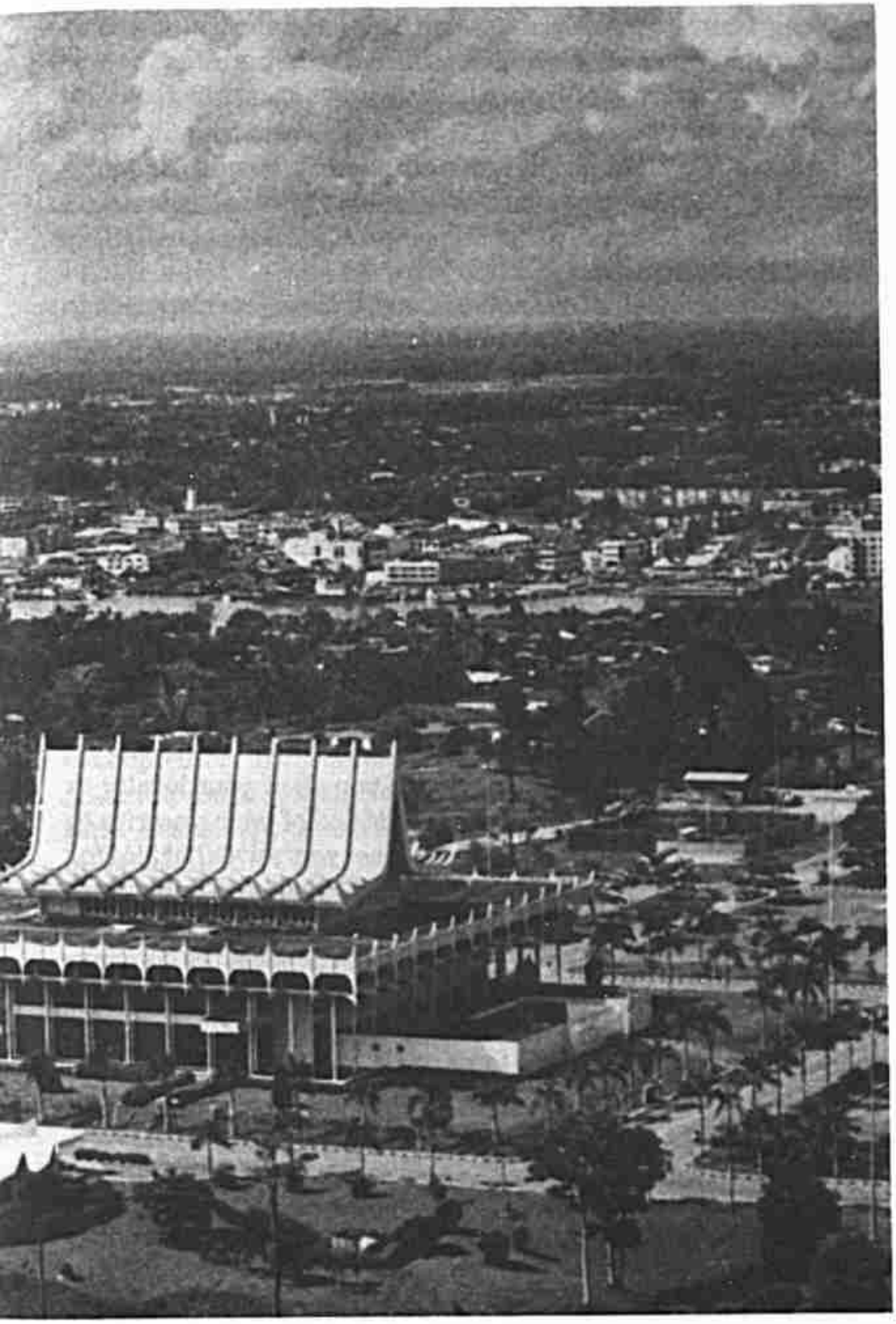
The first batch of 72 Foochow settlers arrived and settled at Sungei Merah in late January 1901. The second batch of 500 came in early March, and the third batch of 540 (four died on the way) arrived in early July the following year.

Wong Nai Siong led the new settlers to build shops and houses, cleared the jungle for planting vegetables and crops, and later planted rubber. Sungei Merah and the main Sibu town soon developed and flourished.

Later, more Foochow people came to Sarawak. They settled at Kapit, Sarikei, Binatang, Bintulu, Song, Kanowit, Baram and other places. These towns soon developed through the hard work of the new settlers.

Wong Nai Siong

Petra Jaya, Kuching. On the left is the State Secretariat, Bangunan Tunku Abdul Rahman; on the right is the Dewan Undangan Negeri; and on the extreme lower right is the Lapau.



Wong Nai Siong left Sarawak in 1906 and died in China in 1924 at the age of 75. During his short stay in Sarawak, he was made the Kang-Chew of Sibu, which then was known as New Foochow.

Today the Foochow people is one of the most forceful communities in Sarawak playing important roles in politics and commerce.

Tunku Abdul Rahman

Sarawak owes much of its new life and modern development to Bapa Malaysia — Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, the first Prime Minister of Malaysia, who had long connection with the state.

Addressing the pressmen at a lunch in Singapore on May 27, 1961 Tunku Abdul Rahman proposed that Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, Brunei and Sabah form a federation which he called Malaysia. After many negotiations, Sarawak gained its internal self-government on August 31, 1963; and on September 16, joined the Federation of Malaysia.

Sarawak owes its independence much to the Tunku's efforts. He turned 80 on February 8, 1983. He specially flew into Kuching to unveil a marble bust of himself at the lobby of the State Secretariat named after him.

"Let this bust stand as a reminder to you all of your loyalty to this country, of your unity as Malaysians and of your sincerity to make this country a happy home for not just yourselves but also for those who come along after we are all gone," said the Tunku when he unveiled the bust on February 17.

The Tunku is a prince who had chosen to be with the common people. As Prime Minister of Malaysia, he had travelled almost the length and width of Sarawak, meeting not only the people in the towns, but also the rural folks of the remotest villages.

He first came to Sarawak on September 25, 1958 when he stopped in Kuching on his way to Brunei to attend the opening ceremony of the new Brunei Grand Mosque. He was then Prime Minister of the newly independent Federation of Malaya. Accompanied by the late Tun Abdul Razak, he was greeted by leading Malay community leaders and senior colonial officers at the Kuching Airport. He arrived dressed in lounge suit. But he took time off to change into his official uniform for a group photograph to be taken with the welcoming party. This photograph was present-

ed to him when he visited Sarawak on his 80th birthday.

The Tunku was born in Alor Star in Kedah to Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah.

He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Cambridge University in 1925. He came back to Malaya to serve the Kedah civil service in various capacities. He went back to London in 1946 to read law and was called to the English Bar in the Inner Temple when he was 45 years old, when most people would be thinking of retirement. But to Tunku, it was just the beginning of a busy political life.

He was president of the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) in 1951, and led the people to gain independence in 1957. Then in 1963 he brought independence to Sarawak when the Federation of Malaysia was formed under his initiative. He retired as Prime Minister in 1970 to devote his time to the development of Islam and writing books.

Sarawak honours the Tunku by naming buildings (including the State Secretariat at Petra Jaya, Kuching, which is the tallest government office building — 22 storeys — in Malaysia), roads etc., after him.

Tun Datu Abang Haji Openg (1905-1969)

On September 16,1963 the colonial Governor of Sarawak was replaced by Datu Abang Haji Openg bin Abang Sapi'ee (later Tun Datu Abang Haji Openg bin Abang Sapi'ee) who took his oath of office as the first Governor of Sarawak after independence. The title of the Sarawak Head of State was later changed to Yang Di Pertua Negeri.

Datu Abang Haji Openg was the last life member of the Council Negri appointed by the White Rajah. He was a well known and respected man descended from a long line of Datus who served the Brooke Government. He was the great-great-grandson of Datu Patinggi Ali of whom we have read earlier.

A section of Rock Road from the centre of Kuching town to the second mile junction has been renamed after Tun Abang Haji Openg. There is also a secondary school in Kuching at Petra Jaya named after him.

He was born in October 1905 in Kuching, had his education at the Malay School, St. Anthony's School in Sarikei and St. Thomas's Night School, Kuching. He joined government service as a clerk in November 1924, and later transferred to the Native

Affairs office, and as Senior Native Officer at Sarikei in 1932. His abilities and knowledge of the country marked him out for rapid promotion. By 1940, he was appointed Third Class Magistrate; and also made Native Officer under a special appointment by the Rajah. That same year, he was appointed a member of the Council Negri. This again was a special appointment and he held this post until his resignation in 1963 upon his appointment as Governor of the State.

In 1941, Tun Abang Hj. Openg was promoted to Second Class Magistrate and in 1951, he was promoted to senior service and appointed by the Colonial Government a member of the Supreme Council. He was appointed member of the Board of Examiners for Government Officers in 1952, and the following year was made a Datu, and appointed councillor of Kuching Sanitary and Municipal Advisory Council.

He was promoted to Acting Superintendent of Prisons, Sarawak in November 1954 and appointed President of Sarawak's Majlis Islam formed in May 1956. The following year he was appointed a member of the Turtle Board and Turtle Trust. He retired from government administrative service in September 1958.

For his services in the Brooke Government and the Colonial period, the British Government bestowed on him the Order of the British Empire in 1962; and he was made a Tun in November 1964.

Before that, he was selected by the Council Negri to represent the state in the negotiations for the formation of the Federation of Malaysia. The Malaysia Agreement was concluded in July 1963. He was one of Sarawak's signatories.

Tun Abang Haji Openg died on March 28, 1969 mourned by his wife Toh Puan Hajjah Masniah binti Abang Haji Abdulrahim, four sons and six daughters.

One of his sons, Abang Johari was elected into Council Negri in 1981 and has just been appointed Political Secretary to the Chief Minister in early 1983.

Tun Abang Haji Openg had paved the way for the development of Sarawak after independence.

Datu Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha (1906-1964)

Bulatan Datu Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha is a gyratory near

the Sarawak Club in Kuching.

The gyratory was named after Datu Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha, one of the leading Malay leaders who played an important role in Sarawak's modern political development. He was the grandson of the first Datu Hakim appointed by James Brooke.

Abang Mustapha was appointed Datu Pahlawan in 1941 and was promoted to Datu Bandar in 1946.

Datu Bandar had been in government service all his life, from the Brooke Government to the Colonial Government, then the Malaysian Government until his death in January 1964.

When Vyner Brooke proposed to cede Sarawak to the United Kingdom, Datu Bandar threw his support behind the Rajah. Together with his brothers and others, he formed the Young Malay Organisation to support the cession movement.

The Cession Bill was tabled for debate in the Council Negri in May 1946. Datu Bandar said: "My forefathers and I have been honoured Datus. I see no reason why I should seek the end of Brooke Rule. But for the good of the people, I must support and agree to the proposal."

He also said: "We must go ahead and develop our resources, improve agriculture, education, sanitary conditions. All these are very important tasks."

He became a member of the Council Negri before World War II; and was later appointed a member of the Supreme Council until 1963.

Datu Bandar formed a political party. The Colonial Government gave him three months leave from his post as government advisor for Native Affairs to organise the party.

The new party was registered on April 6, 1960 and was called Party Negara Sarawak (PANAS), with Datu Bandar as the chairman, his brother Datuk Abang Haji Othman the secretary-general, and Tun Temenggong Jugah the vice-chairman. Contesting under the banner of the party, Datu Bandar and his two brothers were elected councillors of the Kuching Rural District Council. They were also elected Council Negri members. All of them were at one stage or another appointed state or federal ministers.

When Tunku Abdul Rahman proposed the Federation of Malaysia in 1961, Datu Bandar was among the first to express his support to the proposal. He was actively involved in the formation of the federation. He was a signatory to the Malaysia Agreement

in 1963 in London.

Early in 1964, he was appointed Federal Minister without Portfolio following his appointment as a Senator. He had earlier actively promoted the setting up of UMNO branch in Sarawak. He was ready to merge his party with BARJASA to form the UMNO branch. But due to various reasons he was not successful. He died on January 20, 1964.

Nevertheless, after his death, PANAS, led by his brother Datuk Abang Haji Othman did merge with BARJASA to form Parti Bumiputera. But UMNO has up to date not set up its branch in Sarawak.

It is worthy of note that Datu Bandar's son Abang Abu Bakar was elected a Council Negri member in 1973; and in late 1976, appointed Speaker of Council Negri, now known as Dewan Undangan Negeri, until his appointment as Deputy Defence Minister in 1981.

Datuk Ajibah Abol (1925-1976)

When the stretch of road linking the Malay kampungs of Kuching to the state Mosque was built in 1901 and 1903, the road was named Datus Road. It was so named from the fact that most of the high ranking Malay Datus lived along this road.

The high ranking Malay Datus included Datu Bandar, Datu Amar, Datu Temenggong, Datuk Imam, Datu Bendahara, Datu Pahlawan and others.

More than 70 years later, the road was renamed. It is now called Jalan Datuk Ajibah Abol after Sarawak's first woman minister, Datuk Ajibah Abol who died on June 14, 1976. The name has changed, but the characteristic of the road remains.

Datuk Ajibah Abol was born in Kuching on September 24, 1925. She was educated at the Sekolah Permaisuri, Kuching. She later took up teaching at the school where she had her education and founded one of the first kindergartens in Sarawak.

She was an active woman leader during the anti-cession movement. She led the Malay women to join hands with other anti-cessionists to campaign for the independence of Sarawak instead of becoming a British colony. She gathered the Malay women to form the women section of Malay National Union, a politically active body that played a leading role in the anti-cession movement, and became the secretary of the women's wing.

Datuk Ajibah Abol, PNBS

Tun Datuk Patinggi Temenggong Jugah anak Barieng

Later she became vice-president, and president between 1947 and 1976 of the women's wing. She was also for many years the vice-president of the Malay National Union.

On April 1, 1947, she joined 337 others to resign from government service in protest against the colonial government which required them to sign a loyalty circular and stop their anti-cession activities. The resignation of many teachers had forced the closure of one-third of goverment Malay schools.

Datuk Ajibah Abol together with the others established private Malay schools. She let a section of her house to be used as kindergarten. She remained in the teaching profession till she became involved in politics full time. The colonial government had invited her to rejoin the civil service, but she refused.

Datuk Ajibah joined other leading Malays in Kuching and Sibu to form the Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA) at the end of 1961. BARJASA was Sarawak's fourth political party. She was the head of the women's wing.

BARJASA merged with PANAS to form Parti Bumiputera in late 1966. She was elected one of the vice-chairmen of the new party, and deputy chairman of the women's wing. When Parti Pesaka and Parti Bumiputera merged to form Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu, she was elevated to leader of the women's section.

In 1963, Datuk Ajibah was elected a member of Parliament. In July 1970, she was elected a member of Council Negri and retained her seat in the 1974 general elections. She was appointed first as Minister of State, then Minister for Welfare Services till her death. Her death was a great loss to the women in the state. It is therefore apt that Datus Road was renamed after her as an everlasting remembrance of her services to the State.

Tun Datuk Patinggi Temenggong Jugah ak Barieng
(1900-1981)

At a solemn ceremony held in 1959 in the Council Negri chamber to welcome Prince Philip, there stood a young man dressed in the Iban traditional costume. He wore a traditional head gear without wearing a shirt and he spoke in Iban to welcome His Highness.

A number of years later, this same Iban leader put on a smart black suit, tie and leather shoes, stood in Parliament in front of the Speaker and spoke in Bahasa Malaysia.

On another occasion, he wore the traditional Chinese-style tunic when he accompanied the Malaysian Prime Minister to meet the late Chou En Lai in Peking.

During the war, he led his people to fight the Japanese in the thick jungle.

The man was a great leader of the Iban people of Sarawak, Tun Datuk Patinggi Temenggong Jugah anak Barieng who died at the age of 81 on July 8, 1981.

For more than 55 years, as leader of the Iban people, and later as state and national political leader, Tun Jugah was affectionately called "Apai" by the people of all walks of life. He played many important roles in the history of the State from 1924 to 1981, as a peace maker, freedom fighter, founder of political parties, and was one of the signatories to the Malaysia Agreement in London in 1963.

Tun Jugah's early life was quite unknown except that he was the son of a farmer in the longhouse at Nanga Gaat in Kapit. He was a warrior in those old days and for this he was made Penghulu of Merirai on May 1, 1924. In that capacity he took part in an important peacemaking ceremony held in Kapit ending a 60-year old feud between the Kayans, Kenyahs and Kajangs on one side, and the Ibans on the other.

During the war he joined the Allied Special Task Force in Kapit leading his men to fight the Japanese with great courage. After the war, he was awarded the King's Medal, and later the OBE and QMC.

Tun Jugah was instrumental in the government's efforts to codify all the Dayak adats into a book. In 1953, he was one of those representing Sarawak at the grand coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in London.

It was from May 24, 1952 onwards that Tun Jugah involved himself in a new role in Sarawak politics. He was made a member of the Council Negri and remained in that office for 10 years. He spoke very little English, but he spoke in a forceful language in Iban. In early 1955 Tun Jugah was appointed Temenggong, the paramount chief of the Ibans, upon the death of Temenggong Koh. In the same year he was elected councillor of the newly formed Kapit District Council, and was the chairman for many years before he was appointed a Federal Minister in 1963.

In 1960, when Sarawak's second political party, PANAS, was

formed, he threw his support behind it.

In mid-June 1962 on his way back home from Kuching, he was cornered by Iban leaders from Kanowit, Sibu and a big crowd of supporters at Sibu Airport. There followed days and nights of negotiations in Sibu and Kanowit. The result was that Jugah was to lead a new political party called Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak, in short Pesaka. Shortly after this, he was involved in negotiations with other parties for a Sarawak United Front. In October that year the Sarawak Alliance was formed and Tun Jugah became the president.

Tun Jugah gave his support to the proposed Federation of Malaysia, initiated by Tunku Abdul Rahman. He was a member of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee; and later signed the Inter-Government Agreement on Malaysia in London in 1963, representing Sarawak. In June 1963 Tun Jugah was elected a member of the Council Negri, and a member of Parliament.

He was among the few considered for appointment as the first Governor of Sarawak after independence. Nevertheless he was made Minister for Sarawak Affairs in the Federal cabinet. He held this post till his retirement in 1974.

In September 1972, Tun Jugah brought the merger of Parti Pesaka and Parti Bumiputera to form Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu. He was president of this new party till his retirement. Though he retired from active politics in October 1974, Tun Jugah assumed some other important roles. He was appointed President of the Majlis Adat Istiadat Sarawak responsible for the standardisation of all the Dayak customs and laws in Sarawak. He held the post till his death.

Tun Jugah played an important role in peace-making in the old days. He continued to play that role in the modern days. In early 1966, he was a member of the Malaysian Delegation to the peace talk with Indonesia in Bangkok. The talk was successfully concluded and the agreement was signed in August. Tun Jugah was one of the people who affixed their signatures on the agreement ending the Confrontation which started in 1963.

The following year, Tun Jugah led a delegation of Ibans, Kayans and Kenyahs from Sarawak to a peace-making ceremony at Long Jawi in Indonesian Borneo with the Indonesian Kayans and Kenyahs to normalise relations after Confrontation. During

the 4-year Confrontation, there had been much conflict between these people.

For his services he was bestowed honours by the Sarawak Governor, the Yang Di Pertua Negeri of Sabah and His Majesty the Yang Di Pertuan Agong. Sarawak honoured him with the highest Datuk Patinggi title in 1977, and the King bestowed on him the title Tun posthumously.

