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**British Colonial Rule in Sarawak,  
1946-1963**

# British Colonial Rule in Sarawak, 1946–1963

Vernon L. Porritt

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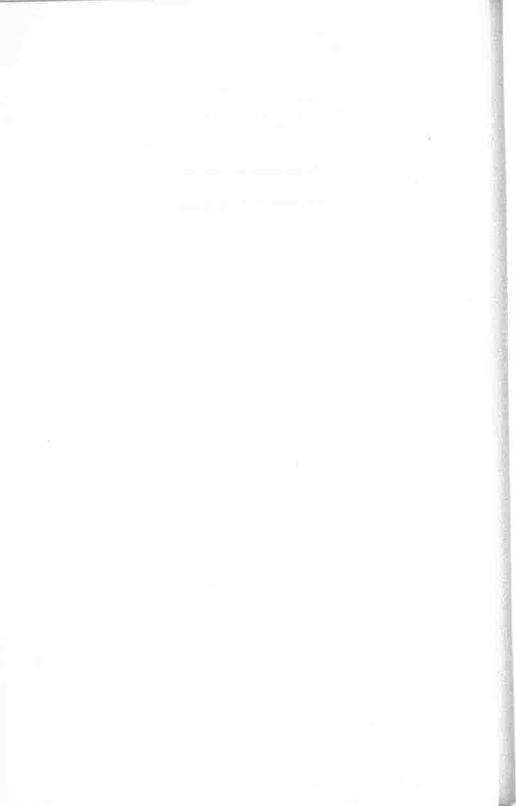
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*To the people of Sarawak*

*Harap-lah sa' lagi bernapas*





## Foreword

DR PORRITT is an 'old hand' of Sarawak, having lived and worked here for many, many years. He is one of the vanishing few who served and loved the country they worked in.

This book, albeit academic in nature, is testimony to his love and regard for the people of Sarawak. It throws light on those aspects of colonial administration which are hitherto unknown.

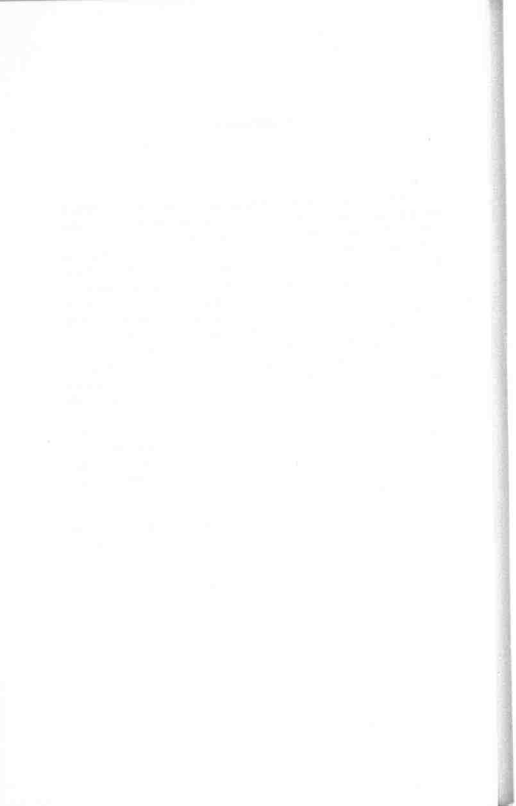
In judging colonialism, one must distinguish between the system and those who administered it. Colonialism as a system whereby one minority forces its mores and hegemony over others is no longer practised and is roundly and rightly condemned.

The British, however, did leave behind some legacies which are found to be beneficial, like the universal use of the English language and a solid, systematic, and efficient system of administration. Dr Porritt's book is testimony to this fact.

I commend this book to those who have an interest in Borneo and Sarawak in particular and those who have a certain sweet nostalgia for things which are gone and left behind in history books. For the serious student, it covers a yet unchronicled time of rapid change in our history.

*Sarawak*  
*April 1996*

DATUK ADENAN HAJI SATEM  
MINISTER FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



## Preface

SURROUNDED by controversy on both occasions, in 1946 Britain annexed a new colony, Sarawak, and seventeen years later, ceded its sovereignty. For Sarawak, the colonial era, from 1946 to 1963, was one of rapid economic, political, and social change in pursuing the pledges made and obligations undertaken by the British government at the time of annexation. These were the Nine Cardinal Principles embodied in the 1941 Constitution of Sarawak, which promised open government, raising the standard of living, developing social and educational services, and aiming for self-government as soon as feasible. To what extent these obligations were met, that is the history of that era, is largely unwritten, and a comprehensive survey or a major study of this critical phase in Sarawak's history is lacking.

There are a number of reasons for this. First, it was a relatively tranquil period apart from the political assassination in late 1949 of the second Governor, Duncan Stewart, and there was little to attract international attention. Secondly, Sarawak is synonymous in the West with the colourful image of the 'White Rajahs'. This fascinated British readers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and has attracted historical research ever since, to the neglect of studies into the pre-Brooke era, the Japanese occupation, and the colonial period. Thirdly, the transition from an autocracy to a colony and then to a form of responsible government was relatively peaceful, without a strident nationalist movement and heroes of international status or notoriety who fought for independence against overwhelming odds. Sarawak's disappearance from the world stage as a discrete entity in 1963 further reduced its international profile.

This book seeks not only to overcome the lack of any substantive overall work on Sarawak's colonial period, but also to put that era in perspective both in respect of its successes and failures.

*Tuart Hill, Western Australia*  
*April 1996*

VERNON L. PORRITT

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The Sarawak Association helped me to contact a number of ex-Sarawak Administrative Service (SAS) officers, all of whom were most helpful in providing information and commenting on draft material. Messrs R. A. Bewsher (missionary and Community Development Officer), M. G. Dickson (Director of Education), K. H. Digby (Attorney-General and Circuit Judge), A. R. G. Morrison (Information Officer), A. J. N. Richards (Resident), K. G. Robinson (Education Officer), and B. E. Smythies (Conservator of Forests) warrant special mention.

Dr Naimah Talib helpfully provided extracts from her 1993 Ph.D. thesis on the development of the Sarawak Administrative Service. Two persons to whom I am particularly indebted are Tan Sri Datuk Ong Kee Hui and Dato John Pike. Their constructive comments and helpful criticisms removed many of my misconceptions and misinterpretations. My deep appreciation is also expressed to the many people in Sarawak who, in venues ranging from coffee shops to the Astana, participated in informal but constructive discussions and willingly gave their time and hospitality. The Chief Minister of Sarawak kindly found the time to have a long discussion about the state. Mr T. Komarusamy's guidance in Kuching proved invaluable. My thanks are also due to Messrs Raymond Allas and Ho Ah Chon who provided the photographs.



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## Abbreviations

ADO	Assistant District Officer
ATAS	Anti-Tuberculosis Association of Sarawak
BARJASA	Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak
BBCAU	British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit
BCG	<i>Bacillus Calmette-Guérin</i>
BCL	Borneo Company Limited
BDC	Borneo Development Corporation
BEM	Borneo Evangelical Mission
BHD	Borneo Housing Development Ltd
BLTC	Batu Lintang Training College
BMA	British Military Administration
BPS	Barisan Pemuda Sarawak
CAS	Colonial Administrative Service
CCO	Clandestine Communist Organization
CDC	Colonial Development Corporation
CD & W	Colonial Development and Welfare (Act)
CEB	Central Electricity Board
CHSC	Cambridge Higher School Certificate
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CJSC	Cambridge Junior School Certificate
COLA	Cost of living allowance
COSC	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CSCEB	Chinese Schools Common Examination Board
DAC	Divisional Advisory Council
DC	District Council
DO	District Officer
ECA	Economic Co-operation Administration
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GLS	Government Lay School
GOC	General Officer Commanding
HMOCS	His/Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service

HMSO	His/Her Majesty's Stationery Office
HYV	High-yielding variety
IBRD	International Bank for Research and Development
IGC	Inter-Governmental Committee 1962
ILO	International Labour Organization
JMBRAS	<i>Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
KMB	Kuching Municipal Board
KMC	Kuching Municipal Council
KRDC	Kuching Rural District Council
MESA	Malaria Eradication Special Account
MNU	Malay National Union
MP	Member of Parliament
MUDC	Miri Urban District Council
NO	Native Officer
OAG	Officer Administering the Government
PANAS	Party Negara Sarawak
PAPAS	Party Pesaka Anak Sarawak (used by the Press)
PESAKA	Party Pesaka Anak Sarawak
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party
PKMS	Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Sarawak
PMS	Persatuan Melayu Sarawak
POW	Prisoner of War
PPM	Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu
PPSO	Preservation of Public Security Ordinance
PRB	Partai Rakyat Brunei
PRO	Public Records Office
PSC	Public Service Commission
PTS	Police Training School
PWD	Public Works Department
RCM	Roman Catholic Mission
RHL	Rhodes House Library
RIS	Rural Improvement School
SAS	Sarawak Administrative Service
SAYA	Sarawak Advanced Youths' Association
SCA	Sarawak Chinese Association
SCS	Sarawak Civil Service
SDA	Sarawak Dayak Association
SDFC	Sarawak Development Finance Corporation
Sesco	Sarawak Electricity Supply Company
SESCO	Sarawak Electricity Supply Corporation
SF	Security Forces

SFA	Sarawak Farmers' Association
SG	<i>Sarawak Gazette</i>
SGAOU	Sarawak Government Asian Officers' Union
SGJSA	Sarawak Government Junior Service Association
SIS	Sarawak Information Service
SJSC	Sarawak Junior School Certificate
SNAP	Sarawak National Party
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
SRD	Services Reconnaissance Detachment
SRDC	Sibu Rural District Council
SSE	Secondary School Entrance Examination
SSOL	Sarawak Shell Oilfields Limited
SSWC	Sarawak Social Welfare Council
SUDC	Sibu Urban District Council
SUF	Sarawak United Front
SUPP	Sarawak United People's Party
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia
TNKU	Tentara Nasional Kalimantan Utara
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UEL	United Engineers Limited
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
WWII	World War Two
YMA	Young Malay Association



## Introduction

THE British government annexed Sarawak on 1 July 1946, a time when colonialism was coming under increasing scrutiny.<sup>1</sup> It had already pledged to help India obtain free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth with dominion status under the Declaration of August, 1940,<sup>2</sup> and in September 1941, Winston Churchill, the Conservative Prime Minister during World War II had explicitly committed Britain to working towards self-government in its other colonies.<sup>3</sup> Exactly one year before the Sarawak (Cession) Order in Council, 1946, was promulgated on 26 June 1946, the United Nations (UN) Charter, which incorporated principles to be followed by imperial powers in respect of their colonies, had been signed in San Francisco. Article 73 of the Charter obliged member nations to foster self-government of non-self-governing territories under their control and to ensure the political, economic, social, and educational advancement of those subjects. The Americans viewed World War II as an opportunity to end colonialism, but Churchill was determined to retain the British Empire,<sup>4</sup> his government pledging ultimate self-government within the Empire for the colonies.<sup>5</sup> Clement Attlee, the leader of the British Labour Party and Prime Minister when Sarawak was annexed, favoured an international system of responsibility and control over 'backward peoples'.<sup>6</sup> Also, by the end of the war Britain was ill-equipped to meet any additional financial obligations since it had overseas debts amounting to £3,355 million and there was a 'huge deficit in balance of payments'.<sup>7</sup> Why then did Britain annex Sarawak on 1 July 1946?

### *The Background of Cession and Annexation*

Formal post-war policy planning for Malaya and the states in British Borneo began on 6 January 1944, when the War Cabinet (Ministerial) Committee on Malaya and Borneo chaired by Attlee was appointed.<sup>8</sup> The Colonial Secretary, Oliver Stanley, recommended increasing British powers in all those territories to enable

his government to legislate under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act and thus have control over their future.<sup>9</sup> To achieve this in Malaya, the Sultans of the nine Malay States would have to cede their jurisdiction as a prelude to a new Constitution and the formation of a Malayan Union.<sup>10</sup> For North Borneo, the Colonial Office proposed acquiring all the sovereign and administrative rights of the British North Borneo (Chartered) Company so that Britain would have complete control, and Labuan could be incorporated with it.<sup>11</sup> In Brunei, the Sultan would have to cede more powers to the British government.<sup>12</sup> For Sarawak, a new treaty with the Rajah was proposed to allow Britain to legislate for the territory and exercise control through a resident British Adviser. His advice would have to be sought and acted upon in all substantial matters of policy and administration. Another theme of the recommendations was closer union of the states in the Malayan peninsula and closer union among the Borneo territories.<sup>13</sup> When the Committee accepted these recommendations on 22 March 1944, it pre-ordained the post-war future of Malaya and the Borneo territories.<sup>14</sup>

Stanley held that the pre-war constitutional and administrative systems of the Borneo territories were undesirable, both in respect of security and the declared intent of Britain to promote economic, political, and social progress in the colonies. He also wrote that 'self-government in Brunei and Sarawak should not merely develop towards systems of autocratic rule but should provide for a growing participation in the government by people of all communities in each territory.'<sup>15</sup> Though not specifically mentioned, control over three highly strategic raw materials—oil, rubber, and tin found in Malaya and the Borneo territories—was in Britain's military interests. For the Japanese, gaining control over these resources had been a major factor in their invasion of the area during World War II. British control of these resources, including Sarawak's oil, would help to avert any resurgence of Japanese military power, an important consideration for post-war security in 1944 when the war against Japan was still being waged.

There were also economic imperatives. Britain was in dire economic straits after the war and needed every possible source of American currency to acquire American plant and equipment for post-war rehabilitation and to service war loans. Sarawak oil, rubber, and pepper would be useful commodities for earning American currency.<sup>16</sup> Some Members of Parliament may have favoured cession due to a common perception that Sarawak was a

land of vast wealth, as epitomized in an immediate post-annexation statement in the House of Commons that 'we could make Sarawak one of the richest countries in the world literally in a year if we wanted to'.<sup>17</sup> According to the Colonial Office, the keys to safeguarding British interests and influence in the area were political and economic progress, and satisfying national aspirations.<sup>18</sup> This was compatible with Fabian Society thinking and Labour Party ideology. Also, the declared aim of ultimate self-government with dominion status within the British Commonwealth was compatible with Churchill's aspirations and Conservative Party tenets. Further, British parliamentary tradition viewed autocracies as obstacles to political progress and, therefore, replacing the sole sovereignty of the Rajah in Sarawak presented no undue political problems in Britain.<sup>19</sup>

The official explanation for annexation given in the House of Commons on 6 February 1946 was that the British government needed additional powers to discharge its obligations to Sarawak under the 1888 and 1941 treaties and its responsibilities for Sarawak under the UN Charter.<sup>20</sup> The powers sought were twofold: to extend the authority of the British Representative in Sarawak so that he would have an effective voice in the state's policy and administration and to empower the British government to legislate for Sarawak under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act.<sup>21</sup> This meant British control over both the internal and external affairs of Sarawak commensurate with a constitutional monarchy, for which cession was neither sought nor essential. However, by October 1945, the Rajah, then 72 years old, had decided that cession was the only realistic solution for himself and Sarawak. Whether by accident or design, his decision left the British government with no alternative to acquiring sovereignty. This finally resolved the historical lack of empathy between the Colonial Office and the Brooke regime on the administration of Sarawak by making the Colonial Office directly responsible for Sarawak.<sup>22</sup> The adversarial two-party Westminster system made political opposition by the party not in power inevitable, in this case the Conservative Party which had a traditional interest in protecting inherited wealth. However, it acquiesced after Captain L. D. Gammans, its member on the two-man parliamentary commission sent to Sarawak in April 1946 to assess public opinion, reported favourably on cession.<sup>23</sup> He advised his party that a majority in Sarawak accepted that cession was inevitable and that he was convinced it was the best solution for the people. Thus, both the major political parties



in Britain accepted the cession of Sarawak by the Rajah, whose influence in bringing it to fruition was decisive.

### *A Brief on Sarawak*

Britain thus acquired responsibility for Sarawak, a country of 125 000 square kilometres forming a 730 kilometre strip facing the South China Sea on the north-west coast of the island of Borneo. Lying just north of the Equator between longitudes 109 and 116 °E Sarawak has a tropical, monsoonal climate with high humidity, a coastal mean average temperature of about 25 °C, and an annual rainfall ranging from 250 centimetres on the coast to over 500 in the mountains of the interior. Most of its border with Indonesian Kalimantan is marked by a mountain range rising to over 2000 metres, giving way to rolling hill country of yellow sandy clay intersected by lower mountain ridges running at right angles to the main ridge. The swampy coastal alluvial plain is bisected by innumerable oxbow rivers originating in the mountain ranges, the longest being the Rajang and Baram rivers which are respectively about 550 and 400 kilometres in length. Travel other than in the vicinity of the few towns and smaller settlements was by river and coastal craft, reflecting the simple needs of a largely subsistence farming economy. Tropical rain forest marked by swidden agricultural clearings covered over 90 per cent of the country and ranged from tropical hardwoods to *nipah* palm.

Sarawak's population of some 540,000 was predominantly rural, engaged in mixed subsistence and cash crop farming and collection of forest produce. Unlike Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, and Indo-China where cash crop cultivation centred on large European-owned estates with daily paid local labour, in Sarawak the smallholder predominated. The Brookes actively discouraged European investment in large plantations, preferring mixed subsistence and cash crop farming by self-reliant individual/family landowners. This fundamental difference between the economy of Sarawak and those of its South-East Asian neighbours affected every facet of development. It precluded an expensive infrastructure in communications and services as government revenues were limited, yet at the same time rendered much of these infrastructures unnecessary. Also, Sarawak was well-equipped with river and water transport, a low-cost means of moving rural products. Further, by the late 1930s all known mineral deposits that could be recovered economically had been worked out. Industry was

confined largely to the simple processing of cash crops, with the exception of the oil industry, which was Sarawak's major export earner before the war. However, by 1941, production had declined to one-tenth of its 1930 peak due to depletion of the Miri oilfield reserves. Miri, the third largest town in Sarawak with a population of about 9,000, owed its existence to the oil industry. Kuching, with a population of some 38,000, was the capital and major administrative centre, and Sibü, the second largest town in Sarawak with a population of about 20,000, was predominantly a trading centre. Like most settlements in Sarawak, both were strategically located on rivers to handle entrepôt trade. Townships generally had two main functions, providing staging posts for trade and serving as centres for administration.

When Britain annexed Sarawak, it accepted responsibility for the economic, political, and social development of over half a million people. These comprised some fifty-five racial groups in which the Iban, the Chinese, the Malay, the Bidayuh, and the Melanau were the most significant in number as shown below.<sup>24</sup>

<i>Cultural Group</i>	<i>1947 Census: Population</i>	<i>Per Cent of Population</i>
Bidayuh	42,195	7.7
Chinese	145,158	26.6
European	691	0.1
Iban	190,326	34.8
Malay	97,469	17.9
Melanau	35,560	6.5
Other Indigenous	29,867	5.5
Other Non-indigenous Asians	5,119	0.9
Total	546,385	100.0

The Bidayuh were concentrated in the rural areas of the First Division where their primary occupation was subsistence farming, growing rice by shifting cultivation. Cash crops—rubber and pepper—had only a marginal role in their economy. Generally, they lived in longhouses and their belief systems centred on a spirit world ordered by festivals of appeasement. Literacy had no function in their mode of life and therefore few sought education. The far more numerous Iban were longhouse dwellers living mainly in the inland areas of the Second, Third, and Fourth Divisions. They also practised shifting cultivation of hill *padi* and supplemented

their subsistence farming by collecting jungle produce and, in some areas, by tapping planted rubber trees. Few were literate as education was of little value in their lifestyle or culture, nor was it available in the rural areas. They had a strong belief system based on animism, a spirit world, and an afterlife around which their culture and mode of life were organized, while their social structure was centred on the longhouse community.

The majority of the Chinese were also farmers, but grew cash crops on fixed smallholdings in the immediate vicinity of settled communities where education in the Chinese medium was valued and organized by clan groups. Skilled in operating in a cash economy, the Chinese dominated the economy and controlled much of the trading and business in Sarawak. They made up the bulk of the population in the major towns. Their society was highly organized through clan groups and associations and their culture and beliefs were those of pre-war China, with the exception of the Foochows of Sibu who were practising Methodists and a number who were converted to Christianity in Sarawak.

The Malays, all Muslims, lived in villages in the coastal plains and on the outskirts of the larger towns. They were engaged in primary production, such as fishing and fruit farming, and made up the bulk of the police force and customs department. Their social structure was based on Islam and aristocratic lineage, members of the latter providing the Sarawak Administrative Service (SAS) with its Native Officers,<sup>25</sup> who controlled whole districts under European District Officers. The Melanau, the only other group of note practising Islam in Sarawak, were concentrated in the coastal plains of the Third and Fourth Divisions. Their speciality was working sago, an important export. A large number of minority groups ranged from the nomadic Penans living in and off the forest to the Indian Tamils, brought in originally to work on the Rajah's tea estate at Matang. Each ethnic group had its own belief systems, customs, language, social structure, culture, and way of life.

### *British Obligations to the People of Sarawak*

In annexing Sarawak on 1 July 1946, the British government was obliged to fulfil Article 73 of the United Nations Charter and its promise to uphold the Nine Cardinal Principles in the preamble to the 1941 Constitution of Sarawak.<sup>26</sup> In simplified form, these were:

1. Sarawak is the heritage of its people and is held in trust for them.

2. Social and educational services shall be developed and improved and the standard of living shall steadily be raised.
3. Never shall any person or persons be granted rights inconsistent with those of the people of Sarawak or be in any way permitted to exploit them or those who have sought Sarawak's protection and care.
4. Justice shall be easily obtainable and the Rajah [governor] and every public servant shall be freely accessible to the public.
5. Freedom of expression, both in speech and writing, shall be permitted and encouraged and everyone shall be entitled to worship as they please.
6. Public servants shall ever remember that they are but the servants of the public on whose goodwill and co-operation they are entirely dependent.
7. The people of Sarawak of whatever race or creed shall be freely and impartially admitted to offices in the public service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge.
8. The goal of self-government shall always be kept in mind, the people of Sarawak shall be entrusted in due course with the governance of themselves, and continuous efforts shall be made to hasten the reaching of this goal by educating them in the obligations, the responsibilities, and the privileges of citizenship.
9. The general policy of the Rajahs, whereby the various races of the State have been enabled to live in happiness and harmony together, shall be adhered to by their successors and all who follow them.

### *A Preview of the Colonial Period*

The colonial period in Sarawak has to be viewed in the context of a post-war Labour government in Britain intent on building a welfare socialist state, yet hampered by wartime debts, a falling currency, and an inability to maintain satisfactory export levels. In the broader context, the world-wide cold war of communist and capitalist powers, the Korean War (1950) which created boom conditions for Sarawak, and the decline in British power exemplified by the 1955 Suez crisis influenced, if not dictated, events in Sarawak. By 1960 the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan was convinced that national consciousness in the British colonies had to be accepted as a political fact.<sup>27</sup> This, together with the

growing number of colonies achieving independence, made early self-government for Sarawak a certainty.

There were three identifiable historical phases during the colonial period. As in every country that had been embroiled in World War II, the immediate post-war years in Sarawak were the reconstruction phase. Work on repairing the damage and neglect of the war years to property, transport, government infrastructure, and all sectors of the economy dominated this period. Much of the funding for this work was drawn from Colonial Development and Welfare (CD & W) funds. This period was one of political dissent over cession. A large sector of the Malay community was opposed to cession and this culminated in the assassination of Sarawak's second British Governor at the end of 1949. Although this delayed any constitutional reforms until the political situation was considered stable, development of local government began in early 1948. The economy was buoyant in the post-war era of commodity shortages and the trade boom during the Korean War period was reflected in high prices for Sarawak's major exports of oil, rubber, and pepper. A declaration of a state of emergency in 1952 followed by enactment of security legislation and expansion of the Constabulary after a minor incident mirrored the cold war preoccupation with communist hegemony.

The second phase, 1953 to the late 1950s, was one of development, largely untrammelled by political divisions or controversial issues. Political stability after anti-cession groups became inactive in 1951 gave the government sufficient confidence to introduce constitutional changes providing for a more representative legislature. Local government was extended to cover the entire country and its responsibilities, which included primary education, were increased. Tentative steps were taken by some local leaders to form a multiethnic political party, but were abandoned. At the same time, the growing influence of China in South-East Asia was marked by growing evidence of communist indoctrination and infiltration in Sarawak, especially in the Chinese education system. Completion of post-war rehabilitation freed resources for new development aimed at economic expansion and improved social welfare. The bulk of development expenditure was devoted to agriculture, fisheries, forestry, public utilities, and communications, the last including roads to open up land for cash crop farming. About one quarter of development expenditure was devoted to the social services, largely education, health, and housing. Local funding met an increasing proportion of development expenditure as

income tax was introduced. However, in addition to British-funded grants, a need for loans and help from other members of the Commonwealth and international agencies began to emerge.

The third phase, 1959 to September 1963, witnessed a ferment of political change reflecting United Nations pressure for all remaining colonies to be given their independence. Political parties emerged along nominally multiethnic lines, but quickly changed to reflect particular ethnic groups and internal differences within the major ethnic groups. To meet the timetable for the establishment of Malaysia by August 1963, a divisive issue in Sarawak, constitutional changes and universal suffrage were introduced. A series of elections were then held which provided a ministerial-type government through a temporary three-tier election/selection system. The government's struggle to gain control of the Chinese education system in an attempt to deal with communist indoctrination in the Chinese schools was an ongoing preoccupation from the early 1950s. Signs of success began to emerge in 1961 when most Chinese secondary schools agreed to convert to teaching in English. The Brunei uprising, involving part of the Fourth and the Fifth Divisions in December 1962, enabled the government to assume sweeping emergency powers and remove known sources of communist influence in the political, educational, and social structures, but also ushered in a period of dependence on British and other Commonwealth troops to counter communist-supported border incursions from Indonesia. Increasing development expenditure could no longer be met entirely from revenue surpluses and grants, forcing the government into borrowing and creating a national debt.

### *Studies on the British Period in Sarawak up to the Mid-1990s*

Apart from works on very specialist subjects,<sup>28</sup> the only published works of note up to the mid-1990s dedicated to the colonial period were on Malay politics, economic development, and settlement geography.<sup>29</sup> Reece examined the 1946 cession, Leigh provided a survey of the politics of the late colonial era as part of a larger work, Lockard included material on social and political change in Kuching in his study, and Sutlive gave specific information in his dissertation on the Ibans of the Sibuan district.<sup>30</sup> Biographies on indigenous political leaders began to appear in the early 1990s by courtesy of various sponsors.<sup>31</sup> This work seeks to provide a

reasonably comprehensive survey of the history of Sarawak during the colonial period and, for that purpose, covers four broad areas: political development, development of the administrative arms of government, economic development, and social development.

1. America favoured trusteeship regimes in the Far East (W. R. Louis, *Imperialism at Bay, 1941-1945: The United States and the Decolonisation of the British Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, pp. 7-8).
2. *Hansard*, Vol. 361, cols. 283-5, 23 May 1940.
3. *Hansard*, Vol. 374, cols. 68-9, 9 September 1941; Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p. 130.
4. Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, pp. 37, 121, 199-200, and 225.
5. *Hansard*, Vol. 391, col. 48, 13 July 1943.
6. 'Post-War Settlement in the Far East', Minutes of Meeting, 10 September 1942, FO 371/31777, CO 825/35/55104, PRO. Attlee believed that the colonies were a financial burden on the British electorate.
7. Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p. 25.
8. War Cabinet Meeting, W.M. (44) 2nd Conclusions, Minute 3, 6 January 1944, CAB 98/41, PRO. For an obituary on its main adviser, Edward G. Gent, see the *Straits Times* (Singapore), 5 July 1948, p. 4.
9. Colonial Secretary to War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo, C.M.B. (44) 3, 14 January 1944, CAB 98/41, PRO.
10. See also James de V. Allen, *The Malayan Union*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967, p. 9.
11. Colonial Secretary to War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo, C.M.B. (44) 6, 18 January 1944, CAB 98/41, PRO.
12. For Brunei, see D. S. Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983: The Problems of Political Survival*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984.
13. Colonial Secretary to War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo, C.M.B. (44) 3, 14 January 1944, and C.M.B. (44) 6, 18 January 1944, CAB 98/41, PRO.
14. War Cabinet Committee Meeting on Malaya and Borneo, C.M.B. (44) 1st Meeting, 24 March 1944, CAB 98/41, PRO.
15. Colonial Secretary to War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo, C.M.B. (44) 6, 18 January 1944, CAB 98/41, PRO.
16. *Singapore Free Press*, 21 August 1947, p. 1.
17. Statement by Rees-Williams, Labour, South Croydon (*Hansard*, Vol. 425, col. 315, 9 July 1946).
18. 'Regional Co-operation in South-East Asia and the Far East', PUSC (53), 20 August 1949, FO 371/76030, PRO.
19. The validity of seeking to impose Western democratic concepts is another question.
20. *Hansard*, Vol. 418, col. 1734, 6 February 1946.
21. On 5 January 1946, the Supreme Council contentiously authorized cession negotiations (R. H. W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 300).
22. Minute by Gent, CO 531/27, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 100.

23. L. D. Gammans, Conservative, to Oliver Stanley, 18 May 1946, WO 203/5535, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 239; 'Death of a State', *The Sunday Times* (London), 2 June 1946, in Anthony Brooke, *The Facts about Sarawak*, Singapore: Summer Times Publishing, 1983, pp. 60-3.

24. Useful basic sources are B. A. Hepburn, *The Handbook of Sarawak: Comprising Historical, Statistical and General Information Concerning the Colony Obtained from Official and Other Reliable Records*, Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1949, pp. 9-18, and T. Harrisson (ed.), *The Peoples of Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1959.

25. 'Native' — a legal term of honour in Sarawak meaning an indigenous person.

26. *Hansard*, Vol. 426, col. 26, 24 July 1946.

27. G. Woodcock, *Who Killed the British Empire: An Inquest*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1974, p. 320.

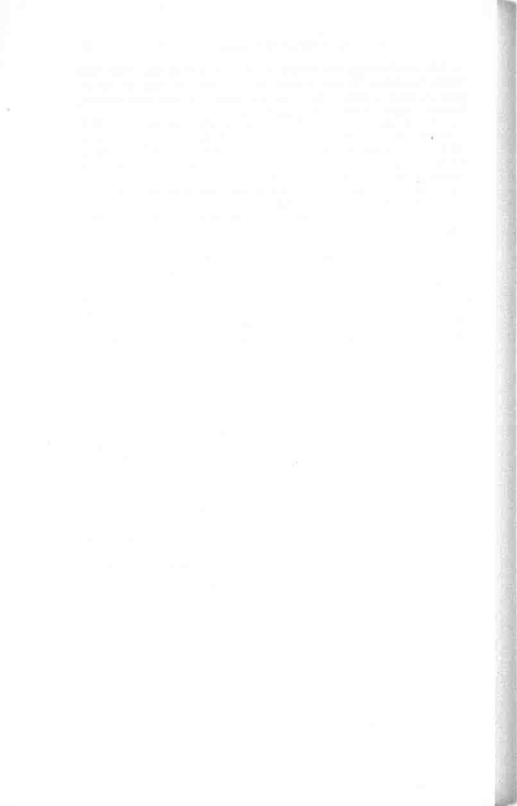
28. The British government commissioned four specialized studies: H. S. Morris, *Report on a Melanau Sago Producing Community in Sarawak*, London: HMSO, 1953; W. R. Geddes, *The Land Dayaks of Sarawak: A Report on a Social Economic Survey of the Land Dayaks of Sarawak Presented to the Colonial Social Science Research Council*, London: HMSO, 1954; J. D. Freeman, *Iban Agriculture: A Report on the Shifting Cultivation of Hill Rice by the Iban of Sarawak*, London: HMSO, 1955; and T'ien Ju-Kang, *The Chinese of Sarawak: A Study of Social Structure*, London School of Economics and Political Science, Monographs on Social Anthropology No. 12, London, 1953.

29. Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985; James C. Jackson, *Sarawak: A Geographical Survey of a Developing State*, London: University of London Press, 1968; and Lee Yong Leng, *Population and Settlement in Sarawak*, Singapore: Donald Moore for Asia Pacific Press, 1970.

30. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*; M. B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974; C. A. Lockard, *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970*, Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1987; V. Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar: Urbanization in Sarawak, East Malaysia*, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1980.

31. The Sarawak Literary Society, Kuching, sponsored V. Sutlive, *Tun Jugah of Sarawak: Colonialism and Iban Response*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1992 and Bob Reece, *Datu Bandar: Abang Hj. Mustapha of Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Kesusasteraan Sarawak, 1993; and the Malaysian Historical Society, Sarawak Branch, Sanib Said, *Yang Dikehendaki: Biografi Yang Di-Pertua Negeri Sarawak, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Ahmad Zaidi Adruce Mohammed Noor*, Kuching: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, Cawangan Sarawak, 1991.





PART I  
Political Intervention



## Constitutional Change, 1946–1963

WHEN Sarawak was ceded to the British government on 1 July 1946, the British government accepted and adopted Sarawak Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941. This new Constitution defined the structure of the executive (the Supreme Council) and the legislature (the Council Negri), and also laid down precepts for the government of Sarawak in the form of Nine Cardinal Principles.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, Cardinal Principle No. 8 obliged the British government to pursue a goal of self-government for Sarawak. On 18 May 1946 when Order No. C-24 (Cession of Sarawak) 1946 became law, there were no elected members in the Supreme Council or the Council Negri, since all members were nominated by the Rajah. By 16 September 1963 when Sarawak became a state in the Federation of Malaysia, constitutional reform had provided universal suffrage, an elected executive, an elected legislature, and a ministerial form of government. This had entailed establishing local government structures, making extensive amendments to the 1941 Constitution to provide the legal framework for the changing mode of government, and developing the people's political awareness. Changing the Constitution was the sole prerogative of His or Her Majesty in Council on advice from the Privy Council—not that of the Governor of Sarawak, the Supreme Council, nor the Council Negri.

The Brookes held sole sovereignty over Sarawak from 24 September 1841 to 24 September 1941 when the new Constitution was introduced.<sup>2</sup> On 17 October 1855 the First Rajah, James Brooke, had appointed an executive advisory body, the Supreme Council.<sup>3</sup> The Council was given executive powers on 19 February 1924 by an Order empowering it to consider all proposed government Orders, amendments, or additions before submission to the Rajah for signature.<sup>4</sup> The forerunner of a legislative council, the Council Negri, was established by the second Rajah, Charles Brooke, and held its first meeting on 8 September 1867 at Bintulu.<sup>5</sup> Its role was to provide a forum for the Rajah, senior

members of the civil service, and traditional leaders to exchange views, discuss problems in outlying areas, and assess the needs and feelings of the people, although much of this was done informally at the social events accompanying the meetings.<sup>6</sup> Under the Treaty of 5 September 1888, sovereign power over cession, alienation of territory, and foreign affairs had been surrendered to the British government in return for British protection.<sup>7</sup> Brooke sovereignty was unchanged until 1941, when various factors including the third Rajah's advanced age led to the promise of a new constitution on the centenary of Brooke rule in September.<sup>8</sup> In a secret *quid pro quo* arrangement with senior government officers, the Rajah and his dependants were given future financial security and the Rajah in turn agreed to effectively transfer his legislative powers to the Committee of Administration.<sup>9</sup> This body had been set up on 5 September 1873 to advise the Rajah when he was in Sarawak and administer the government in his absence.

### *The 1941 Constitution*

Promulgated on 24 September 1941, Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941 effectively transferred the Rajah's executive autocracy to an executive oligarchy of senior Sarawak Civil Service (SCS) officers through the Rajah in Council, meaning that the Rajah acted only with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council.<sup>10</sup> The new Supreme Council had a minimum of five members with its majority of official members drawn from the SCS. Similarly, the Rajah's legislative autocracy was replaced by a legislative oligarchy of senior SCS officers, the reconstituted Council Negri's twenty-five members, consisting of fourteen official members and eleven unofficial members. The power of the oligarchy was supreme as, under Clause 17, any single bill passed by the Council on three successive occasions automatically became law.

### *Transfer of Sovereignty and Obstacles to Constitutional Change*

Due to the Japanese occupation, 25 December 1941 to 11 September 1945, the 1941 Constitution was not put into practice, and on 18 May 1944 the British War Cabinet pre-empted Sarawak's future by deciding that Britain should have effective jurisdiction over Sarawak after the war.<sup>11</sup> The reasons given were security and

promotion of social, economic, and political progress. However, Sarawak's Provisional Government formed in London in early 1945 under Anthony Brooke, the Rajah Muda, opposed any changes to the existing treaties with Britain until after the war. Differences between the Provisional Government and the third Rajah led to its dissolution shortly after the war ended. Under some pressure from the British government, in the autumn of 1945 the Rajah unilaterally decided to cede Sarawak to Britain.<sup>12</sup> The Rajah also stripped Anthony Brooke of his right of succession and title. After an inept attempt to legitimize his decision to cede Sarawak attracted embarrassing questions in the House of Commons, two Members of Parliament (MP) were sent to Sarawak to assess whether cession was 'broadly acceptable to the native communities'.<sup>13</sup>

The Datu Patinggi, the paramount leader of the Sarawak Malays, withdrew his support for cession, kindling an anti-cession movement which was supported by his Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Sarawak (PKMS), also known as the Malay National Union (MNU), and the Sarawak Dayak Association (SDA).<sup>14</sup> By 15 April 1946, when the British Military Administration (BMA) returned the governance of Sarawak to the Rajah, the anti-cession movement was well-established. Controversially, the two MPs, L. D. Gammans and D. R. Rees-Williams, assessed that public opinion was adequate for placing the Cession Bill before the Council Negri.<sup>15</sup> The Bill's passage in the Council Negri on 15 May 1946 was no less controversial. Although a majority of the indigenous members voted against the Bill, it was carried by the votes of European members, subsequent Colonial Office action to delay cession being too late to stop the Instrument of Cession being signed on 20 May 1946.<sup>16</sup> Supported by the Rajah Muda, Anthony Brooke, the anti-cession movement became a significant anti-colonial force in the post-cession era, and up to fifty-two anti-cession associations were formed.<sup>17</sup> It created security fears that inhibited constitutional change and progress towards self-government.

After formal annexation on 1 July 1946, the modified provisions of Order No. C-21 (Constitution), 1941 had full force and effect under Clause 8 of the Sarawak Letters Patent, 1946.<sup>18</sup> The extent of the aversion to cession was shown by the unenthusiastic reception the Governor-General of Malaya, Singapore, and British Borneo, Malcolm MacDonald, received when he arrived in Sarawak to take part in the official cession ceremony, and the Datu

Patinggi's refusal to meet him.<sup>19</sup> Cession was also being questioned in the House of Commons.<sup>20</sup> Possibly to counter criticism, on 9 July the Colonial Secretary, George Hall, advised the House that he would ask the new Governor to recommend changes to the Constitution.<sup>21</sup> These were to provide for the 'fullest association of the people with the Government and administration ... on the broadest basis that present conditions permit'. When the new Governor, Sir Charles Arden Clarke, first arrived in Kuching on 29 October 1946, he immediately received a protest from the Datu Patinggi appealing to the King to revoke cession. His official inauguration on the next day was boycotted by many Malays and Dayaks, no address of welcome was given by the Dayaks, and there were large-scale anti-cession demonstrations in Kuching, Sibü, and Miri.<sup>22</sup> Six weeks later, he told the Colonial Office caution was needed, saying that there was an active anti-cession movement and the people's trust was far from won.<sup>23</sup>

A small advance towards broader representation was made in 1948 when vacancies in the Council Negri were referred not to the Supreme Council as previously, but to the newly formed Divisional Advisory Councils for their nominations.<sup>24</sup> This did not deter the *Sarawak Tribune* from questioning the lack of discussion on legislation in the Council Negri and the large number of official members, nor from suggesting an increase in the number of members to provide wider representation.<sup>25</sup> The *Sarawak Tribune* claimed on 7 and 10 May 1949 that the advanced section of the public was clamouring for popular elections to the Council. For the Colonial Office, this raised the spectre of losing control over expenditure and legislation unless the Constitution was changed to enable the sovereign power to disallow any legislation passed by the Council Negri.<sup>26</sup>

Arden Clarke's authoritarian approach and his 'belligerent thirst to kill the snake [the anti-cession movement] as soon as possible' only strengthened the resolve of the anti-cessionists, most of whom were Malays.<sup>27</sup> Their resentment was compounded by Secretariat Circular 9/1946 of 10 December 1946, initiated by Arden Clarke, which prevented civil servants from participating in the anti-cession movement. This led to more than 338 resignations of Malays from government service.<sup>28</sup> Resentment was further exacerbated by the ban imposed on Anthony Brooke's entry into Sarawak on security grounds and by the lack of progress on his legal attempts to overturn cession.<sup>29</sup> Although Arden Clarke felt that Sarawak was over its 'teething problems' when he left Sarawak

on 20 January 1949 for six months' leave, he left a legacy of anti-cession feeling.<sup>30</sup> This finally erupted on 3 December 1949, when the new Governor, Duncan Stewart, was assassinated only nineteen days after his arrival in Sarawak.<sup>31</sup> The assassination discredited the anti-cession movement which lost all its overt support, and the ensuing period of political stability gave the government growing confidence to pursue constitutional reform.

### *Preliminary Work on the 1956 Constitution*

Sarawak's Officer Administering the Government (OAG), Robert Gordon Aikman,<sup>32</sup> argued in his letter of 19 April 1952 to the Colonial Secretary, Oliver Lyttelton, that the state had recovered from the ravages of war and the controversy over cession.<sup>33</sup> Saying the time had come to pre-empt local pressure for constitutional reform, he recommended that this be done within eighteen months to show that the British government intended to aim for self-government as promised in the eighth Cardinal Principle. For the Supreme Council, Aikman proposed increasing the membership from a minimum of five to a total of eight, made up of three *ex officio* members, three members chosen by the unofficial members of the Council Negri, and two members nominated by the government. This increased the number of unofficial members and allowed selection of three by the Council Negri, but the majority of official and nominated members was retained and executive power remained in the hands of the officials.

For the Council Negri, Aikman proposed the following:

<i>Type of Member</i>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
Official members	14	17
Unofficials nominated by Supreme Council	11	2
Unofficials elected by Divisional Advisory Councils	—	8
Unofficials elected by Municipal Councils	—	3
Unofficials elected by Chambers of Commerce	—	2
Unofficial standing members <sup>34</sup>	8	< 8

Aikman, the officials, and a large number of prominent Asian and European unofficials, held that retaining a majority of official



members, excluding standing members whose support of government was taken for granted, was necessary.<sup>35</sup> Although under his proposals the officials retained legislative power, the unofficial practice of local government authorities electing their own members to the Council became a constitutional right. As Aikman pointed out, ballot-box elections to the Council were still in the future as no electoral procedures had been developed.

Aikman had not overlooked the Crown's need to disallow legislation, proposing that the Governor should be empowered to withhold his assent to any bill without further reference to the Council.<sup>36</sup> On 22 August 1952, the Colonial Secretary agreed to constitutional changes, which had been 'deferred for political reasons', to honour the promise of advancement towards self-government.<sup>37</sup> The third Governor, Sir Anthony Abell, then presented the proposed changes to the Council Negri for discussion by the public and representative organizations during the following year.<sup>38</sup> Public support emerged for three further changes.<sup>39</sup> These were an unofficial majority in the Council Negri, increased representation for the First, Third, and Fourth Divisions, and an increase in residential qualifications for membership of the Council Negri, or only the Supreme Council, from five of the previous seven years to seven of the previous ten. Growing confidence in local government organizations overcame initial official reluctance to forgo a majority in the Council Negri and the Governor proposed increasing the members elected by Divisional Advisory Councils from eight to twelve.<sup>40</sup> Answering a question from R. W. Sorensen, Labour MP, on 2 June 1954, the Colonial Secretary, Oliver Lyttelton, then advised the House of Commons that discussions on the Constitution were taking place.<sup>41</sup>

With Colonial Office approval, the revised proposals were then distributed in Sarawak for a further round of discussions.<sup>42</sup> Oral answers to questions were introduced for the first time at the meeting of the Council Negri held in March 1955, reflecting its gradual development into a forum for debate. At that stage there was little sense of urgency for constitutional reform on Britain's part, as shown by Lord Perth's comment two years later that it would be some time before independence would be granted.<sup>43</sup> The Governor finally advised the Colonial Office of his detailed proposals on 7 July 1955.<sup>44</sup> The reconstituted Council Negri would have forty-two members with a majority of two unofficial members, achieved by increasing the number elected by the Divisional Advisory Councils from eight to twelve. The Supreme Council would con-

sist of five official members, including two nominated by the Governor, and five members elected by the Council Negri. After approval by the Colonial Office, the proposals were passed without dissent by the Council Negri on 7 September.<sup>45</sup> Thus, after nine years of colonial rule, the principle of an unofficial majority in the Council Negri was achieved, although ultimate legislative authority was forfeited to the Crown in the process.

### *Problems in Introducing the 1956 Constitution*

By 29 September 1955, the Governor was pressing the Colonial Office for early action to show that the government was anxious to lead the state towards self-government.<sup>46</sup> His concern reflected political developments in Malaya where the first national election had just been completed, whereas in Sarawak there was not one directly elected representative body at the local, division, or state levels. Local anxieties that the new Constitution would not comply with the Council Negri resolution were aroused when the Attorney-General, George E. Strickland, pointed out that granting a new Constitution was the prerogative of the sovereign and that the Council Negri proposals were subject to amendment by the Crown.<sup>47</sup> Precedents elsewhere justified the warning,<sup>48</sup> but ultimately the Colonial Secretary allayed the fears by advising the House of Commons that the wishes of the Council Negri would be followed 'to the greatest possible extent'.<sup>49</sup> According to the *Utusan Sarawak*, the local Malay-language newspaper, the Malays considered a new Constitution premature as they were not politically organized and did not know the form of constitution they wanted.<sup>50</sup> Their cause was taken up by Anthony Brooke, and in late 1955 he and some members of the House of Commons began to voice their concerns.<sup>51</sup>

Anthony Brooke asked why it was necessary to increase the powers of the Governor, thus drawing public attention to the proposed repeal of Section 17 of the existing Constitution that vested ultimate power to pass legislation in the Council Negri.<sup>52</sup> In conjunction with this, Clause 6 of the Council Negri resolution of 7 September 1955 enabled the introduction of the long-sought provision for Crown powers to disallow legislation.<sup>53</sup> After the *Straits Times* supported the need for disallowance legislation on 16 November, Anthony Brooke withdrew his opposition, saying that the important point was the removal of an official majority in the Council Negri.<sup>54</sup> In fact the point was not negotiable, since a

majority of unofficial members in the Council Negri had to be offset by concomitant sovereign power to disallow legislation so that the Crown could control expenditure. Some Council Negri members, including Khoo Peng Loong who had moved the resolution for the new Constitution in September 1955, assumed the new Constitution would be referred to them before enactment.<sup>55</sup> Anthony Brooke applied pressure on the Colonial Office for this to be done on their behalf, but without success.<sup>56</sup> He then submitted a four-page preamble for the new Constitution, which was interpreted by the Colonial Office as an 'attempt to arrogate to the Brooke family a continuing position of authority' in Sarawak affairs.<sup>57</sup> His request that an unofficial member of Council Negri be allowed to present his preamble to the Council was turned down in the House of Commons.<sup>58</sup>

The political pressure exerted by Anthony Brooke raised fears of a resurgence of the anti-cession movement. In December 1955, the Presidents of the SDA and the MNU wrote to Anthony Brooke saying they were looking forward to his return,<sup>59</sup> although he had been banned from entry into Sarawak by the Governor since December 1946.<sup>60</sup> A. D. Pyke Howard of the Colonial Office minuted in February 1956 that some Chinese had joined the movement for the first time, but the anti-cession movement was no longer effective.<sup>61</sup> The Special Branch in Sarawak thought otherwise, reporting in the middle of July that Anthony Brooke, whose imminent return was widely rumoured, was attempting to reopen the cession issue and that a Malay party might be formed in a new attempt to overturn cession.<sup>62</sup> This intelligence probably resulted from the activities of Ahmad Zaidi bin Wan Adruce, an outspoken critic of colonialism who had recently returned to Kuching.<sup>63</sup> The Malays regarded him as their new leader and he played a significant part in the revival of Malay political activities. He was an inspiring speaker who looked upon Indonesian President Sukarno as the great Muslim liberator of his people from colonialism.<sup>64</sup>

### *The 1956 Constitution*

On 3 August 1956 the Sarawak (Constitution) Order, 1956, which included all the changes sought by the Council Negri a year earlier, was promulgated by the Queen in Council.<sup>65</sup> The Order provided for a reconstituted Supreme Council with ten members. These were:

- (a) 5 unofficial members elected by the unofficial members of the Council Negri from the members of that Council;
- (b) 3 *ex officio* members, namely the Chief Secretary, the Attorney-General, and the Financial Secretary; and
- (c) 2 nominated members from the members of Council Negri, nominees of the Governor.

The Governor or his nominee presided over the meetings. When exercising his powers, the Governor was required to consult with the Supreme Council unless there was an emergency or other compelling reasons. He was not obliged to accept the advice he was given, but he had to inform the Secretary of State and give his reasons when he did not do so. The 1956 Constitution therefore gave the Governor the power to override a hostile Supreme Council should the need arise, a power lacking in the 1941 Constitution. Later the Governor informally ensured a majority of unofficial members in the Supreme Council by choosing an unofficial as one of his nominees.<sup>66</sup>

The 1956 Constitution introduced the principle of elections and established a majority of elected unofficial members in the Council Negri. These were significant advances, although tempered by the introduction of the concomitant sovereign power of disallowance of laws under Clauses 40 and 41. The reconstituted Council Negri had forty-two members excluding standing members as follows:

- (a) 24 elected members, elected from and by the members of each of five Divisional Advisory Councils (DACs), the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC), and the Sibu and Miri Urban District Councils (SUDC and MUDC);
- (b) 3 standing members, the remaining life members of the Council Negri appointed under the 1941 Constitution, who, although not obliged to do so, usually supported the government;
- (c) 14 *ex officio* members, a maximum number made up of the Chief Secretary (President), the Attorney-General, the Financial Secretary, a maximum of five Residents, and six SCS nominees of the Governor; and
- (d) 4 nominated members, appointed by the Governor to represent those interests inadequately or not represented in the Council Negri.

A claim that the majority of unofficial members was illusory, because five of them served on the Supreme Council and therefore had to support the government, was refuted in an official statement.<sup>67</sup> This said that no unofficial member was obliged to

support the government in the Council Negri. Ability to deal with an alienated Council was introduced under Clauses 40 and 41 of the new Constitution that empowered the Governor to refuse his assent to any bill and enabled the Crown to disallow any law to which the Governor had assented. Also, when considered 'expedient' in the interests of public order, good faith or good government', the Governor could introduce and pass legislation under Clause 39, notwithstanding Council Negri objections.