In Kapit there is a road linking the old bazaar to the new bazaar named after this great leader of the Ibans. There is another road named after his wife Toh Puan Tiong anak Anding.

Tun Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Haji Bujang

When boys and girls have games and sports in the big field in Sibu, they will remember one of the leaders of Sarawak who had fought for the independence of the State. The prominent leader is Tun Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Haji Bujang bin Tuanku Haji Othman, the second Yang Di Pertua Negeri of Sarawak, after whom the sports field in Sibu was named.

Tun Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Haji Bujang was born in Sibu on December 12, 1898. The grand old man had his early education at the Malay School in Sibu, and joined the police force in 1927 as Probationary Assistant Sub-Inspector. Six years later he was promoted to probationary Inspector. In 1934, he was transferred to the administrative service and made Native Officer in Kuching. Before the transfer he displayed his bravery as a police officer when he arrested a man who ran amok in Sibu for which he was awarded a medal for bravery by the Rajah.

Tun Tuanku Haji Bujang was appointed Magistrate Fourth Class in November 1934. In August 1941, he was seconded to the Sarawak Rangers with the rank of Lieutenant. He remained in the force for only four months. He was promoted to senior service as administrative officer the following June. In January 1957, the British Government awarded him the MBE and he retired from the civil service in 1960. Two years later he was awarded the OBE.

When Cession was proposed in 1946, Tun Tuanku Haji Bujang was one of the leading anti-cessionists in Sibu. He and other prominent Malay leaders, as well as Dayaks and a few Chinese formed a fourth political party in Sarawak, the Barisan Rakyat

Jati Sarawak (BARJASA) which was registered in late 1961.

The Tun was the president of this new party. When PANAS and BARJASA merged to form Parti Bumiputera in 1967, he was elected vice-president until his appointment as Governor of Sarawak.

He was made a member of th Malaysian Senate in 1963. Following the death of Tun Abang Haji Openg in late March 1969, he was appointed Governor on April 2. He held the high office till his retirement in April 1977.

He was made a Datu in 1955, a Tan Sri in 1967 and Tun in June 1970. He was also honoured by the Sultan of Selangor, Sultan of Kedah and the Yang Di Pertua Negeri of Sabah with the highest state awards.

Besides the Padang Sukan Tun Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Haji Bujang in Sibu, the Federal Complex at Simpang Tiga in Kuching was also named after him. The building was declared open on June 29, 1978 by the then Prime Minister of Malaysia Tun Hussein Onn. There is also a college in Miri named after him.

Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub

The man closely connected with the political activities of Tun Tuanku Haji Bujang in the 1960-70s is Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, now the Yang Di Pertua Negeri of Sarawak. He was Chief Minister of the State from July 1970 till March 1981. He started a new era in Sarawak — an era of fast development, political stability, economic progress and big changes in many fields.

On July 7, 1970, he formed the Sarawak Coalition Government, paving the way for great development and progress in Sarawak in the next 10 years.

As Chief Minister, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman transformed Sarawak from a backward into a fast developing state, to become a model state in Malaysia. The achievements in terms of development were more than what had been achieved in the last 100 years.

Within three years after his appointment as Chief Minister, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman settled the security problem of the state; more than 75 percent of the communist guerrillas surrendered and were rehabilitated to rejoin society under Operation Sri Aman.

He started the educational revolution starting with the abolition of the primary six common entrance examination, thus allowing all primary six pupils to continue their education on to secondary level. The government also took over the management of primary schools from the local councils. A campus of the University Pertanian, and a branch of the Mara Institute of Technology were set up in Kuching.

To help poor and promising students, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub established the Yayasan Sarawak, which provides educational loans and scholarships.

He set up the State Planning Unit (the first in Malaysia) to plan and implement development projects. Several other statutory bodies were also formed to accelerate the development of the state in various fields. He reorganized the original five administrative Divisions in Sarawak into seven in order to achieve more efficient administration and greater pace of progress. He started the 20-year master planning and development of Petra Jaya, on the left bank of Sarawak River previously known as Across River, just opposite Kuching proper. He initiated the developments in Miri, Bintulu and Long Lama too.

Kuching town is divided into two parts by the Sarawak River . Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman built a bridge across it to link the two banks. He then sited the new State Secretariat, the Lapau and the Dewan Undangan Negeri Building at Petra Jaya making it the new administrative centre of the state, to be followed later by other development.

The new bridge, built at a cost of six million ringgits, was declared open by Tun Tuanku Haji Bujang, the then Yang Di Pertua Negeri in May 1975. It was aptly named "Jambatan Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub".

On March 26, 1981, due to health reasons, he retired as Chief Minister, and on April 2 he was sworn in as the Yang Di Pertua Negeri of Sarawak.

The story of Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub is itself one of remarkable determination and perseverance. From a humble beginning as the son of a fisherman, he worked his way up with set determination to the very top.

He was born in Bintulu in January 1928. He attended Anchi Malay School in Miri. Later he transferred to an English medium school. He also learned Chinese in the afternoon, after school

hours. His formal education was interrupted by the Second World War and he resumed his education after the war. After he had completed his primary school education, he worked during the day as oil tester with Shell in Lutong near Miri for a pay of $2 a day, and in the evening he taught Malay to Shell employees.A year later he went to Kuching to continue his education in secondary school. At the same time he worked as a Student Native Officer, and became a First Class Magistrate in 1952.

In 1953 he again went back to school to study for his Senior Cambridge Certificate at St. Joseph's School, Kuching. Among his classmates was Datuk Dr. Sulaiman Haji Daud, currently the Minister of Education.

He passed his Senior Cambridge examinations and in 1954 he left Sarawak to read law at the University of Southampton, and at Lincoln's Inn, London. He came back four years later with an honours degree in law and as a barrister-at-law. He was then appointed Deputy Public Prosecutor and Crown Counsel.

The hot topic of the day was politics. The first political party had been formed, and the second one was in the process of forming. The young Abdul Rahman Ya'kub became actively involved in politics. He drafted the constitution of PANAS in 1960. He was the key figure behind the formation of BARJASA in 1961, and was the new party's legal and political advisor. He eventually resigned from government service to contest in the 1963 Local Council elections. But he was not successful. Nevertheless, he was appointed a member of the Malaysian Parliament followed by the appointment as an Assistant Federal Minister in 1963. He was Assistant Minister for Rural Development, then Assistant Minister for National and Rural Development as well as Assistant Minister for Justice. Later he was promoted to be the Minister for Lands and Mines (1965-69), and Minister for Education (1969-70). In 1970 he resigned to return to Sarawak to lead the State Government. As a Federal Assistant Minister and Minister he worked directly under both the late Tun Abdul Razak and the late Tun Dr. Ismail.

Sarawak's first direct general elections were held in 1969/1970. Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman contested the parliamentary seat of Payang and the state seat of Kuala Rajang under the banner of Sarawak Alliance. He won both seats. Under the advice of Tun Abdul Razak, the then Prime Minister, he was appointed

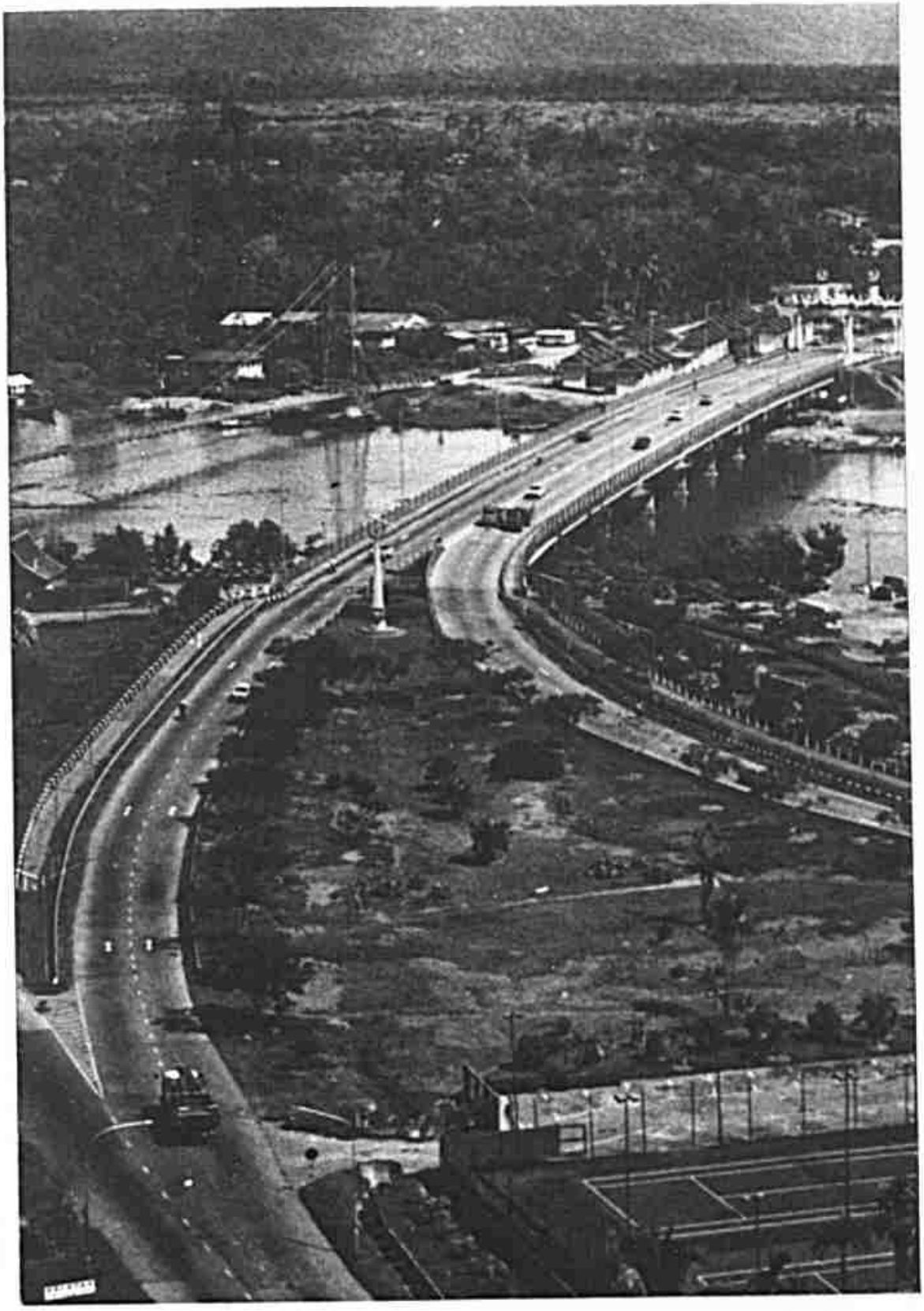
Chief Minister of Sarawak.

Sarawak was fortunate to have a great and dynamic leader at a troubleful time. Tun Datuk Patinggi, as the Chief Minister, steered the State towards peace, progress and development. Even though he is now no longer involved in active politics, the people of Sarawak still honour him. He is loved by the people.

This year the people of Sarawak celebrate the 20th anniversary of Sarawak's independence and its achievements in the last 20 years. Let us pay tribute to the man to whom the State owes much of its successes: Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, who gave the State a new motto, a new anthem, a new state flag and a new crest. He took a personal interest in the design of the crest and flag, and in the composing of the new anthem.

Merdeka has brought many changes in Sarawak. The changes were especially evident under the leadership of Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub.

The efforts of many Sarawak leaders, including those we have recorded in this chapter, had laid a strong foundation for the development and progress of Sarawak. A bright future is assured ahead. The great services and contributions of these leaders will be remembered forever by the people as long as the roads, buildings and bridges named after them stand as witnesses to the history of Sarawak: the living names!



Jambatan Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, in Kuching.
On the left, alongside it, is the old Satok Suspension Bridge.

Yayasan Sarawak students boarding the plane at Kuching airport to go to their schools in Semenanjung.


asian airlines system

Winning The Peace

by
Haji Balia Munir

Malaysia marked the end of British colonialism in Sarawak (and Sabah) but it took one full decade to rid the State of the manace that erupted around the time of independence. Communist terrorism in the state operating under what was generally known as the Sarawak Communist Organisation, was inherited from the colonial regime.

Events preceding independence (the Brunei Rebellion and Confrontation) created an opportunity for the Sarawak communist organisation to prepare in practical terms for an armed struggle as a means of seizing political power in Sarawak. So far it had advocated the use of constitutional method.

The situation then prevailing, just before Malaysia, appeared ideal for the SCO to prepare for a rapid build-up of its military potential necessary to precipitate the armed struggle.

And so when Sarawak became independent the following year, the new political government was faced with a problem that local political leaders were ill-prepared to face and solve. The marked absence of political stability offered a fertile ground for the SCO to further sow the seed of discontent and discord. The job of maintaining peace and order in the state to a great extent was left to the expatriates.

Military adventures into independent Sarawak by the communist-backed Sukarno regime of neighbouring Indonesia helped the SCO in further creating conditions of disorder and instability. Apart from providing a source of arms and more importantly moral and psychological advantages, Confrontation was a vehicle of convenience. However, this was not to last long. The early conclusion of Confrontation and resumption of friendly relations between our country and Indonesia dashed the communist dream of achieving his objective.

There followed a period of adjustments in the policy of the SCO penetrating into the masses and establishing bases within

Sarawak, starting from isolated areas. The influx of returning terrorist-groups from bases on the other side of the border reached its peak in the second half of 1969. The year also saw the first general elections after independence. It was no coincidence that among the candidates contesting the election for the State Legislature (now Dewan Undangan Negeri) was a young politician who had already left his mark in the federal government. The candidate was no other than Datuk Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, now Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, the Yang Di Pertua Negeri, Sarawak. After the results were known the first coalition government was formed. Naturally, to be workable, it was led by Datuk Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub. It was a daring experiment, especially in the light of different political ideas and approaches of the various parties in Sarawak.

The new Chief Minister was resolute in his conviction that if he could bring about political stability to Sarawak, the battle against the SCO could be won. And so began, right from the date he took office, relentless and continuous effort in winning the "hearts and minds" of the masses in the fight against the common enemy, the communist terrorist. The "fight" took many forms and spread on countless fronts: the acceptance of the coalition government concept immediately enhanced political stability, the planning strategies were re-orientated to complement and supplement overall development programme. New measures at improving the quality of life of the rakyat were introduced, and the restrictive education policy inherited from the colonial regime was reviewed and abolished.

Fighting the communist threat was, in the initial years of the coalition government, the focal point of nearly all governmental activities. Hand in hand with the Security Forces, the Administration and the politicians set out their business with a new sense of urgency and dedication.

As the Third Division was the main 'black area' where the communist activities were concentrated, the region was declared a special security area, named RASCOM, short for Rajang Security Command. Formed on March 25, 1972, it was directly administered by the Chief Minister, as Director of Operations. Armed with the necessary authority vested in him by the Prime Minister (Tun Abdul Razak), Datuk Rahman himself often spent

several days at a stretch in sensitive areas known to be infested with armed communist terrorists.

At gatherings in longhouses or schools in remote villages, Datuk Rahman reasoned with the people of the need for peace and stability in the country so that development for the benefit of all could be implemented. He talked to them about the advantages of good government, civic-consciousness and loyalty to nation and country, national unity and solidarity, moral and religious values and various other issues that touched the normal human life.

The Communist terrorists too were busying themselves by committing murders and other acts of terrorism, spreading anti-government propaganda in schools and recruiting new cadres. Their military activities were stepped up.

In a White Paper issued in February 1972, it was stated that the "Threat of armed communism posed by the SCO in Sarawak has developed into serious proportions during the last two years as a result of communist terrorist infiltration into the State from the border area of West Kalimantan." "An attempt is being made by the SCO to intimidate the people into withdrawing their support for the government. Intensive efforts are also being made by the SCO to launch a concerted United Front campaign of subversion."

In retrospect it seemed that about the time when the whole weight of the government was brought to bear on the communist organisation, the SCO was shifting into high gear up to the formation of the Rajang security command, the situation was serious. The terrorists were still receiving supplies from certain section of the people.

The sustained and concerted efforts by the government began to produce positive results: the people were changing their attitude towards the authority. They showed more confidence in the government and its agents and in areas where the people were once afraid to be identified with the government, they were now ready to take the lead such as attending anti-terrorist rallies and similar anti-communist operations.

With increasing support and co-operation of the masses the Government, on the other hand, was able to collect intelligence information from the people, resulting in more successful operations.

To show that the Government meant business, Operation Judas was launched in 1973 in which some prominent people were detained for giving logistic support.

Co-operation was forthcoming because the people understood government action. And the civil arm of the government saw to it that the people were provided with accurate and adequate information regarding government's policy and measures. Thus, they accepted the imposition of curfew as security measure against the terroists and not a punitive act against them as the terrorists had tried to make them believe.

It was clear to the masses that the Government was exhorting them to participate in the work of constructing the country, not destroying it. The style and dedication of the political leadership further strengthened their faith in the way of democracy, as opposed to communism. The government had proved to the people at large that it could "deliver the goods" and communism was no alternative.

It was not until mid-1973 that intelligence officers could see the light at the other end of the tunnel. There were indications for optimism, but the struggle for peace continued. Endless visits to rural areas and long meetings with officers and consultations with political colleagues gave no opportunity for the Director of Operations to rest. Fatigued, Datuk Rahman was ordered by his doctors to rest in the Kuching General Hospital in early October 1973.

Having received a letter from the top leader of the SCO Bong Kee Chok, in which he offered to make a "peace talk", the hospitalised Chief Minister was soon on his feet again. On October 18, 1973 he was already in Simanggang, holding a series of meetings with the SCO delegates.

On October 21, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed and subsequently Operation Sri Aman was launched to enable the guerillas to withdraw from the jungle. In all 482 guerillas, including their top military and political leaders laid down their arms and returned to society by the time the success of Operation Sri Aman was announced on March 4, 1974. About 100 guerillas in the First Division and about the same number in the Rascom area were still in the jungle when Sri Aman was announced. But by mid-April 1974 the guerillas in the First Division, under Lam Woh Kwai, have also rejoined society.

Marching to the Sri Aman Peace Rally, Kuching, 1974.

Peace Rally at the Central Padang, Kuching, 1974.

The returning guerillas were guaranteed their freedom as stated in the 'Memorandum of Understanding'.

The period immediately preceding Sri Aman saw political stability and strength of leadership that really enhanced the meaning of independence. This had provided the most important and basic ingredient for the peace formula. Political stability had produced a dynamic government, a government that was committed to development and well-being of its people.

When Sarawak celebrated its first decade in Malaysia in 1973 the then Chief Minister Datuk Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub made a speech in which he stressed the need to build up the country. That speech, ten years ago, inspired Bong Kee Chok to lay down arms and "restore peace in the country."

'Sri Aman' brought to an end a decade of communist struggle to establish communist hegemony in north Kalimantan. The terrorists who took advantage of the peace amnesty realised that they were waging a futile battle, for the people at large obviously preferred the freedom of democracy to the subjugations of the communist regime. The people gave their confidence to the Government that had proved its credibility and sincerity.

In terms of losses Sarawak had suffered much. The progress of the State was slowed down because great efforts and expenditures were diverted to tackle the problems of security and insurgency. Like the Confrontation episode, the challenge posed by the Sarawak Communist Organisation to our way of life had given us the opportunity to test our strength as an independent people — our cohesiveness and our moral fibre.