To implement the change from nominated to elected unofficial members of the Council Negri, the Council Negri Elections Ordinance, 1956, was enacted to establish eight electoral colleges for the Council Negri, the KMC, SUDC, MUDC, and five DACs. DAC members were to be elected by non-urban District Councils. Elections to the Municipal, Urban District, and District Councils were covered by the Local Government Elections Ordinance, 1956, and the first public election was held on 4 November 1956 for KMC councillors. The first meeting of the Council Negri under the new Constitution was held on 21 May. In his opening speech, the Governor said that the new Council was 'the best balanced and the most truly representative body' that had ever met in Sarawak.<sup>68</sup> The Council's President, Chief Secretary Hugh Ellis, said that the meeting was a great success politically, with a good balance between the different races.<sup>69</sup>

The 1956 Constitution initiated the transition from government-nominated, traditional, community leaders to publicly elected members of communally based political parties.<sup>70</sup> This political change was given added momentum at the end of 1959 by the dissolution of the Council Negri and state-wide elections.<sup>71</sup> Increasing participation in Council Negri debates by elected members reflected their growing confidence.<sup>72</sup> Initiated by the government in 1959, the redrafting of Section 38 of the Constitution enabled the Council's unofficial members to register their disapproval of government by the classic method of moving a motion to reduce an item of expenditure in the Committee of Supply estimates.<sup>73</sup> DACs became an important forum of discussions on electoral and constitutional reforms, as shown in early August 1960 when Stephen K. T. Yong called for universal suffrage for everyone over the age of eighteen at a First Divisional Advisory Council meeting.<sup>74</sup> Voting was then confined to adult married ratepayers and tenants.<sup>75</sup> Epitomizing the differences between the Chinese urban population and the conservative indigenous rural people, Tua Kampung Haji Dol of the Kuching Rural District Council

(KRDC) said only the male should be entitled to vote.<sup>76</sup> A month later, Yong criticized the three-tier election system and complained that the advisory role of the unofficial Supreme Council members gave them responsibility but no authority.<sup>77</sup>

### *The 1961 Constitutional and Electoral Reforms*

In fact, constitutional and electoral reforms were already being drafted. This suggested that the reforms were a logical progression from the success of the 1959 general elections, rather than a response to political pressure from the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), which was suspected of being the open political party of the communists.<sup>78</sup> Nor was the 'Greater Malaysia plan' put forward by the Prime Minister of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman, in May 1961 a factor of note.<sup>79</sup> The reforms were published in Sessional Paper No. 2 on 30 September 1961 after approval by the Colonial Secretary, Reginald Maudling, who advised the House of Commons on 24 October that the proposals were being tabled in the Council Negri.<sup>80</sup> The electoral reform extended the franchise to everyone over the age of twenty-one, subject only to residential requirements and the usual disqualifications.<sup>81</sup> One constitutional reform moved towards ministerial government by associating unofficial members of the Supreme Council with specific portfolios. Another replaced the Chief Secretary as President of the Council Negri by a Speaker, which enabled the Chief Secretary to take full part in Council debates and question time. Also, the number of *ex officio* members in the reconstituted Council Negri was reduced from fourteen to three.<sup>82</sup> The Council members were:

- (a) 3 *ex officio* comprising the Chief Secretary, the Attorney-General, and the Financial Secretary;
- (b) 15 nominees, including 4 or more unofficials; and
- (c) 24 members elected by and from the DACs. Representation from the Kuching Municipal, the Sibu Urban, and the Miri District Councils in the Council Negri should be via the DACs, similarly to all other Councils.

Welcoming the White Paper, the *Sarawak Tribune* described it as 'another significant move forward in the pace of Sarawak's progress towards self-government'.<sup>83</sup> In the ensuing Council Negri debate, the paper was well received by Native members, but the SUPP had a number of objections.<sup>84</sup> SUPP objections to the three-tier electoral system were repeated, as was the party's

contention that unofficial Supreme Council members associated with portfolios had responsibility but no authority. Retention of nominees on the Council was also condemned. The KMC and SUDC, both SUPP-dominated, called for reconsideration of the composition of the Council and the three-tier electoral system, which the government viewed as giving the communists less opportunity to manipulate voting. In reply, the Acting Attorney-General pointed out that the proposals had been presented as an indivisible whole and declined to accept the motion of amendment. When put to the vote, the motion was lost and, following endorsement of the White Paper by the Council on 1 November 1961, the Sarawak (Constitution) Order in Council, 1962 was enacted.

### *The 1963 Constitutional Reforms*

On 1 November 1961, the Council Negri also approved the Governor's proposals to hold general elections in 1963, timed in the middle of the year as the most suitable season from the farming point of view and to avoid clashing with the government's annual budget.<sup>85</sup> After receiving a favourable report from the Cobbold Commission,<sup>86</sup> the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations announced on 1 August 1962 that agreement in principle had been reached to proclaim the Federation of Malaysia by 31 August 1963.<sup>87</sup> The 1963 elections then became the last and only opportunity to transform Sarawak into a self-governing state that would be capable of defending its own interests within Malaysia, yet structured to facilitate transition from a colony to a state within Malaysia. In February 1963, the conditions under which Sarawak would join Malaysia were made public in the Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) Report,<sup>88</sup> which enabled the government to present the necessary changes in the state's Constitution to the Council Negri on 9 March 1963.<sup>89</sup> Accepted by the Council on the same day, quick action by the Colonial Office enabled the Sarawak (Constitution) Order, 1963, to be issued on 2 May 1963, some four months before the formation of Malaysia.

Although the three-tier indirect system of election to the Council Negri was retained for the 1963 elections, the IGC Report stipulated that the first general elections after the fifth anniversary of Malaysia Day, or earlier if the state government agreed, were to be direct. The main reform in May 1963 provided the Supreme Council with a Chief Minister selected by a majority in the Council Negri, five members selected by the Chief Minister from the

Council Negri and three *ex officio* members.<sup>90</sup> This established a ministerial system of government with a Chief Minister chosen by the political party or parties controlling the Council Negri. Also, all but three of the nominated members were eliminated and the number of elected members was increased from twenty-four to thirty-six. The British administration retained the power to disallow legislation so that ultimate control over expenditure could be maintained. With this exception, the electorate, through their political representatives in the Council Negri and on the Supreme Council, was to be given complete control over the internal affairs of Sarawak.

By the time of the general elections, which were held from April to June 1963, there were six political parties contesting for power. After the final election results in the District Councils were announced during the week ending 24 June 1963, a shifting kaleidoscope of alliances developed to gain control of the Council Negri.<sup>91</sup> Supported by some independents, a four-party alliance finally won control of the Council Negri and a pro-Malaysia Council Negri was elected in mid-July. On 22 July the Governor appointed the first Chief Minister, Dato Stephen Kalong Ningkan, who commanded a majority in the Council Negri.<sup>92</sup> The Governor then appointed five Supreme Council members chosen by the Chief Minister from his colleagues in the Council Negri.<sup>93</sup> With a Speaker presiding in place of the President of the Council, the first fully elected Council Negri in Sarawak met on 4 September 1963 and passed the Malaysia Agreement on the following day.<sup>94</sup> From the time of its inception nearly a century earlier, this was the zenith of the power of the Council Negri, as, when Sarawak became one of the states of Malaysia, several areas of Council responsibility became Federal matters under the Constitution of Malaysia. These included trade and customs, the health services, and the police, for which responsibility was transferred to the Dewan Ra'ayat in Kuala Lumpur on Malaysia Day, 16 September 1963. Malaysia inaugurated the beginning of a new and different era for both the Supreme Council and the Council Negri.

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The British administration inherited a long-established government structure with a recently written Constitution that embodied precepts for the government of Sarawak. It was committed to working within those constraints which included ultimate self-government.



For this, one essential facet was constitutional reform to establish a fully elected legislature and a ministerial form of government. In the late 1940s constitutional change was inhibited by several factors. These included the immediate priority of re-establishing and restoring government services, political resistance to cession and ensuing fears of an adverse reaction to any further changes, lack of local government structures and an electoral system, and the inherent conservatism of the indigenous people. Also, adverse criticism would have been attracted by the necessary transfer of final power over legislation from the Council Negri, under the 1941 Constitution, to the Crown. Only by 1952 was the British administration sufficiently confident to initiate reforms. Lack of political pressure and no fixed timetable for self-government removed immediate urgency from the process and four years elapsed before the new Constitution was promulgated. Much of this inordinately long period was taken up in discussion with local government bodies, which served a useful purpose as their views were taken into account in representation on the Council Negri. The result was that under the 1956 Constitution there was an elected majority in the Council Negri, although, as a *quid pro quo*, legislation disallowance clauses were intitled.

Pressures for reform were generally confined to the predominantly Chinese SUPP, which was suspected of being an open front for the communists. However, the origins of the 1961 reforms were the successful state-wide elections of 1959, the forthcoming mid-1963 state-wide elections, and world pressures to end colonialism. Universal suffrage was introduced and a hesitant step was taken towards a ministerial form of government. This hesitancy no doubt arose from the SUPP's predominance in the political arena. Although SUPP pressure continued unabated, the real dynamic behind the urgent introduction of the reforms prior to the 1963 elections was the official commitment to the Malaysia plan. During the colonial era, a balance had to be achieved between the indigenous people's resistance to change and their desire to maintain the *status quo*, excluding a very small number of well-educated progressives, and the politically organized, predominantly left-wing, urban Chinese. Although this balance was achieved, the resulting rate of constitutional change proved inadequate to equip Sarawak with an experienced ministerial form of government by Malaysia Day, as reflected in the number of expatriate officers in senior executive roles whose services were retained for a number of years. In the absence of a programme for self-government with target dates until August 1962, when the formation of Malaysia became

the publicly declared aim of the British and Malayan governments, perhaps this was inevitable. At least local government had a much stronger foundation by that time.

1. *Hansard*, Vol. 246, col. 26, 24 July 1946. See pp. 6-7 for the Nine Cardinal Principles.
2. D. S. Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983: The Problems of Political Survival*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. 223-5. In 1841, Sarawak (known as Sarawak Proper) was a small Brunei Sultanate province of 7750 square kilometres around Kuching, covering the Lundu, Sarawak, and Samarahan river basins.
3. C. Hose, 'The Constitutional Development of Sarawak', *Asiatic Review*, 25, 83 (July 1929): 485. Dr Hose, an SCS officer, played a major role in developing the Miri oilfield.
4. T. Stirling Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', Unpublished typescript, c.1934, pp. 31 and 59-63. The Rajah carried out daily business direct with the Government Secretary.
5. Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', pp. 33 and 53. See also M. B. Leigh, *Council Negri: Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak State Government, 1992.
6. Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', pp. 36-7.
7. R. H. W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 288.
8. Notification No. 383, *Sarawak Government Gazette*, 34, 11 (31 March 1941): 190.
9. Anthony Brooke, *The Facts about Sarawak*, Singapore: Summer Times Publishing, 1983, pp. 30-2.
10. For Order No. C-21, see Brooke, *The Facts about Sarawak*, pp. 33-41. The Constitution was drafted by the Committee of Administration (J. B. Archer, first Chairman; C. D. Le Gros Clark, second Chairman; T. Corson; J. G. Anderson; and C. Pitt-Hardacre).
11. Colonial Secretary to War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo, C.M.B. (44) 12, 9 December 1944, CAB 98/41, PRO.
12. Brooke, *The Facts about Sarawak*, pp. 6 and 7; Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp. 187-90.
13. *Hansard*, Vol. 419, col. 368, 13 February 1946; Vol. 421, col. 358, 27 March 1946.
14. The Datu Patinggi (Malay supreme chief), a Supreme Council member, sought, without success, sole rights over Talang Island turtle eggs and his title being made hereditary (Brooke, *The Facts about Sarawak*, pp. 76-7; Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp. 200, 206, and 299-300).
15. *Hansard*, Vol. 433, col. 337, 22 May 1946. The British Resident wrote that possibly a majority of Dayaks and Malays were against cession (C. W. Dawson Diary, 8 June 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL).
16. *Singapore Free Press*, 18 May 1946, p. 5; C. W. Dawson Diary, 21 May 1945, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL.
17. Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 48.
18. *Sarawak Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 1, 1 (1 July 1946): 2-7.

19. The roads were virtually empty when MacDonald toured the villages (C. W. Dawson Diary, 2 July 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL).

20. *Hansard*, Vol. 424, col. 1295, 26 June 1946.

21. *Hansard*, Vol. 425, col. 241, 9 July 1946.

22. *Singapore Free Press*, 1 November 1946, p. 1. The headline read: 'Sarawak still wants Rajah'.

23. Arden Clarke to T. I. K. Lloyd, Colonial Office, 12 December 1946, CSO Conf. 16/46, CO 938 3/1, PRO.

24. British Information Services, 'The British Colonies in 1948', Supplement to *Commonwealth Survey: A Record of United Kingdom and Commonwealth Affairs*, London: HMSO, 6 August 1949, p. 25.

25. *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 December 1948, p. 2. Progressive expatriates could have written this.

26. Colonial Secretary to Arden Clarke, Saving No. 64, 20 September 1947, File 58553/47, CO 938 3/1, PRO. Sovereign control over expenditure and legislation was lacking in the 1946 Constitution.

27. K. H. Digby, *Lateyer in the Wilderness*, Data Paper No. 114, South-East Asia Program, New York: Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1980, p. 90.

28. Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, pp. 51-2.

29. *Singapore Free Press*, 20 December 1946, p. 1; 15 July 1948, p. 1; 21 June 1949, p. 4. Bertram Brooke, the third Rajah's brother, and Anthony Brooke appealed to the Privy Council without success.

30. D. Rooney, *Sir Charles Arden-Clarke*, London: Rex Collins, 1982, p. 79; *The Times* (London), 3 June 1949, p. 5.

31. See Appendix 1 for a brief account of the trial. The *penghulu* had difficulty in persuading the Ibans, in Sibü for the occasion, from reprisal attacks on Malay villages (Personal communication, A. J. N. Richards, 26 June 1993). Later the perpetrators were hailed as Malay patriots (Tan Sri Dato Dr Mubin Sheppard, 'A Patriots' Memorial in Kuching', *JMBRAS*, 64, 1 (1991): 122).

32. The OAG administered the government in the absence of the Governor. Aikman, born 1905, joined the SCS in 1926 and was interned from 1942 to 1945. In 1950, he became Chief Secretary and retired in 1955 in ill health (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1167 (31 May 1955): 96).

33. Saving No. 214, 19 April 1952, Ref. 8/C/442/52, CO 1022/90, PRO.

34. Under Section 9 of the 1941 Constitution, a Native member of the Council Negri on 1 September 1941 remained a member until he left the civil service, resigned, or died.

35. The *Sarawak Tribune* objected strongly when the Council President used his casting vote in May 1952 to allocate funds for a broadcasting station (*Sarawak Tribune*, 24 May 1952, p. 2).

36. Sir Gerald Whiteley, Colonial Office, hoped some means of electing or selecting Council Negri members would offset an unpopular disallowance clause (Minute, 5 June 1952, File SEA 31/7/02, CO 1022/90, PRO).

37. Colonial Secretary to the OAG, Sarawak, No. 511, 22 August 1952, File SEA 31/7/02, CO 1022/90, PRO.

38. *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 December 1952, p. 2. On 12 August 1953, 20,000 pamphlets in four languages were issued (Memo RO/803/c/67, Sibü Resident Office's file, RO/803, Sarawak Museum Archives).

39. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1158 (31 August 1954): 163. Few in the Kapit district

were even aware that Sarawak had a Constitution (Letter No. 109 in B18/1, 30 October 1953, RO/803, Sarawak Museum Archives).

40. Saving No. 16, 7 January 1954, Fed. 42/7/01 and Minute, 28 January 1954, Fed. 36/7/01, CO 1030/105, PRO.

41. *Hansard*, Vol. 528, col. 64, 2 June 1954. Federation with Malaya and Singapore was precluded.

42. 'Notes on Amendments to the Sarawak Constitution' sent by the Chief Secretary to the Residents under cover of letter 52/C/442/52, 12 August 1954 (RO/803, Sarawak Museum Archives).

43. *Utusan Sarawak*, 31 September 1957, p. 2. Lord Perth was Minister of State for Colonial Affairs.

44. Governor to Sir Gerald Whiteley, Colonial Office, 7 July 1955, File 1/60/S/6/55, CO 1030/105, PRO.

45. Minute by Sir G. Whiteley, 19 July 1955, Fed 36/7/01, CO 1030/105, PRO; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1172 (31 October 1955): 246. See also the *Sarawak Government Gazette* dated 7 October 1955.

46. Saving No. 481, 29 September 1955, Ref. GO/S/6/55, CO 1030/106, PRO.

47. G. E. Strickland, QC, in a broadcast reported in the *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 September 1955 (CO 1030/105, PRO) He was the Attorney-General from 1952 to the time of his death on 14 November 1957.

48. In 1948, the Cabinet overruled a Colonial Office promise to grant Gibraltar a Legislative Council (J. M. Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967, p. 59).

49. *Hansard*, Vol. 555, col. 483, 27 June 1956; *Straits Times* (Singapore), 7 July 1956, p. 6.

50. *Utusan Sarawak*, 6 June 1955, p. 2. The Council Negri had eight nominated Malay members.

51. *Hansard*, Vol. 543, col. 176, 13 July 1955; Vol. 545, col. 120, 2 November 1955.

52. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 2 November 1955, p. 6.

53. Undated note on file Fed. 36/7/09, CO 1030/112, PRO.

54. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 16 November 1955, p. 6; File note, 3 December 1955, Fed 36/7/05, CO 1030/110, PRO. At this time, the Sarawak government absolved Anthony Brooke from inland revenue claims by commuting the Rajah's dependants' allowances into a capital payment.

55. *Hansard*, Fifth Series-Volume CC, cols. 340-1, 15 November 1956.

56. Anthony Brooke to A. Lennox-Boyd, letter of 19 December 1955, Fed. 36/7/05, CO 1030/110, PRO; *Hansard*, Vol. 555, col. 483, 27 June 1956.

57. 'Note for Ministers' sent to Private Secretaries of Lord Home and Selwyn Lloyd, 2 July 1956, Fed. 36/7/09, CO 1030/112, PRO.

58. *Hansard*, Vol. 555, col. 484, 27 June 1956. Anthony Brooke had approached the Prime Minister.

59. CO 1030/110, PRO. The letter of 1 December 1955 also mentioned vociferous complaints against taxes.

60. *Hansard*, Vol. 431, col. 2178, 19 December 1946. The ban remained throughout the colonial era.

61. A. D. Pyke Howard to Asst. Sec. A. M. MacKintosh, Minute, 23 February 1956, CO 1030/110, PRO.

62. Governor Anthony Abell to the Colonial Office, Report, 15 July 1956, CO 1030/110, PRO.

63. Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, pp. 72 and 64. Born in Sibn in 1921, Ahmad Zaidi was the first Native of British Borneo to obtain a master's degree. He joined the Education Department in 1955.

64. M. B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, pp. 28-9.

65. Sarawak (Constitution) Order in Council, 1956, CO 1030/110, PRO.

66. M. B. Leigh, *Council Negri: Dewan Undangan Negri Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak State Government, 1992, p. 95.

67. Answer to a question by Stephen K. T. Yong during the Council Negri debate on 21 May 1957.

68. First Meeting of the First Session of the Third Council Negri minutes, 21 May 1957, col. 5, Sarawak Museum Archives.

69. Ellis to the Colonial Office, Saving No. 27, 27 May 1957, File AG. 5/430/1, CO 1030/457, PRO.

70. The first political party, the SUPP, was inaugurated on 12 June 1959.

71. *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 October 1958, p. 1; 24 September 1959, p. 1.

72. Leigh, *Council Negri: Dewan Undangan Negri Sarawak*, pp. 98-9.

73. Colonial Office to OAG, Sarawak, Saving No. 10, 8 January 1960, File Fed. 36/7/04, CO 1030/458, PRO.

74. Stephen K. T. Yong, a Hakka born in Sarawak in 1921, was a lawyer, KMC councillor, Council Negri member, and founder member and Secretary-General of the SUPP (*New Malaysian Who's Who. Part 1. Sabah and Sarawak*, Selangor: Kasuya Publishing, 1989/90, p. 728).

75. J. C. B. Fisher, *The Report on the Kuching Municipal Council Elections Held on 4th November, 1956*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1956; Kuching Municipal Council, *Annual Report, 1959*, p. 5.

76. *Sarawak Tribune*, 9 August 1960, p. 1.

77. *Sarawak Tribune*, 29 October 1960, p. 1.

78. Intelligence was aware that the communists sought to establish a communist state (Sarawak Information Service [SIS], *The Danger Within: A History of the Clandestine Communist Organisation in Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1963, p. 27).

79. This was clearly stated on page 2 of Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 2. Malcolm MacDonald, the Commissioner-General, had promoted the formation of Malaysia since the late 1940s (CO 1030/164, PRO).

80. *Hansard*, Vol. 646, col. 38, 24 October 1961. Written reply to A. F. Brockway, MP.

81. *Hansard*, Vol. 646, cols. 38-9, 24 October 1961. Stephen K. T. Yong sought a voting age of eighteen which would have enhanced the SUPP's election prospects.

82. Fourth Meeting of the Third Session of the Third Council Negri, 30 October 1961, col. 14, Sarawak Museum Archives.

83. *Sarawak Tribune*, 7 October 1961, p. 1.

84. Fourth Meeting of the Third Session of the Third Council Negri, 30 October 1961, cols. 22-46, Sarawak Museum Archives. The debate highlighted the political differences between the urban Chinese and the rural Native.

85. *Ibid.*, cols. 13-14 and 46.

86. Lacking independent observers, the Cobbold Commission was viewed by some as legitimizing British withdrawal without first granting promised self-government (Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 41).

87. The Commission's British members sought three to seven years to build up a ministerial form of government, but the Malayan members sought immediate transfer of legislative and executive authority in Federal matters with sovereignty (*The Times* (London), 2 August 1962, p. 8; 11 October 1961, p. 8).

88. *Sarawak Tribune*, 27 February 1963, p. 1. Lord Landsdowne chaired the IGC.

89. Second Meeting of the Fifth Session of the Third Council Negri, 9 March 1963, col. 9, Sarawak Museum Archives.

90. *Ibid.*, col. 91-4.

91. G. P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, p. 304.

92. Stephen Kalong Ningkan, an Iban from Betong, Second Division, was born on 20 August 1920. He was a founder member of the Sarawak National Party and its Secretary-General from 1961 to 1964.

93. *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 July 1963, p. 1.

94. *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 September 1963, p. 1; 5 September 1963, p. 1. Alan Roe Snelus, a long service SCS officer, was the Speaker. Dr M. Sockalingham, who was born in Ipoh and had lived in Sarawak from 1941, became the Speaker immediately Malaysia came into being.

## Local Government

IN 1944, the British government had decided that political progress in Sarawak 'should provide for a growing participation in the government by the people of all communities'.<sup>1</sup> The Colonial Secretary, Oliver Stanley, believed there was no better training for self-government than through local administration.<sup>2</sup> His successor, George Hall, held similar views and, on 9 July 1946, called for the broadest possible basis of association between the people of Sarawak and its government to achieve maximum constitutional and economic development.<sup>3</sup> Apart from serving as training grounds for self-government, local government bodies later played a crucial role in raising the people's political consciousness by serving as electoral colleges. However, the transition from indirect local government, through nominated but recognized community leaders, to autonomous, elected local government authorities required significant changes to the existing government structure. As a Secretary of Local Government later wrote, 'the system of local government in the United Kingdom evolved in empirical fashion, that in Sarawak has been to a greater extent imposed'.<sup>4</sup>

### *Local Government under the Brookes*

Under the Brookes, the higher ranking European officers of the SCS were policy advisers to the Rajah and responsible for implementing his policies and decisions. A hierarchical chain of command in the SCS devolved administrative powers from the Chief Secretary to each of the Residents of Sarawak's five Divisions, each of which was subdivided into Districts administered by District Officers. Districts were further divided into substations under an officer of the Native Officers' Service. The Brooke policy of minimal interference in local customs was maintained through the legal system and by governing through local leaders.<sup>5</sup> At the highest level, traditional leaders were involved in government as nominated members of the Council Negri, although the Dayaks and the

Chinese were severely underrepresented.<sup>6</sup> Upper level European officers exercised their influence through communal leaders, that is Malay *datu*, Dayak *penghulu*, *kapitan China* generals, and influential Chinese. At local levels, Native Officers worked with the *tua kampung* (head of a Malay or Bidayuh village), the *tuai rumah* (head of an Iban longhouse), and an influential Chinese or *kapitan China* (head of a local Chinese community).

The first local government body in Sarawak, the Kuching Sanitary and Municipal Advisory Board, was set up under Order XXVIII of 1921 and consisted of five Europeans including three *ex officio* members, four Chinese, one Malay, and one Indian.<sup>7</sup> The Board was reconstituted in 1934 as the Kuching Municipal Board and similar boards were set up in Bau, Sibü, Sarikei, Binatang, and Miri.<sup>8</sup> The Native Administration Order of 1940 introduced a concept of committees in rural settlements to replace individual chiefs, but the Japanese occupation intervened before it could be implemented. This Order and the Municipal Boards provided the basis for development of local government after cession.

### *Plans for Local Government, 1947*

Sir Charles Arden Clarke set the general pattern for post-cession development of local government in late 1947 when he issued his 'Note on Development of Local Government in Sarawak'.<sup>9</sup> To avoid arousing any latent tensions among the various ethnic groups, he proposed establishing monoethnic authorities at the local level and multiethnic organizations at the District and Divisional levels. He proposed a four-level system of local government: Village Group Councils, Native Authorities, District Advisory Councils, and Divisional Advisory Councils, beginning with five experimental Native Authorities in Bidayuh, Iban, and combined Kayan/Kenyah areas. Immediate selection of a Malay or a Melanau Native Authority was not suggested since the Malays were still divided over cession; for rural Chinese communities, further study was recommended. As an interim measure, the existing Chinese Advisory Boards would act as electoral colleges to provide representation on Divisional Advisory Councils.

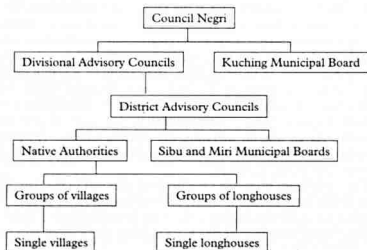
The experiment proposed for a Bidayuh area was in the Bau district of the First Division, which covered about 9,000 people. A number of small settlements were to be amalgamated to form a Village Group with four or five *tua kampung*, and a small number



of Village Groups would form in turn a Village Group Council. Village Group Councils would provide forums for exchange of views and elect two or more of their members to the local Native Authority. For the Iban and combined Kayan/Kenyah areas, each locality already had its own chief, a *penghulu*, and each settlement had a *tuai rumah*, so that a Native Authority could be formed simply by grouping a number of *penghulu* of the same and akin indigenous groups.

Native Authorities were to assume general responsibility for local self-government, including control over their own finance and local vernacular primary schools. Each would collect its own income made up of local taxes, Native court fines and fees, and other minor sources. For the first three years when income would not cover costs, an annual central government grant would be provided to meet the cost of maintaining the *tua kampung*, the *penghulu*, and primary school teachers under their jurisdiction. As electoral colleges, the Native Authorities would also elect one or two of their members to the District Advisory Councils. The existing multiethnic Municipal Boards of Sibu and Miri would act as District Advisory Councils for voting purposes, and Kuching would be treated as a separate electoral area because of its size and relative importance.

FIGURE 2.1  
Voting Protocol for Election to the Council Negri



District Advisory Councils, each under the chairmanship of an *ex officio* member, the local District Officer, were already being formed with proportional racial representation.<sup>10</sup> These Councils had no statutory functions, but provided an interracial forum and an avenue for direct communication between the government's and the people's representatives. Their direct political function was as electoral colleges to five Divisional Advisory Councils then being established. The latter Councils, each with the Division's Resident as its chairman, also had no statutory functions, but were the electoral colleges for unofficial members to the Council Negri and a direct link between the government and selected local leaders. Kuching as a separate electoral area would elect its own unofficial members direct to the Council Negri. The voting protocol of this rather complicated tier system under Arden Clarke's proposals of 1947 is shown in Figure 2.1.

### *Development of Rural Local Government to the End of 1956*

On 29 July 1947, the Colonial Secretary, Creech Jones, advised the House of Commons that new local government institutions were being created,<sup>11</sup> and in January 1948, five Native Authorities serving some 64,500 people became functional under the Native Administrative Ordinance. These were in the Bau area of the First Division, the Batang Lupar and Saribas areas of the Second Division, the Sibu area in the Third Division, and the Bintulu area of the Fourth Division. The Local Authority Ordinance was enacted in 1948 and has been described as the most pervasive piece of local government legislation in Sarawak.<sup>12</sup> This enabled rural local authorities to take over local government activities from government officers at a pace commensurate with their experience and stage of development.<sup>13</sup>

Inevitably there were some apathy and indifference when local authorities were established as the people were accustomed to government officers dealing with local government matters, but this did not delay the formation of local authorities. In his speech to the Council Negri on 29 November 1948, the Governor advised there were immediate plans to establish more local authorities with jurisdiction over a further 122,000 people. Six months later, the Acting Governor was able to report that nine more local authorities had been set up and that nearly one-third of the population, some 156,000 people, was under the jurisdiction of fourteen local

authorities.<sup>14</sup> Even more importantly, he advised that the first rural multiracial local authority had been established in the Limbang area, where its authority was territorial and people under its jurisdiction included Muruts, Malays, Kedayans, Indians, and Chinese. This was a major step towards the declared aim of welding the diverse elements of the country's plural society 'into a united body of Sarawak citizens'.<sup>15</sup> Excluding municipalities, by 22 May 1950, local government bodies in Sarawak were serving 195,000 people and included four mixed or multiracial authorities, of which two were territorial.<sup>16</sup> By November 1950 it was clear that many of the racial local authorities were too small to be economically viable and the governor spoke of establishing 'much larger [local government] units on an interracial basis which would command enough resources for financial stability'.<sup>17</sup>

After a year of planning and consolidation, in November 1951 the Governor announced the local authority programme for 1952.<sup>18</sup> This included setting up the Sibu Rural District Council (SRDC) and the Mukah Mixed Local Authority, and extending the Limbang District Council to include all races. By the end of 1952 there were thirteen racial and four mixed local authorities with jurisdiction over some 240,000 people.<sup>19</sup> During 1953 the mixed local government authorities at Sibu—Sibu Urban District Council (SUDC) and SRDC, Mukah, and Limbang proved effective and both Mukah and Limbang showed a capacity for extended responsibilities.<sup>20</sup> To deal with the growing complexity of the planning and development of the local government structure, a Local Government Department was set up in the Secretariat in Kuching during 1954. In its first year it converted three racial authorities to mixed authorities and set up the Lawas Mixed Local Authority. This extended local government jurisdiction to a new total of 260,000 people.<sup>21</sup> Establishing new local authorities was accelerated and by the end of 1956 virtually all the rural people were under mixed local authority jurisdiction.<sup>22</sup>

### *Development of Urban Local Government to the End of 1956*

In late 1947, the Deputy Municipal President of the Singapore Council, J. R. Hill, was invited to Kuching to advise the government on giving all municipalities some control over collection of revenue and expenditure, as at that time the Financial Secretary

controlled their finances and many of the public services were provided by government departments.<sup>23</sup> Hill recommended that Kuching should be given independent status since it was the seat of government, the centre of commerce, and the largest population centre in Sarawak.<sup>24</sup> He also suggested that all other municipalities should have a degree of autonomy. By late 1951, plans to convert the Kuching Municipal Board (KMB) to a Council were virtually complete and it was replaced by the autonomous Kuching Municipal Council (KMC) at the beginning of 1953 under the Kuching Municipal Ordinance.<sup>25</sup> Whereas the KMB had been little more than a government department operating on government funding, the KMC raised its own revenue and was controlled by a majority of communally chosen unofficial members.<sup>26</sup> Responsibility for all government-run primary schools in the KMC area was handed over to the KMC during 1954. To pay for this, central government provided a grant of half the estimated running cost, half anticipated cost increases, and half the cost of associated approved capital works. To help the KMC to assume its extended responsibilities, the SCS seconded a European officer as its chairman from 1953 to 1956, when William Tan was elected and became the first Sarawak-born chairman.<sup>27</sup>

For Sibü, the second largest urban centre in Sarawak, local government plans were included in the 1952 programme. The District Officer wrote to various communal organizations on 16 July 1951 asking for their nominations to the proposed SUDC.<sup>28</sup> By 31 July, a list of twenty-one selected and nominated councillors, made up of eleven Chinese, five Malays, one European, and four officials, had been published.<sup>29</sup> The Council became operative on 1 January 1952, and in February its area was extended to include the new airfield. By March, councillors began pressing for a fully elected body.<sup>30</sup> The third largest population centre in Sarawak, Miri, was a special case as the Sarawak Shell Oilfields Limited (SSOL) dominated the business and social life of the township. SSOL also provided and managed many of the amenities of local government in Miri, including the best equipped hospital in Sarawak. Negotiating transfer of amenities and responsibility proved rather protracted and the Miri Urban District Council (MUDC) was not formed until New Year's day, 1956.<sup>31</sup> This completed the programme for establishing the only three urban councils in Sarawak: Kuching, Sibü, and Miri covering 12.5 per cent of the population.

*Local Government Education Responsibilities*

As they were formed, local authorities became responsible for extending primary school education into the rural areas. After 1948 no new primary schools were built by central government and by the end of 1957, all fifty-six government primary schools had been handed over to local authorities. Guidance was given by administrative and education officers and mission personnel, but there were difficulties and some loss in professional efficiency. Many rural schools were simple structures in remote locations that presented formidable difficulties in supervision, and were completely dependent on one teacher of limited education and training.<sup>32</sup> Some authorities overextended their finances in their eagerness to have new schools opened in their areas; their ability to maintain their schools and provide the necessary material for student use suffered accordingly.<sup>33</sup> Financial problems were eased in 1956 by the Grant Code under which local authorities had to accept government control over teaching standards and curricula. The Grant Code met recurrent costs of running primary schools from the public purse and grants-in-aid were made available for up to one half of the approved expenditure on approved capital projects. Results appeared rapidly. Aided by over \$500,000 in capital grants under the Code, eighty-four schools were built in 1957. The growth of the local authority primary school system is shown in Table 2.1.<sup>34</sup> In 1957, 9,603 pupils out of 12,000-14,000 Malay children between 6 and 12 years old, and 7,403 pupils from 17,000-27,000 Dayak and other indigenous children in the same

TABLE 2.1  
Growth of Local Authority Primary School System, 1948-1963

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i>	<i>Number of Pupils</i>
1948	18	804
1955	112	6,338
1956	150	9,027
1957	270	17,182
1963	591	44,576

Sources: Sarawak Education Department, *Triennial Survey, 1955-1957*, p. 8; *Annual Summary, 1963*, Table 1A.

age group were attending local authority schools. These pupil numbers excluded the 14,813 in mission primary schools in 1957, which emphasizes the significance of the role of local authorities as providers of primary education for the indigenous peoples in the rural areas.

### *Early Problems in Local Government*

Extending local government throughout Sarawak in a very short period was not without problems. Initially some *penghulu* and their people were reluctant to establish local authorities and treasuries because the concept of local government was not understood. A constant and widespread SCS information campaign achieved only very slow acceptance.<sup>35</sup> Native Authorities established in the early years were administratively convenient, but too small to be economically sound and their racial basis was divisive. These problems were overcome by their integration into larger mixed local authorities.<sup>36</sup> Another early weakness was the small proportion of income from sources under local authority control and the high proportion from government grants, for example, 56 per cent in the typical case of Kanowit estimates for 1949.<sup>37</sup> This removed much of the incentive to collect taxes or to explore new sources of revenue and did not foster financial responsibility. Sources of local authority revenue were limited to fines, fees, a door tax of \$1 a year for each Dayak family, and a head tax of \$1 a year levied on all male Malays of working age.<sup>38</sup> Also, government grants were somewhat open-ended as they were related to the expenditure of local authorities on education and any other services they provided.

From 1948 the government grant was therefore made proportional to the taxes collected by the authority, and a grant of \$5 a year for every taxpayer was introduced.<sup>39</sup> In return, local authorities had to comply with revised rules to ensure proper management of their funds and accept responsibility for any new social services and any existing government-funded local expenditure, such as the headman's salary. Collecting direct taxes presented problems. Dayaks and Melanau in the Mukah area objected to paying taxes, but were finally persuaded to do so.<sup>40</sup> The Native door tax and head tax did not apply to the Chinese communities, so various *ad hoc* alternatives were adopted.<sup>41</sup> In some areas the Chinese finally agreed to pay \$1 a year for every adult male, and the SRDC adopted an 'inhabited house duty' in lieu of the door tax. In

Kanowit, Chinese objections to a direct tax had to be overcome before a mixed authority could be established.<sup>42</sup> However, taxes were finally collected in all cases without incident.

### *Transition to Elected Local Government Councils, 1956*

Nineteen fifty-six was a significant year in the development of local government in Sarawak. In one of the most representative meetings ever held in Sarawak up to that time, a local government conference was held in Kuching in April to co-ordinate policies and activities throughout the state.<sup>43</sup> The Local Government Elections Ordinance, 1956, was enacted to cover public elections to councils, although voting was limited to the adult ratepayer and the legally married.<sup>44</sup> The Kuching Municipal (Amendment) Ordinance, 1956, was also introduced to enable elected councillors to take the place of Governor in Council nominees. Foreshadowing this legislation, on 24 January the KMC Chairman announced that elections would be held during the year for the KMC, which would become a fully elected council in January 1957.<sup>45</sup>

The KMC elections on 4 November 1956 were the first elections by secret ballot held in Sarawak and were rated a success since over 86 per cent of those entitled to vote did so, although the franchise was limited to about 10 per cent of the population, the adult ratepayers.<sup>46</sup> Following the well-established principle of communal representation practised in the pre-election Council and its predecessor, the KMB, and in the absence of competing political parties,<sup>47</sup> voting in the election was strictly on communal lines.<sup>48</sup> In seven wards where Chinese predominated, Chinese councillors were elected, and in two wards where there was a Malay majority all the councillors elected were Malays. Alterations to the municipal boundaries earlier in the year had removed some 10,000 Malays from the KMC, which resulted in a majority of Chinese councillors being elected.<sup>49</sup> Dayaks, Indians, and minority races were left without any representation at all in the KMC. Its councillors elected a prominent Teochew, William Tan, as their Chairman, and as a gesture to the Malay community, Ahmad Zaidi Adruce, a Malay civil servant with anti-colonial views, was elected to the position of Vice-Chairman.<sup>50</sup> To assist the Council in its early years of formation, a civil establishment post of Secretary to the Council was created and was held by an expatriate officer of the SCS for the following three years.<sup>51</sup> Similar elections were held in Sibu at the end of 1957 when councillors were elected by secret

ballot to a reconstituted SUDC and elections for Bau Council were planned for late 1957.<sup>52</sup>

By this time, some of the councils were undertaking relatively ambitious projects. The more notable of these were a KMC low-cost housing scheme, a large building and development programme by the SUDC, and a slum clearance and resettlement scheme of the MUDC.<sup>53</sup> Local authorities became more aware of the need to expand health services and a number of maternity and child welfare clinics were built. Also, a few councils began to provide local public utility services, such as water and electricity, with the help of grants and loans from central government. In January 1957 the Acting Secretary for Local Government announced that council responsibilities were being extended to include public health services and the construction, upkeep, and planning of secondary roads and paths. The government also began to encourage councils to carry out capital works by offering capital grants to match contributions raised by the councils themselves for approved development projects.<sup>54</sup>

The growing confidence of the local councils is shown in two disparate decisions in early 1958. The first was the Kuching Rural District Council (KRDC) decision to impose a direct tax on houses occupied by Chinese as their contribution towards development works and council services.<sup>55</sup> Prior to that, the Chinese had not paid direct taxes although the Dayaks and the Malays had been paying government door and head taxes from pre-cession times. The second decision concerned moral codes. The SUDC appealed to the Board of Censors to cease issuing licences for strip-tease shows in an attempt to counter the growing number of clubs and hotels offering this form of entertainment.<sup>56</sup> Although the councils at this stage were gradually taking over many of the functions of the District Officer, traditional community leaders were still dominant in the councils and District Officers, in their *ex officio* role as chairmen of the councils, had a direct influence over council workings and decisions.<sup>57</sup> In a continuing process of establishing and maintaining common practices and policies, the British Council arranged for Harold Bedale, the Town Clerk of Hornsby in North London, to visit Sarawak in early 1958. For local guidance, he produced a handbook covering the essential duties of local authorities and councillors.<sup>58</sup> It also included information on a wide range of sources of income, including rates, fees, cesses, leasing and hiring property, and interest on investments.



There were inherent weaknesses in the system of raising revenue due to a lack of uniformity among councils and the obvious inequities between the Malay head tax, the Dayak door tax, and the Chinese tax on occupied houses. These were finally eliminated in 1959 when all local authorities agreed to adopt a common rating system supported by central government grants.<sup>59</sup> Also in 1959, all rural councils adopted a standard model constitution to ensure similarity in functioning throughout the state.<sup>60</sup> By far the most important political event in 1959 was the first state-wide election held in November and December to choose new members for all twenty-four councils, which included the three urban councils. For most of the councils, this was the first time their members would be elected. Some 350 separate elections were held throughout the country, although not without problems.<sup>61</sup> To encourage voting on a regional basis rather than on ethnic affiliations, creation of racial groups was avoided as far as possible by dividing councils into wards, but voting patterns still tended to follow ethnic lines.<sup>62</sup> Chinese voters for KMC and SUDC councillors showed both ethnic and political affiliations in strongly supporting the Chinese-led SUPP, the only political party then in existence.<sup>63</sup> A growing political awareness, possibilities of patronage, and the role of councils as electoral colleges and sub-electoral colleges for the Council Negri, attracted both traditional leaders and the new younger intelligentsia as candidates.<sup>64</sup> Voter interest was indicated by an average poll of 75 per cent of the restricted electoral roll. On 1 January 1960, elected members assumed control of every local council in Sarawak.

### *The Role of the Divisional Advisory Councils*

At that time the Divisional Advisory Councils fulfilled their primary function as electoral colleges for the Council Negri.<sup>65</sup> Although criticized as mere 'talking shops', these Councils were a valuable component in the local government structure. The Resident as Chairman had a forum to explain government policies and legislation before they were tabled in the Council Negri, so that the views of councillors could be taken into account.<sup>66</sup> Councillors were able to question the administration on matters of local interest and draw attention to matters requiring action.<sup>67</sup> Important matters such as constitutional changes, the Borneo federation, and Malaysia were discussed at length. As power gradually devolved from the administration to the local government authorities, the Divisional

Advisory Councils became an increasingly useful link in the overall matrix of local government by providing informal channels of communication between the executive and selected—later elected—representatives of the public.

### *Improvements in Primary Education Grants*

Primary education, a major responsibility of local authorities, was given added impetus when the government accepted the main recommendations of the Maclellan Report in August 1960 and approved appropriation of the necessary funds.<sup>68</sup> These included further grants and loans for the expansion of all schools qualifying for aid under the earlier Grant Code and a higher scale of grants and loans for Native primary schools. Every local authority produced a three-year development building plan as a basis for central government capital grants in 1961.<sup>69</sup> These grants enabled local authorities to build a further seventy Native primary schools in 1962, bringing the total number of local authority schools established since 1946 to 513.<sup>70</sup>

### *The 1963 Elections*

By 1963, when state-wide elections were held between April and June, there had been three major changes in the political structure. Six political parties had been registered, and many existing and prospective council members were aligned with these parties. The government had encouraged broadly representative political parties, and had publicly expressed its concern at the divisive effects of communal politics.<sup>71</sup> However, as each political party was formed, it was seen as threatening the interests of other ethnic groups and other factions in its own ethnic group. As a result, the six political parties contesting the 1963 elections were ethnic and ethnic-faction based.<sup>72</sup> The second major change was the Sarawak (Constitution) Order, 1963. This provided universal suffrage and, for the first time in Sarawak, all adults were eligible to vote by secret ballot for their local councillors.<sup>73</sup> The third major change also arose from this Order and was the adoption of a ministerial form of government, which offered prospects of political control of the executive and legislature.

As with the 1959 elections, voting generally followed racial affiliations,<sup>74</sup> the complete antithesis of the mixed local authority concept of transcending ethnic affiliations in the interests of all

communities.<sup>75</sup> The effect of the political parties was to expose the electorate to political pressure from parties struggling for national supremacy rather than on local government issues which was the real role of the District Councils.<sup>76</sup> This was further accentuated by the three-tier electoral system under which the Municipal, Urban, and District Councils were the first stage in the election process for seats in the Council Negri. As a result, many candidates were preoccupied with national issues rather than the fundamental reason for their election, representing local people on local issues in their local council.<sup>77</sup> Further, under the three-tier election system, gaining control of the Councils became the paramount objective of every political party in order to gain control of the Divisional Advisory Councils, and thus control of the legislature and executive in a ministerial form of government. In this context, local interests were secondary and prospects of power in a national political party became the predominant aim of candidates.

On the other hand, local council involvement in all aspects of the electoral process provided a useful initiation of a relatively unsophisticated electorate into modern electoral practices. Use of local councils as electoral colleges is open to criticism, but the time-scale within which the Malaysia concept was adopted and implemented was too short to develop a new electoral system. The existing three-tier electoral system enabled an elected ministerial form of government to be introduced quickly so that it could function within the larger political framework of Malaysia. Local government, in the form of the Municipal, Urban, and District Councils elected in mid-1963, was then at the apogee of its political power, not only at the local level, but also collectively at the state level through its role as an electoral college for the Divisional Advisory Councils. As will be seen, the local councils had another important role, providing a training ground for politicians and political parties.

1. War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo Report, 'Policy in regard to Malaya and Borneo', 18 May 1944, W.P. (44) 253, Appendix II, p. 3, CAB 98/41, PRO.

2. Rita Hinden, *Local Government and the Colonies*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1948, p. 29.

3. *Hansard*, Vol. 425, col. 242, 9 July 1946, Speech in the House of Commons.

4. John Woods, *Local Government in Sarawak: An Introduction to the Nature and Working of District Councils in the State*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1968, p. 7.

5. In 1841 James Brooke undertook to respect forever the laws and customs of the Sarawak Malays.

6. On 15 May 1946, the Council Negri had four Chinese, four Dayak, one Eurasian, ten European, one Indian, and eighteen Malay members. The population was 26 per cent Chinese, 48 per cent Dayak, 24 per cent Malay and Melanau, and 1 per cent others.

7. B. A. Hepburn, *The Handbook of Sarawak: Comprising Historical, Statistical and General Information Concerning the Colony Obtained from Official and Other Reliable Records*, Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1949, p. 31; Kuching Municipal Department, *Annual Report, 1927*.

8. Woods, *Local Government in Sarawak*, 1968, p. 7.

9. See Appendix 2.

10. *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 December 1947, p. 4.

11. *Hansard*, Vol. 441, col. 267, 29 July 1947.

12. Liang Kim Bang, *Sarawak, 1941-1957*, Singapore: University of Singapore Press, 1964, p. 24.

13. Recommendations for local government activities included control over aspects of agriculture, animals, buildings, education, forestry, land, liquor, markets, health, public order, roads, taxes, and trade licensing ('Local Authority Draft Ordinance, 1948', File 58538/1, CO 938 3/2, PRO).

14. British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey: A Record of United Kingdom and Commonwealth Affairs*, General Surveys 3, London: HMSO, 6 August 1949, p. 26.

15. See Appendix 2.

16. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1107 (7 June 1950): 143.

17. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1113 (11 December 1950): 295.

18. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1125 (28 December 1951): 235.

19. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1138 (31 December 1952): 277.

20. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1150 (31 December 1953): 218; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953*, p. 176.

21. J. R. Outram, 'Progress Report on the Development of Local Government in Sarawak up till July 1955', p. 1 (RO/628, Sarawak Museum Archives); Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1954*, p. 6.

22. Woods, *Local Government in Sarawak*, p. 9.

23. *Singapore Free Press*, 17 December 1947, p. 5; Liang, *Sarawak, 1941-1957*, p. 25.

24. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 5 March 1948, in Liang, *Sarawak, 1941-1957*, p. 25.

25. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 3.

26. Representation on the KMC was unbalanced, with three unofficial Malay councillors compared with eleven Chinese (C. A. Lockard, *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia 1820-1970*, Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1987, p. 160).

27. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, pp. 160 and 188.

28. Letter No. 1 in RDO-92/51, 16 July 1951 (SUDC, RO/292, Sarawak Museum Archives).

29. Circular from the District Officer, 31 July 1951, RO/292, Sarawak Museum Archives.

30. *Sarawak Tribune*, 12 February 1952, p. 3; No. 3 in UDC-142/1, 31 March 1952, Chairman SUDC to Third Division Resident, RO/292, Sarawak Museum Archives.

31. British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey*, 2, 5, 6 March 1956, p. 171; J. R. Outram, 'Progress Report on the Development of Local Government in Sarawak up till July 1955', RO/628, Sarawak Museum Archives, p. 4.

32. Sarawak Education Department, *Triennial Survey, 1955-1957*, p. 10.

33. In 1951, local communities were responsible for providing school buildings and furniture.

34. Sarawak Education Department, *Triennial Survey, 1955-1957*, p. 7.

35. The average Iban in Kapit had no interest in local authorities (Kapit Assistant District Officer report, 14 December 1950, RO/103, Sarawak Museum Archives; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1132 (31 July 1952): 170).

36. British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey*, General Surveys 3 (d), 16 March 1951, p. 19.

37. Kanowit income estimates for 1949: Door tax \$2,887; school fees \$5,724; court fines and fees \$2,700; and government grant \$14,435 (Ian Morrison, 'Local Self-government in Sarawak', *Pacific Affairs*, 22, 2 (June 1949), p. 183).

38. HMSO, *The Colonial Office List, 1948*, London, p. 217.

39. Liang, *Sarawak, 1941-1957*, p. 24; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 3.

40. Mukah District Officer to Third Division Resident, Memo 17 in U1/1, 25 January 1956, RO/628, Sarawak Museum Archives. The underlying problem was a long-established nominal taxation system.

41. Chih Chia Kwei to the Information Officer, Memo GSIS/23/52/11, 26 October 1953, RO/292, Sarawak Museum Archives.

42. Third Division Resident to Chief Secretary, Memo No. 12/RO/628, 24 September 1953, RO/628, Sarawak Museum Archives.

43. British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey*, 2, 5, 6 March 1956, p. 171; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1178 (30 April 1956): 83.

44. The Council Negri Elections Ordinance, 1956 enabled election of members to the Council Negri by the KMC, the SUDC, the MUDC, and the five Divisional Advisory Councils.

45. British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey*, 2, 5, 6 March 1956, p. 171.

46. J. C. B. Fisher, *Report on the Kuching Municipal Council Elections Held on 4th November, 1956*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1956, pp. III and 7. Fisher joined the SCS in 1932 and was Chairman of the KMC from 1954 to 1956.

47. However, the Datu Bandar was instrumental in the formation of Panita Bumiputra, formed specifically to find and help Malay candidates (Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 74).

48. *Sarawak Government Gazette*, 16 November 1956, cited in Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, pp. 187-8.

49. The changes to the KMC boundaries also resulted in a Malay majority in the Kuching Rural District Council, which proved extremely useful in the crucial 1963 elections.

50. Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 72.

51. A. R. Meikle of the SCS was the KMC Secretary for most of the 1956 to 1960 period.

52. Chairman SUDC to Resident Third Division, Memo No. 4 in UDC-376/1, 15 August 1957, RO/292, Sarawak Museum Archives; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1197 (30 November 1957): 225.

53. British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey*, 3, 12, 11 June 1957, p. 539. By 1 November 1956, the KMC had completed forty terraced houses (Kuching Municipal Council Annual Report for 1956, p. 1).
54. British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey*, 3, 12, 11 June 1957, p. 539.
55. This excluded houses in the Sekarna Road and Pending areas on the outskirts of Kuching where rates were levied (*Straits Times* (Singapore), 15 November 1957, p. 5).
56. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 27 March 1958, p. 4.
57. Woods, *Local Government in Sarawak*, p. 9.
58. H. Bedale, *Local Government in Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1959.
59. Sarawak Government, 'The Financing of Primary Education and Financial Assistance to Local Authorities', Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1959, was passed by the Council Negri in August 1959. This introduced a rural rate grant of \$2 for every \$1 collected, a matching education rate grant, and a matching road maintenance grant.
60. Chief Secretary to Residents, Circular Memoranda 50/CSO/114, 13 July 1959, and 55/CSO/114, 12 September 1959, RO/628, Sarawak Museum Archives; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1959, p. 3.
61. An eligible voter had to have 'his own clearly defined establishment distinct and separate from the rest of premises', yet there were up to five trades in one shophouse in the bazaar (District Officer to Resident, Memo 110 in Ag.2/1, 12 December 1959, RO/103, Sarawak Museum Archives).
62. 'Members of the *persatuan* and *ketua kampung* told their Malay voters to vote for Malay candidates' (Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 75).
63. *Sarawak Tribune*, 27 November 1959, p. 4. The SUPP was first registered on 12 June 1959.
64. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, pp. 189-90.
65. The electoral college system did not avert election of Divisional Advisory Council and thence Council Negri members on a racial basis (*Sarawak Tribune*, 19 February 1960, p. 2).
66. Such debates led to an unofficial majority in the Council Negri in the 1956 Constitution.
67. At the Third Division Advisory Council on 12 April 1954, questions arose on VHF communications, a hospital for Sarikei, and an airstrip for Belaga (RO/100, Sarawak Museum Archives).
68. Sarawak Government, 'Expansion of Educational Facilities in Sarawak', Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1960.
69. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1961, p. 89.
70. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 149.
71. M. B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, pp. 14 and 15.
72. See Chapter 4 for details of the six political parties formed before the 1963 elections.
73. In Kuching, universal suffrage increased the number of registered voters from 4,798 in 1959 to 16,302 in 1963 (Kuching Municipal Council, *Annual Report*, 1963, p. 11).
74. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 61.
75. 'Local Government in Sarawak', in British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey*, Administration 3 (a), 15 September 1950. Local government aimed to weld the diverse elements of Sarawak's plural society into a united body.