Changing Sarawak

by

Hj. Yusuf Heaton

While celebrating the twentieth anniversary of Sarawak's independence through Malaysia, it is both interesting and educational to look back over the years at those things which preoccupied the minds of the people of Sarawak during the colonial period. By doing this, we have a chance to realise just how much we have changed and progressed — often without realising it, so gradual and imperceptible have been the changes — since the state became a part of Malaysia.

In the past twenty years there have been many physical changes in Sarawak, in the shape of the many development projects that have been undertaken and, also, many mental changes in the way of thinking of the citizens of the state.

While the physical changes are there to be seen by all who care to look, the changes in the mental attitudes of the people are not quite so easy to be seen. Today, it would be difficult to find a single sane person in the state who was prepared to argue sincerely and rationally that Sarawak would be better off as an independent state of its own, outside Malaysia. And yet, only a little over twenty years ago, there were people who feared that Sarawak would suffer greatly by casting its fortune with Malaya, Sabah and Singapore to form Malaysia. These people were no doubt sincere in their beliefs and yet today there might not be a single one of them who would not be willing to admit that he had been mistaken. This then, is the mental change that has taken place amongst the people — opposed, sceptical or concerned about the Malaysia proposal, they have now come to embrace the concept of Malaysia whole-heartedly, so much so that any suggestion that Sarawak would be better off without Malaysia would probably be met with stares of total incredulity.

Roads

When talking of the physical changes which have taken place in the state since Independence, one of the first things which come

to mind is the huge mileage of new roads that have been built. After 100 years of Brooke rule Sarawak is said to have had 457 miles of roads but this figure included 195 miles of unmetalled pathways and bicycle roads plus 112 miles of unmetalled roads suitable for motor traffic only in good weather conditions. So if we were to ignore these so-called roads and count only those roads which were either surfaced or metalled, we find that at the time Sarawak became a colony of Great Britain, there were not too many miles of what could genuinely be referred to as roads. Even during the colonial period, road development was so slow that in 1958 there were only 81 miles of genuine roads in the State. From 1958, when a road construction project was launched, up until the end of 1963, 297 miles of road were built, giving a total of 378 miles.

Today, it is possible to travel overland from Sematan right through to the border with Brunei, an achievement which, when it was finally accomplished, was hardly remarked upon, so accustomed are we nowadays to all sorts of development projects being completed throughout the length and breadth of the state.

But it was not that long ago really that the colonial government was finding itself hardpressed to even maintain the few existing roads in the state, let alone build new roads. As an example of the state of things as they once were, let us take this extract from a Sarawak Tribune editorial of June, 1946:

> "A journey up to Serian is something of an adventure. One might or might not get there in a day, although the journey is only 40 miles. The prospect is of a night or two nights spent somewhere along the top end of the road camping in the open on the roadside or seeking the hospitality of gardeners in their huts when the truck gets stuck or breaks down. (The road is so bad that buses don't dare go beyond the 24th mile.) Jeeps are supposed to go through any kind of road, but even a Jeep gets stuck in four or five different places along the road . . . ."

In fairness, of course, it has to be remembered that this was the situation less than a year after the Japanese occupation had ended and when the authorities were still struggling to bring the colony back to a state of normalcy.

But this is what one irate person wrote to the Sarawak Tribune five years later in 1951 after reading about a generous Betong

contractor who had constructed a path from the road to the local clinic at his own expense:

> "Looking from another angle, this news is only an exposure of the dereliction of duties on the part of government in this new colony towards its citizens. The roads even in Kuching, the capital, are a real disgrace to both native citizens and white rulers, and one need only see Pisang Road, Green Road and suburbs, to mention but a few to be convinced. On a dry day, these roads are as dusty as the desert, while on a rainy day, pools of water are formed all along them."

Very true indeed, said another letter writer a few days later:

> "I have taken the trouble of visiting Green Road, Pisang Road, Nanas Road etc.to see if your correspondent's criticism of Kuching roads is justified. Rain had just ceased and some of these roads, especially Pisang Road, looked more like canals than what they should be. It is shocking how neglectful, and perhaps deliberately, our road authorities can be. And the roads complained about are merely five minutes away from the town, which besides being the capital, boasts also of a resident Governor! Surely, Kuching deserves better roads if not more."

A short time after this, another letter appeared in the Tribune on the same topic:

> "Sometime back correspondence appeared in your columns in which Pisang Road was referred to as a misnomer and should be called Pisang Canal instead — which was quite correct in the wet season.
>
> "Today it should be called Rocky Pass and a prominent sign should be set up there with this grave warning to bicyclists 'Ride with the utmost care — A fall may mean your last'.
>
> "Residents of Rubber Road, Nanas Road and Pisang Road must have spent many a night dreaming fitful dreams of their roads well tarred and safe. When will their wildest dreams come true?"

In Sibu, during this same period, the situation was even worse, so bad, in fact, that "unfortunately, the rapid deterioration of the roads in and around Sibu necessitated the closing of Lanang Road, and certain roads in the kampung as from the beginning of December. This is to be followed by closing all other roads 'off the island' on the first January 1951. It is unlikely that these roads will be reopened before the middle of February 1951. As may be

expected this action is the subject of much bitter comment and considerable inconvenience is being caused to the public living in and around Sibu. The difficulties which the PWD have to contend with are of course well-known but it is hard to make the public appreciate them as well."

Still, even if Sarawak's roads were either unuseable or even closed to traffic altogether, at least democracy was thriving judging by the numerous letters of complaint being published.

> "What is happening to the public roads which are begging for attention? A few stones are dropped in this hole and a few broken bricks into that hole; then a pause — contemplation — again a few stones into this hole and a few stones into that hole — and so on and so on; not unlike the ancient Malay game of chongkat."

Even as late as 1962, some of Sarawak's roads — ones which have long since been sealed — were often in an atrocious condition. Matang Road, for example, was only useable up to the 2½ milestone during the rainy season. Beyond that point, the road was so bad that a two-wheel drive vehicle could not pass through and even pedestrians found it difficult to 'wade' through the muddy surface.

The road was so bad, the Manager of the Kuching Matang Transport Company told a public hearing, that it would soon be impossible for even four-wheel drive vehicles to use the road if something was not done quickly. As far as his company was concerned, bus services beyond the 2½ milestone were completely out of the question during the rainy season. Matang residents living beyond that point would have to walk down to the 2½ milestone if they wanted to catch a bus into town — or just stay at home.

An interesting point about all this of course is that despite the huge amount of improvements being made to Sarawak roads over the years, there is just as likely to be the same volume of complaints about local roads as there were 30 years ago when road conditions were truly primitive. Along Matang Road, for example, the people living there are quite likely to write letters of complaint to the newspapers if the road should become pot-holed, whereas just 20 years ago, they would not even have dared to dream that the road should ever be sealed in the forseeable future.

But that is human nature. People tend to forget their past hardships very quickly. They take progress for granted and then

complain the moment there is a slight drop in the condition of their road. The more progress there is, the more people expect and demand — there is no end to the expectations of the people. And the faster their expectations are met, the faster they produce a new and lengthier list of further expectations they would like fulfilled — immediately, if not sooner.

Having mentioned earlier that it is now possible to travel by road from Sematan to the Brunei border, it is interesting to look back to the time when it was first accepted as government policy that such a road, linking one end of Sarawak to the other, should be built.

In 1960, the Director of Public Works announced that his department had drawn up a master plan for a road network linking Kuching with Miri and on as far as Merapok in the Fifth Division.

> "It is estimated that it would take 10 years to investigate, survey and design the trunk and secondary roads. Construction would take another 20 to 30 years."

The interesting point here is that had this schedule been adhered to, the initial investigations would have taken up until 1970 while construction would have taken another 20 to 30 years — up until 1990 or the year 2,000 A.D. — but as the work has been completed already, except for one bridge and the link to Merapok, it is obvious that development work in the state has been considerably accelerated since the formation of Malaysia.

Mind you, they had their problems and set-backs in those days. When they were building the airstrip at Belaga, the PWD decided to drop in a bulldozer by parachute to speed up the work. Unfortunately, though, several of the parachutes failed to open properly and the last they saw of the bulldozer, it was sinking into 30 feet of mud!

The Radio

Other strange things happened during the colonial days, which, when we read about them now, make us realise how backward the state was in so many ways.

Before regular radio transmissions were introduced, people had a problem knowing just what the exact time was. In Kuching it was not so bad because they had the eight o'clock gun firing every

night but in Sibu everybody swore by the time according to his own watch and it was impossible to get people to be punctual at all.

The D.O. of Sibu finally got fed up with this, as the following report testifies:

> "It seems difficult to ascertain the correct time of day in Sibu for the simple reason that so many people are having their own version of the time. It is evident that in the absence of such a standard time signal confusion is bound to occur.
>
> "The District Officer has recently devised a new scheme whereby the people, and especially those in the bazaar area, can adhere to a standard time. A notice has been issued that the siren at the Power Station would give the correct time signal. The siren would be sounded four times a day at the following hours: 7.30 a.m., 12 noon, 1.30 p.m. and 4 p.m."

Since Sarawak achieved its independence through Malaysia, the state has seen steady progress and development over the past 20 years, thanks to the large amount of money devoted to this purpose by the state and federal governments.

Because this development has been carefully controlled and steady in nature, the state has not suffered from alternate periods of boom and depression.

During the colonial period, on the other hand, development was so slow that the state seemed to be in a permanent economic recession until 1950, that is, when the Korean War led to a massive rise in the price of rubber — and other crops — leading to a boom unprecedented in the state's history and never repeated since then.

During this period, rubber rose to a high of $265 a pikul, pepper was being sold at a high of $835 per pikul and even lowly copra was selling at $33 per pikul.

For those whose living came from these crops — and indeed for just about every able-bodied person in the rural areas — this boom in prices brought them undreamt of wealth, and sales of bicycles, sewing machines, radios and other luxury items went through the roof. Coffeeshops, cinemas and other businesses did a roaring business as people flocked to the towns to spend their suddenly acquired riches. The towns were so crowded, especially Sibu, that some coffeeshops began to stay open 24 hours a day, so great was the patronage they were attracting.

But not everybody benefitted from this boom. For those who were on fixed wages, the boom became a time of untold misery as businessmen were quick to raise the prices of their goods when they saw how much money was floating around the state and prices just sky-rocketed. The situation was so bad at one stage that prices rose by as much as 20 per cent over a period of less than one week as everyone who could scrambled to make hay while the sun was shining.

The irony of all this was that the civil servants, usually envied by others for their regular, guaranteed salaries and permanency of employment, suddenly found themselves impoverished by the rapidly increasing prices and no longer commanding the awe and respect they had grown accustomed to receive from the hoi polloi members of the public.

The following extract from the Saribas district report for 1951 illustrates this point:

> "There has been so much money in the district that an unskilled labourer can earn as much as $15 per five-hour day, a far higher figure than his counterpart in the United Kingdom. But as money comes easily it is spent lavishly . . . Government officers on fixed salary have little local prestige and the police constable none at all."

The Sadong district report for the same period shows the way in which prices were rising during this period:

> "The overall picture is one of . . . steadily rising prices. Ikan pusu has risen from 80 cents per kati to $2.40, local-milled rice from 90 cents per gantang to about $2.20; most other foodstuffs have risen in proportion. The rise in prices is of course offset by the high prices obtained for rubber and pepper, though this latter is little consolation to the 'white collar' worker whose salary does not adjust itself to fluctuating prices as rapidly as that of the direct participators in trade."

The civil servants were, naturally enough, highly perturbed by the rapid increase in prices which were playing such havoc with their personal budgets that they soon found it impossible to live within their means.

In July 1950, even before the boom had reached its peak, the government offered its civil servants a five per cent increase in their Cost of Living Allowance. The civil servants' union, SGAOU, held an open meeting to discuss this offer and of the 446

members who attended the meeting, all but one voted to reject this 'meagre' increase.

By September 1950, the civil servants were really feeling the pinch and began to voice their unhappiness through the correspondence columns of the Sarawak Tribune. Here is a selection of their letters which illustrate the dilemma they found themselves in:

Sir,

An army cannot march on empty stomachs neither can salaried workers carry on with their work efficiently on semi-starvation diet. After all we are human.

The controversial subject of Cost of Living Allowance is no longer a controversial subject, it has become an obsession, haunting the sleeping and waking moments of Government employees, especially those on a low salary level. It has become more than coffeeshop pow-wow; it has assumed the place of the only worth-while conversation between husband and wife, children and parents in the otherwise peaceful and contented home.

Commissions have come and commissions have gone, scales have appeared tantalisingly on paper, hopes have centred on thin air. The only reality is the clerk left with his underfed wife and children.

What has our union done? So many meetings between the authorities and our Union representatives seem to have taken place, but what results have the latter achieved? A question that was started in 1947 was shelved in 1948, popped up in 1949, knocked down in 1950, reared its head again defiantly in the same year and . . . need more be said.?

Meanwhile the Union officials have been singing their swan song — patience. Yes, patience is a great virtue but it does not enhance the digestion or improve the liver.

Beseiged, surrounded, mobbed, manhandled, perhaps being snowed under by debts and layers of misery, how long are the clerks to remain patient.

FED UP

Sir,

I am over forty years old and neither I nor my wife smoke or drink. We have not had a vacation since before the war; our house is not a house but a cubicle room which is rented from a towkay, my wife's newest suit is six years old and my newest pair of shoes but a pair of Japanese boots.

Now it is mighty lucky that I earn $100 a month. I have no overtime pay and 10 per cent is deducted every month for Provident Fund. But I have a 'position' to keep up.

I must be up to date in learning affairs of my own people. I am a man whom the people of this town come for advice, mutual help and co-operation.

Every other evening after work I hurry on to another job as a salesman in a shop in an adjoining village. You cannot know my name — because I am not supposed to do other work save stay at home and starve.

My friends, I am not a member of a religious group, nor am I a crank. I am a government servant. I follow my shoe-string way of life because I cannot afford any other. I cannot afford to keep up my position on my pay, and there are a few thousand people like myself in the Colony of Sarawak.

I know a man who is starting at under $50 per month and has heavy debts after two years of employment in the Government. To eke out his wage he has to work for others as a casual labourer during the weekends and holidays.

There is a married government employee who has a baby daughter and who is in debt each month for $30; another can never afford to go to the cinema with his wife. She has to go alone. One couple have rationed themselves to one packet of cigarettes a week.

The reason for this threadbare struggle is that Government servants are underpaid.

Maybe $150 a month does not sound to you like under-paying. But only a man with years of service and experience earns that amount. The youngsters — many of them with families, earn far less. In my post, now I earn, after deductions, exactly $150 per month — not much more than a rubber tapper who taps only 20 days a month.

This is disgraceful pay for long services, better qualifications and the most important work in the Colony.

In some cases salaries in other professions and jobs have risen over 300 per cent, and after the war Government employees have risen only how much? I am ashamed to tell you. If I tell you it is a disgrace to the government.

POOR FELLOW

Sir,

My friend, who is in the government service, tells me this story of how the high cost of living is affecting wage-earners.

He was doing his marketing and approached a fishmonger with the intention of giving his family a rare treat by bringing home some fish. He enquired about the price, but the fishmonger lifted his eyebrows superciliously and without paying much attention to him, asked if he referred to 3rd quality fish.

My friend mentioned tenggiri whereupon the fishmonger said: "Oh, what's the use of you asking. You can't afford it."

During this conversation a rubber tapper pushed my friend aside, plonked down a fiver, and took away the fish in question without even enquiring about the price.

My friend was hurt and insulted, and had to run the gauntlet of many eyes. He went home without fish.

SHOCKED

But all's well that ends well. The civil servants finally had their salaries adjusted but it was a long wait before that came about. It would be interesting to compare the rancour that accompanied the negotiations for the new salary scale with the ease with which the local civil servants received their new salary scales — and generous arrears — during the time of the Coalition government under (then) Dato Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub. But of course, times had changed and so had our rulers. The colonial government was under very strict instructions that Sarawak had to pay its own way and that no approaches were to be made to the British government for funds. So the increase in salaries could only come about when the state's finances had improved sufficiently. By the 1970s, however, we had been independent for

some 10 years and the Federal government stepped in to help the state overcome the additional costs incurred under the new salary scale.

One of the favourite hobbies of the people of today is to moan and complain about how much everything cost. Finding whatever it is they want to buy is not a problem — finding the money is.

As a way of contrast, it is interesting to look back to the years after liberation and to see how people were faring in those days when it came to buying both luxuries — cigarettes for example — and necessities — such as cloth.

This is what the Tribune had to say in 1946:

> "The days following the re-occupation of Kuching by the Australian Forces saw many types of cigarettes in the market but the prices were still exhorbitant. There were, of course, until lately, the Government rations but these were hardly sufficient. The prices in the black market continue to fluctuate very uncertainly according to the supply that came in from Labuan and Singapore. Another source that greatly assisted the black market activities was the outlet for the various outstations whose demands for the commodity were just as great. Government has been exerting all efforts possible in the recent weeks to put a check to the actions of black marketeering by attempting to work out the plausible scheme of distribution of cigarettes but it has realised that the only measure of success to combat this is to flood the market with a surplus and continued supply.
>
> "When an official notice from the Supply Office was issued banning the sale of cigarettes in the market above the government controlled price, it was received with very little attention and the business was carried on as usual, but when several arrests followed later by the 'fines' that were imposed, it was realised that the Government really meant business. Then a change happened and cigarettes vanished from the fronts of shops and to casual passer-by there was apparently no cigarette on sale anywhere, but the racket continued for this time trading was conducted "under the counter" or through the "back door", and only those who were aware of the right channels to get their supplies were able to do so, but at a very much higher price than what they ordinarily obtained from the front."

But it wasn't just cigarettes that were in short supply during these early post-war days. Milk, sugar and other essential items were also traded on the black market at very high prices whenever they were made available. This story appeared in the Sarawak Tribune in July 1946 and illustrates the difficulties people were facing in those days:

> "A few poor people came down to the Supply Office and appealed for the distribution of cloth and the Supply Officer granted the request and these people went home happy after having paid 50 cents for a yard of cloth. The next day another group of people came who were obviously in dire need of cloth and their request was granted too. The fact that cloth is scarce and expensive here makes it quite an essential commodity and the news that cloth could be obtained by mere application soon brought crowds of people from both the town and the up-country districts into the Supply Office for application for cloth. As the Supply Office only had a limited amount of cloth the stock was soon exhausted."

No matter how many additional services the Malaysian Airlines System introduces for the convenience of travellers in Sarawak, there still remain complaints about the "insufficiency" in the number of seats available or the flights are badly timed or the service is lousy or something or other was wrong.

But that is progress for you — the more and the better the service people are given, the more they complain. It is human nature to be perpetually dissatisfied.

Air services from Sarawak to Singapore, Malaya and North Borneo only started after the Second World War and for the first three years the service consisted of a single, solitary flight — by RAF flying boat landing and taking off at Pending — once a week between Kuching and Singapore. Eventually, in June 1949, the airstrip — it could not yet be called an airport — was repaired and enlarged so that DC3 aircraft could land and take off. The airport 'terminal' was little more than a wooden shack. There was not even a telephone provided and the toilets were just holes in the ground, one marked 'Asiatics' and one marked 'Europeans'.

In the first six months of the air service, provided by Malayan Airways Ltd, 350 passengers landed at Kuching, 347 passengers took off from Kuching and there were 544 other passengers who

were in transit. In six months a total of 1,281 passengers! The Kuching airport probably handles that number of passengers on a single, slow day, now.