76. Edwin Lee, *Sarawak in the Early Sixties*, Singapore: University of Singapore Press, 1964, p. 34.

77. The SUPP argued that the three-tier electoral system made Council Negri members remote from and thus not answerable to their electorates (*Straits Times* (Singapore), 28 October 1961, p. 7).

## Early Political Organizations, Resistance, and Initiatives

POLITICAL parties had no place under the absolute sovereignty of the Rajahs.<sup>1</sup> Politics, when defined as reconciling different interests by apportioning each an appropriate share of power, was then in the hands of the *tuai rumah*, *tua kampung*, and *kapitan China*, the traditional leaders of the main ethnic groups at local levels, through selected, recognized prominent leaders, mainly from the traditional Malay elite, in the state legislature.<sup>2</sup> Communal organizations promoted the interests of specific groups. The Chinese formed thirty-eight such organizations before 1941, established the China Relief Fund in the 1930s, and organized boycotts of Japanese goods and firms.<sup>3</sup> Various Malay organizations were formed after 1914 and culminated in the registration in 1939 of the Persatuan Melayu Sarawak (PMS) with Datu Patinggi Abang Haji Abdillah as its first President.<sup>4</sup> This was the first association to represent all Sarawak Malays. The Indians formed their own association in 1937, followed by the Eurasians in 1940.<sup>5</sup> In 1941, the Dayaks Co-operative Society was registered to try and overcome the Chinese traders' monopoly over the Second Division's Paku and Rimbas Iban trade with Kuching.

During their occupation, the Japanese took an active interest in establishing organizations to assist in controlling the population and ensuring security. Preferring not to deal with a large number of clan organizations, they forced the Chinese to form the Kakeo Kokodai (United Overseas Chinese Association).<sup>6</sup> A department for Malay affairs run by traditional Malay leaders appears to have been set up,<sup>7</sup> but the PMS was banned as the Japanese believed that it was a political organization. The Japanese sponsored the Perhimpunan Dayak Society to assist in their dealings with the First and Second Division Ibans, and the Dayaks Co-operative Society, renamed the Gerempong Dayak, became an Iban welfare organization. A multiethnic *kaum ibu* (women's association) was



also sponsored by the Japanese to raise funds and the Indian community formed a branch of the pro-Japanese Indian Independence League. The greatest political contributions of the Japanese to Sarawak's future were their philosophy that Asians should be ruled by Asians and their appointment of Ibans and Malays to positions of authority in government previously held by Europeans.<sup>8</sup>

Division within the Malay community and to a lesser extent amongst the Bidayuh and Ibans over cession to Britain heralded a period of intense political activity in the immediate post-war period. On 15 May 1946 a majority of the Malay and other Native members in the Council Negri voted against the Cession Bill, but it was carried by the votes of six of the eight SCS European members on the Council.<sup>9</sup> The political significance of the voting was apparent to the Colonial Office, but its subsequent secret instructions to withhold signing the Cession Agreement were not deciphered in Sarawak in time to prevent the document being signed.<sup>10</sup> The cession controversy had not been quelled by the finding of the two-man parliamentary mission that cession was broadly acceptable to Sarawak's Native communities.<sup>11</sup> It spawned at least eighteen organizations registered as social groups, but which took part in the political struggle against cession.<sup>12</sup>

### *Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Sarawak*

After World War II, the PMS became the Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Sarawak (PKMS), in English the Malay National Union (MNU).<sup>13</sup> When the Rajah announced on 6 February 1946 that his people would become the King's subjects, the PKMS questioned Britain's right, as the protecting power, to 'share out the political rights of the Natives or hand over part of their country's government to non-Malays'.<sup>14</sup> The pro-cession Chairman, the Datu Amar, was removed and the PKMS assumed a leading role in the anti-cession movement, also forging an alliance with the newly formed Sarawak Dayak Association (SDA).<sup>15</sup> The official cession ceremony on 1 July was boycotted by the Datu Patinggi and PKMS members and the Dayaks were not represented.<sup>16</sup>

PKMS leaders maintained the anti-cession campaign with anti-British speeches in the villages.<sup>17</sup> When the first Governor, Arden Clarke, arrived at the end of October, the PKMS organized a protest demonstration with 'thousands' of anti-cession banners and PKMS President, Abang Haji Zaini, together with the Datu Patinggi presented an appeal asking the King to revoke cession.<sup>18</sup>

Arden Clarke took exception to the banners and had them destroyed, resulting in a question in the House of Commons about police intimidation of the Native population and trespass on the PKMS President's compound.<sup>19</sup> The PKMS organized a massive rally of welcome in late 1946 for the Rajah Muda, Anthony Brooke,<sup>20</sup> but Arden Clarke countered by issuing an order on 13 December that prohibited him from entering Sarawak. This was a severe disappointment to the PKMS and caused an uproar in the House of Commons, but the ban was not lifted during the colonial period.<sup>21</sup> The PKMS also reacted strongly to Secretariat Circular No. 9/1946, 10 December 1946, that asked all government servants whether they were 'prepared to give loyal service to the new Government or wished to resign on conscientious grounds'.<sup>22</sup> Backed by the PKMS, about 340 Malay civil servants resigned and twenty-two of the sixty-two government Malay schools had to be closed due to a lack of teachers, but otherwise administration was not unduly impeded.<sup>23</sup> By mid-June 1947, the government had re-engaged seventy of those who had resigned.<sup>24</sup>

After the Datu Patinggi's death on 21 November 1946, differences emerged between the younger educated Malay members of the PKMS and their more conservative leaders.<sup>25</sup> These led to the formation of two important breakaway organizations open to Malays and other indigenous youths in Sarawak, the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak (BPS) and the Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu, Sibu (PPM). The PKMS remained an influential body in the Malay community and in the anti-cession movement,<sup>26</sup> but cession was not open to discussion as far as the British government was concerned.<sup>27</sup> The anti-cession movement was severely damaged by the assassination of the newly arrived second Governor, Duncan Stewart, in Sibu on 3 December 1949 by a secret faction of the anti-cession PPM and the subsequent execution of four of its members.<sup>28</sup> Although there was evidence to suggest that the PKMS would have resorted to bloodshed if necessary, searches uncovered nothing that linked the PKMS or other anti-cession organizations directly to the assassination.<sup>29</sup>

The PKMS remained anti-cession, undeterred by the assassination, government refusal to allow a demonstration when the new Governor, Anthony Abell, arrived on 4 April 1950, and Anthony Brooke's appeal in February 1951 to all anti-cession organizations to cease their activities.<sup>30</sup> However, support for the anti-cession movement was diminishing and by October, politics played little part in PKMS proceedings.<sup>31</sup> By 1958, its concern over comparative

advances made by the Chinese was reflected in exhortations to members to work hard and catch up with other communities and in a renewal of its close association with the SDA.<sup>32</sup> Anthony Brooke encouraged the PKMS to support the formation of a political party in early 1959 and Ikhwan Haji Zainie, PKMS General Secretary, proposed the Malayan pattern of ethnic parties united in an Alliance-type coalition.<sup>33</sup> The PKMS sponsored a meeting with seven other Malay associations on 11 February 1962, which voted unanimously in favour of Malaysia.<sup>34</sup> However, as covered in Chapter 4, two Malay political parties were formed, Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA) and Party Negara Sarawak (PANAS), generally representing pro- and anti-cession Malay factions.

### *Barisan Pemuda Sarawak (Sarawak Youth Front)*

Another important anti-cession group, the Kuching-based BPS, was formed in June 1947 by educated Malays from the PKMS who could not accept the autocratic style of the PKMS leadership and the younger members' lack of power.<sup>35</sup> Its Chairman, Abang Mohd. Kassim Taha, maintained links with the traditional Malay élite, but all other important posts were held by younger educated Malays who had no aristocratic connections.<sup>36</sup> The BPS claimed 3,000 active members and 2,000 supporters. It worked closely with the PKMS and the SDA, and in early 1949 declared it would call for a referendum on the repeal of cession.<sup>37</sup> Like the PKMS, a phase of political dormancy followed the assassination of Duncan Stewart, the subsequent searching of anti-cession premises, the ban on public functions, and Anthony Brooke's withdrawal of his personal support for the anti-cession movement.<sup>38</sup>

The BPS resumed its radical political role after holding a meeting on 16 August 1958 to elect new office bearers.<sup>39</sup> Under Ahmad Zaidi bin Adruce, a charismatic speaker and militant nationalist who championed the Malay cause, the BPS set up branches throughout the state. Zaidi shared the preference of his close friend, A. H. Azahari, the President of the Partai Rakyat Brunei (PRB), for a federation of Brunei, North Borneo, and Sarawak instead of the Malaysia plan.<sup>40</sup> This issue divided the BPS, and the moderates in favour of Malaysia joined the newly formed political party, BARJASA. BPS itself declared its support for Malaysia, but Zaidi still had his followers in certain areas, such as the Sundar branch, which was opposed to Malaysia.<sup>41</sup> He had set up an underground section of the BPS for secret dealings with the

Partai Rakyat Brunei<sup>42</sup> and, when the Brunei uprising broke out on 8 December 1962, he was detained and then placed under house arrest.<sup>43</sup> Some of his followers in the Fifth Division, who had gone to Indonesia for military training and joined the Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara (TNKU) to free British Borneo from imperialism, were either arrested or captured.<sup>44</sup> Its pro-Borneo federation faction discredited, the BPS devoted its energies to pro-Malaysia activities for the remaining few months of the colonial era.

*Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu, Sibü*  
(*Malay Youth Movement*)

The Sibü-based PPM, also an off-shoot of the PKMS, was formed in late 1946 with a predominantly young Malay membership. Its branches extended up the Rajang to Belaga and along the coast to Mukah.<sup>45</sup> Like the BPS, it worked closely with the PKMS in anti-cession demonstrations and organized a display of anti-cession posters when Arden Clarke made his first visit to Sibü in November 1946. Five months later, its General Secretary, Awang Rambli bin Mohd. Deli,<sup>46</sup> claimed the anti-cession movement in the Third Division was 'growing up bigger and bigger'.<sup>47</sup> Demonstrating the growing confidence of the PPM, he and Abang Han, the PPM librarian, exhorted its annual anti-cession parade in Sibü to take an unauthorized route on 1 July 1948. Rambli was sentenced to two months' imprisonment under the Penal Code, but this was overturned on appeal to the Supreme Court.<sup>48</sup> In another incident, Awang Rambli also clashed with Arden Clarke.<sup>49</sup>

Awang Rambli and thirteen other members of the PPM, including its President, Mohammed Sirat, and Abang Han, formed a secret faction of the PPM, the Rukun Tiga-belas.<sup>50</sup> This faction dedicated itself to overturning cession by killing the Governor, other officials, and some of the Malays who supported cession.<sup>51</sup> This led to rumours of violence in Kuching and Sibü when the new Governor, Duncan Stewart, was installed in Kuching on 16 November 1949 but there were no incidents.<sup>52</sup> Seventeen days later, the Rukun Tiga-belas put its plan into action with the assassination of Duncan Stewart by two of its Malay members, eighteen-year old Rosli bin Dobi and twenty-five year old Morshidi bin Sidek.<sup>53</sup> They were both arrested immediately and investigations quickly uncovered the Rukun Tiga-belas and its role in the assassination.<sup>54</sup> All its other members were arrested on conspiracy charges and the PPM was proscribed. Rosli, Morshidi, Awang Rambli, and Bujang Suntong were sentenced to death by hanging

and seven other Rukun Tiga-belas members received substantial prison sentences.<sup>55</sup>

When passing sentence on Rosli and Morshidi, Judge Lascelles said that their names would go down in the history of Sarawak as two men who cowardly murdered an innocent man.<sup>56</sup> However, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first Prime Minister of Malaysia viewed Rosli and Morshidi as freedom fighters who expressed national aspirations and he personally encouraged the erection of the Patriots' Memorial in Kuching in 1990 to commemorate the event.<sup>57</sup> On a more pragmatic note, C. W. Dawson, the Officer Administering the Government (OAG), advised the Colonial Office that the sentences 'would have a salutary effect on those who appear to have been misled into thinking Anthony Brooke will save them'.<sup>58</sup> During the colonial era, the PPM remained proscribed and had no part in political developments after the assassination.

### *The Sarawak Dayak Association*

The SDA, the only Dayak anti-cession organization,<sup>59</sup> was inaugurated on 1 March 1946 by a small group of educated Bidayuh and Ibans from the First and Second Divisions who had settled in Kuching.<sup>60</sup> Its Joint Secretary, Philip Jitam, voted against cession in Council Negri on 15 May 1946 after he became aware that it was not supported by the Tuan Muda, Bertram Brooke.<sup>61</sup> The SDA in its anti-cession activities worked closely with the PKMS, with which it also held common cause in its fear of Chinese domination.<sup>62</sup> SDA members employed by the government declined to join their PKMS colleagues in resigning when Circular No. 9 called for their pledge of loyalty. This led to a division within its ranks and the public servants on the committee were replaced by non-government members on 23 December 1947 to restore its political credibility.<sup>63</sup> However, by then the anti-cession movement was in decline. Close identification of its leaders, Eliab Bay and Robert Jitam, with the Malay leaders of the Brooke era, precluded it from the Dayak-led political parties of the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>64</sup>

### *The Young Malay Association*

The sharp polarization of views in the Malay community over the cession issue led to hostility towards, and social and religious ostracism of, the outnumbered pro-cessionists by their fellow

Malays. The Datu Pahlawan, Abang Haji Mustapha, who was the most influential Malay protagonist of cession, was often 'greeted with the derisive call "*jual negri*" (seller of the country)'.<sup>65</sup> This was a pointed reference to his being proclaimed Datu Bandar by the Rajah four days before cession came into effect and to an earlier payment of \$10,000 from the Rajah which the anti-cessionists linked to his signing of the cession documents.<sup>66</sup> To offset the social pressure of the anti-cession organizations and provide a congenial environment for pro-cessionist Malays, he was instrumental in forming the Young Malay Association (YMA) on 4 June 1946 to promote social, cultural, and sporting activities and to encourage education. The YMA, with Abang Haji Mustapha as its first President and assisted by a gift of \$2,000 from the Rajah, set up branches in Sibu, Kalaka, Miri, and Kampung Sambir over the next three years. Abang Haji Mustapha's past connections with the Constabulary, in which his younger brother, Abang Othman, was serving when he took over the YMA presidency, led to a significant YMA following amongst the police, although the overall membership was relatively small.<sup>67</sup> It remained a minority organization which was 'disliked by the majority of Malays' and disappeared after the cession controversy ended.<sup>68</sup>

### *Summary of the Political Aspects of the Cession Controversy*

The cession controversy heralded a false dawn for Malay politics in Sarawak, with a host of social and cultural organizations set up to pursue the political goal of overturning cession and reverting to Brooke rule. Although aspects of the manner in which cession was brought about were very much open to question, once the Instrument of Cession had been signed by the Rajah, in whom sovereign power was vested, and the Royal Order in Council had been issued, cession was a constitutional reality that could only be overturned in the law courts or by the British Parliament. Anti-cessionist demonstrations were anathema to Arden Clarke, a Governor schooled in the more remote and authoritarian modes of administration. His confrontationist approach and a British government unmoved by demonstrations and petitions led almost inevitably to a secret militant group being set up within the anti-cession movement. That group's decision to pursue anti-cession by assassination was alien to Sarawak and not only invoked action by the government but aroused general indignation amongst the public.<sup>69</sup>

Without public sympathy, no support from the Rajah Muda, and little prospect of success of the Rajah Muda's court appeals questioning the legality of cession, the movement declined rapidly. From a political viewpoint, the movement divided the Malay community to such an extent that animosities remained throughout and beyond the colonial period. It reduced Malay influence in the civil service due to their block resignations, forced the government to become less reliant on Malays in administration, and hindered constitutional reform.<sup>70</sup> In the short term, political associations were also discredited and the pre-cession traditional leadership system was reinforced. Within the anti-cession movement, its political objective was intertwined with a thread of personal interests and anti-government animosities.<sup>71</sup> By 1952 the anti-cession movement had become irrelevant and British political planning was already seeking to introduce one of the major political initiatives of the colonial period as a step towards self-government.

### *The Borneo Federation Plan*

As early as 1931, the Colonial Office favoured a federation of British Borneo and, by July 1947, had extended this to a Malayan federation 'which may eventually include not only Singapore but Borneo and Sarawak'.<sup>72</sup> When Malcolm MacDonald, Britain's Commissioner-General for South-East Asia, assumed office, he promoted a Borneo federation of the Brunei protectorate and the colonies of North Borneo and Sarawak.<sup>73</sup> This reflected the preferred solution of the Colonial Office for its smaller colonies, the formation of federal systems as economically and politically viable entities.<sup>74</sup> A cautionary note on timing was sounded in January 1949 by Sarawak's Governor, Arden Clarke. He warned the tenth Commissioner-General's conference in Singapore that too precipitous action on administrative unification of the three territories would cause political unrest in Sarawak, which was just becoming accustomed to its colonial status.<sup>75</sup> Possibly intended to initiate public discussion, a speculative article in the *Sarawak Gazette* in August suggested Labuan as the capital of a British Borneo under one supremo, who would be the governor of a unified North Borneo and Sarawak and high commissioner for Brunei.<sup>76</sup> By the end of the year, Malcolm MacDonald was planning to integrate the three territories within three to five years.<sup>77</sup> The Colonial Secretary, Arthur Creech Jones, welcomed this, adding only a proviso that integration should not be faster than the territories wel-

comed.<sup>78</sup> As a step towards amalgamation, the Sarawak, North Borneo, and Brunei (Courts) Order in Council, 1951 established a single High Court and Court of Appeal for all three territories on 1 December 1951. By early 1952 the Commissioner-General's conference was discussing the ultimate goal of closer association of the British Borneo territories, Singapore, and the Federation of Malaya through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).<sup>79</sup>

The next step was establishing a standing conference of the three Borneo territories to promote closer co-operation, and at its first meeting held in Kuching on 21 April 1953, unification of the Brunei and Sarawak administrative services was a major topic.<sup>80</sup> The *Straits Times* (Singapore) speculated that the conference could be the first step in forming a new South-East Asia dominion including Singapore and Malaya.<sup>81</sup> Oliver Lyttelton, the Colonial Secretary, said this may become possible in the future but was precluded in the short term because of the different stages of political development of the states.<sup>82</sup> To secure Brunei's support for his Borneo federation plan, in October 1954 Malcolm MacDonald proposed incorporating Sarawak's Fifth Division and Labuan into Brunei, but Colonial Office officials pointed out that North Borneo and Sarawak were unlikely to agree.<sup>83</sup>

By late 1954 Brunei was becoming increasingly suspicious about closer association with North Borneo and Sarawak and there were fears that the appointment of a High Commissioner over all five territories could offend Singapore and Malaya.<sup>84</sup> This reduced the standing conference to routine meetings of departmental heads and Malcolm MacDonald felt constrained to recommend separating the administration of Brunei and Sarawak and the appointment of a Resident specifically for Brunei.<sup>85</sup> His earlier suggestion to transfer the Fifth Division to Brunei was withdrawn since no concessions were needed from Brunei. The Colonial Secretary, Lennox Boyd, replied that defining any ultimate aim of the British government for 'some form of a confederation' was premature, as was any agreement in principle to separate the administration of Brunei from Sarawak. Also any action on Labuan should be deferred as it could be construed as transfer of sovereignty.<sup>86</sup> However, setting up a Standing Joint Council of the Commissioner-General, the Sultan of Brunei and his Resident, and the North Borneo and Sarawak Governors and Chief Secretaries was agreed.

Malcolm MacDonald convened a meeting of senior Colonial Service officers on 26 June 1955 that discussed the powers of the



proposed (Standing) Joint Executive Council.<sup>87</sup> Its portfolio covered defence, internal security, banking, currency, and combined departments such as the judiciary, geological survey, communications, and trade and customs. The meeting concluded that closer association might be achieved by grouping the Federation of Malay States and Brunei; grouping Malacca, North Borneo, Penang, Sarawak, and Singapore; and later forming a federation of the two groups. Faced with Brunei's lack of enthusiasm for any form of federation,<sup>88</sup> Anthony Abell restated his advice to separate the Brunei and Sarawak administration and appoint a high commissioner for Brunei, who would also be the governor of North Borneo and Sarawak.<sup>89</sup> In July 1956 Anthony Abell was authorized to discuss his proposals with the Sultan of Brunei, but after renewed objections from the Governor of North Borneo, told the Commissioner-General he could not make any proposals to the Sultan until the British administrators reached agreement.<sup>90</sup> He also said he was astonished at the continual flow of draft letters that showed how little actual power was in the Governor's hands.

The concept which was finally presented to the public on 7 February 1958 envisaged a loose federation of the three Borneo states, each with internal autonomy and control over its own finances, with a central body responsible for internal security, communications, defence, and foreign relations.<sup>91</sup> The Sultan made his position clear two months later, stating publicly that holding the Ninth Interterritorial Conference in Brunei did not mean that the three territories would become a federation.<sup>92</sup> Although official and public debate continued for some time, the Bornean federation concept really foundered in October 1958, when the Sultan indicated that most educated Bruneians opposed federation since they believed this would delay independence and that Brunei wealth would have to subsidize the other states.<sup>93</sup>

The Borneo federation concept provided an insight into the workings of the British colonial structure, showing the cautious restraining influence of the Colonial Office over the Commissioner-General, Malcolm MacDonald, in his enthusiasm for implementing British policies. It also revealed that his long-term political aim from the immediate post-war period was to establish a federation of Malaya, Singapore, and the Borneo states, while the more conservative Colonial Office and Governors of North Borneo and Sarawak cautioned against rapid change. The actual restraints on a governor's powers also became clear, in sharp

contrast to the apparent sovereign powers granted by MacDonald's commission. Although the Borneo federation plan failed to materialize, it provided a political platform for the Brunei uprising and political parties opposing Malaysia and opened up public opinion to ideas of federation.<sup>94</sup> Also, it was one of the factors that stimulated the formation of political parties in Sarawak.

1. Order No. S-1, Societies, 1930, precluded organizations with avowedly political aims.

2. Two Second Division Ibans became Council Negri members in the 1880s, and two Chinese in 1937.

3. C. A. Lockard, *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970*, Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1987, pp. 115-17, 127-8, and 136; C. A. Lockard, 'The Southeast Asian Town in Historical Perspective: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970', Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1973, Appendix G, p. 672.

4. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, pp. 137-8. The movement originated in the Straits Settlements.

5. Suresh Menon, 'Sarawak Indians in Recent Times: A Period of Integration', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 40, 61 (December 1989): 260; R. H. W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982, pp. 136-7.

6. Christopher Chan, 'The Japanese Occupation: Extracts from a Broadcast Interview by Christopher Chan with Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui on 14th February 1975', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society* (Sarawak Branch), 3 (December 1976): 12.

7. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 145. Tuanku Bujang and Abang Openg were senior officials.

8. L. Edwards and P. W. Stevens, *Short History of the Lawas and Kanowit Districts*, Kuching: Borneo Literature Bureau, 1971, p. 50; John Chin, 'Reminiscences of the Japanese Occupation', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society* (Sarawak Branch), 3 (December 1976): 17; Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp. 145-7; Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 31 and 36.

9. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 237. Fourteen of the twenty-six local members opposed cession.

10. C. W. Dawson Diary, 21 May 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL.

11. Labour MP, D. R. Rees-Williams, and Conservative MP, L. D. Gammans, assessed opinions in Sarawak in a two-week visit during May 1946 (C. W. Dawson Diary, 15, 16, and 17 May 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL).

12. *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 June 1946, p. 1. Only the Young Malay Association (YMA) was pro-cession.

13. The PKMS estimated its registered members to be 24,500; the BMA estimate was 2,417 (Macaskie to Colonial Office, 23 March 1946, WO 203/5535, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 246).

14. *Sarawak Tribune*, 8 February 1946, p. 1.

15. Abang Haji Zaini became the PKMS President and Abang Haji Openg its Vice-President (*Sarawak Tribune*, 1 March 1946). Proportional Iban and Malay representation was agreed upon (Interview with Tuan Haji Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor, May 1975, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 249).

16. C. W. Dawson Diary, 2 July 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL; Anon to Bertram Brooke, 1 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 255.

17. C. W. Dawson Diary, 31 July and 1 August 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL. Fearing sedition charges, Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor prepared a dossier on Abang Haji Mustapha's pro-Japanese activities from 1942 to 1945 (Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 29 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 254).

18. *Singapore Free Press*, 1 November 1946, p. 1.

19. *Hansard*, Vol. 230, cols. 295-6, 26 November 1946. An apology was issued for trespass.

20. The Editorial in *Sarawak Gazette*, 1066 (2 January 1947): 2, described Anthony Brooke as an 'effervescent emancipator' and 'his claims and pretensions' as 'twaddle'.

21. *Hansard*, Vol. 431, cols. 2178-83, 19 December 1946.

22. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1078 (2 January 1948): 8; Circular No. 9 reflected Arden Clarke's 'belligerent thirst to kill the snake [of anti-cession]' (K. H. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, Data Paper No. 114, South-East Asia Program, New York: Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1980, p. 90).

23. *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 February 1947, p. 8; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1078 (2 January 1948): 3 and 8.

24. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1119 (12 June 1951): 110.

25. Interview with Su'ut Haji Tahir, April 1975, in Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 48.

26. The PKMS sponsored a conference of anti-cession organizations on 28 June 1947, which organized the largest demonstration in the movement's history on 1 July (*Sarawak Tribune*, 30 June 1947, p. 5).

27. The Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, Lord Listowel, reaffirmed cession was not negotiable in 1948 (*Singapore Free Press*, 5 April 1948, p. 5).

28. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1103 (7 February 1950): 27-31.

29. *Utusan Sarawak*, 14 May 1950, p. 4; interview with Annuar Ahmad, April 1975, in Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 55. Most offices of the anti-cessionist organizations were searched.

30. *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 March 1950, p. 1; 3 April 1950, p. 1; 5 April 1950, p. 2; 5 February 1951, p. 1; 8 February 1951, p. 1; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1119 (12 June 1951): 110.

31. *Utusan Sarawak*, 10 October 1951, in Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 57.

32. *Utusan Sarawak*, 2 August 1958, p. 1; *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 August 1958, p. 4.

33. M. B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 14. The President of the PKMS was Mohd. bin Haji Bakri.

34. *Utusan Sarawak*, 15 February 1962, p. 1. The meeting was chaired by Abdul Rahman Yakub.

35. Robert Jitam to Anne Bryant, 23 May 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 273; Abang Han interview, April 1975, in Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 48.

36. BPS Vice-Presidents—Tuan Haji Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor, Sharkawi bin Haji Osman, and Johari Bojeng; General Secretary—Haji Su'ut Tahir; Chairman of political affairs—Suhaily bin Matlayeir.

37. *Utusan Sarawak*, 21 March 1949, p. 3; 8 March 1949, p. 2, in Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 55. The proposed call for a referendum was supported by the more radical PPM.

38. *Hansard*, Vol. 470, col. 259, 14 December 1949; *The Times* (London), 14 December 1949, p. 3.

39. Ahmad Zaidi Adruce was appointed President of the BPS; Abang Haji Kassim Taha, Vice-President; Haji Su'ut, Secretary; and Mohamad Musa, Treasurer. The BPS was re-registered in June 1959.

40. Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad (ed.), *The People's Party of Brunei: Selected Documents*, Petaling Jaya: Institute of Social Analysis, 1987, p. 11.

41. The BPS Sundar Branch said it represented 6,000 people (*Sarawak Tribune*, 21 March 1962, p. 5).

42. Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, pp. 72 and 84.

43. Zaidi either escaped to Indonesia on 9 September 1963, (*Sarawak Tribune*, 8 June 1964, p. 7) or improbably was kidnapped, taken to Indonesia, and made to take part in *konfrontasi* (Sanib Said, *Yang Dikehendaki: Biografi Yang Di-Pertua Negeri Sarawak, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Ahmad Zaidi Adruce Mohammed Noor*, Kuching: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, Cawangan Sarawak, 1991 pp. 196–8).

44. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 30. There were pockets of the TNKU, mostly BPS members, in some First and Third Division Malay communities. (Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 93).

45. The PPM, whose President was Sirat Haji Yaman, claimed to have 30,000 members.

46. Rambli, a 38-year-old Brunei Malay, who was with the Customs Department from July 1929 to June 1946, possibly left the service over suspected cigarette smuggling (Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 262).

47. *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 March 1948, p. 3.

48. *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 September 1948, p. 2.

49. Alastair Morrison, *Fair Land Sarawak: Some Recollections of an Expatriate Official*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 44.

50. The name Rukun Tiga-belas—the thirteen essentials to make a Moslem prayer effective—was adopted as there were thirteen members in addition to its leader, Awang Rambli. The group took an oath, the *ayer yasin*, of secrecy on 20 August 1948 (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1103 (7 February 1950): 30).

51. *Ibid.* Those to be killed were the Governor, Datu Abang Yan, Tuan Large, Willie Geikie, Abang Kiprawi, NO, Abang Morshidi, NO Sarikei, Inspector Dahlan, Abang Mustapha, NO, Abang Ibrahim, Abang Mentrang, and Abang Razak. There was also a shorter list of people to be beaten (*di-pukul*).

52. Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 56.

53. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1103 (7 February 1950): 28.

54. Abang Han's diary listed the persons to be killed (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1103 (7 February 1950): 30).

55. See Appendix 1 for a brief account of the Rukun Tiga-belas trials.

56. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1103 (7 February 1950): 29.

57. Tan Sri Dato Dr Mubin Sheppard, 'A Patriots' Memorial in Kuching', *JMBRAS*, 64, 1 (1991): 119–26.

58. OAG to the Colonial Secretary, Telegram No. 4, 7 January 1950, CO 938/12/6, PRO.

59. The Third Division Ibans accepted cession as the Rajah's wish (C. W. Dawson Diary, 10 May 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL).

60. Charles E. Mason, a Balau Iban with the Medical Department, became President; Edward Brandah Jaban, a police inspector, the Vice-President; and Philip Jitam of the Water Department, and Andrew Jika Jaban (brother of Edward), of the Constabulary were Joint Honorary Secretaries (*Sarawak Tribune*, 9 March 1946, p. 4).

61. When Temenggong Koh learnt that the Tuan Muda had not approved cession, he remarked that the Rajah had cheated them (F. H. Pollard, 'Report on Visit to Sarawak by Mr. F. H. Pollard', Brooke Papers, Vol. 21, p. 6, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 232).

62. Robert Jitam to Anne Bryant, 10 August 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 280.

63. SDA officials were Alfred Jumah, President; Joint Secretaries Robert Jitam, ex-*ken sanji*, Sarawak Steamships employee, and Eliab Bay, ex-liaison officer, Iban Affairs, Simanggang during the Japanese occupation, whom the British declined to re-employ (Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp. 154-5 and 272).

64. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 33.

65. Bob Reece, *Datu Bandar: Abang Hj. Mustapha of Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Kesusasteraan Sarawak, 1993, p. 102. Abang Haji Mustapha, pre-war Assistant Commissioner, Constabulary, was appointed *Kuching Shi Jikeidan Cho* (8 December 1943) and Assistant Judge (8 January 1944).

66. Dawson privately questioned the motives behind sums paid by MacBryan to five *datu* on behalf of the Rajah in early 1946, the Datu Pahlawan's elevation to Datu Bandar, and the remittance of the mortgage on Ong Tiang Sweet's land (C. W. Dawson Diary, 15 April 1946 and 25 June 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL).

67. According to Senawi bin Suleiman, it was 'almost compulsory' for the police to be members (Interview, July 1974, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 252).

68. Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 65.

69. In Sibn, the Temenggong had difficulty in restraining the Rajang Ibans from taking revenge on the Malays for Duncan Stewart's assassination (Conversation with A. J. N. Richards, 13 April 1992).

70. OAG to the Colonial Secretary, Message 214, 19 April 1952, CO 1022/90, PRO.

71. There were many reasons for animosities: Malay fears of losing their favoured status; anti-cessionists, such as Awang Rambli and Eliab Bay, with personal animus towards the government; an absence of punishment for the over-zealous collaborators with the Japanese; and the pragmatic rather than diplomatic restoration of pre-war leaders.

72. N. Tarling, 'Sir Cecil Clementi and the Federation of British Borneo', *JMBRAS*, 44, 2 (1971): 10; *The Times* (London), 29 July 1947, p. 5.

73. For background information on Malcolm MacDonald, see Appendix 5.

74. J. M. Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967, p. 218.

75. Minutes of the Tenth Commissioner General's Conference, 21 January 1949, CO 954 5/3, PRO.

76. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1097 (6 August 1949): 162. The governorship of North Borneo was vacant at the time.

77. Minutes of the Thirteenth Commissioner-General's Conference, 1 November 1949, CO 954 5/3, PRO.

78. G. Whiteley to J. D. Higham, Internal Colonial Office minute 14 April 1949 and Colonial Secretary to Commissioner-General, Saving No. 54, Ref. 58922/49, CO 954 5/3, PRO.

79. *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 November 1951, p. 3; Malcolm MacDonald to Colonial Office, Telegram no. 9, 29 January 1952, CO 1022/63, PRO; MacDonald to Colonial Office, Saving No. 73, 10 June 1952, CO 1022/63, PRO.

80. Conference members were the Commissioner-General (Chairman), the Sultan of Brunei, the Governors of North Borneo and Sarawak, and three representatives from each state (Commissioner-General to Colonial Secretary, 10 February 1953, CO 1022/63, PRO). Unification of departments was also considered.

81. Reuters, 22 April 1953, CO 1022/63, PRO; *Straits Times* (Singapore), 23 April 1954, p. 7.

82. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 4 June 1954, p. 5; 12 June 1954, p. 5.

83. Secret Memorandum from Malcolm MacDonald to the Colonial Office, 1 September 1954 and file note by G. Whiteley, 13 October 1954, CO 1030/164, PRO.

84. Minutes of Meeting, Astana, 28 October 1954, with Sir John Martin, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for South-East Asia; the Commissioner-General; the North Borneo and Sarawak Governors; and R. W. Jakeman, Assistant Commissioner-General for Colonial Affairs (CO 1030/164, PRO).

85. MacDonald to Colonial Secretary, 4 February 1955, CO 1030/164, PRO.

86. Colonial Secretary to the Commissioner-General, 25 March 1955, CO 1030/164, PRO.

87. Meeting of senior Colonial Service officers on 26 June 1955, CO 1030/164, PRO.

88. *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 March 1956; CO 1030/164, PRO.

89. Anthony Abell to Assistant Under-Secretary Sir John Martin, 6 April 1956, Ref. 36/TS/10/043/54, CO 1030/164, PRO. He wrote that Brunei was anxious to retain its integrity as an Islamic state.

90. Anthony Abell to Sir Robert Scott, 15 October 1956, CO 1030/164, PRO.

91. J. R. Angel, 'The Proposed Federation of Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei: The Development and Decline of the British Borneo Concept', MA thesis, University of Sydney, 1963, pp. 284-5. The *Straits Times* said it made good sense (*Straits Times* (Singapore), 8 February 1958, p. 6).

92. *Borneo Bulletin*, 5 April 1958 and 26 April 1958, in D. S. Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983: The Problems of Political Survival*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 140.

93. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 20 October 1958, in Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983*, p. 140.

94. On 19 February 1960 at the Third Congress of the Partai Rakyat Brunei in Brunei, the PRB and the SUPP joined in common cause on a policy of pursuing a Borneo federation.

## Political Parties

THE turning point in the political development of Sarawak took place in 1952. The anti-cession movement was no longer active, communism was emerging as a militant political force,<sup>1</sup> the Kuching Municipality was converted into an autonomous local council, and constitutional reform was being considered. Four years later, Sarawak had a new Constitution giving unofficial members a majority in the Council Negri and the first ballot-box elections in Sarawak had been held for the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC). Encouraged by the government, in 1956 Ong Kee Hui and Stephen K. T. Yong, two KMC Councillors, and S. K. Reddi, a lawyer, tried to establish a multiracial party, but the Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Sarawak (PKMS) and the Sarawak Dayak Association (SDA) declined to participate.<sup>2</sup> This growing political awareness in Sarawak arose from constitutional and political changes introduced by the government, political events in Malaya leading to independence on 31 August 1957, and political changes in Singapore then moving towards self-government.<sup>3</sup>

By the end of 1958, the colonial government had established all the necessary structural stimuli for the development of political parties—a three-tier system of electoral colleges and ballot-box elections to District Councils—and younger, more radical, potential leaders were beginning to emerge to supplement the older, more conservative, traditional leaders.<sup>4</sup> The Governor's announcement in December 1958 that the Council Negri and all District Councils would be dissolved at the end of 1959 was the final catalyst.<sup>5</sup> State-wide elections were then to be held for all councils, enabling fresh electoral colleges to be established for electing unofficial members to a new Council Negri.

A letter in the *Sarawak Tribune* on 4 March 1959 from Safri Awang Haji Ahmed Zaidell, suggesting the formation of a People's Party for National Unity, attracted conflicting opinions.<sup>6</sup> Messrs Ong Kee Hui, Song Thian Cheok, and Stephen K. T. Yong (KMC Councillors) said that political parties were inevitable, Edward Brandah (SDA) considered political parties premature, and

Ikhwan Haji Zainie (PKMS) proposed ethnic parties on the Malayan Alliance model.<sup>7</sup> The Governor was equivocal, expressing doubts that political parties would spell faster progress, but favouring parties which would unify the state and be 'guided solely by consideration of the public weal'.<sup>8</sup> Claiming to provide 'a rallying point for all politically conscious people of Sarawak', on 5 June 1959 Ong Kee Hui, Song Thian Cheok, Stephen K. T. Yong, and other Chinese, Dayaks, Malays, and Melanau formed the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP).<sup>9</sup> Its four-point declaration included future independence and improving the economic condition of the economically backward. Correcting the ethnic educational imbalance, a point of concern to Temenggong Jugah who considered a political party system premature until rural educational facilities were improved, was not mentioned.<sup>10</sup> The SUPP was perceived as Chinese-inspired in spite of denials by its Chairman,<sup>11</sup> and anti-Chinese posters denouncing the party appeared even before it was registered.<sup>12</sup> It was viewed with 'suspicion and resentment' by the Malays and two Dayak leaders, Temenggong Jugah and Pengarah Montegerai, who had expressed support for the party, subsequently declined to become members.<sup>13</sup> Infiltration of the party by the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) was gradually revealed as CCO papers and records were intercepted.<sup>14</sup>

A resurgence of Malay interest in politics was reflected in the renewed activity of their two major social organizations, the PKMS and the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak (BPS). However, even with the added stimulus of the Partai Rakyat Brunei (PRB) in 1956, no Malay political party was formed in time to contest the 1959 council elections, although the Datu Bandar and some of his associates carried out some improvised campaigning in coastal areas.<sup>15</sup> After an abortive attempt to form a Malay political party, the Parti Islam,<sup>16</sup> the Datu Bandar took the initiative on 7 December 1959 by calling a meeting of all Council Negri members who were not SUPP members.<sup>17</sup> Agreement was reached to form a new political party, Party Negara Sarawak (PANAS), and the government granted the Datu Bandar three months' leave to organize it. PANAS was registered on 9 April 1960 with a constitution and by-laws modelled on the Alliance Party of Malaya.<sup>18</sup> Its stated aim was to pursue and protect the interests of all the people of Sarawak, particularly those of the indigenous people. Although PANAS was multiracial when it was formed, as ethnic parties proliferated it gradually became predominantly Malay.<sup>19</sup> Referring to the unhealed division in the Malay community over cession and with pointed reference to the



Datu Bandar, the PKMS queried the reliability of some PANAS and SUPP leaders who had changed from pro-cessionist in 1946 to pro-independence in 1960.<sup>20</sup> Although some anti-cessionists joined PANAS,<sup>21</sup> a party attractive to the majority of anti-cessionists was not formed for a further two years.

Perceptions of the SUPP as a Chinese party and PANAS as a Malay party led perhaps inevitably to some Second Division Ibans, the largest ethnic group in Sarawak, forming their own party, the Sarawak National Party (SNAP).<sup>22</sup> Welcomed and given every encouragement by British officials,<sup>23</sup> it was founded by Stephen Kalong Ningkan<sup>24</sup> and five other Second Division Ibans.<sup>25</sup> The party was registered on 10 April 1961 and drew its support from Iban areas other than in the Rajang district of the Third Division where past rivalries precluded its acceptance.<sup>26</sup> SNAP, the first party to be formed and controlled by non-traditional or 'recognized' community leaders, was run entirely by self-made men who, in the Iban tradition of *bejalai*, had left their homes in search of economic gain and social prestige.<sup>27</sup>

The manifestos of SUPP, PANAS, and SNAP were based on western concepts of democratic government and economic advancement to raise living standards and improve the people's material well-being, with an emphasis on the needs of the less advanced indigenous races.<sup>28</sup> All the parties represented communal rather than national interests, as shown by their conflicting attitudes to British promotion of the Borneo federation concept in the late 1950s. The SUPP set up a Joint Consultative Preparatory Committee for a Pan-Bornean Congress in June 1960,<sup>29</sup> establishing a close relationship with the PRB that survived until the Brunei uprising in December 1962.<sup>30</sup> However, the SUPP support for the concept aroused Malay suspicions that it would benefit the Chinese to the detriment of the other races.<sup>31</sup> The Datu Bandar, Chairman of PANAS, was only prepared to discuss the idea of a national congress with Sdr. Azahari, the head of PRB, whereas his Malay political opponents, the BPS, welcomed the proposal.<sup>32</sup> The SDA, speaking on behalf of the Dayaks prior to SNAP being formed, said that the concept should be reconsidered after ten to fifteen years as their priority was to raise the Dayaks to a level more comparable with other ethnic groups in Sarawak.<sup>33</sup>

### *Formation of More Political Parties*

Stimulated by the prospect of Malaysia, the 1961 constitutional and electoral reforms, and the scheduling of state-wide elections for mid-1963 with an elected majority in the Council Negri and prospects of a ministerial government, three new political parties were formed in 1962. The Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA), the first party to include an anti-communist aim in its manifesto, was registered on 2 January 1962. Under Tuanku Bujang, a traditional Malay elder from Sibul,<sup>34</sup> the party drew its support from dissident members of PANAS,<sup>35</sup> former Malay anti-cessionists, and Malays who had rejected the leadership of the Datu Bandar,<sup>36</sup> such as his traditional rivals, the Third Division *abang* and their followers.<sup>37</sup> The party's intellectual drive was provided by Abdul Rahman Yaakub and Abdul Taib Mahmud, young Muslim Melanau lawyers who became prominent in Sarawak politics, and Abang Han Ahmad, a dedicated anti-cessionist.<sup>38</sup> Membership was open to all indigenous people and initially included Dayak opponents of SNAP, but within six months the party became predominantly Malay. The formation of BARJASA rekindled old pro- and anti-cessionist Malay divisions and broke down any façade of political unity within the Malay community.<sup>39</sup>

In July 1962, a fifth political party, Party Pesaka Anak Sarawak (PESAKA), applied for registration.<sup>40</sup> Prior to its formation, Third Division Ibans were politically fragmented as SNAP did not attract their support due to historical differences with Second Division Ibans.<sup>41</sup> Attributed to the unofficial efforts of a senior expatriate officer,<sup>42</sup> PESAKA was formed to provide the Third Division Dayaks with a strong political voice so that they would not be overwhelmed in the political changes taking place. It also served to draw Third Division and other Ibans from the communist infiltrated SUPP.<sup>43</sup> Temenggong Jugah, Paramount Chief of the Third Division Ibans,<sup>44</sup> resigned his vice-chairmanship of PANAS to become founder president and other Third Division Ibans followed his example.<sup>45</sup> This growing factionalism was further reinforced by limitation of PESAKA membership to Dayaks and a manifesto dedicated primarily to Dayak interests.<sup>46</sup>

A letter in the *Sarawak Tribune* in October 1958 seeking comments on forming a Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) was welcomed by the editor, who suggested a central communal organization that could bridge the gap between English and non-English-speaking Chinese.<sup>47</sup> By the time it was registered, 1 August 1962,

the concept had changed to a political party similar to the Malayan Chinese Association.<sup>48</sup> It was pro-Malaysia, pro-free enterprise, and anti-communist, in sharp contrast to the anti-Malaysia policy and socialist ideology of the SUPP. As a Chinese party, its manifesto primarily addressed Chinese interests leavened by an aim to improve the economic status of the Native.<sup>49</sup> The founders of the Party and many of its supporters and members were from the Kuching Teochew and Sibü Foochow business communities.<sup>50</sup> With a membership drawn largely from Chinese business and English-speaking Chinese, its following was somewhat restricted. However, similar to its counterpart in Malaya, it stood to benefit as a member in any alliance of Sarawak's right wing parties then being encouraged by the Malayan government.<sup>51</sup>

The communal and intercommunal rivalries and factions separating the Sarawak political parties presented formidable obstacles to any alliance. Attempts to form an alliance between the Malay party BARJASA and the Iban party SNAP, both pro-Malaysia, in March 1962, foundered in disputes over their respective degree of control.<sup>52</sup> In May, PANAS, the other Malay party, announced it would amalgamate with a future United Malaysian National Organization to be set up by the Alliance Party of Malaya when Malaysia was formed.<sup>53</sup> Negotiations on an alliance between the Iban parties PESAKA and SNAP in July proved fruitless.<sup>54</sup> The United Malays National Organization (UMNO) finally sent a three-man mission to Sarawak in September to encourage an alliance of pro-Malaysia parties and stimulated a meeting of BARJASA, PANAS, PESAKA, SCA, and SNAP in Kuching on 22 October 1962.<sup>55</sup> Agreement was reached to form the Sarawak United Front (SUF) and one of its first resolutions was to send a memorandum to the United Nations opposing the SUPP's anti-Malaysia stand.<sup>56</sup> Another Malayan delegation led by Senator T. H. Tan, Hon. Secretary-General of the Alliance Party of Malaya, spent a week in Kuching in late November 1962. This visit culminated in the replacement of the SUF on 21 January 1963 by the Sarawak Alliance patterned on the Malayan Alliance.

### *The Brunei Uprising*

There was, however, another political party operating in Sarawak, the PRB formed in Brunei in 1956. This party had strong links with the SUPP and its nationalist sentiments had attracted a following of young Malays and Kedayans in some areas of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions. Echoing earlier Borneo federation plans, the

PRB organized an armed uprising aimed at forming Kalimantan Utara, a sovereign state consisting of the three Borneo territories under the Sultan of Brunei.<sup>57</sup> The uprising began at 2.00 a.m. on Saturday, 8 December 1962, and involved parts of northern Sarawak where there was a PRB following. Although the Special Branch had some prior knowledge of the uprising and there had been indications of dissatisfaction with the *status quo* in northern Sarawak, this information had not been heeded.<sup>58</sup> Twenty-one petitioners claiming to represent the majority of the local people had called on the British government to return the Limbang district to Brunei in March 1962, predictably to no avail,<sup>59</sup> and a demonstration in Limbang two months later met with a similar response.<sup>60</sup> The police had uncovered documentary evidence of a secret military organization, found uniforms with Tentara Nasional Kalimantan Utara (TNKU) insignia and signs of military training in the Fifth Division,<sup>61</sup> and arrested ten persons involved on 3 December.<sup>62</sup> J. C. B. Fisher, Resident of the Fourth Division, had even received a warning from a Malay the day before the uprising.<sup>63</sup> He placed the police in Miri on alert and advised the Governor, who was then able to warn the military authorities in Singapore.

The TNKU under Yassin Effendi planned to capture the Sultan, the police stations, and the oilfields. Although only achieving mixed success in Brunei town and failing to capture the Sultan,<sup>64</sup> the TNKU seized control of the Brunei oilfields, Seria and Kuala Belait in Brunei, Weston in North Borneo, and Limbang and Bekenu in Sarawak.<sup>65</sup> Emergency legislation was introduced immediately by the Sarawak government and Field Force reinforcements were airlifted to Miri.<sup>66</sup> The Commander-in-Chief of British Forces in the Far East in Singapore activated a previously prepared contingency plan and by late Saturday evening,<sup>67</sup> the bulk of the Initial Force from the 1st Battalion of the Second Gurkha Rifles in Singapore had arrived in Brunei via Labuan.<sup>68</sup> Order was restored in Brunei town by Sunday morning. Weston was recaptured on the same day although stubborn resistance was encountered. The Queen's Own Highlanders with a platoon of the 1st Battalion of the Second Gurkha Rifles regained control of Seria, Kuala Belait, and the oilfields on Tuesday, 12 December.<sup>69</sup> In occupying Limbang, the TNKU killed four Sarawak Constabulary personnel and took the Resident, R. H. Morris, his wife, and five other Europeans hostage.<sup>70</sup> In the recapture of Limbang on 12 December by L. Company of 42 Commando Royal Marines, five Marines lost their lives.<sup>71</sup> Recapture of

Bekenu on 13 December by the 1st Green Jackets virtually ended the uprising and, with irregular forces raised by the Sarawak government cutting off escape routes to Kalimantan, few escaped.<sup>72</sup> Yassin Effendi was finally captured on 18 May 1963. Malays and Kedayans from both the Fourth and Fifth Divisions took part in the uprising, the Malays with a clear political objective and the politically naive Kedayans possibly having been misled by the PRB.<sup>73</sup>

As already noted, the anti-Malaysia faction in the BPS was directly implicated in the uprising. Its president, Ahmad Zaidi, was placed under house arrest, but managed to leave for Indonesia on Malaysia Day.<sup>74</sup> The Brunei uprising also proved traumatic for the SUPP. Although it postponed its four-man 'anti-Malaysia' delegation to the United Nations and its top executive denied any connection with the uprising, the party's close association with the PRB and suspected communist infiltration led to a spate of resignations in late 1962.<sup>75</sup> The government detained a number of its officials throughout Sarawak as suspected CCO members under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance, further detracting from its image.<sup>76</sup> Attempting to restore some credibility, the party decided to suspend its Sibuti and Niah branches pending investigations into their activities. It also decided to expel all members who had taken part in the uprising, dismiss all officials who had not reported for duty, relieve committee members whose whereabouts were unknown of their posts, and expel all such members known to have left Sarawak for unexplained reasons.<sup>77</sup>

### *Government Policies on Political Parties*

The Brunei uprising discredited the SUPP and destroyed much of its effectiveness as the political voice of the majority of the Chinese in Sarawak. Although the colonial government had provided the environment for the formation of political parties and officially encouraged multiethnic parties, the suspicion that the CCO aimed to establish an open political party caused some unease and reluctance to support the formation of the first party, the SUPP. After the party was registered, the government actively supported the formation of new parties representing Native peoples, whose interests could otherwise be submerged during the electoral process. With this shift in emphasis, the colonial government in fact achieved its aim of denying political power to a well organized, city-based, intelligentsia-led, left-wing party with suspected com-

munist connections, the SUPP. However, resolving the problem of communism proved more elusive.