And flying in those days was not the casual, nonchalant sort of thing we experience today. Just a few weeks after Malayan Airways started its commercial service, one of its planes had to make an emergency landing at the Japanese-built airstrip at Sibu Laut due to bad weather. From there the passengers had to be brought back to Kuching by launch to wait for the next flight. But one passenger had apparently had enough. He cancelled his ticket and took the boat that was sailing for Singapore the following day.

Not long after this, a DC3 took off from Kuching for Singapore, but when it arrived in Singapore, the airport was closed due to bad weather, so the pilot diverted to Kuala Lumpur. But when the plane reached Kuala Lumpur, the airport there was also closed due to bad weather, so the pilot headed for Singapore again in the hope that the weather had cleared. But, when they got to Singapore, the airport was still closed so they had no alternative but to return to Kuching from where they had started off in the first place.

The Flying Doctor service, which is so convenient for both the rural people and the Medical Department staff, was not even thought of during the colonial days. Instead, they had what were known as travelling dispensaries — long-boats which used to travel up and down the rivers visiting the various communities living on the banks of the rivers. In 1960, the Supervisor of Travelling Dispensaries was an Encik Heng Kia Hem and it is interesting to read about his duties, for it gives us an idea of the difficult conditions under which many civil servants had to labour in those days. Here are some extracts from an article written about his exploits in 1960:

> "For the past three years, home for 42-year-old Mr Heng has hardly meant a normal life with his family in a house in Kuching — in fact home has embraced All-Sarawak.
>
> As a Superintendent of Travelling Dispensaries, it is Mr Heng's job to do just what his job entails — travel.
>
> And so he has travelled — hundreds of miles throughout the country, from Limbang in the north, to Lundu in the south, from

Miri to the Kelabit Highlands, supervising and advising Government travelling dispensers armed with a mission to 'cure anything'.

This has meant being away from home for two months at a stretch, back to base for about two weeks, then out again.

Travelling is adventure. Mr Heng has had his share of it. He has been shot up and down dangerous rapids, capsized in them, losing all his supplies and equipment.

Getting lost in the jungle has also been one of the hazards of his travels. At one time, he was lost for three days and he and his party had to live by hunting wild boar, fishing in streams and searching for wild bamboo shoots."

Medical services in those days were still quite rugged. In 1960, the maternity ward in Belaga was on the ground floor of the 'Kubu' and "Councillor Abun said so much noise was going on in the Kubu that he felt sorry for the patients and especially for the women after giving birth."

In the same year, the Director of Medical Services said that free injections against various diseases were given by the Medical Department but in the case of polio-myelitis, "stocks of the vaccine are maintained at the main government centres and anyone wishing to be protected against this disease can be given the necessary injections by paying the cost of the vaccine, which amounts to $5."

In 1960 $5 was still a lot of money and not everybody would be able to pay for these injections, especially those with say half a dozen children needing immunisation. But even so, such was the fear of this disease that a few months later the government ran out of vaccine and "the public are asked to note that no further injections can be given in the meantime and that further intimation will be made through the press and radio advising people when injections can be resumed and where and when these are to be obtained."

Up till 1960, everyone had to pay a fee when they attended government dispensaries — 50 cents on first attendance and 25 cents on each subsequent attendance "unless they were able to satisfy the hospital assistant or District Officer that they were too poor to pay these charges."

These fees were scrapped for the outstation dispensaries from October 1, 1960 but "No change is proposed in the charges made at hospital outpatient departments for residents of Kuching, Sibu, Simanggang and Miri towns where patients have the opportunity of receiving more specialised attention and where if necessary they are seen by a doctor."

During the colonial period, one of the main scourges of the people was the high incident of malaria. The government declared war on this disease, in the hope of eradicating it entirely but they met with unexpected resistance from some of the people. Anti-malaria teams used to go from kampung to kampung spraying the houses and their surroundings with anti-malaria spray. The problem was that they did their job so thoroughly that they were killing off all the household cats. Often too, the spray they were using left unsightly marks on the houses and, as soon as they were gone, the housewives would rush out and either scrub down their walls or have their husbands repaint their houses.

Today, malaria is no longer the scourge it once was and instead the medical authorities are finding more and more of their time being taken up with other illnesses — the modern ills brought about by the increasing affluence of Malaysians — such as heart diseases, cancer, peptic ulcers, hypertension, high-blood pressure and industrial and road accidents.

According to Ministry of Health statistics, the number of Malaysians dying from such diseases as malaria, TB, gastro-enteritis and other communicable diseases is going down while deaths from 'diseases of affluence' are going up.

So, as more and more people are provided with proper water supplies from a tap, as sanitation standards are improved, as better diets are adopted, the number of deaths from infectious diseases shows a declining rate. Today, the majority of people admitted to hospitals in the country are accident victims and those suffering from heart diseases.

But not everybody in those days was as dedicated to his job as Supervisor of Travelling Dispensaries Encik Heng Kia Hem was.

Just after the formation of Malaysia, the then Director of Education Mr M.G. Dickson spoke of reports that several hundred young men and women had left their homes and gone across the border "to learn how to fight and kill people in Sarawak." He said that "such evidence as there is, suggests that these young persons

Medical Service in the rural area.

The Flying Doctor Service

Medical Service in the rural area.

The Chief Minister of Sarawak, Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud (on the left front) and the Chief Minister of Sabah, Datuk Harris Salleh (second from the right) at the opening of the Merapok/Sendumin Road and Bridge, which link Sarawak and Sabay by land, in 1982.

The road that links Sarawak and Sabah.

Teacher trainees at the Batu Lintang Teacher Training College, Kuching

are products of the Chinese schools. " . . . if the Chinese schools have failed to inspire in such a number of their pupils the elementary sense of loyalty to their country, the English schools seem to me to have failed to produce a sense of service in their pupils.

"By sense of service, I don't mean the wish to get a job in a Government department, and to keep it — that wish is not lacking — I mean a desire to repay something of what one has received by helping those who need help, even if it means accepting rather less than the maximum possible salary, or working for a time under rougher conditions than one is used to.

"A year ago a member of Council Negri stated that in the last three years, out of seven doctors and dentists who had been trained overseas under scholarships, four had refused on their return to honour their moral obligation to serve the Government and people of Sarawak.

"Many of those who take degree courses and diplomas in education with the aid of scholarships write to the department when they are due to return to Sarawak and say 'I am willing to teach anywhere — in Kuching or Miri'.

"The reluctance of those who have been educated in urban English-medium schools to help the rural schools, even for a short period, is proving to be a heavy handicap to educational progress in the country areas.

"A few years ago, it was made obligatory for Batu Lintang IIA teachers to serve for two years in rural schools — not a long period in the whole lifetime of a teacher. The result of that decision was a serious fall in the recruitment to Batu Lintang.

"Recently a Sea Dayak leader from the Second Division came to Kuching hoping to persuade some school leavers to teach in schools in his area for a year or two. He has now given up this idea as hopeless and wants to recruit school leavers instead from England, under the Voluntary Service Overseas Scheme.

"It's a paradox, isn't it, that the products of one part of our school system are prepared to trek through the forests to Indonesia, in pursuit of their treacherous aims, while the products of another part of our school system, nicely brought up and well-behaved as they are, are not prepared to move a few miles away from Mum and Dad and their home towns to give their help where it is desperately needed."

One of the problems that progress and modernisation bring is that some people adhere rigidly to their old customs and thus fail to progress, while others discard their old ways entirely and adopt new and often unsuitable customs imported from the west. The problem, then, is to strike an even balance between the old and the new in order that progress can be introduced without completely disrupting the way of life of the people, thereby upsetting the social equilibrium and introducing an entirely new set of modern-day problems.

In 1960, all the Bidayuh members of the Bau District Council agreed that the custom of 'mowah' or courting, under which unmarried boys were allowed to visit unmarried girls at night, should be abolished as soon as possible.

They asked the District Officer, Encik Michael Sadin, who proposed that this custom be abolished, to draft suitable new regulations governing Bidayuh marriages.

Mowah, said Encik Sadin, himself a Bidayuh, was still practised by the majority of the Bidayuhs in the district and he thought that under present-day conditions it was an improper practice and harmful to young people. It resulted in quite a number of girls having children without getting married because the fathers deserted them.

The same Council was told, at another meeting, by Encik Sadin that the observance by Bidayuhs of 'pantangs' which involved the stoppage of work and various social restrictions had been retarding the progress of the Bidayuhs for the last hundred years.

He also criticised the practice of kampungs holding 'begawais' on different days. This, he said, involved one kampung entertaining the others, which was not only costly but used up many working days.

"Keep the good old adats," he said, "but discard those which are unworthy."

In Sibu, around the same period, the SUDC held a debate on whether or not it should issue licences for the holding of 'main gendang'. Datu Tuanku Hj. Bujang was invited by the Council to give his opinion on the subject and he said that in 1947 a fight broke out in a house in Sibu where a gendang was being held and as a result the Resident had stopped it in the kampungs at the request of the Malay leaders.

He said that gendang would disturb the kampungs and especially the sick and young children who needed a lot of sleep.

Gendang, he said, had been stopped for the past 10 years and it was not in the best Malay tradition to revive it.

In later years, even after the formation of Malaysia, there was a proliferation of youth clubs being set up in the various kampungs, especially in Kuching and, to raise funds, these clubs used to hold frequent stage shows and sandiwaras. Eventually, the situation got so out of hand, that various Malay councillors spoke out against this practice and said that other ways should be found to raise funds. There were so many stage shows being held, they said, that students were continually being lured away from their studies by the noise and excitement of these stage shows. Their criticisms were taken to heart and today it is a rare occasion indeed when such a function is organised in a kampung.

Other customs have also been done away with — the scattering of 'ghost money' along the roadside during a Chinese funeral procession, for example. The councils did not like that for it was, to them, tantamount to littering.

In those days too, such problems as drug taking amongst the youth of Sarawak were of course unheard of. The only people taking drugs then were elderly Chinese who had picked up the habit when opium was still a legal commodity. On one occasion, police in Sibu raided a factory site and dug up a haul of 200 lbs of opium from the ground, probably the largest ever drug haul in Sarawak. Those responsible for smuggling in the opium were caught, jailed and then deported to their country of origin.

But while the young people were not involved in the likes of drug taking, it seems they were not altogether angelic by nature. In 1959, the SUDC held a lengthy discussion on the subject of whether or not jukeboxes should be banned from coffeeshops and restaurants in the town. The Council rejected two applications to install jukeboxes in two coffeeshops as they were not recommended by the Divisional Superintendent of Police and the District Officer for two main reasons:

(i) creation of noise nuisance; and

(ii) they would attract undesirables — prostitutes, pimps and 'yankee style' youths — whatever they were. If problems of this magnitude were all that the authorities of today had to worry about, they would be a very contented lot.

One of the biggest changes which has taken place in Sarawak since Independence has been the Malaysianisation — or Borneanisation as it was once called — of the civil service. During the colonial period, every single senior post was held by European expatriates and there was not a single decision made which did not go through their hands first.

The first move towards localisation of the civil service was made in 1957 when Council Negri formed a select committee to study the gradual replacement of expatriate officers.

However, little progress was made, so much so that in February 1963, almost on the eve of Independence, the then President of SGAOU, Encik Abdul Rahman bin Ya'kub, felt compelled to criticise the slow rate of localisation in the state. The process had been so slow, he complained, that in the past three years, only one local officer had been promoted to a Division One job — that of Superintendent of Prisons — and of all the Division Two posts, only one-third were held by locals.

"Our union is dissatisfied with the slowness of the Borneanisation of the Civil Service," he said.

With the formation of Malaysia there was, naturally enough, a speeding up of the process of replacing expatriate officers so that the then Chief Minister, Mr Stephen Ningkan, was able to tell SGAOU at its 17th AGM in January 1964 that within the next three months some 15 superscale posts would be occupied by Sarawakians and that by the end of that month, 14 of the state's 19 districts would have local District Officers.

But even then, a lot of civil servants were not at all happy with the rate of localisation. "When you are independent, you will rule your own destinies," the people had been told as independence neared, and to some, this meant that locals would take over, en masse, from the very first day of independence.

They were to be disillusioned. Two and a half years after independence had been achieved, SGAOU was told by the Chief Minister that "we cannot do without the services of government servants from overseas for the next year or two."

But not to worry, SGAOU was told. "The exaptriates do not run the government, they do not run me, they work in the same way as any other civil servant and they do what the government tells them. You need have no fear on this score."

But the then SGAOU President Encik Dawi Abdul Rahman was not impressed. "The process of Borneanisation leaves much to be desired. Our union is still deeply concerned with the retention of high-handed inducted expatriate officers in the government, both state and federal services. Our union is sceptical of the duration when its members will be given a chance to take over the responsibilities. In effect, it has full confidence its members are ready to handle with efficiency the work of Administration Officers in the Ministries."

Even the Minister for Sarawak Affairs, Tan Sri Temenggong Jugah was not happy. "Expatriates in this country," he said in March 1966, "should act as advisers, not bosses, to a people intelligent enough to know the difference between the two . . . The hangover of colonial mentality can no longer be imposed on a people already awake to what is going on in the outside world."

A few days later he said: "Our boys and girls should be given top priority with regard to selection to higher posts and appointments in Sarawak before taking people from outside the state, so that their chances for promotion are not thwarted . . .

"This is vital if we want to retain the confidence of our local officers in the government. Their aspirations for a more responsible position must not be frustrated for we do not really know their challenge and abilities until they are given the chance to prove themselves."

True enough, replied Dato Ningkan. "Government jobs must go to Sarawak people. But it is impossible to implement it overnight. It is very easy for one to say anything but to act on what one says is not as easy as one thinks."

The next person to chip in was the Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman who said that as long as British expatriates remained in the Sarawak administration, they would continue with their policy of "Divide and Rule" and the unity of the various indigenous people would be hard to achieve.

"The principal administrators of the Sarawak government still look to the British for inspiration and from what we have seen, it will take a long time before they can drop this colonial outlook.

"As long as the principal administrators there are British colonial officers, they cannot expect to cast off that influence and develop a Malaysian consciousness."

"I think the Tunku is a bit too old," Dato Ningkan retorted. "Razak understands us better."

A few days later, however, a Borneanisation Committee, comprising mainly of State Cabinet Ministers, was formed to look into the various problems involved. But then, just over two months later, the 'Ningkan crisis' burst on to the local political scene. Dato Tawi Sli was appointed Chief Minister and the Borneanisation issue gradually faded into the background as the expatriates were replaced one by one as they reached retirement age or completed the terms of their contract.

The Tunku made his celebrated Malaysia proposal in 1961. But what was Sarawak like in those days? For the edification of those who were not in the state in those days, or for those who have forgotten, here is an extract from an article written for *The Sarawak Tribune* in 1961 by a visiting writer after a lengthy and prolonged stay of two days in the state:

> "The bus lurched to a halt. A Dayak girl was standing a few yards off the road.
>
> "I looked into her eyes, they were softly loving, utterly lost and bewildered by the encroachment of mechanisation and the twentieth century civilisation. All they wanted was love and to be left alone, by the strange world creeping in from distant lands. Above all they wanted peace and security.
>
> "The eyes told me of Sarawak. Up till now they had more or less escaped the inflow of turbulent world affairs, the unscrupulous politicians and the exploiting businessmen but the times are changing and everyday those eyes become a little more mystified in this new cut-throat way of life. Their newly acquired education did not help them to understand it, instead it conflicted with their primitive environment. Petrol and diesel engines scream past their longhouse, the local candidate for the next election promising them undreamt of pleasantries if they gave them their vote, bartering over coconuts and rice with money flowing from one hand to another, officials telling them they are way behind the times and should be planting this instead of that in hitherto unknown methods, narrow-minded missionaries preaching a new God, all theirs being false, and for those who do not worship this invisible god there. is an infinite large pit awaiting them, with hot glowing embers; these are enough to make those poor eyes bewildered and forlorn."

When the Tunku first proposed the formation of Malaysia, the general response from the natives, once they had overcome their initial doubts, was that of support.

To a large extent this was due to the neglect they had suffered during the colonial period. In as far as the Malays were concerned, the British were obviously punishing them for having had the temerity to oppose the cession of Sarawak to Great Britain, while the other natives were left largely to their own devices, isolated from the mainstream of whatever little development was taking place.

Examples of bias during the colonial period are not hard to find — take land for example: in the Sarawak Annual Report for 1956 it was stated that "it was the policy of the Rajah's government, and remains that of the present government, to pay sympathetic regard to the customs of the people and their rights thereby established in the matter of Native customary land."

A few paragraphs later, however, can be found the following report on resettlement schemes being undertaken by the colonial government:

> "A block of land has been made available near Simanggang for the settlement of Foochow Chinese from the Lower Rejang. Although the land is not suitable for high yielding rubber considerable drainage works have been undertaken. In the Fourth Division encouraging progress has been made on the scheme in the Sebiew area of Bintulu where it is hoped eventually to settle Chinese farmers on more than 4,000 acres. So far some 2,500 acres of forest have been cleared for rubber planting and interim crops of padi and maize have been planted. New settlers are being helped under the Government's Rubber Replanting Scheme. Another block of about 2,000 acres of land suitable for rubber planting has been provisionally selected in the Bakong area of the Baram. If the reclassification of this land as Mixed Zone Land is approved, compensation will be paid by the Government, for extinguishing any existing native customary rights over the land, before lots are made available to intending Chinese settlers.
>
> "At Julau in the Third Division, surveys of native customary rights have been completed over 1,700 acres and agreement has been reached for the extinguishing of rights by monetary

compensation. The land has been classified as Mixed Zone and action is being taken to alienate it for Chinese Agricultural Settlement. Similar surveys have been made over some 13,000 acres of undulating land above Sarikei and Binatang, where land use data has been collected and compiled, and in the Pasai-Siong area east of Sibu. It is hoped, as a result of these surveys, that several thousand acres of suitable land can be made available for rubber planting."

The total bias displayed in this extract, and its contradication of the extract quoted earlier, does not need to be pointed out.

Not everyone supported the Malaysia proposal, of course, and there were those who were adamant that to join Malaysia was the worst thing Sarawak could ever do. The various political parties adopted their own stands on the matter while at the same time many individuals expressed their opposition, their doubts and their fears through the correspondence columns of the various newspapers.

After 20 years of independence through Malaysia, it is interesting to look back to the period immediately prior to the formation of Malaysia to see just what these people felt about Malaysia. Many of the views seem laughable nowadays, Malaysia having proved to be such an unmitigated success, but by reading these letters we can gain a fuller understanding of just how much our feelings and attitudes have changed over the past two decades.

Here are extracts from some of these letters:

"We know that Malaya needs us, but I can say in all earnestness and sincerity that we can live alone as we have done for the past 100 years. No right thinking and patriotic Sarawakian will allow Sarawak to be the grazing ground for other countries.

"I am of the opinion that the Malayan government is responsible for the creation of a Frankenstein monster which even now threatens to destroy its Creator."

A teacher in a Chinese school in Miri wrote:

"Why the devil should we have to face the prospect of Sarawak being swamped under the Malaysian regime by an invasion of unemployed Singaporeans who cannot find work over there and who are regarded by both the Singapore and Malayan governments as socially and politically undesirable citizens? If they arrive, I go and so will many of my friends too."

The Malaysia proposal was a "stupendous confidence trick" said another writer. "To calmly suggest at this early stage, handing sovereignty of Sarawak to a country with only four years experience in independence and to try and justify this by the present one-sided propaganda being fed to the trusting indigenous people of Sarawak, by Tunku Abdul Rahman and his supporters is despicable."