1. The Batu Kitang incident (see Chapter 5) in August 1952 raised fears of armed communist insurgency similar to the Emergency in Malaya (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1138 (31 December 1952): 274-6.)
2. Interview, Ong Kee Hui, November, 1967 in M. B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 13.
3. Liang Kim Bang, *Sarawak, 1941-1957*, Singapore: University of Singapore Press, 1964, p. 36.
4. Two younger leaders elected to the KMC were both born in 1921, Ahmad Zaidi bin Adruce, a charismatic radical leader of the younger Malays, and Stephen K. T. Yong, a lawyer.
5. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1210 (31 December 1958): 236.
6. *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 March 1959, p. 2. Safri Zaidell was working with the Education Department and was subsequently sponsored to study in New Zealand by the Department.
7. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 March 1959, p. 1; 19 March 1959, p. 2.
8. *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 May 1959, p. 1; Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, pp. 14-15.
9. *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 June 1959, p. 1; 22 June 1959, p. 1.
10. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 June 1959, p. 1; 20 June 1959, p. 1; 22 June 1959, p. 1.
11. For biographical notes on the SUPP Chairman, Tan Sri Datuk Ong Kee Hui, see *New Malaysian Who's Who. Part 1. Sabah and Sarawak*, Selangor: Kasuya Publishing, 1989/90, p. 506.
12. *Utusan Sarawak*, 10 June 1959, in Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 78.
13. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, pp. 14-15.
14. Sarawak Information Service (SIS), *The Danger Within: A History of the Clandestine Communist Organisation in Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1963, pp. 25-33.
15. *Persatuan* (association) members and *ketua kampung* (village heads) told Malay voters to vote for Malay candidates (Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 75; Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 26).
16. Originally the Persekutuan Islam Sibui, this was a Muslim party (*Utusan Sarawak*, 5 January 1960, pp. 2-3, and 12 January 1960, pp. 2-3; in Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, pp. 78-9).
17. *Utusan Sarawak*, 15 December 1951, p. 1.
18. *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 February 1960, pp. 1 and 6; 19 April 1960, p. 1. The Datu Bandar resigned from government service on 1 April 1960 to devote all his time to PANAS.
19. The Committee of PANAS in 1960 had nineteen members of whom five were Malays; in 1963 there were thirty-five members of whom twenty were Malays (Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 27).
20. *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 June 1960, p. 5. Nevertheless, Marikan Salleh, Chairman of the political section of PKMS, applauded the PANAS and SUPP aim of self-government.

21. 'With the exception of Abang Ekhwan Zaini, other anti-cession leaders were conspicuously absent from PANAS' (Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 80).

22. *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 April 1960, p. 1. The Ibans in Sarawak made up about one-third of the population. About one-quarter of them lived in the Second Division (L. W. Jones, *Report on the Census of Population Taken on 15th June 1960*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1961, pp. 51-2).

23. *New Sunday Times* (Singapore), 11 December 1988.

24. Datuk Amar Stephen Kalong Ningkan, born 20 August 1920 in Betong, was a Rubber Fund clerk (1938-9), a member of the Constabulary (1940-6), a teacher (1946-9), and an SSOL hospital assistant (1950-61) ('Brief Biography, 1989', Undated typescript issued on his personal letterhead).

25. SNAP co-founders were Edward Jeli, Young Frederick James, Penghulu Maja, Joseph Utek, and Jueng Brau. All five and Ningkan were working with the Shell Company in Brunei at the time (P. M. Kedit and Chan Seng Chai, 'Interview of Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan, First Chief Minister of Sarawak', Unpublished typescript, transcribed and edited for the *Sarawak Literary Society* by Janet Rata Noel, 12 March 1990, p. 10).

26. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 35.

27. *Bejalat*, an Iban custom of young unmarried men leaving their longhouse to undertake a journey for material profit and social prestige (P. M. Kedit, 'Iban *Bejalat* and Sarawak's Development', in R. A. Cramb and R. H. W. Reece (eds.), *Development in Sarawak*, Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1988, p. 135).

28. Although the SUPP was 'hijacked' in support of the communist agenda for a time, its manifesto and its public statements did not include communism or expound communist ideology.

29. *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 June 1960, p. 1. Stephen K. T. Yong, SUPP Secretary-General, suggested that the federation be called 'Brunei' to bring unity and restore the sultanate's past glory (*Borneo Bulletin*, 20 February 1960, in D. S. Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983: The Problems of Political Survival*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 150).

30. *Borneo Bulletin*, 22 December 1962, in Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983*, p. 174.

31. *Utusan Sarawak*, 1 March and 24 April 1958, in Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 76.

32. This reflected the ongoing division in the Malay community from the cession controversy (*North Borneo News and Sabah Times*, 19 March and 22 March 1960, in Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983*, p. 150).

33. *North Borneo News and Sabah Times*, 9 May 1958, in J. R. Angel, 'The Proposed Federation of Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei: The Development and Decline of the British Borneo Concept', MA thesis, University of Sydney, 1963, p. 346.

34. Tuanku Bujang, born 1898, was the highest ranking Malay in Sibu. He joined the Native Officers Service in 1934, was one of four representing the Malays on the *ken sarnj* during the Japanese occupation, and was appointed Administrative Officer by the British administration in 1956.

35. Encouraged by Su'ut Hj. Tahir, an ardent anti-cessionist, a group of PANAS members dissatisfied with the Datu Bandar's autocratic style, approached Muhammad Ghazali bin Shafie, the *de facto* representative of UMNO, for agreement to establish a new Native party (Bob Reece, *Datu Bandar: Abang Hj. Mustapha of Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Kesusasteraan Sarawak, 1993, p. 152; Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 30; Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 89).

36. BARJASA had four prominent anti-cessionists on its National Executive and connections with the SDA, BPS, and PKMS (Reece, *Datu Bandar*, p. 152; *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 January 1962, p. 1).
37. Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, pp. 89-90. The outstation *abang* (sons of *datu*) resented the Kuching *abang's* domination of Native Officer appointments in the Brooke era.
38. For brief notes on Tun Datuk Patinggi Dr Haji Abdul Rahman Yaakub and Tan Sri Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, see *New Malaysian Who's Who. Part 1. Sabah and Sarawak*, pp. 28 and 30. Abang Han was the Sibü PPM librarian implicated in the assassination of Duncan Stewart.
39. Bitter rivalry developed with PANAS (Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, pp. 90-1).
40. *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 July 1962, p. 8. The press sometimes referred to PESAKA as PAPAS.
41. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 36. Under the Brookes, Second Division Ibans 'pacified' the Ibans of the Rajang River. Anglicanism was propagated in the Second Division against Catholicism and Methodism in the Third Division.
42. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 36; *Sarawak Tribune*, 25 June 1962, p. 1. Reece suggests the officer was D. L. Bruen, District Officer, Kanowit. He joined the SCS in 1947 as an administrative cadet and served in Brunei as Assistant Resident from 1955 to 1958 (Reece, *Datu Bandar*, p. 151).
43. A number of Third Division Dayaks resigned from the SUPP, no doubt influenced by civil service administrators in the struggle against communism (*Sarawak Tribune*, 16 March 1962, p. 1).
44. *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 July 1962, p. 1; Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 37. Jugah was appointed Temenggong (Paramount Chief) by the British administration on 22 January 1955, his letter of appointment being silent on whether his paramouncy was intended to be over all Ibans in Sarawak.
45. Penghulu Umpau, ex-Central Committee member of PANAS, became Secretary-General, and ex-SUPP member Jonathan Bangau became the Assistant Secretary (Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 37).
46. PESAKA classified Eurasians with a Dayak parent or a Sarawak-born mother as Dayaks (*Sarawak Tribune*, 20 July 1962, p. 8).
47. *Sarawak Tribune*, 17 October 1958, p. 4.
48. *Sarawak Tribune*, 27 June 1962, p. 1; 2 August 1962, p. 1.
49. *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 August 1962, p. 1; 12 February 1963, p. 6.
50. The SCA's first Chairman was William Tan, a prominent Kuching Teochew businessman, and its second Chairman was Ling Beng Siew, a prominent Sibü Foochow businessman. For biographical sketches, see *New Malaysian Who's Who. Part 1. Sabah and Sarawak*, pp. 397 and 613-4.
51. The SCA paralleled the Malayan Chinese Association in the Alliance Party of Malaya that had proved so successful (Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, p. 133).
52. *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 April 1963, p. 1; 11 May 1962, p. 1; Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 52.
53. *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 May 1962, p. 1; 16 May 1962, p. 8. The Chairman of PANAS reported that the United Malaysian National Organization would be made up of the Alliance Party of Malaya, PANAS, the Singapore People's Alliance, and the United Kadazan National Organization of North Borneo.
54. *Utusan Sarawak*, 17 July 1962, in Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, p. 97.
55. *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 October 1962, p. 1. The UMNO mission consisted of



UMNO executives Azahari bin Taib (leader), Abdul Ghani bin Ishak, and Safie bin Haji Abdullah.

56. *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 October 1962, p. 1.

57. Documents 20-22/PRB/62, 8 December 1962, in Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad (ed.), *The People's Party of Brunei: Selected Documents*, Petaling Jaya: Institute of Social Analysis, 1987, pp. 197-225.

58. *Hansard*, Vol. 664, col. 33, 10 December 1962; Vol. 670, col. 1455, 20 December 1962.

59. *Sarawak Tribune*, 27 March 1962, p. 1. The petition claimed to represent 8,000 of the 15,000 people in the Limbang district. This area had been annexed from Brunei on 17 March 1890 and the unofficial members of the Brunei Legislative Council had called for its return in 1959.

60. *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 May 1962, p. 1; 22 May 1962, p. 1.

61. The *Borneo Bulletin* published an accurate and well-informed account of the military training in Indonesia in early December, but the Information Office in Kuching discounted the account as alarmist and inaccurate (Alastair Morrison, *Fair Land Sarawak: Some Recollections of an Expatriate Official*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 141).

62. *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 December 1962, p. 1; Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, pp. 93-4.

63. Morrison, *Fair Land Sarawak*, p. 142.

64. H. James and D. Sheil-Small, *The Undeclared War: The Story of the Indonesian Confrontation, 1962-1966*, London: Leo Cooper, 1971, p. 6.

65. According to one report, about 80 per cent of the Malay youths in Brunei took part in the uprising (*Borneo Bulletin*, 22 December 1962, in Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983*, p. 180).

66. *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 December 1962, p. 1.

67. The Sultan of Brunei called for military assistance under Clause 5 of the agreement with Britain of 9 September 1963 (Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983*, pp. 237-41).

68. Labuan, 1200 kilometres from Singapore, had a long runway adequate for RAF Britannia aircraft.

69. All forty-six hostages in Seria were rescued unharmed (James and Sheil-Small, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 16-26).

70. *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 December 1962, p. 1; 17 December 1962, p. 2.

71. Another six Marines were wounded during Limbang's recapture (James and Sheil-Small, *The Undeclared War*, p. 30).

72. By 16 December over 3,000 of an estimated TNKU force of 4,000 had surrendered (*Sarawak Tribune*, 14 December 1962, p. 1; 20 May 1963, p. 1). The irregular forces, Kenyah, Kayan, and Iban volunteers were rallied by Fisher (Sarawak Information Service (SIS), *Sarawak by the Week*, 6-12 January 1963, pp. 1-21).

73. SIS, *Sarawak by the Week*, 6-12 January 1963, p. 18; *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 December 1962, p. 2.

74. Zaidi was described as anti-communist, very anti-Chinese, and pro-Indonesian at that time (*Sarawak Tribune*, 11 June 1964, p. 7). He subsequently denied ever having been anti-Chinese (*Sarawak Tribune*, 5 November 1974, p. 2).

75. *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 December 1962, p. 1; 15 December 1962, p. 2; 19 December 1962, p. 2; 22 December 1962, p. 1; 27 December 1962, p. 4. Known resignations in December totalled about 300.

76. *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 December 1962, p. 8; 5 January 1963, p. 1.

77. *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 January 1963, p. 1.

## Communism in Sarawak

COMMUNISM proved to be the most intransigent political problem faced by the colonial regime. In August 1948, the Colonial Secretary, Arthur Creech Jones, warned all colonies of the threat from communism, in a circular drawing attention to abundant evidence of communist aims to undermine British authority in its colonial territories world-wide.<sup>1</sup> Eighteen months later, he suggested that the government of each territory should consider taking a wide range of powers to deal with subversion and should seek means of thwarting subversive activities, particularly by communists.<sup>2</sup> Although not acted on immediately in Sarawak, this served to authorize a series of legislative measures taken during the colonial period to counter communist activities.

### *The Communist Organization in Sarawak*

Sarawak was particularly vulnerable to communist influences from mainland China because of its large Chinese population.<sup>3</sup> The first known communist-inspired organization in Sarawak, the anti-Japanese Sarawak Anti-Fascist League, was formed during the war.<sup>4</sup> This small, rather inactive organization became the Races Liberation League in 1942 and, after the war, the Overseas Chinese Young Men's Association. This was possibly the forebear of the first Sarawak communist group identified from documents, the Sarawak Overseas Chinese Democratic Youth League, which was founded on 21 October 1951 to work amongst Chinese students and had ties with the Anti-British League in Singapore.<sup>5</sup> It was broken up during the 1952 emergency (see Chapter 9), but was re-formed as the Sarawak Liberation League in March 1954. Six months later it had some thirty members and a hundred 'activists' promoting communism to Chinese students, workers, and farmers.<sup>6</sup>

By 1956 the League had been replaced by the newly formed Sarawak Advanced Youths' Association (SAYA),<sup>7</sup> for which

the government adopted the generic name of the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO). Following Beijing guidelines,<sup>8</sup> the CCO adopted a United Front policy,<sup>9</sup> setting up 'departments for work' to penetrate or establish open groups among students, labour, farmers, and political parties.<sup>10</sup> By 1959 the CCO had grown to about 1,500 active supporters with fifty to sixty hard-core members.<sup>11</sup> This small movement presented an intransigent problem that was probably at its zenith when Malaysia was formed.<sup>12</sup> The Manifesto on the Establishment of the Borneo Communist Party perhaps best defines communist policy in Sarawak, stating *inter alia* 'to overthrow the British Imperialists' colonial rule; to eradicate thoroughly all the exploiting classes and systems; to establish a completely independent, democratic, peaceful, prosperous and powerful socialist society; and gradually to attain the high-ideal of mankind—communist society'.<sup>13</sup>

The CCO was structured to resist penetration and infiltration. It was hierarchically based on cells of three or more members, a number of cells making up branches that in turn made up district committees, then area or town committees, and finally divisional committees with a central committee at the apex.<sup>14</sup> Members were generally recruited through study (*hsueh hsih*) cells, picnic parties, singing and dancing classes, and other outer-fringe bodies.<sup>15</sup> Each prospective member was chosen for his or her sound ideological quality, good connections with the masses, simple social connections, and interest in collective *hsueh hsih*.<sup>16</sup> Before being accepted as a member and taking an oath pledging his or her life to the CCO, the recruit had to undergo an ideological education, study specified communist literature, and produce a satisfactory autobiography.<sup>17</sup> Cadres were selected from members on criteria of dedication to communism. To become leading cadres, cadres required a wide knowledge of politics and communist international policy and a firm grasp of organizational leadership.

### *The CCO and Major Political Disturbances in the Colonial Era*

The *Sarawak Gazette* described the Batu Kitang incident in August 1952 as Sarawak's first experience of communist terrorism. Three men and one woman, all armed and in jungle-green uniforms, overran the Batu Kitang Bazaar about 10 kilometres from Kuching at 11.00 p.m. on 5 August and left at 2.30 a.m. the next day.<sup>18</sup> Firing their weapons to force shophouse occupants to open their doors, the group claimed they were members of a 1,000-strong

Sarawak Peoples Army living in the jungle in Kalimantan near Sangau, and handed out a 'communist-inspired' leaflet.<sup>19</sup> They demanded a 'loan' of \$10,000 from each shophouse and collected about \$4,000, the ready cash of about twenty shopkeepers. Receipts stamped with a five-star seal were issued showing the amount still to be paid.<sup>20</sup> On their way back to the border in a local taxi, they opened fire when called upon to halt at a routine police road block at the 27th Mile, killing a police lance-corporal and injuring two constables.<sup>21</sup> The group, one of whom may have been wounded, abandoned the badly damaged taxi about a mile further on and escaped into the jungle.

This incident triggered unprecedented security measures and the government declared a state of emergency on 8 August 1952 that was not rescinded for five months.<sup>22</sup> For the CCO, the episode was counter-productive since it provided official justification for the deportation of five overseas-born Chinese suspected of subversion, the detention of twenty-five others who were locally born, the expansion of the Constabulary, a strengthened Special Branch, and a new Field Force to deal with militant political activities.<sup>23</sup> It also led to a government decision to improve intelligence gathering in the Chinese-speaking community by increasing 'the Chinese-speaking strength of the Government Service, not only in the Constabulary but also in the Education and other departments'.<sup>24</sup>

Similar to the Batu Kitang incident, the Brunei uprising in December 1962 enabled the government to detain suspected CCO members as a security threat, although there was no evidence that the CCO was involved and the CCO-infiltrated SUPP had stated that armed revolt was against its policy.<sup>25</sup> By the end of January, about 100 suspected CCO members had been detained under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance (PPSO), 1962, including officials of the SUPP, teachers' and alumni associations, trade unions, basketball associations, and the Chinese press.<sup>26</sup> It also provided grounds for disarming Chinese farmers in the First Division by calling in their unlicensed firearms and for closing three local Chinese newspapers which were publishing communist propaganda. The government was also able to deport four visiting left-wing politicians and ban publications from a number of Singapore left-wing organizations without undue criticism.<sup>27</sup>

Fear of internment, the CCO decision to transfer military training to Kalimantan, and an ideological wish to take part in *konfrontasi* led to an exodus of Chinese youths to Kalimantan in early 1963.<sup>28</sup> By July, Indonesia was claiming that 1,600 Chinese men

and women from Sarawak had been given military training and the Border Scouts had been established to warn security forces of any aliens entering Sarawak.<sup>29</sup> CCO complicity in Indonesian border incursions heralded the start of their armed opposition to the formation of Malaysia that continued until 1974.<sup>30</sup> The number of youths who left Sarawak and the anti-Malaysia riots in Sibu and Miri in late August 1963 were symptoms of the influence of the CCO in the Chinese education system.<sup>31</sup>

### *CCO Activity in the Chinese Education System*

Government officials warned the Chinese Advisory Board and the Kuching Chinese schools' management of communist indoctrination in Chinese schools in late 1949 and late 1950, but to no avail.<sup>32</sup> Beginning a struggle that continued throughout the colonial era, in July 1951 the government declared the Student Self-Governing Society of the Kuching Chung Hua Middle School unlawful under the Societies Ordinance.<sup>33</sup> Three months later, the management lost control of the school when students demanded a review of English examination results since the majority had failed.<sup>34</sup> To restore order, a new board of management of Kuching Chinese schools was finally formed on 17 January 1952.<sup>35</sup> The Kuching Overseas Chinese Youth Association which supported the students was declared an unlawful society in February.<sup>36</sup> Under the Emergency Regulations introduced after the Batu Kitang incident in August, the headmaster and five teachers of the 17th Mile Chung Hua Primary School were detained for suspected subversion, and three registered teachers were deported.<sup>37</sup> However, indoctrination continued and a growing number of Chinese youths opted to leave for China in the early 1950s.<sup>38</sup>

After closing the 17th Mile Chung Hua Primary School in August 1954 for its 'unhappy record of communist association',<sup>39</sup> the government concluded that the best way of gaining control of Chinese schools was through financial assistance.<sup>40</sup> Against a background of problems in the Kuching Chung Hua Middle School,<sup>41</sup> new financing arrangements known as the Grant Regulations were approved in September 1955.<sup>42</sup> These offered public funding of the operating costs of primary and secondary schools and half of all approved capital expenditure in exchange for government control over school staff and syllabuses.<sup>43</sup> The Chinese Education Council accepted the offer two months later and by the end of the year, almost every school had applied for grants.<sup>44</sup> The Colonial Office

commended the Governor's action as communist indoctrination in South-East Asia's Chinese schools was viewed as one of the most difficult and dangerous threats that had to be met.<sup>45</sup>

A serious case of indiscipline at the Miri Chung Hua Middle School in March 1956 was followed by a six-month period of tranquillity.<sup>46</sup> The Special Branch ascribed this to the CCO instructing Middle School students to refrain from overt acts of indiscipline so that their organizations in the Chinese schools could be strengthened.<sup>47</sup> Faced with evidence of communist influence in the recently formed boards of management of some Chinese schools and communist domination of the Sarawak Chinese Education General Association in late 1956,<sup>48</sup> the government, after consulting the Colonial Office, began to tighten its control.<sup>49</sup> Teachers with 'undesirable political records' were denied appointment, security suspects were refused transfer, and the Special Branch increased the pressure with raids on suspected communists.<sup>50</sup>

Although the government reported reduced communist activity, the Chinese Affairs officer argued that the real index of the success of communist indoctrination was the number of young men leaving for China.<sup>51</sup> He suggested that deportation was the state's most effective weapon against communism.<sup>52</sup> Although there were serious disciplinary and subversion problems in the Sibu Methodist School for Chinese students in 1957,<sup>53</sup> by the following year the Governor was able to report to the Colonial Office that deportation was proving a deterrent to subversion in the classroom.<sup>54</sup> Another deterrent was not allowing re-entry to those under forty-five years of age who had visited China.<sup>55</sup> Tighter control and increased success in exposing study groups in Chinese middle schools uncovered seventeen teachers propagating communism between 1956 and 1959, all of whom were dismissed.<sup>56</sup> However, the Special Branch attributed the period of relative calm in the schools in the late 1950s and early 1960s not to better control, but to a communist policy of using schools as training grounds and fighting its battles on the labour and emerging political fronts.<sup>57</sup>

David McLellan, Adviser on Education to the Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in South-East Asia, was called upon to advise on secondary education in Sarawak in 1959.<sup>58</sup> He also had a secret mandate, to study and make recommendations on controlling subversion in Chinese schools.<sup>59</sup> His short-term proposals were redrafting the Education Ordinance to increase control over student and teacher discipline both in and out of school and introducing age limits and automatic promotion to remove the

influence of over-aged students.<sup>60</sup> This was reflected in the Education Ordinance, 1961 (No. 21 of 1961), which sought to ensure that schools were not 'used as breeding grounds for ideological contents incompatible with a democratic society'.<sup>61</sup> His long-term proposals were to combat subversion in secondary schools by moving towards a national English-medium education system and expanding the secondary education only through non-communal English-medium schools.<sup>62</sup> Weight was added to the proposals at the Council Negri meeting in August 1960 by Sessional Paper No. 3, 'Subversion in Sarawak', that gave an account of communist activity in Chinese schools. As all the Chinese school boards demanded that ethnic groups be taught in their respective mother tongues, McLellan's report was accepted only after a lengthy debate.<sup>63</sup>

In a major step towards a national English-medium education system, at the end of 1960 the Governor advised that all secondary schools would be invited to prepare programmes for conversion to teaching in English.<sup>64</sup> When the Director of Education asked for these programmes in February 1961, he encountered strong opposition from all the Chinese school boards,<sup>65</sup> interpreted by the *Straits Times* as a pretext to weld 'a section of the Chinese community into a movement ... for far different purposes'.<sup>66</sup> Student unrest at the Sibu Methodist School in January 1961 over the conversion led to closure of the Chinese department and only those students whose future good conduct was vouched for by their guardians or parents were re-registered.<sup>67</sup> In view of this unrest, the government obtained reconfirmation of its policy by the Council Negri in March.<sup>68</sup>

Documents captured in 1962 indicated that discontent over conversion helped the CCO to penetrate and take control of some Chinese school boards and Chinese student bodies.<sup>69</sup> The registration of the Joint Council of the First Division Chinese Schools Board of Management, the CCO base for educational campaigns, and the CCO-controlled Third Division Joint Council were cancelled as a result. Grants-in-aid were withdrawn from schools that failed to submit programmes for conversion to English, but resistance to conversion persisted. By Malaysia Day, only nine of the eighteen secondary schools run by Chinese committees were still receiving aid and only 3,000 of their 5,500 students were converting to English.<sup>70</sup> Although consistent stringent action had been taken, the colonial government controlled rather than eradicated communism in the Chinese education system and it was not

able to eliminate communist indoctrination of youths in those schools. As James Wong, Deputy Chief Minister, said in late 1963, 'we all know some of the younger generation of Chinese in Sarawak have been much affected by the teachings of communism'.<sup>71</sup>

### *CCO Activity in the Trade Union Movement*

The CCO first penetrated the trade union movement in 1954, stepping up its efforts in 1958 to 1959.<sup>72</sup> Aware of CCO plans to establish a Sarawak Trade Union Congress (TUC) to dominate all trade unions, in 1955 the Registrar of Trade Unions refused to register the TUC on the grounds that there was no provision in the Trade Unions Ordinance for such a congress.<sup>73</sup> This created some ill feeling among the unionists and seven trade unions appealed without success to visiting members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in 1959. The unions next passed a resolution to form a Sarawak TUC at their 1960 May Day celebrations, claiming that the Commissioner of Labour had promised his support in November 1959. However, registration was once again refused and the unions once again approached CPA members without success.<sup>74</sup> By this time the TUC was almost exclusively Chinese, as the main Malay unions had either subsequently withdrawn or had never been affiliated.<sup>75</sup> Applications to establish trade union free night schools in the middle of 1961 were also rejected as captured documents showed the CCO proposed to use them for training cadres and for indoctrination.<sup>76</sup>

In 1958 the government took steps to forestall any small group from seizing control of the trade union movement by prohibiting a person from holding office in more than one union without the consent of the Governor.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, in 1962 any CCO use of trade unions in the political arena was pre-empted under the Trade Unions (Amendment) Ordinance, 1962, that prohibited union participation in politics or in running schools or classes not connected with trade unionism.<sup>78</sup> Condemnation of the Ordinance at a 'huge rally' held in Sibu on 6 May 1962 and the resolve of the First Division TUC with other unions to protest to the Colonial Office failed to deter the government and the legislation remained.<sup>79</sup> The colonial government's last notable act to counter CCO penetration of the trade unions was taken during the Brunei uprising in December 1962, when sixteen suspected CCO activists and members who were trade union officials were detained under



emergency regulations.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, according to the government's own analysis, the CCO still managed to establish control of the country's large and predominantly Chinese unions.<sup>81</sup> Reacting to this, in the late 1950s the government changed its policy from encouraging the formation of trade unions to introducing regulatory legislation aimed at curbing CCO penetration and preventing CCO use of the unions for political purposes.