Another correspondent said that if Malaysia was not solely for the good of Malaya then "is it not reasonable then that Singapore should be the capital of any federation which would include the Borneo territories as well as Malaya? The site of Singapore was chosen in 1819 because it was the natural centre of the area. It still is."

A Limbang writer said that when the head of state of Sarawak was chosen from a particular race in the state then the other races would be unhappy, having wanted someone from their own race appointed.

"It seems to me, and many who have pride in Sarawak identity will agree, that there is only one compromise to the situation, namely the Brooke family. Anthony Brooke will be a far more acceptable figure as our Head of State and will satisfy all Sarawakians. Then Sarawak will be able to have her old identity back, but with a difference, that the Rajah is only a constitutional head. If we are in Malaysia our Rajah must also be given the right to be elected the Yang di-Pertuan Agong."

"Ours is a country akin to Utopia where robbery is virtually unheard of and communism is only a sprinkling which can be wiped out. Are we to see this peaceful country become a happy hunting ground for the warring of the various factions with political ambitions — another Congo?"

"Let us accept Malaysia for a trial period, say five years, with reservations inscribed in our new Constitution that if we find that we are losing too much in this merger, we can opt out just like Jamaica had done from the West Indies Federation."

". . . I can plainly see that the Malaysia Plan is nothing but an elusive scheme to prolong rule of colonialism directed against the political advancement of the people of Sarawak. The right of self-determination to govern herself without outside interference is now being obviously suppressed."

But while the politicians and the majority of the people were discussing the pros and cons of the Malaysia proposal, and the various safeguards they would expect, a few others were taxing their minds over the most suitable name for the new nation when it came into being.

Thus Bornesia or Masineo (MAlaya-SINgapore-BornEO) were two suggestions put forward by one person in the letters column of the Sarawak Tribune.

Nonsense, said another letter writer a few days later. Borsima — Borneo-Singapore-Malaya — was a far better name.

One district council even suggested Borbrusima — Bor for Borneo, Bru for Brunei, Si for Singapore and Ma for Malaya — as the most suitabe name for the new Federation.

Even in Sabah, there was some discussion on the name for the proposed new nation. The Borneo Times, for example, said that Malaysia was a bad name.

> "Imagine the horror in Kuala Lumpur if it were proposed to call the new country Sino-Eastasia, Ibania or Murutania.
>
> "Malaysia is equally inappropriate. Our suggestion: Confederation of Southeast Asia. A mouthful but suitably neutral from the racial viewpoint."

When the Cobbold Commission was visiting Sarawak, several delegations objected to the name 'Malaysia'. One group said that it would support the Malaysia proposal but only if the federated states were called "United States of Malaya, Sarawak, Singapore, Brunei and North Borneo."(Fancy composing a national anthem to fit that mouthful!)

Another group meeting the Commission suggested "Federation of States of South East Asia."

But all of these suggestions came to nought. When the Cobbold Commission issued its report, it was quite brusque on the question of what the new federation should be called.

"The Commission sees no alternative to the name 'Malaysia' for the proposed new federation."

And that was that.

They Say . . . . .

by
Wilfred Nissom
Ding Seling
Aloysius Dris

The man stared at us. He was trying frantically to sort out his thinking, trying to put words to the things that rushed to his mind. We had asked what in his mind were the important happenings in Sarawak since Merdeka, 20 years ago.

It was not a difficult question. But 20 years is a long time and one remembers many things, many events . . . It is going to take some thinking . . . going over all those years. Finally, he said simply, "Latok Laman" and with a shrug he changed the subject.

He was a taxi driver, he said . . . he has been around a lot but he moves fast and people and places do not make impression easily on him. The price of petrol occupied his mind much more, he explained.

The man was not very articulate. Just an ordinary man-in-the-street, not the type, it seemed, who thrives on election fever and as he emphasized he did not dwell on things too deeply.

His reply, nevertheless, was significant. It was spontaneous. In his mind, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub stood out prominently over everything else and he simply associated all happenings of the last 20 years with that name.

Our taxi driver was not alone in that view. Many ordinary people readily talked of the changes they noticed around them. They could see a lot of changes, they said. In Kuching. In Bintulu . . . they recalled the old times, back in the 60's. They agreed that much progress has been made since then. Always, there was a name mentioned: Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub.

The man has dominated over one decade of Sarawak politics, cast powerful influence over much that was going on and done in Sarawak during this time. An undisputed leader in the most active decade since Merdeka.

The more politically-conscious had much to say on the standard of politics in Sarawak since Merdeka. There are obvious changes,

they point out, in the quality of our politicians. University graduates and professionals were rare species in the Council Negri of the 60's and so were Sarawak's spokesmen in the Dewan Rakyat in those years. Here is a remark from one veteran Sarawak politician whose active political life, we were told, dated well back before the Cobbold Commission:

> "In those days how well you are known to the rakyat was more important than your qualification . . . the graduates and the professionals, because of their occupations in the higher level of the Civil Service or in firms in towns, were generally less known, and so less acceptable, to the great majority of the voters . . . government dressers serving in small outstations or wealthy local businessmen or active Ketua Masyarakat or such like were more familiar to the masses and so stood better chance of winning seats in the Council Negri . . . the challenge of development, of administering and managing immediate post-colonial Sarawak was given to these people by the rakyat".

A retired Senior government officer, who contested in the first direct general election in 1970 and lost to a former rural health worker of the Anti-Malaria programme, talked of his experience on the field:

> "There were far too many candidates. Political parties were generally not on speaking terms. . . and with, say, $3,000 in your pocket you could put up quite a good fight. There was considerable vote-splitting . . ."

And this is what he had to say on election campaigning in those days:

> "There was not much definite political or developmental issues in the campaigning . . . mudslinging was most common and attacks on personal character of one's opponent always created quite a bit of excitement . . . but defamation or libel suits were rare". (laughter)

The formation of coalition government in 1970 and, later on the Barisan Nasional brought about considerable changes in the politics in Sarawak. Political party disputes and squabbles were reduced and narrow partisan issues gave way more and more to common concern for political stability and economic development.

In the early years after Merdeka, the more intellectual among our political personalities did not, it seemed, always enjoy the distinction or the glory from their superior education. Our veteran politician had this to say:

> "The local intellectuals and young professionals (and they were not many), because their ideas tended to challenge established habits and prejudices of the earlier era, were at times felt as irritants . . . and indeed one later on was known to have been sacked from his Ministerial post! (a loud burst of laughter)"

The situation today is greatly different. Out of the 48 present State assemblymen, many have university or college education or professional qualifications. We noted the following remark from a senior Civil Servant in the State Secretariat:

> "In the recent years, the principal men in the State Cabinet have good education . . . It was a deliberate policy of the previous Chief Minister, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, and continued by the present CM, to bring more and more qualified people into the State Assembly and this will have a far reaching effect on the quality of politics in our State".

It cannot be doubted that there is now much greater political maturity among the political leaders in Sarawak. Among the electorate too there are signs of increased political awareness. Our Orang Ulu interviewee did not quite agree:

> "Increased political awareness? Well, maybe. Perhaps more abvious in the urban areas, among urban and semi urban electorates. But in the ulu areas, most rural folks remain probably as ignorant as they were 20 years ago . . . only now they vote more enthusiastically when there is a general election . . . and speculating on who wins and who loses is the greater motivation not the political issues . . . because so and so's son or uncle or cousin is involved and that can get the ulu folks emotionally involved".

The State Government's efforts in expanding its social and developmental sectors in the last 10 years or so have tended to also change the issues of politics and administration. Another interviewee made this observation:

> "Council Negri Sessions in those early years after Merdeka devoted much time on issues which today our State Assembly would probably quite happily leave to the Administration.

> I recall an occasion when hot argument almost erupted over the question of salary advances for the month in which Hari Raya Puasa happened to fall.
>
> These days debates and speeches are more and more on developmental and economic issues which are of much wider scope and implications . . . less and less issues of limited or localised relevance; our District Action Committees or our State Development Office takes care of those".

Barisan Nasional was formed to reduce politicking so that greater attention could be devoted to development and welfare of the masses.

The advantages of this concept in practice has been demonstrated . . . generously publicised. At least it cannot be denied that Barisan Nasional principles do indeed reduce, if not prevent, bitter and wasteful partisan squabbles.

But what about the less publicised side of Barisan Nasional? Obviously no one wants to imagine that it is perfect. Nothing is perfect.

Our interviews collected the following remarks. There are, it seems, aspects of the Barisan Nasional ideology which appear to be causing a great deal of dissatisfaction, if not injustice, to some quarters:

> "There is much sense in the Barisan Nasional concept, especially in the beginning. But I think that after a time, say,10 years the concept ought to be reviewed. Otherwise it will begin to display its inevitable weakness, that is, its inability to accommodate the natural shift and change of party preferences of the electorates . .
>
> 'Barison Nasional just keep trying to ensure that the member party keeps winning in the same constituency, keeps retaining the same number of seats . . . the assumption seems to be that the electorate is static in their party political preferences ... if in the beginning you have been represented by *that* component party of the BN,, then you remain represented by *that* Party, presumably for good, even if *that* BN component party has lost the confidence of the electorate of *that* constituency . . . you cannot ask to be represented by another component of the BN . . . if you seek to be represented by a non-Barisan party then you are told that you are deliberately seeking to be missed out in development. That is what has been said during election campaigns".

Another of our interviewes simply put it this way:

> "The main concern of the BN during general elections is not that the rakyat get the chance to put up the wakil they really want but that the rakyat vote the candidate that the BN give them".

Here is another.

> "In the practice of the BN principles the fortunes of the component political parties are placed above the principle of free choice of the rakyat".

Our interviewees, however, agree that much progress has been achieved in the decade of Barisan Nasional, that the concept and practice of BN has contributed a great deal to the political stability necessary for the planning and implementation of major development programmes.

Sarawak's relations with the Central Government is much better now than before and we have made considerable progress towards national integration.

There was a time not very far back, our interviewees pointed out, when the situation was vastly different. They recalled many incidents which they said were signs of poor understanding between Sarawak and the people of Peninsular Malaysia and were grave obstacles to national integration. It is, they agree, an outstanding achievement of our leaders, that we have been able to reach the present condition of political and social harmony.

One member of a political party, now happily enjoying a good rest from active party politics, offered his views on some of the causes of poor relations between Sarawak and Semenanjung in the early years after Merdeka:

> "Many leaders in Peninsular Malaysia failed to appreciate the fact that Sarawak was a country before Malaysia was formed. It already had an established political set-up . . . it was under British colonialism, true, but a political system nevertheless. Sarawak already had administrative and judicial systems, its own civil service, its own education system . . . its ethnic makeup too is unique and Sarawak just could not fit easily into the administrative and political patterns or styles conceived of in Semenanjung against the background of different social and ethnic structures there . . ."

Another political party man expressed this point:

"Those who were anxious to assert federal control over the affairs of Sarawak . . . to effect political and administrative uniformity in the shortest possible time . . . became impatient with the 'specialness' of Sarawak, with Sarawak's insistence on special consideration in a number of major issues . . . and they tended to misinterprete this as regionalism, a reluctance to accept Central authority . . . these were real obstacles to cordial State/Federal relations in the 60's and even in the early 70's."

Says one interviewee:

"Sarawak leaders today tend to talk less of the 'specialness' of Sarawak and instead show much concern for national integration".

This, he thinks, is an outcome of greater rapport between Sarawak and Semenanjung leaders, an outcome of greater trust all round:

"National integration is promoted through trust and this is best promoted by our national leaders and Federal Administrators practising a lot of patience and understanding in their dealings with Sarawak situations.

We are not likely to achieve national integration or national unity quickly simply by official enactments insisting on uniformity here and uniformity there . . . that can really irritate Sarawak and can produce response that can also irritate the Central government . . . so we produce the opposite feelings that we wish to promote to bring about national unity . . . it may sound ironic but the excellent relations that now exist between Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia is the result of greater tolerance of Federal administrators to diversities in Sarawak . . . the greater the willingness to accept diversities the greater is the chance to build up the trust necessary to achieve national integration".

The Civil Service in Sarawak has greatly expanded, in step with the increased tempo of development in the last decades after Merdeka. Outstations administration is continually being improved with both manpower and facilities and better communications system has reduced the isolation which used to be the dread in outstation service.

Sarawak's State Secretary, Datuk Amar Abang Haji Yusuf Puteh, gets a lot of tribute. Here is a fairly lighthearted one from a subordinate who knows "Datuks SS" well:

> "After 20 years of administrative overburden the Civil Service suddenly became so overgrown with untidy hairs that it alarmed the State Secretary into his famous anti-longhair campaign . . . then just to make sure that the resultant over-occupation of his men with combing and grooming did not cause them to be late for work he also launched the punctuality campaign (laughter) . . ."

The Government also launched efficiency campaigns. All these and the newly instituted Civil Service Day as well as more organized recreation for the Government officers contribute towards enhancing morale and professional consciousness in the Civil Service.

Those who have seen enough elsewhere to make comparison think that Sarawak Civil Service maintains a number of characteristics which Civil Services in many other countries in this region lack or no longer have at all. A foreigner, a widely travelled timber businessman remarked: :

> "Sarawak Civil Service still maintains that informal touch which makes it very approachable . . . what they lack in computers they have plenty in the way of friendliness and courtesy . . . the civil service staff in Sarawak are less officious . . . they appear to enjoy a good salary scheme and generous service benefits . . . smart uniforms . . . . . good morale . . ."

Between 1980 and 1982, over 200,000 rural dwellers benefited from the Flying Doctor Service, many of them in areas without the benefit of a local Hospital Assistant and far away from the nearest Clinic Desa. We noted the views of a young graduate politician. He thinks the Flying Doctor Service is a capital idea, good thinking, he says, on the part of the Medical Department:

> ". . . The Flying Doctor Service extends to the interior communities the quality of medical care which were rarely available to them before . . ."

Our young Barisan Nasional politician reckons the Service is a powerful political asset:

> "The Flying Doctor Service is quite easily the most convincing evidence of government care for the interior communities".

Government Officers at the Civil Service Day Rally, 1982.

Government Staff and Uniformed government personnel at the Civil Service Day Rally, 1982.

". . . An extremely expensive service . . . " says one Kuching doctor.

A KEMAS teacher says that the Flying Doctor's visit is very exciting!:

"The helicopter comes from a great height, over the hills . . . impressive . . . the villagers come out. Not all are sick. But the coming of the Flying Doctor Service is itself important and very exciting . . . a sparkling moment in a dull Kampung life . . . they welcome it . . . they can see the government still cares for them.

Electricity which at one time was the privilege of the town dwellers has now begun to reach many distant longhouses. This is the result of the government Rural Electrification Programme.

In the near future, when the Batang Ai Hydroelectric project is completed electricity will become available to wider areas of Sarawak, reaching rural communities which have hitherto experienced no other sources of power except that from wood and kerosene. This Hydro project together with another one being planned at Pelagus may one day produce electricity well in excess of Sarawak's maximum need.

Rural electrification has brought about significant changes in the life of the rural dwellers. Says one rural school teacher:

"Electricity encourages the rural communities to desire for luxuries such as fridges and television sets . . ."

It cannot be denied certainly that electrificiation has brought much convenience to the rural communities. But there are, however, some accompanying problems. A kampung dweller expresses one of them:

"I am now worried about cash . . . I used cash to pay for wires and other things to get the electricity to my house. I was ready for that . . . then, it does not stop there. You continue to need cash to pay for your electricity . . . then your electric bulbs blow and you need cash again . . ."

It is a new problem to the rural communities whose normal economic life is not cash-earning. But it is not a problem which will cause rural communities to reject electricity, says our school teacher:

"You see the houses next to you get the electricity and you also want your own house to have it . . . this thing you cannot pay with

your harvest of hill padi . . . so they just have to think of cash more often now . . . to alter some of their economic activities in order to get cash . . ."

Luxuries such as the television sets which have become more common in the rural villages with the arrival of electricity are bound to have some profound effects on the thinking of the rural people. What effects, for example, do passionate romantic scenes on TV have on the young viewers in the longhouse? What thoughts run in the minds of the impoverished and underfed in rural areas when they see T.V. children enjoying "Kentucky Fried Chicken"? Frustration? Rising expectation? New social styles and values? Food for thought.

Among our most outstanding achievements since Merdeka is in road construction and road improvement. This is described elsewhere in this book.

Considerable attention has been given to roads in the rural areas, the home of the great majority of our people. Between 1979 and 1983, the state spent more than $16,000,000 on construction and improvement of rural and kampung roads alone.

Roads have powerful influence on economic development. And in the rural areas they set in motion numerous changes which affect the quality and way of life of the people. Rural roads facilitate movements of the interior communities and increase their contact with the urban centres. The following are some extracts of views by villagers in rural First Division on the social effects of rural roads:

". . . from my Kampung we used to carry provisions for one meal on the way before reaching Bau town . . . we walked along the jungle tracks . . . Our new road now cuts the journey to two hours and on the back of a pickup truck the trip takes less than an hour . . ."

"Our roads make it possible for us to sell jungle produce to get cash . . . cash is a new necessity in our life . . ."

"The number of people in this area cultivating their land with cash crops has greatly increased since the government built our road . . ."

"There used to be only a few houses in this Kampung with zinc sheets for roofs . . . now with a light lorry you can bring up better materials for your house."

"The road makes the town nearer . . . but the town brings many bad influences . . . years ago the young people walked for hours through the jungle path for their occasional visits to the town. Now their occasional visits is to this Kampung, from the opposite end, from the town where they now prefer to live . . . if we want to carry out development projects here we will be short of active manpower."

"Rural migration is not caused by new rural roads linking the villages to the towns . . . anyway, youth migration to towns is not always bad. The youth learn new ideas, new skills . . ."

We wanted to discover some views on the other side of 'development', the less desirable social effects of progress. Our friendly police officer obliged us here with remarks on the conditions of law and order today compared with that of 20 years ago:

"You are a Kuching man, right? O.K. So you go around Kuching area a bit, right? Right. How many houses do you see without formidable metal fences, huh? What about the formidable metal grills to their doors and windows? Do you notice? What do you think of that, huh? Haaa . . . ha! You see what I mean? Do you think people love to be fenced in like that or are there reasons today that make all these fencing and grills a necessity? . . . and what do many policemen have around their hips nowadays, huh? We did not wear guns in those days, did we? But now they do, right? Right. So what does that tell you about security and crimes these days?"

He made his point all right. The nature of crimes and security problems today has indeed changed greatly. Anyone can see that, says our interviewee. Organised crimes and 'white collar' crimes are more common now. Drug-pushing is a relatively recent thing in the crime scene in Sarawak. But, says our police officer, it is by far the most destructive crime item in our time.

But if the nature of crimes has changed greatly, so too is the quality of our police personnel and the degree of sophistication in their methods. They have developed better communication network and are quite capable of adequate and discreet surveillance of potential crime situations. The police is now a vastly expanded force and is tuned to meet the needs of our circumstances.

Finally we asked how have changes in the last 20 years affected our standard of living on the whole.

We talked to a political party man who once belonged to the inner circle of the ruling group in the early 1960s:

> ". . . . . on the whole the state is economically better now than before".

A young politician from Padungan expressed his view thus:

> ". . . . . getting better rapidly in some quarters and getting worse and worse in some . . . . . Definitely you see less and less bicycles being used these days and more and more cars jam our roads . . . . . and if you move around in Kuching and its vicinity you will see fabulous brick houses where 10 years or even 2 years ago there were only attap and wooden kampung houses . . . . . but you look a bit further into our situation, you will find that there are sections of our population which are not benefitting from changes and are indeed getting worse from changes in the cost of living."

The culprit, said our unhappy pensioner who was a senior officer in a government Department before he retired, is inflation and this reduces the purchasing power of those with meagre or fixed incomes:

> ". . . . . spending $300 a month on food in the early 1960's was luxurious: sugar was 15¢ a kati and the best quality rice was around $2.00 per gantang, vegetables were cheap . . . . . a wage earner who earned $150 a month could survive reasonably well."

The rising cost of living hurts the rural dwellers more severely. A rubber tapper who now sells jungle produce for a living told us this:

> "My small rubber garden yielded around 4 katies of rubber a day in those days when I tapped. That earned me around $5 . . . . . that paid for my rice, my salted fish, my kerosene and a few other things. I was healthy on my income. Now, $5 cannot support me for a week . . . . . do I look like a well-fed man? My wife is sickly and my two young boys left school and work in a brick factory . . . . . their children will probably also grow up to be coolies . . . . . "

This turned out to be a typical tale of the rural dwellers whose toil in their rubber or pepper gardens can no longer yield enough to match the rising cost of living.

There are those who are not hurt by inflation. These are the lucky section of our population whose incomes have improved rapidly as a result of their advantageous situations in our economic and social setup.

The economic gap has become wider between this section of the population and the great majority who have not benefited much from economic development in the last 20 years.

> "In this situation", said one of our interviewees, "lies the biggest challenge to our government . . . . . because in this situation lies the seeds of discontentment and political instability . . . . . the rakyat do not know the complicated economic forces which cause the purchasing power of their Ringgit and Cents to fall . . . . . they just blame the government because it is the government that is entrusted with the responsibility of handling the economic situation of the country . . . . . "

There is a strong tendency among our interviewees to blame the government for the rising cost of living, falling prices of agricultural commodities and poverty in the rural areas.

An interviewee said:

> "The government fails on two counts . . . . . the government does not effectively control the towkays, the wholesalers and retailers who are the outlets of consumer goods . . . . . they can manipulate prices and the poor suffer . . . . . The government also manages the natural resources of this state poorly . . . . . we had much oil but during the oil boom, the price of petrol and petroleum products in this state was high . . . . . We have a lot of timber in the interior of this state but during the timber boom, the forests disappeared faster than rural development came in . . . . . we have plenty of land but it is not exploited effectively . . . . . "

Here is another:

> "The government failed to control the manner and speed of exploiting our natural resources . . . . failed to control the flow of money that came from the exploitation of our timber areas and our oil resources and failed to ensure an increase in production of food and consumer goods to match the quantity of money in the country . . . . . The result is rising prices . . . . . good for the

sellers . . . . . bad for the poor buyers, the rural dwellers, who form the great bulk of our population."

From a civil servant:

"The situation is quite demoralizing. It produces situations that tempt civil servants to breach the code of conduct of the civil service."

There it is. The headache of being the government. The privilege and the ease to criticise enjoyed by the rakyat and those outside the government. Dissatisfaction can be endless.

Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau,
Paramount Chief of the Orang Ulu.

Temenggong Salau anak Jabon,
Paramount Chief of the Bidayuh.

Hopes And Expectations

by
Paul Kadang

What are hopes and expectations? Are they something esoteric or are they tangible and immediate? Hopes and expectations are concepts, which are not far-fetched, for they have an important bearing on the problems and prospects of statehood, nation building, and indeed, statesmanship.

One way to explore them is to focus on the question of needs, which is the origin of hope. In a community like ours needs are not merely human requirements, they also describe wants which go beyond the individual to such areas as organizations, society, ethnic groups, the state, and finally, our country.

People's needs are important and governments of all ages have struggled to fulfill them. They can be basic such as the necessity for food, housing and clothing. At the psychological level, humans are in need of safety, affection and the feeling of belongingness — powerful factors which can act or motivate citizens to participate in politics, even to lead. The people of Sarawak have similar needs, a fact which has an important bearing on the politics of the land. To this end the identification of needs becomes important. Expressed through such channels as the mass-media, correspondence with our people's representatives and functionaries, needs, hopes and expectations help determine such things as development priorities and projects, the fruits of our independence and freedom. In short, a need is a factor in deciding who gets what, when and how. In the interplay of decision-making process much time and effort are expended as all governmental bodies struggle to compete and compromise on points of their own particular hopes and expectations. On a societal scale successive governments in Sarawak have had to accommodate our demands and satisfy our needs lest they risk public censure come election time. The development of needs to hopes involves the interaction between our leaders and government on one side and members of the society on the other.

When needs become more acceptable to the people, instead of merely expressions of personal dreams and requirements, and when our leaders accept and champion these needs, then hopes become possible.

In general it is the role of our leaders and their advisors to identify our hopes. At the community level, the more parochial needs and hopes are expressed by ethnic leaders, the *ketua masyarakat*, whose bounds of concern may even take them beyond their own communities into the area of inter-ethnic endeavours. At the lower end of the hierarchy are individuals and they too express hopes. Indeed, the more roles a person has to play the greater are the number of his hopes likely to be.

By their very nature hopes are varied and general. In our rural areas, the hopes are generally basic; what the people want are amenities that will give them material aid and comfort. Very often the call is for more roads, medical services, water supply, electricity, house improvement and so on. These are items which are taken for granted in the urban centres but which are something of an innovation in the rural areas. In the more hilly parts of Sarawak where fresh water is available in sparkling unpolluted streams, the call for water supply involves little more than the construction of a small reservior and the laying of connecting plastic (PVC) pipelines to the villages concerned. To take another example: in the last several years there has been a marked scarcity of easily available timber for making houses. Because of this there has been a rise in the demand for adequate housing.

When asked to express their hopes most people focus on their more immediate needs. Thus, for instance, rural dwellers inevitably talk about amenities; but when the conversations touch on future affairs, the concern is not so much on physical developments but rather on values, morality, and stability, as well as the yearning for continuity. Values are collective goals, they are also a standard for making choices. Values are also modes of conduct, meaning that such traits as fairness, civility and prudence are part and parcel of values.

The oft-repeated theme is the desire for tranquility or stability in this state. On continuity the hope is that succeeding generations would devise an acceptable formula for cultural co-existence in this state. The point here is not to question the emphasis on national culture but rather to emphasise the hope that the various

cultures in the state be allowed to continue as they are. In this way future citizens are given their proper "roots".

Among those of all ages who are in school the broadest hope is for better educational facilities and resources. School children have often remarked on the crowded conditions in their schools. Very often, they complain that because of overcrowding they are unable to concentrate on their studies. Overcrowding has tended to sap their enthusiasm. The other areas of hope are for adequate textbooks, either on loan or to be made available in the school library; and for a sufficient number of seats in our institutions of higher learning. Perhaps, it has been suggested, the state should consider expanding the local branches of Universiti Pertanian and MARA Institute of Technology. Lastly, many students have expressed the hope that the number of scholarships be increased in order to accommodate rising demand and the expanding varieties of specializations.

These are examples of hopes which have emerged from our needs. The evolution of needs to hopes is the product of socializing influences, it is the result of social forces at work in our society. It is also an end result of deliberate stimulation by our political leaders who, in their role as organizational or communal representatives, have had to grapple with the myriads of needs, to sort them out to their satisfaction and to begin the process of promoting them to become what we recognise as hopes, or in its escalated form, aspirations. As our roles become more complex our leaders have also sought to focus on areas beyond the level of the individuals. There is every confidence that the traditional racial harmony in Sarawak will not only be maintained but strengthened. The other point is the issue of State-Federal relationship; the sentiment at this point is that while the need to build a cohesive and strong Malaysia is readily accepted, policies of nation building and national integration also need to consider local flavours and sensitivities. Time, resources, and diplomacy will help blur the stinging edges of parochialism and suspicion, and the hope is that, as each succeeding generation takes over control, each is blessed with these advantages in order to strengthen the Federation.

On governmental affairs very high hopes are placed on the objectives and leaderships of both the state and federal governments which have endorsed and indeed campaigned on the slogan

of being *Bersih, Cekap dan Amanah.** Compared to other bureaucracies, the Sarawak civil service is an efficient body. However, in the light of changes in the past couple of years — for example, in the clock-in system, the "Leadership by Example" campaign, and the introduction of new procedures and machines as part of the overall attempt to instill a greater sense of dedication — there exists the hope that the civil service would be even more efficient and effective. With improvements in the civil service system, it is expected that the government would be more alert to the need of awarding promotions and that their enactments would incur less delay.

And what about expectations? In its general meaning, an expectation is a prospect in life, a probable gain. Thus, to expect is "to wait for, to look forward to; to look in as likely to happen; to look for as one's due; to await, to anticipate." The difference between hopes and expectations is that while the realization of the former is (desirable and) merely possible, that of the latter has a much greater degree of probability. The emergence of expectation is rooted both in the basic needs of our people and also in the interplay of our politics. That is in its development both our citizens and our leaders help build expectations and the resulting consensus — at whatever level and however it is arrived at — gives expectations a great deal of weight both from the view of policy makers and planners as well as of the public at large. The goals of the two concepts will also serve to differentiate them. In contrast to the goals of hopes which are ordinarily vague and generalised, the objects of expectations are specific, prescriptive, even particular — at least from the view point of its champions.

Those who build expectations, the public and their leaders, have tended to view them as entitlements, not just what they could receive, but what they *should have* as well. The view of expectations as entitlements is a factor in the political and social processes in our country. Because expectations originate from our leaders it is a force to be reckoned with, and because the public view an expectation as something which they deserve, it has a good degree of psychological resilience. Perhaps, because it is a factor in our politics, attitudes, and dispositions, an expectation enjoys a good deal of moral acceptance by the people. In other

* Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy.

words, the legitimacy of an expectation is often unquestioned for, once it is identified and championed, an expectation is often viewed as an entitlement. Therefore, if after the first or second instance of lobbying for the realization of a particular expectation — it could be, for instance, a development project or even an official support for the standardization of one's language — the goal is still unrealized, and the effort stalemated, the proponents of the expectation will probably try again.

In the future, succeeding generations can expect significant economic, social, cultural, or even political changes in Sarawak. We cannot predict specifically what changes will occur and what will not. However, we can identify just what Sarawakians can expect within a specific time frame. But first let us examine the underlying Malaysian conditions within which these expectations will operate.

The first of these is the fact that Sarawak is a state, one out of thirteen member states of the Malaysian Federation. The point here is not to put this membership into question for the matter was settled by the founders of Malaysia twenty years ago, but rather to note on the subsequent relationship between the two levels of government. Fears about the impact of the so-called federal interference on state affairs had resulted in a number of well-publicised frictions. A case in point was the row over the "Borneanization" of the civil service. This is one of the more well known instances which made the early phase of state-federal relations especially colourful. The major underlying condition which need to be expressed here is the fact that the Federal Government has more substantial powers than our State and the theme on the usage of that list of powers has been to centralise. The centralization theme is likely to persist as Malaysia seeks to consolidate its strength internally, as it continues the process of nation-building. It is thought that as a process, nation-building will continually test the ability and patience of our leaders, and in this there are five fundamental areas of nation building namely: identity, legitimacy, penetration, participation, and distribution.

The hope often expressed here is that if a way could be found to retain and, where they are concurrent, even widen state control without unduly creating ill-will or offending the sensitivity of the Federal Government, then this should be allowed. The argument on this is as localised as it is subjective, self-centred and body-

bound. Its operative factor is that if the origin of a particular case in point has much to do with Sarawak, then Sarawakians should be the primary beneficiary. The expectation on this matter is rather different: given the relative advantages of federal control (for instance, the availability of funds for the development of projects in question) and given the trend of centralization in the past decades, the expectation is for a continuation of central consolidation. Thus, in the all important realm of energy, for instance, the federal take-over of oil and gas exploitation eventually led also to federal control of the state's major supplier of energy, the Sarawak Electricity Supply Corporation (SESCO).

In addition to the centralization theme, the other underlying condition is the change in the economic ground rules after the events of May 13, 1969, which also saw the adoption of such measures as the prevention of the discussion of sensitive issues from public debates, the usage of social criteria (in addition to financial and administrative ones) for planning. And last, the emphasis on Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction. These are significant features of the post-13th May development and today one can say that there exists a broad consensus on these points.

However, as far as the arousal of Sarawakian expectations were concerned, no factor was more powerful or potent than the New Economic Policy which, after its introduction in early 1970s, was incorporated into the Second Malaysia Plan (1971-1975). The twin aims of the policy, which are to reduce poverty and to restructure our society in order to increase Bumiputra participation in the private sector, have done much to raise people's demands and expectations. In order to achieve the first aim the government is prepared to provide opportunities to the poor so that they participate in the process of the nation's economic growth. As for Bumiputra participation, it has become an established policy to free them from the traditional sectors of the economy. In other words, the inception of the New Economic Policy was the first glimmer of hope to break down the yoke of economic compartmentalization which had mightily constricted their activities in their own country. The objectives of eradication of poverty and the restructuring of society were reaffirmed by the Fourth Malaysia Plan.

What then are our prospects? It is a fact that Sarawak is well endowed with a number of mineral products. We have coal, oil,

and gas. Sarawak has an abundance of water supply and timber; it is also a noted producer of pepper and rubber. Even the quality of our soil is not that discouraging. Compared to that of some other parts of the world ours may appear infertile, but our soil is not so tátally impoverished that it cannot be agriculturally productive. On balance therefore our resources are impressive.

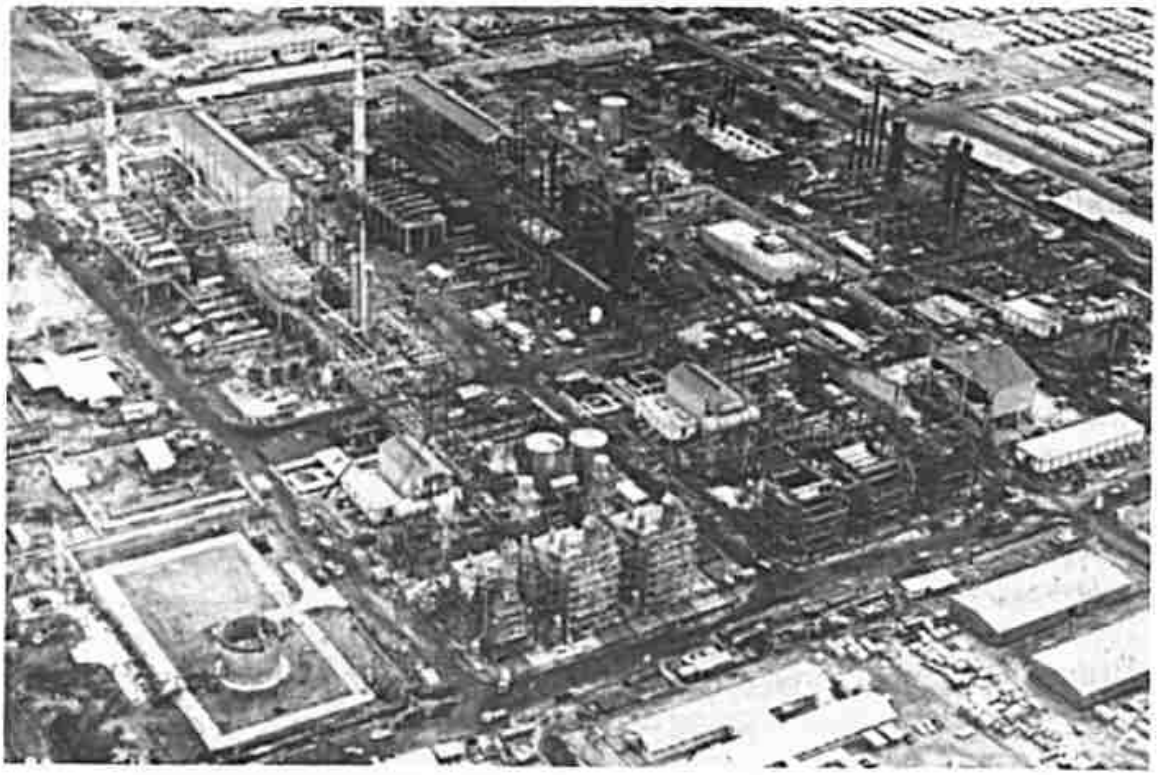
Moreover, Sarawak is stable in its politics and its civil service is efficient.

With these in mind one can ask the question as to when the state will be self-sufficient in its staples (rice and other foodstuff). Sarawak has the land space and a large number of trainable young people who are looking for employment. Can they be motivated and trained to help make Sarawak another rice bowl of Malaysia?

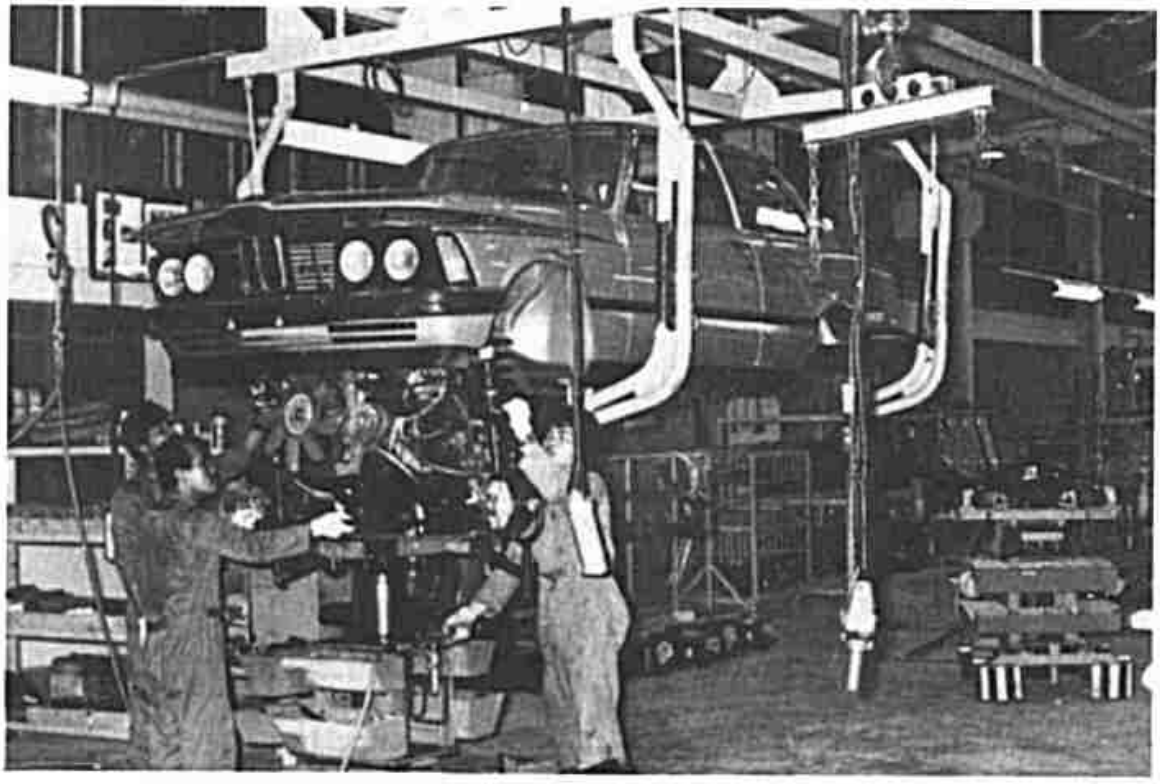
When will it be able to match the wealth of its neighbours (Brunei and Singapore) so that its able-bodied men can stay at home to labour, istead of going on what the Ibans call the *bejalai?* Should something be done to check the rural-urban migration?

Great strides are being made to make Sarawak a progressive society, and this trend is going to continue.

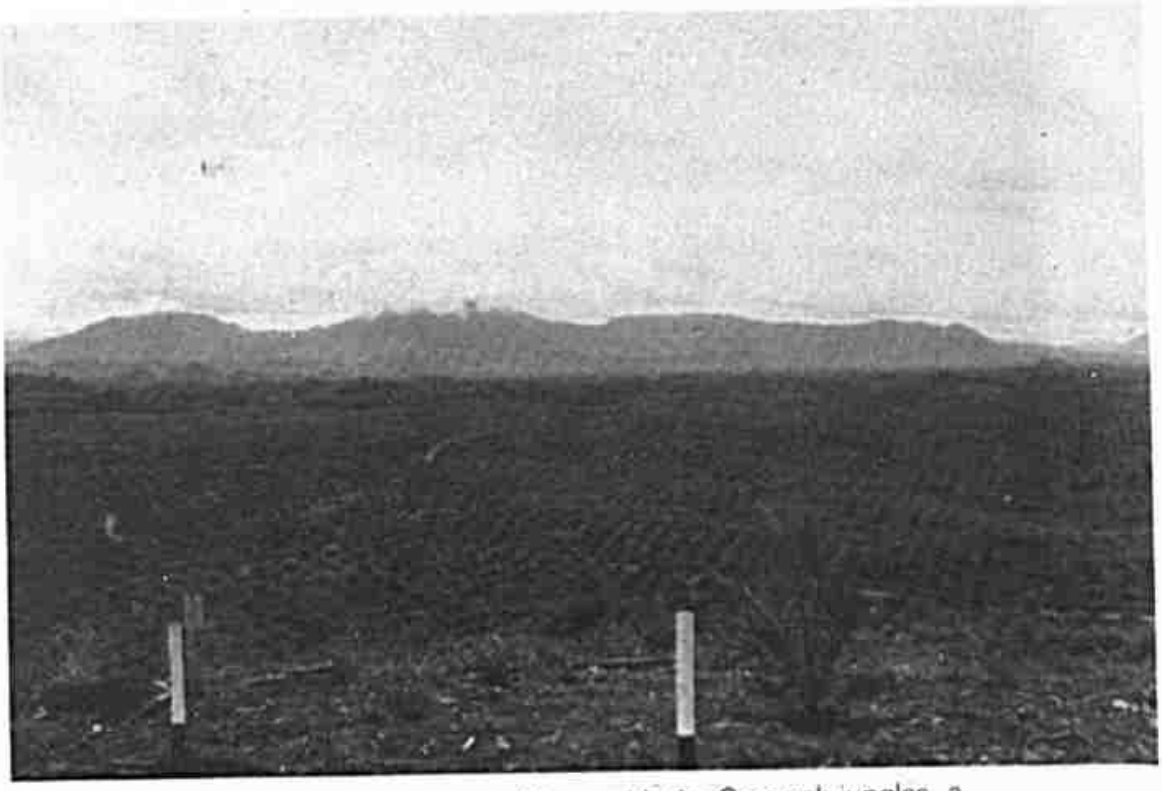
From the point of its physical development, Sarawak performance since the attainment of independence has been very impressive. Under the Third Malaysia Plan (1976-1980) the state expended just over $2,500 million, but under the current Fourth Malaysia Plan (1981-1985) Sarawak is targeted to spend double the amount. It has forged ahead with several ambitious and varied projects including the modernization of port facilities in our major towns, the building of a cement plant in Kuching, and the creation of a car assembly plant under the management of the Sarawak Motor Industries (SMI), and the setting up of the Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) which seeks to regulate timber exploitation in the state. In addition Sarawak has in Bintulu a number of projects, three of which are: the plant for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), a urea plant, and an aluminium smelter which cost billions of ringgits in investment. By the end of the century projects such as these could create well over twenty thousand permanent jobs; they are in themselves significant achievements. The impact undoubtedly is to add more expectations.



The Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Plant in Bintulu.

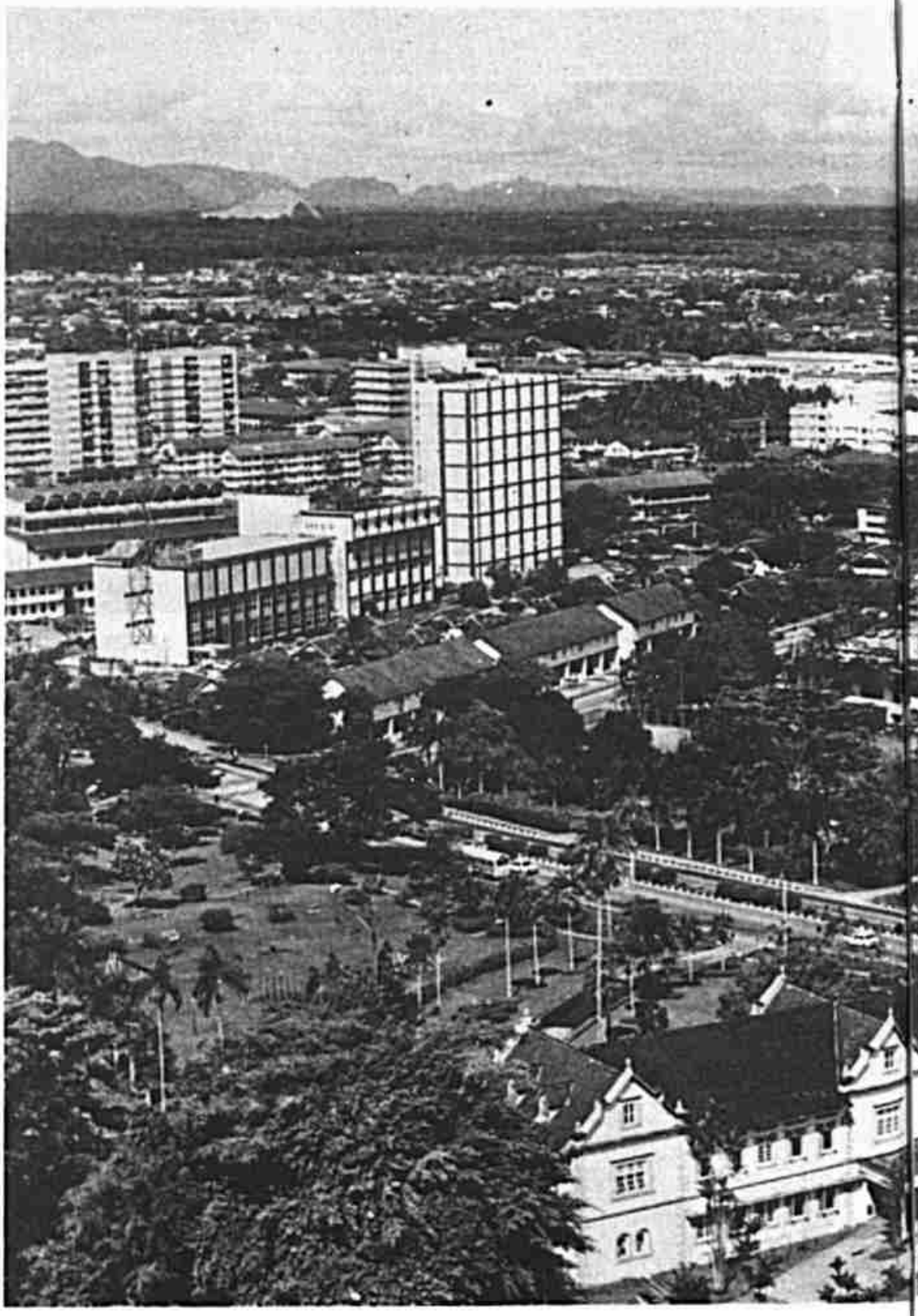


Sarawak Motor Industries (SMI) workers assembling a car at the SMI car-assembly plant.



SALCRA Oil Palm Scheme; and beyond it the Sarawak jungles, a rich source of timber.

A pepper farmer harvesting pepper.



Kuching, the Capital of Sarawak.

Sibu.

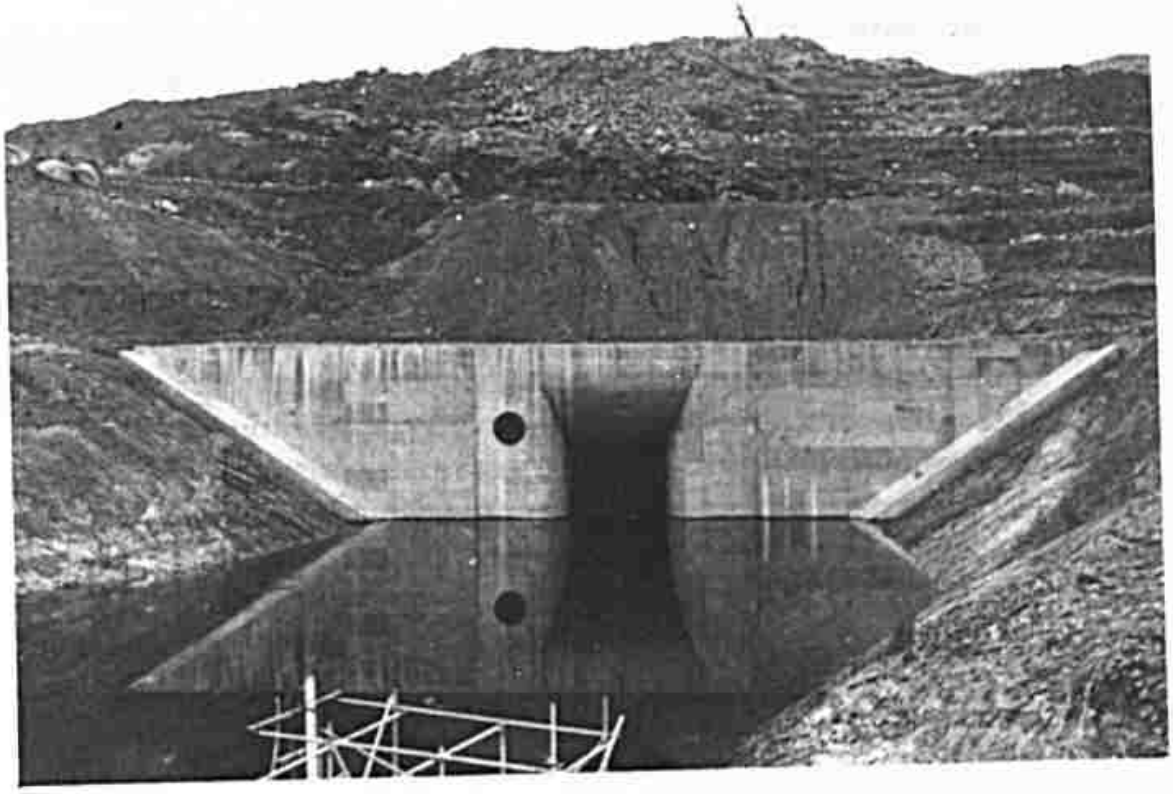
Miri.

Bintulu.

Tanjung Kidurong, the new industrial area and port near Bintulu.

The Housing Development Commission housing project at Petra Jaya, Kuching.

Constructing the main dam at the Batang Ai Hydroelectric Project.



A coffer-dam at the Batang Ai Hydroelectric Project.

There are other evidence of our new found vitality as well. In the field of energy, for instance, Sarawak is well on its way to develop a number of giant hydro power schemes first in Batang Ai and later in the Pelagus. A large section of Sarawak rural dwellers will benefit from these projects, and many more elsewhere will have light and energy as a result of the construction of the dams. Billions of ringgits will be expended to harness the rivers but the expected volume of power generated will justify the initial cost because much of the energy will be exported out of Sarawak. Further, there has been a leap in the number of people who have benefited from the nation's rural electrification programme. Up to 1975 the number of people who benefited was a dismal 5,000 but by 1980 the figure has increased to over 70,000. Under the current plans the trend is bound to continue. Almost inevitably, the overall consequence of these major industrial projects has been to stimulate the expectations of succeeding generations.

Sarawak's government, leadership, and participation are to be found in the major sectors of the economy as well. There are the various statutory bodies such as the Housing and Development Commission (HDC). Here again the image of unbounded government success is the rule. The HDC is expected to improve considerably its record of constructing 3,500 units of low cost houses under the Third Malaysia Plan to about 6,000 under the current Plan. Significantly, the HDC is also very active in elevating rural housing shortages and deficiencies, by instituting different schemes to assist rural dwellers in the restoration of longhouses.

The demand for housing is a fundamental point when we talk of the needs of Sarawakians and both private developers and government agencies work to serve this demand. Although complete data are not available on housing demands it is widely expected that the government, through its agencies, play a central role in trying to satisfy this need. For every unit that has been completed and offered for sale by the HDC or the Borneo Development Commission (BDC) there has been scores of applications.

In the rural areas, the source of their expectations arose from a different type of need. Here the tradition in home construction has generally been one of self-reliance, a sense of independence

which has endured to this day. By and large, therefore, the hope has been to seek adequate raw materials which not too long ago were in abundance. When the steady and progressive disappearance of cheap timber continued, when wood became scarce, many rural dwellers began to seek, even expect, government assistance.

Under the current plans some four hundred families are targetted to benefit from new houses and scores of others have successfully negotiated loans for house improvement. Rural expectations of active and positive government role in housing is high. To date there have been thousands of applications to the HDC alone, for assistance of all kinds.

Perhaps the most important area where the hopes and expectations of most Sarawakians reside is in the field of agriculture and land development, two features which are primarily a rural phenomenon. The complicating factor in this area is that compared to urbanites, a good proportion of our rural dwellers are somewhere below the poverty line. In 1976, 51.7% of Sarawak's population lived below or at poverty level. When the population of the state was dichotomised into rural and urban sectors it was found that only 16.3% of urban dwellers were considered poor while 60% of their rural cousins fell under that category.

In Sarawak the challenges of agriculture and land development are reinforced by two debilitating factors. As many rural Sarawakians are in effect poorer than the urbanites, many are unable to gain such items as credit facilities which are so necessary for their own economic take off. The other factor is distance. What they are often faced with is inaccessibility. To illustrate: to travel by car a distance of twenty miles would require a few dollars worth of petrol, but to reach the same destination by means of river transport would necessitate an expense many times that amount. In Sarawak, although the construction of road transportation is making an important headway, it is its rivers which provide the chief means of physical mobility. For rural Sarawakians, to the degree that their relative isolation is both expensive and time consuming, it has also affected their ability to participate fully in agricultural and land schemes.

Yet the hope for these people lies in the government's policy to eradicate poverty, a policy which has seen the promotion of sectoral programmes and projects to assist farmers as well as

increase productivity and the creation of improvement opportunities. More importantly, through successive Four Year Plans this pronouncements have led to rising expectations on the vitality and need for government assistance in agriculture and land development.

We encounter at this point a profound irony of development: progress begat new problems. The poverty level has been reduced significantly. In 1970 it was 49.3 per cent of the national population but by 1990 Malaysia's poor will be a mere 16.7 per cent. Likewise, there has been a marked rise in our income per capita which stood at $856.00 in 1970 to about $2000 this year (1983). Today Sarawakians are in a better financial position to acquire better clothing, more home appliances, and a greater variety of entertainment and recreational facilities. These material developments are manifestations of our greater wealth, compared to ten or twenty years ago.

One end result of the largely successful war against poverty has been the continuation of the general clamour for a yet higher standard of living. For the poor the government is expected to rescue them from their sorry state; for those above that line it is expected to provide them with a greater measure of amenities; and for those who are already living quite comfortably, the authorities are expected to install yet better and more varied ways of comfort.

The availability of material benefits inevitably leads to demands for more conspicuous consumption, and the belief that the future has much more to offer. To quote the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir:

> (The) people at all levels are demanding infrastructure on par with developed countries. If this expectation was to be realised the country would need greater revenue, meaning that the people should step up productivity as soon as possible.
>
> *Sarawak Tribune* May 1, 1983

The statement on the need for the haste to produce result is timely for rising expectations also give rise to a form of collective dependency. The problem lies in the fact that people have been conditioned to believe in and expect the near omnipotence of the government in its ability to deliver the rewards of independence.

Further, it may be assumed that exposure to stories of government achievements, that range from completion of minor rural projects to the unveiling of more large-scale and grandiose plans, each successive year has ushered in a partial rise in our people's expectations.

There are times when these expectations could not be met, at least not in the time frame specified by the people concerned. For instance, in a period of economic recession the government becomes cautious in spending in an effort to move the country to recovery. Under this sort of situation, the people's expectations would have to be temporarily lowered until the economy is in full stride again. Sarawak's economic recession is not expected to last beyond 1985, after which time the government will have even more funds to spend on development projects.

What else, therefore, can Sarawakians reasonably expect? The key that will activate successful progress in other sectors of Sarawak economy is the development of mass agriculture. In the light of this the government deserves to be congratulated on its foresight to tackle Sarawak's land and agricultural developments on several fronts in order that the state has a proper footing in the area.

Whatever the merits and impact of past agricultural policies on our rural dwellers have been, the primary organization which is involved in agriculture is in the middle of a systematic rejuvenation in an effort to be not only truly responsive to the people's expectations but also to be in the forefront of their development. To begin with under the current Plan over 100 million ringgits will be expended on new drainage and irrigation projects, an essential infrastructure of rice production which can, given the so-called "go ahead", bring over twenty thousand acres of land into production. In order to raise productivity the state government has adopted what has been termed as the National Extension Project (NEP). Established under this project will be centres and sub-centres for training and development as well as forward bases. The aim again is to restructure Sarawak's agricultural society in order that it may lose its turgid and somewhat inert character.

Today, of the number of government's agricultural policies unveiled so far, the *magnum opus*, and potentially the most ambitious from the farmers' point of view, is the concept of integrated

development. It is appropriate to quote from a position paper written by an ardent proponent of integrated development who said:

> It is in totality a community development exercise embracing the development of people inclusive of their mentality, aspirations, capability, the development of the environment in which they work and live, and the development of ways and means of how they may improve their livelihood. Agriculture is only one of the considerations, and for it to be considered without active reference to human and environmental considerations on which agricultural success will depend, would be an exercise in self-delusion. History in the local scene has taught us that agriculture, without the support of strong human and environmental development considerations, has only a dismal and patchy success....

The other area of agricultural development is land schemes. Again the tradition is for government participation if not its leadership and the expectation is for this trend to continue, perhaps with a greater measure of control. The Sarawak Land Development Board (SLDB) has had experience in the running of a number of estates and together with that of the Department of Agriculture (in rubber planting) its programmes had covered over 75,000 acres. For the years 1981 to 1985, however, only over 16,000 acres are earmarked for development, a trend which may be indicative of the SLDB's willingness to consolidate existing properties. The second organization is the Sarawak Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (SALCRA). Established during the Third Malaysia Plan (1976), SALCRA's function is to develop land for agricultural projects in order to help eradicate rural poverty and raise the productivity of native land. SALCRA engages in the development of oil palm, cocoa and rubber schemes. At the moment it is operating only in the First and Second Divisions.

The latest organization to enter land development and by far the most powerful governmental body in this field is the Land Consolidation and Development Authority (LCDA). Formed in October 1981, its role is to play a matchmaker between land owners and experts, and financiers who will then work together to develop specific projects. Plans are afoot for the LCDA to

embark on developments for industrial, agricultural (estates) as well as commercial and residential housing projects. Given its wide powers, LCDA will, without doubt, progress into an authority that will shoulder the state's burden of urban renewal schemes and the redevelopment of all types of land. It will be in the forefront of Sarawak's progress.

To recapitulate briefly, the recurring theme which appears in the broad overview above is one of surging material development and gains. Sarawak is a state blessed with many natural resources and with the passing of time, greater efficiency, and policy adjustments, Sarawakians will continue to enjoy even better distribution of material benefits.

In Retrospect

by

Datuk James Wong

It would be interesting to review again at this juncture, particularly for the benefit of the younger generation, and as a footnote to history to some of the thinking and discussions which preceded the entry of Sarawak into an Independent Malaysia.

As one who was deeply involved in the preliminary stages of the discussions on the *Concept of Malaysia* and thereafter as a member of the Inter-Governmental Committee which was responsible on determining the terms of Sarawak's entry into Malaysia, I would like on this very special year — 20 years later — to set down some of the perhaps untold stories.

The question often asked by Sarawakians before Malaysia was, "Why Malaysia? Why not some other arrangements?" One political party had even put forward the suggestion that we obtain Independence first and join Malaysia afterwards. But the prevailing political opinion of the day was that Sarawak's best and only option was independence within Malaysia. This was confirmed by the United Nations and the Cobbold Commission which carried out fact-finding missions to determine the wishes of the people. In 1963 the first General Election was held in which Malaysia was the main issue. By a merger of Sarawak, Malaya's eleven States, Singapore and Sabah to form the Federation of Malaysia, we brought together countries which were once governed by the British and which therefore had the same administration and a common language and also basically the same tradition of Civil Service, etc. Furthermore, at that time Indonesia was not very friendly towards Sarawak and this was an important factor which leaders of Sarawak had to take into consideration especially from the security point of view.

Looking back now 20 years later, we have reasons to be grateful that we had made a wise decision in accepting Independence within Malaysia. Our confidence in this decision has been totally justified. We have enjoyed 20 years of peace and happiness and

our economy has progressed by leaps and bounds. The people too have enjoyed tremendous progress socially, economically and politically.

Prior to the formation of Malaysia in the late 50's, several ideas were mooted, tossed around and considered by politicians in Sabah and Sarawak. One such idea was the Federation of the three States — Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei. These ideas, however, were non-starters.

In 1960 I was sent to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting in London and Belfast. During my visit there, two British officials from Whitehall tentatively sounded me out on my views as to whether the people of Sarawak would consider a Federation of the three Borneo States i.e. Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei together with Singapore and Malaya. I heard nothing further on this matter until Tunku Abdul Rahman publicly announced this proposal in 1961. Then on 23rd August, 1961 after coming down to Kuala Baram from a jungle timber survey trip in Baram, I received an urgent message inviting me to proceed immediately to Jesselton (now Kota Kinabalu) to attend the first Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee Meeting (MSCC), as a representative from the Council Negri, Sarawak. This meeting was chaired by the late Mr Donald Stephens, subsequently Tun Fuad Stephens. The meeting was held at the Secretariat Building in Jesselton and attended by members of the legislature from Sarawak, Sabah, Singapore and Malaya. It was at this meeting that the *Concept of Malaysia* was first discussed and was followed up by other similar meetings in Kuching, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. After the Concept of Malaysia was accepted and ratified by the respective legislative bodies, a joint Inter-Governmental Committee was set up to discuss the terms and conditions of the entry of each state into the new Federation of Malaysia.

On December 8, 1962 the Brunei Rebellion spilled over into Limbang in the Fifth Division of Sarawak and Subis and Bekenu in the Fourth Division. This had the effect of lending a sense of urgency in accelerating the formation of Malaysia. So on August 31, 1963 Malaysia was formed and I had the honour then as Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak to fly from Kuala Lumpur to New York to attend the first sitting of Malaysia in the 18th Session of the United Nations.

Indonesia then declared its Confrontation against Malaysia. To counter the Indonesian propaganda, a Truth Goodwill Mission headed by the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, and myself as Deputy Leader visited 14 countries in Africa. The visit lasted 40 days. It is interesting to note that most of the leaders whom we met during our visits are now either dead or have left the political scene. These leaders included president Nasser of Egypt, Prime Minister Nkruma of Ghana and President Tafewa Balewa of Nigeria, just to name a few. Thanks to the help of the Commonwealth and the moral support of the United Nations and the unity of the new Malaysian people, we were able to overcome the Indonesian Confrontation and in 1965 peace between Indonesia and Malaysia was restored.

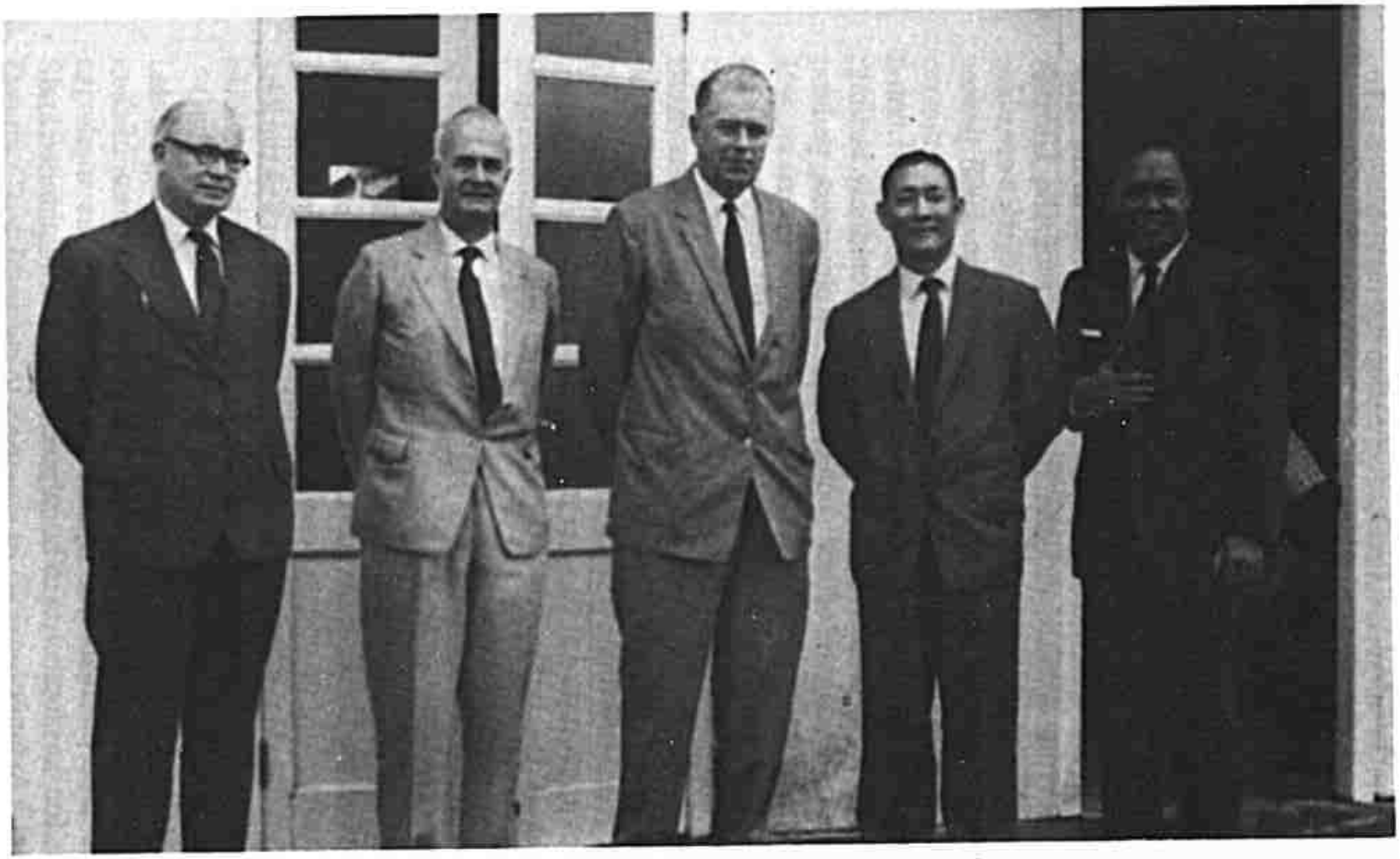
Since then Sarawak, as part of Malaysia, has enjoyed continuous progress. Sarawak has been extremely fortunate in that because of the nature of our society and the closeness, understanding and mutual respect of the people of different races, we have never experienced any racial strife. Even the May 13, 1969 racial riot in Peninsular Malaysia did not affect us in Sarawak. The communist problem within Sarawak has also been successfully contained, but problems and challenges there are and always will be. These are the inevitable facts every country must face. It would be appropriate at this point and time — 20 years later after Malaysia — for us to review these problems and the challenges ahead.

The Two Decades of Malaysia

Roughly the last two decades since Malaysia could be broken up into two parts. The first decade is the decade of fighting Indonesian Confrontation, a decade of learning and achievement of independence. The second decade is one of settling down to the job of consolidation. The second decade also coincided with the New Economic Policy and its implementation.

Politically, too, the first decade was a decade of considerable political activity in the State. The second decade, because of the more settled political atmosphere in the State, has made it possible for developments to be carried out in a more planned and systematic manner.

It is difficult to separate political stability with development as both are complementary. However, it is noted that even in the



Members of the Cobbold Commission which carried out fact-finding missions in Sarawak and Sabah to determine the wishes of the people of the two states about joining Malaysia.

C.P.A. 24-8-61, JESSELTON
FIRST MALAYSIA SOLIDARITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE.

The TYT Yang Di Pertua Negeri Sarawak, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, inspecting the guard of honour before a Dewan Undangan Negeri session.

Members of the Dewan Undangan Negeri at a recent Dewan Undangan Negeri Session.

second decade, the achievement of development has still fallen short of the projection for the planned period. The challenges ahead in maintaining the pace of development looking at it from this point and time, 20 years after independence, presents in the immediate short term a rather sombre picture as many of the projected developments under the Fourth Malaysian Plan may have to be trimmed down and in some cases deferred.

This is inevitable owing to the worldwide recession. But Sarawak as a whole should not feel the effects too badly for the simple reason that the economy of the people throughout Sarawak, particularly in the rural areas, is based on subsistance farming.

Problems and Challenges

What are the problems? Let us take a bird's eye view. The problems of Sarawak have first to be seen in broad perspective by identifying the physical, political, social and economic aspects.

PHYSICAL ASPECT: Sarawak is a state consisting of 48,000 sq. miles broken into seven administrative divisions and stretching 300 miles from North to South. The coastal line consists of a belt of swamps and riparian forest. Between the swamps and the range of broken mountains, stretching from North-south, demarcating the border between Sarawak and Indonesia, lies a thin belt of flat and undulating land where the bulk of the population live and farm.

The population stays mainly along the banks of the herring bone of rivers that radiate from the mountains in the South-east towards the coast in the North-east. Since Malaysia, however, a criss-cross of trunk roads and feeder roads have been built and population growth has gradually crept along the road-sides. But road building is still difficult and expensive.

The bane of Sarawak has always been and still is the scarcity of a good network of roads which obliges communication and transportation of goods to be restricted mainly to rivers. But the rise in the price of oil and petrol in the last ten years has increased tremendously the cost of transportation of produce from the hinterland to the marketing centres. Although new roads have been built, this problem still remains as the roads are mostly earth roads, resulting in severe wear and tear to vehicles using them.

POLITICAL ASPECT: It is a fact of life in any independent nation that the political aspect is of paramount importance for it is the politician of the day who decides the progress and happiness of a nation. Within the nation, it is the Prime Minister of the party in power who must initiate policies which are acceptable to the majority. Within the State, it is the Chief Minister of the ruling party who is to implement policies within the autonomy of the State as allowed for by the Constitution. A happy State and Federal relationship is absolutely vital for orderly progress, although inevitably there are bound to be certain frictions and misunderstanding common within any family. Politicians in Sarawak have shown that they are comparatively matured and consistent in having the welfare of the people at heart. By and large the multi-racial society of the State of Sarawak has been taken into consideration in the various aspects of implementation of government policies. In the last 20 years since independence, there has also been a marked maturity and sophistication of the voters in Sarawak. This augurs well for Sarawak and Malaysia. Political stability is an absolute must for the progress of Sarawak and with the three major parties — PBB, SNAP and SUPP in the State Barisan Nasional coalition, this desirability has been achieved. But continuous achievement of political stability will depend upon the wisdom and the outstanding measure of dedication and sacrifice to the common good that each of the component parties of the Barisan Nasional are prepared to give. If the political leaders in the Barisan and indeed all the political leaders in the country are not prepared to rise above self interest and racial prejudice, then Sarawak will face a set-back. It is hoped that in the two decades ahead the goodwill of our leaders will rise to these challenges.

SOCIAL ASPECT: Up to the time when oil was discovered in Miri and subsequently in Bintulu, Sarawak had been a country which depended mainly on subsistence farming. There were no large rubber estates worth mentioning until the "Settlement Schemes" were introduced during the Confrontation Days after Malaysia was fromed. Palm oil and cocoa estates have only recently been introduced and have not yet played any significant role as a revenue earner. Samll holdings of rubber and pepper and, since Malaysia, timber form a large part of the main revenue earners in the country together with oil which has, over recent years, played

a primary role as the main revenue earner for the State. Gas is coming on stream this year.

Various industries have been encouraged since Malaysia but, with the exception of small industries, these have not made any significant headway. The few exceptions have been cement, car assembly plants and timber processing mills.

Sarawak industries are meant to cater mainly for the Local Market. The main problems with Sarawak industries are, firstly the low population (1.3 million) of the State and secondly the distribution costs. So much so that areas in the Northern part of Sarawak find it cheaper to import direct from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur instead of from Kuching!

The scattered nature of the population in the country and the problems posed in servicing the people living in the isolated areas become immediately apparent when one looks at the population map of the State. Servicing of the Sarawak population, both urban and rural, has posed a tremendous headache to the administration particularly in trying to bring services such as water, roads and electricity to these areas. The Government has been fairly successful in bringing water supply, thanks to the rural health scheme, to almost all towns, kampungs and long-houses in the rural areas during the last ten years. The availability of piped water supply to the longhouses and kampungs has made it possible for modern latrines to be used and this has caused marked improvement in the health and well being of the rural people, particularly in the last seven years. The incidence of infestation of worms and other kinds of rural health diseases have been noticeably reduced with the availability of fresh water supply and modern latrines.

But a tremendous problem still remains. How to improve the standard of subsistence farming that is practised at the present moment and stop wasteful shifting cultivation which is to some extent still being practised in some remote areas. The soil of Sarawak has also posed a problem in some areas. A soil map will show more patchiness of the soil types in the North than in the South-west. The normal conservative attitude of farmers on traditional methods of farming needs time and example to change. Meanwhile, there does not appear to be any marked break-through in agriculture practices to encourage and inspire our farmers to change their traditional methods of farming.

The settlement of farmers too posed a problem to the Government as, quite apart from the cost, the scarcity of suitable land is an inhibiting factor. Furthermore, not all Settlement Schemes have been successful. A few have been sad failures. However with crop diversification and integrated development approach that the Government is now emphasising, the story of farming should change for the better in the years ahead.

ECONOMIC ASPECT: Sarawak is a State which will survive and will grow from strength to strength from year to year. This is because of the enterprising nature of the people, and the harmony as well as stability which exist in the State. On top of this, by the grace of God, we have abundant natural resources. Since 1980 and the introduction of the New Economic Policy, there has been a better participation of Bumiputras in the exploitation of the resources, particularly timber. The revenue from timber, through the Sarawak Foundation, has also helped students to further their studies overseas by providing them with scholarship loans. Many of these students have come back to help with the development of the State.

Since Malaysia, the State Revenue and Expenditure has risen one thousand fold. The standard of living of the people has also improved. Where, before the formation of Malaysia, motorcars were a luxury, today they are a necessity. Where travelling in aeroplanes in those days was again considered a luxury, today it has become as common as a bus-ride. People live in better houses than before and they also dress and eat better.

In short, since Malaysia, we Malaysians in Sarawak have progressed a long way in our physical comfort. We can be proud to say that in achieving material progress we have not lost sight of the aesthetic value, culture and spiritual growth of our people. The promotion and encouragement of the culture of each race in Sarawak has been highlighted by the Government and each citizen in the State is given the freedom to practise the religion of his or her choice. The traditional spirit of harmony and understanding of Malaysia in the State has remained in spite of the tremendous upheavals of development and education in the last 20 years.

Looking back as one of the architects of Malaysia and a member of the first MSCC held in Sabah where the *Concept of Malaysia* was first discussed, and subsequently as a member of the Inter-

Governmental Committee which discussed the terms and conditions of Sarawak entering into Malaysia, I am proud to repeat here that I am glad we are in Malaysia.

Perhaps in conclusion it is appropriate for me to quote a speech I made during the last Council Negri Meeting when the YAB Chief Minister presented the Tunku Abdul Rahman Foundation Bill. This is a fitting tribute to the man who made Malaysia possible, lest we forget, let us pay him our tribute which I voiced on behalf of Sarawak in the Council Negri Sitting that day.

"The mention of Tunku's Foundation sadly or happily brings me down memory lane. It brings me back to 20 years ago when we were then discussing Malaysia. I was much younger then and the present Chief Minister was just out of school. We were all younger then, and looking back now I realise that without the personality of the Tunku at that material point and time, without his integrity, his sincerity and above all his humanity, I do not think we would have sufficient trust in Malaysia to join Malaysia. I would like to emphasize here that one of the greatest, shall we say, inducements, that made me accept Malaysia is my confidence then in the Tunku.

I cannot say I know him very well but I have met him at State Committee Meetings, especially in those early formative days when Malaysia was discussed. Every time we had a problem especially on entrenched clauses for Sarawak (because in those days we always agreed about "entrenched clauses" to protect the rights of Sarawak before entering Malaysia) we usually referred them to Tunku and Tunku would blithely and wisely with a brush of his hand, say "OK, that is no problem, we agree with it". So in this way, we normally solved one problem after another until the IGC (Inter-Governmental Committee) completed its work.

Tunku Abdul Rahman will always be remembered by us, as a great Malaysian. He is known as 'Bapak Malaysia' a name we gave him later on, but I shall always remember him as a great Malaysian. A Malaysian to whom all of us not only pay homage and tribute but one whom all of us could emulate with pride. He is very humane. When he was at University he was not a brilliant student. He passed his law exams at a time when he was well over 40. He was quite a playboy in his younger days! He was all those things that a human being should be, and yet in the final analysis he proved that he could be a great Statesman and a loyal Malayan

first and then a great Malaysian. And above all he has proved that he is a Malaysian in which he can be all things to all men and be able to accommodate all the different hopes and aspirations of the people of Malaysia and to bring about Malaysia.

I do appeal to the Board of Committee which is going to be appointed to make it a condition that awards of scholarship of the Tunku Scholarship Foundation should be based on those who are poor irrespective of race. This, of course, as you know, Tuan Speaker, Sir, is the first pillar of the New Economic Policy. I think if we do that then we will pay tribute to a great man whose whole life has been dedicated to fairness and equality to all Malaysians which he practised when he was the Prime Minister of Malaysia. He has always shown that he is prepared to compromise and never, never to discriminate."

Contributors

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