### *The CCO and the Farmers*

Support from the farmers who comprised three-quarters of the adult population was essential for the CCO, but this was difficult to obtain since most farmers owned their land and there were no farmers' organizations through which the CCO could pursue their United Front policy.<sup>82</sup> In late 1960, following what the CCO perceived as successful penetration of the trade unions and the SUPP,<sup>83</sup> with Beijing's blessing the CCO completed plans to form the Sarawak Farmers' Association (SFA).<sup>84</sup> Its declared aim of promoting farmers' interests attracted some support, but with prior knowledge of the CCO connections, registration was refused under the Societies Ordinance in August 1961.<sup>85</sup> The Council Negri was given three reasons for this: first, CCO documents showed the association would be a CCO satellite organization; secondly, nearly half of the thirty-three organizers were believed to be communists; and lastly the Association intended to set up *hsueh hsieh* groups amongst the farmers to promote communism. Although the Association denied any communist connections,<sup>86</sup> the government did not retract. An explanatory pamphlet was issued in November showing that initially the Association was exclusively Chinese who made up only one-seventh of the farming community and that it was promoted by four local Chinese newspapers known to espouse the communist cause.<sup>87</sup> In its 1963 analysis of the CCO, the government felt sufficiently confident to state that the peasantry movement had failed to secure a following amongst the farmers of Sarawak.<sup>88</sup>

### *The CCO in Politics*

In early 1959, the CCO issued a lengthy paper 'On the Formation of an Open Political Party and the Struggle for Independence', stressing the need for such a party.<sup>89</sup> In the paper, the CCO said it

could coexist in a party in which the propertied class was likely to play the leading role initially, if the party was not controlled by the right wing and the basic aim of independence was not changed. Evidence was soon accumulated showing that the SUPP, in a fusion of communist and Chinese communal interests, was the political party concerned.<sup>90</sup> In August 1960 the CCO itself claimed it had actively promoted the formation of the party and the reports of its members and cadres for May and June 1961 spoke of the SUPP as 'our party', saying it should be given every support 'so as to make use of it in our work'.<sup>91</sup> Further confirmation occurred in September with the Singapore government's refusal to allow entry of two members of the SUPP executive committee, Wen Ming Chuan and Wong Ki Chok, the latter also known as Bong Kee Chong, on the grounds that both were senior members of the CCO. This was strongly refuted by the SUPP when it was confirmed in a broadcast by Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew.<sup>92</sup>

The dilemma that the SUPP leaders claimed they faced was their inability to justify expelling members without firm evidence, not a lack of resolution, inclination, or power.<sup>93</sup> On 22 June 1962, the government acted by arresting seven CCO members under four Deportation and three Restricted Residence Orders.<sup>94</sup> The three arrested under the latter were all Sarawak-born SUPP executives, including Wen and Wong who had been refused entry permits to Singapore, and Lui How Ying, wife of Wong. All sought and were granted a one-way ticket to China in preference to restricted residence.<sup>95</sup> A noisy demonstration of farewell by several hundred members of the SUPP prompted the *Sarawak Tribune* to call on the SUPP's moderate faction to take action against the remaining undesirable elements in the party.<sup>96</sup> Again this was left to the government, and in December fifteen SUPP office holders, all of whom were considered a security risk during the Brunei uprising, were arrested in a drive against suspected CCO members.<sup>97</sup> Other SUPP members with suspected CCO connections were sought, but according to a later police report, 'the top wanted men of the Sarawak United Peoples Party had disappeared during the Brunei revolt'.<sup>98</sup> About 1,000 Sarawak Chinese, the majority of whom were thought to be SUPP members,<sup>99</sup> secretly crossed the border into Kalimantan at the behest of the CCO at this time.<sup>100</sup> Out of sixty-nine caught while crossing the border in one week in mid-1963, over twenty were wearing SUPP lapel badges, possibly as a form of passport.<sup>101</sup>

The *Straits Times* said that the government purge of suspected CCO operatives in the SUPP during the Brunei uprising had destroyed its usefulness as a Trojan horse for the CCO.<sup>102</sup> Although the SUPP's left wing was weakened by the security action, the CCO continued its quest for a United Front with the 'reactionaries' in the party while continuing to expose them and it was even prepared to start a new party if necessary.<sup>103</sup> The government was convinced that the SUPP remained an important component of the CCO United Front policy and that SUPP strength among small Chinese traders in rural areas, the main source of credit for indigenous rural people, provided 'a real, if concealed, accession of power for the CCO in rural areas'.<sup>104</sup> The tenuous control of the SUPP's moderate leaders over militant members was shown by their denial of any party involvement in the violent demonstrations by SUPP members during the visit of the UN team to assess public opinion on Malaysia in August 1963.<sup>105</sup> Although the British administration took stringent action against CCO penetration of the SUPP, the party remained a CCO 'Trojan horse' up to 16 September 1963, when the Federal government became responsible for internal security.

### *The CCO and Printed Propaganda Material*

The Propaganda and Press Section of the CCO, under the direction of the Political Bureau, issued or controlled a series of Chinese language underground and open publications, ranging from cyclostyled leaflets to newspapers.<sup>106</sup> The first recorded secret publication, a periodical entitled *Democracy*, was issued from 1954 to early 1959, when it was replaced by the *National Independence*, published every six to eight weeks.<sup>107</sup> These were supplemented by the *Hsueh Shih Pao* (Study Group News); the *Masses' News* issued by the Third Divisional Committee; loose leaf cyclostyled pamphlets covering topical subjects, classical communist writing extracts, or instruction and study material; and in the early 1960s, the *Workers and Farmers News*. Under the Sedition Ordinance, possession of subversive literature was an indictable offence and was often the only tangible evidence of links with the CCO.<sup>108</sup> On such evidence, those born overseas were subject to deportation without trial, as in the case of two males, Lee Ming Shing and Chan Wan Leung, deported in September 1959.<sup>109</sup> For the locally born, the usual penalty was two weeks in prison or a \$50 fine, and if found guilty of being a member of an unlawful society, the penalty was

two months' imprisonment.<sup>110</sup> Such cases were tried in open court with avenues of appeal which occasionally quashed original convictions.<sup>111</sup>

Open publications were subject to the Sedition (Amendment) Ordinance, 1956, under which any publication considered contrary to the public interest could be banned. Two open periodicals showing strong signs of CCO influence were the SUPP's *Tuan Chieh Pao* and the First Division TUC's *Hsiang Tao*.<sup>112</sup> Indirect measures were taken against both periodicals by action against key personnel under the Societies and the Sedition Ordinances and the *Hsiang Tao* was finally proscribed in 1963.<sup>113</sup> Although the first CCO-inspired newspaper, the post-war *Chung Hua Journal*, ceased publication in 1951, government concerns over press control were aroused.<sup>114</sup> Use of a press council for this purpose was rejected by the Colonial Office as 'utterly repugnant to democratic press traditions'<sup>115</sup> and another seven years elapsed before regulation, through registration under the Local Newspapers Ordinance, 1958, was introduced for locally printed newspapers.<sup>116</sup> Growing CCO interest in the press to propagate propaganda was evident from the late 1950s with three daily papers becoming vehicles for strident communist propaganda.<sup>117</sup> These were the *Sin Wen Pao* that appeared to come under extremist control in 1959, the *Min Chong Pao* registered in Sibu in 1960, and the *Sa Min Pao* established in Miri in 1961.<sup>118</sup> In a lengthy broadcast on 8 June 1962, the government stated that continued promotion of communism by those three newspapers was not acceptable and advised that no more warnings would be issued.<sup>119</sup> Over the next two months Restricted Residence Orders were placed on the three papers' editors, all said to be leading members of the CCO,<sup>120</sup> but this action had little effect.

The new editor and the printer of the *Sin Wen Pao* and the new editor of the *Min Chong Pao* together with its shareholders were all charged with publishing seditious material in late September.<sup>121</sup> Also in September, the Council Negri passed the Printing Presses Bill, enabling action to be taken against locally printed subversive material.<sup>122</sup> Its major features were the appointment of a registrar with the power to issue, revoke, or suspend licences for printing presses, and stringent conditions for all licensees. The Bill was welcomed by the Council Negri as necessary and overdue, but it was not needed for action against the *Sin Wen Pao*, the *Ming Chong Pao*, and the *Sa Min Pao*. These papers were shut down as security risks under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance, 1962,

that came into force during the Brunei uprising on 8 December, and their editors were detained under the Emergency Regulations.<sup>123</sup>

Apart from local publications, there was a continuous flow of communist literature from overseas for the Chinese schools and local retail outlets.<sup>124</sup> Powers of control over publications under the Sedition Ordinance were further strengthened in 1958 by an amendment empowering the Governor in Council to prohibit the importation of all publications from a particular country or written in a particular language. By early 1960 the government had deemed it necessary to impose a general ban on eighty-two publishers known to have published subversive literature 'to protect the public from subversion'.<sup>125</sup> The public were given one month to hand in such publications and after that anyone in possession of a prohibited publication was liable to prosecution. By mid-1960, some 6,000 proscribed books had been handed in and 7,000 had been re-exported by various book stores.<sup>126</sup> The SUPP decried the ban as contrary to the basic principles of democracy and the Charter of the United Nations,<sup>127</sup> but this had no effect. Bans were even extended when considered necessary, as at the time of the Brunei uprising.<sup>128</sup> Although government action closed off legitimate import channels to subversive literature, success was limited as the CCO adopted covert means of importing proscribed publications, and banned publications kept in secret archives continued to be used.<sup>129</sup>

### *Effectiveness of British Attempts to Control the CCO*

Communism's attraction for the Sarawak Chinese, especially the youth, became very evident in the early 1950s from the number who left for China. It became a serious threat in Sarawak during the 1950s as it penetrated the Chinese education system, the trade unions, politics, and the printed media.<sup>130</sup> Because the communist movement operated as an underground organization confined largely to the Chinese-speaking population educated in the Chinese education system, of whom there were very few in the Constabulary and other arms of the civil service since few were literate in English, it proved difficult to penetrate or control. The government attempted to deal with it by introducing control legislation that was then used to the fullest extent, especially during times of crisis when arrest and internment without trial could be

defended on the grounds of public security. This prevented the CCO from completely taking over the Chinese union movement, the farming community, the Chinese education system, the SUPP, and the Chinese printed media. Under the Undesirable Persons Ordinance, described as a repugnant authority by the *Straits Times*, a 23-year-old Sarawak-born Chinese, Fu Tze Man, was deported in late 1960 for subversive activities.<sup>131</sup> The legality of this action was questioned in the courts and upheld, but no more Sarawak-born British citizens were deported.<sup>132</sup> However, the movement was still able to retain a wide following amongst the Chinese community.

The exodus of up to 1,000 Chinese youths to Kalimantan in 1963 to take up the CCO cause in armed resistance to the formation of Malaysia shows that the government's reactive measures against indoctrination in the Chinese-medium schools were far from effective. Moves to integrate the Chinese-medium schools into a national English-medium education system were too late to have any material effect during the colonial era and other proactive measures such as economic, political, and social development were obviously found wanting by many Chinese youths. To control and contain this political challenge, the government therefore used its extensive powers under Emergency Regulations to remove suspected communists from education, politics, unions, and associations in a series of purges in 1952, 1962, and 1963. In combating the influence of the communist movement in Sarawak, to the detriment of the state scarce resources were diverted from development. Communism also served to entrench the ills of communalism in Sarawak since its support was almost exclusively Chinese.<sup>133</sup> These effects were also evident in Malaya, a key component in British plans for a federation of Malaya and the states of Brunei, North Borneo, Sarawak, and Singapore as a bulwark against communism.

1. Secret circular despatch, 5 August 1948, in secret circular despatch Colonial Secretary to the OAG, 18 February 1950, Ref. 14322/4, CO 938/8/13, PRO.

2. Colonial Secretary to the OAG, Circular despatch 18 February 1950, Ref. 14322/4, CO 938/8/13, PRO.

3. Brief prepared by Mr Stent, 27 October 1949, and handed to Malcolm MacDonald ('UK Policy in South East Asia and the Far East', FO 371/76030, PRO).

4. Sarawak Information Service (SIS), *The Danger Within: A History of the Clandestine Communist Organisation in Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1963, p. 2.

5. Sarawak Government, 'Subversion in Sarawak', Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1960, p. 1; SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 2.

6. The League purchased a house with land in Kuching (SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 3).

7. There were other less prominent communist groups outside SAYA. SAYA had labour, literature and culture, peasantry, politics, racial work, and student sections (SIS, *The Danger Within*, pp. 3-4).

8. In late 1958, the Governor, Anthony Abell, claimed that the police had uncovered evidence that CCO activity was directed from outside Sarawak (*The Times* (London), 29 December 1958, p. 5).

9. The United Front signified the proletariat led by the Communist Party working with the bourgeoisie against imperialism and colonialism (SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 15).

10. The Sarawak Farmers' Association (SFA), set up in 1960, is an example of the activities of the 'departments for work' (SIS, *The Danger Within*, pp. 5, 15, and 20).

11. See Appendix 3. The CCO was virtually 100 per cent Chinese (SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 1).

12. Between 600 and 700 young Chinese had crossed the border to Kalimantan to receive military training (*Sarawak Tribune*, 2 August 1963, p. 3).

13. Sarawak Government, 'Subversion in Sarawak', Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1960, p. 2; *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 July 1960, p. 1.

14. The committees had a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, propaganda officer, and treasurer in a bureaucratic structure with centralized authority (SIS, *The Danger Within*, Appendix A, p. 48).

15. 'Recruitment', SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 8.

16. SIS, *The Danger Within*, Appendix F, p. 59.

17. SIS, *The Danger Within*, pp. 8-10 and 56.

18. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1133 (30 August 1952): 177. The group spoke Teochew, Hokkien, and fluent Malay (*Sarawak Tribune*, 8 August 1952, p. 3; 11 August 1952, p. 2).

19. The group told a Malay they had come from Indonesia to liberate the poor people.

20. In a bizarre twist, the group sat in a coffee shop drinking aerated water which they paid for.

21. The guards at the road block were unaware of the raid at Batu Kitang. The Batu Kitang telephone line was out of order and a constable had to cycle 10 kilometres to Kuching to sound the alarm.

22. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 19 January 1953, p. 3.

23. 'Address by His Excellency the Governor to Council Negri on 2nd December, 1952', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1138 (31 December 1962): 274-6. See also Chapter 9, 'Law and Order Enforcement Agencies'.

24. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1138 (31 December 1952): 276.

25. The Governor said that the uprising was solely of Partai Rakyat origin and the name, 'TNKU', of its military force pointed to outside (Indonesian) links (*Sarawak Tribune*, 10 December 1962, p. 1).

26. *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 December 1962, p. 8; 1 February 1963, p. 9.

27. *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 December 1962, p. 1; 12 December 1962, p. 4.

28. *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 June 1963, p. 1; Malaysian Government, Department of Information, *Indonesian Involvement in Eastern Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Public Printers, 1965, pp. 30-3.
29. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 31 July 1963, p. 1; *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 May 1963, p. 1.
30. On 4 March 1974, 500 communists, mainly young Chinese, surrendered (Aluyah Hj. Morshidi et al., 'The History of Sri Aman', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society* (Sarawak Branch), Special Issue in Conjunction with the Year of the Heritage Celebration (1983): 1-4).
31. In late August, there were violent anti-Malaysia protests at Sibu and Miri (*Sarawak Tribune*, 28 August 1963, p. 1; 30 August 1963, p. 1; 3 September 1963, p. 1; 5 September 1963, p. 8).
32. *Sarawak Tribune*, 27 December 1949, p. 2; 3 October 1950, p. 3.
33. *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 July 1951, p. 4. The Society had failed to produce minutes of meetings.
34. Some students went on strike, seventeen students were expelled, and six were fined for unlawful detention of the principal (*Sarawak Tribune*, 30 October 1951, p. 1; 1 December 1951, p. 1).
35. 'Communism in Chinese Schools', File Note, 1954, Ref. 121/367/01, CO 1030/267, PRO.
36. *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 February 1952, p. 1.
37. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1138 (31 December 1952): 276.
38. In 1953, 829 Chinese, including 347 in the 16-30 year age group, left Sarawak.
39. The Special Branch found communist literature at the 17th Mile Chung Hua Primary School (Governor to the Colonial Secretary, No. 606, 22 October 1954, Ref. 24/S/3502/54, CO 1030/267, PRO).
40. Governor to Colonial Secretary, No. 625, 22 November 1954, SEA. 121/367/01, CO 1030/267, PRO.
41. *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 March 1955, p. 1; 30 April 1955, p. 2; 17 May 1955, p. 1.
42. E. W. Woodhead, *The Financing of Education and Conditions of Service in the Teaching Profession in Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1955, p. 32; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1174 (31 December 1955): 309.
43. 'Financing of Education Grants to Aided Schools', Education Department Circular No. 7 in Ed 181/1, 8 August 1955, CO 1030/45, PRO; 'Financing of Education', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1170 (31 August 1955): 186.
44. By the end of 1956 there were 607 aided schools with 67,754 pupils and 31 unaided schools with 1,272 pupils (Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1956*, Table 1 and Notes on Table 1).
45. Colonial Secretary to Governor, Message 116, March 1956, Fed. 23/5/01, CO 1030/45, PRO.
46. To restore order, the Miri Chung Hua Middle School's board of management was replaced by government appointees (OAG to Colonial Secretary, Saving No. 481, 25 July 1956, CO 1030/45, PRO).
47. Governor to Colonial Secretary, Saving No. 656, 10 October 1956, CO 1030/45, PRO.
48. According to the Special Branch, the office bearers of the Sarawak Chinese Education General Association consisted of one active communist, four active communist sympathizers, five with left-wing views, one who was susceptible to communist influence, one with centre-to-left political views, one opportunist, one who



was pro-government, and two anti-communists (OAG to Colonial Secretary and Governor to Colonial Secretary, Saving No. 639 and 656, 4 October 1956 and 10 October 1956, CO 1030/45, PRO).

49. Governor to Colonial Secretary, Saving No. 656, 10 October 1956; Minute 5 November 1956, CO 1030/45, PRO.

50. Governor to Colonial Secretary, Saving No. 203, 17 March 1957, Ref. 21/S/3502/56, CO 1030/422, PRO.

51. In 1954, 150 Chinese a month were leaving for China, later figures not having been reported.

52. 'Dickson Diaries and Papers', 7 April 1957, MSS Pac. s. 100, RHL.

53. The Director of Education had a 'stronger more resolute man' appointed headmaster of the Sibu Methodist School (Governor to Bishop Amstutz, New York, Letter, 17 June 1957, CO 1030/422, PRO).

54. Governor to Colonial Secretary, Saving No. 633, 10 November 1958, CO 1030/422, PRO.

55. D. McLellan, 'Notes on Subversion in Sarawak Schools', 5 November 1959, p. 6, CO 1030/422, PRO.

56. *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 December 1959, p. 2. There was no control over teachers from unaided schools.

57. 'Dickson Diaries and Papers', 15 January 1960, and 11 March 1962, MSS Pac. s. 100, RHL.

58. Commissioner-General to the Foreign Office, 19 June 1959, CO 1030/422, PRO.

59. See Appendix 3.

60. *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 February 1960, p. 1.

61. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 September 1961, p. 1; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 115.

62. *The Times* (London), 6 July 1960, p. 10.

63. Second Meeting of the Second Session of the Third Council Negri, 17 August 1960, cols. 61 and 107-8, Sarawak Museum Archives. Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1960 to implement McLellan's recommendations was also approved.

64. First Meeting of the Third Session of the Third Council Negri, 6 December 1960, col. 12, Sarawak Museum Archives.

65. *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 March 1961, p. 6; 23 May 1961, p. 1.

66. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 18 March 1961, p. 10.

67. Human faeces was smeared on the stairs and walls of the Sibu Methodist School prior to a visit by the Director of Education. ('Dickson Diaries and Papers', 6 April 1962, MSS Pac. s. 100, RHL.)

68. Second Meeting of the Third Session of the Third Council Negri, 27-29 March 1961, cols. 69-100, Sarawak Museum Archives.

69. *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 December 1962, p. 1.

70. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1963*, Table 1A.

71. *Sabah Times*, Jesselton, 28 December 1963, in J. M. van der Kroef, 'Chinese Minority Aspirations and Problems in Sarawak', *Pacific Affairs*, 39, 1-2 (Spring-Summer 1966): 68.

72. SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 15.

73. SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 16; *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 August 1960, p. 1.

74. *Sarawak Tribune*, 12 August 1960, p. 1.

75. The 'Malay' unions were the Kuching Municipal Labourers' Union, the Public Works Department Daily Paid Workers' Union, and the Kuching Seamen's Union (SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 16).

76. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 5 July 1961, p. 5; SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 19.
77. Trade Unions and Trade Disputes (Amendment) Ordinance, 1958. This Ordinance also prohibited school pupils under 20 years old from striking.
78. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 24 April 1962, p. 11.
79. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 7 May 1962, p. 7; *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 May 1962, p. 1. The Deputy Chief Secretary claimed that 55 per cent of the First Division TUC executives were communists.
80. A total of forty-nine arrests of known and suspected communists were made between 11 and 16 December 1962 (*Sarawak Tribune*, 19 December 1962, p. 8).
81. SIS, *The Danger Within*, pp. 17-18.
82. 'Communism and the Farmers', in *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 November 1961, p. 1.
83. *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 November 1961, p. 1.
84. SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 21.
85. The Third Meeting of the Third Session of the Third Council Negri, 7 August 1961, cols. 9-11, Sarawak Museum Archives.
86. *Sarawak Tribune*, 17 August 1961, p. 1.
87. 'Communism and the Farmers', in *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 November 1961, p. 1.
88. SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 22.
89. CCO document, in SIS, *The Danger Within*, pp. 25-7.
90. J. M. van der Kroef, 'Communism and Chinese Communalism in Sarawak', *China Quarterly*, 20 (October-December 1964): 43.
91. CCO, 'Conclusive Report on the Political Party during the Past Year', 20 August 1960, in SIS, *The Danger Within*, pp. 29-31.
92. *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 October 1961, p. 1; 18 October 1961, p. 5.
93. According to Leigh, the SUPP side of the issue has not been adequately aired (M. B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 21).
94. *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 June 1962, p. 1. The arrests were under Section 5 of the Undesirable Persons Ordinance, the Deportation Orders applying to persons not born in Sarawak.
95. Wen became the head of the Overseas Section in China and Wong took over command of CCO armed insurrection in the First and Second Divisions from the mid-1960s.
96. *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 June 1962, p. 1; 30 June 1962, p. 4.
97. *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 December 1962, p. 8. Forty-nine CCO members were arrested as security risks under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance, including the fifteen SUPP members.
98. *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 December 1962, p. 8; 21 June 1963, p. 1.
99. 'A Who's Who of the Border Crossers and Other Wanted Persons', in *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 June 1964, pp. 7-8 and 11. Most of those listed were SUPP members.
100. The CCO is thought to have warned its younger members and sympathizers to hide or escape to avoid imminent arrest (Douglas Hyde, *Confrontation in the East*, London: Bodley Head, 1965, p. 67).
101. *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 June 1963, p. 1; J. M. van der Kroef, 'Communism in Sarawak Today', *Asian Survey*, 6, 10 (October 1966): 574.
102. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 30 March 1963, p. 8.
103. *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 August 1963, p. 2.

104. SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 32.
105. *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 August 1963, p. 1.
106. SIS, *The Danger Within*, pp. 33-8.
107. *Democracy* was produced in booklet form that rarely exceeded thirty pages.
108. Van der Kroef wrote that according to the government publication, *Sarawak by the Week*, possession of Marxist or Communist literature meant one was 'beyond doubt a Communist' (Van der Kroef, 'Communism and Chinese Communalism in Sarawak', p. 53).
109. *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 September 1959, p. 1; 19 September 1959, p. 1.
110. For a typical case, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 September 1961, p. 1.
111. The Court of Appeal quashed the conviction of three young Sibn Foochow of being members and assisting in the management of an unlawful society (*Sarawak Tribune*, 14 July 1962, p. 2).
112. SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 37.
113. SUPP Publicity Section head, Wen Min Chuan, was arrested on 22 June 1962 and elected to go to China. *Hsiang Tao* editor, Choo Yun Hui (also known as Chu Wu Wai) was sentenced to nine months imprisonment, but disappeared after his appeal was dismissed in 1963 (*Sarawak Tribune*, 23 June 1962, p. 1; 21 September 1962, p. 1; 8 November 1962, p. 1; 11 June 1964, p. 7).
114. Attorney-General to the Colonial Office, 9 February 1952, CO 1022/30, PRO.
115. Full details of these discussions are given in Colonial Office File CO 1022/340, PRO.
116. The Local Newspapers Ordinance, 1958, also included some control over the collection and publication of news (*Sarawak Government, Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 82; *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 October 1962, p. 8).
117. SIS, *The Danger Within*, p. 37.
118. The *Sin Wen Pao* had a daily circulation of 2,000 in 1962, the *Min Chong Pao* 2,700, and the *Sa Min Pao* 1,200.
119. *Sarawak Tribune*, 9 June 1962, p. 1.
120. *Sin Wen Pao* editor, Wen Min Chuan, mentioned earlier, was arrested on 23 June 1962 and opted to return to China. *Min Chong Pao* editor, Teo Yung Kiaw, and *Sa Min Pao* editor, Lui How Ming, were arrested on 23 July 1962 (*Sarawak Tribune*, 23 June 1962, p. 1; 24 July 1962, p. 1).
121. The *Sin Wen Pao's* new editor, Bong Siong Min, was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment for publishing seditious articles (*Sarawak Tribune*, 1 October 1962, p. 8; 8 November 1962, p. 1).
122. *Sarawak Tribune*, 29 September 1962, p. 5.
123. *Sarawak Tribune*, 12 December 1962, p. 1; 13 December 1962, p. 1; 19 December 1962, p. 8.
124. 'Dickson Diaries and Papers', 19 December 1958, MSS Pac. s. 100, RHL.
125. There was also a list of banned publications. Examining every publication individually was not deemed practical and led to the blanket bans (*Sarawak Tribune*, 20 February 1960, p. 1).
126. *Sarawak Government, 'Subversion in Sarawak', Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1960*, p. 4. In 1959, about 200,000 periodicals, books, and magazines entered Sarawak.
127. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 March 1960, p. 1.
128. Singapore publications banned were from the Barisan Socialis, the National Union of Journalists, the Nanyang University, the Partai Rakyat, and the Malayan Socialist Front.

129. *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 July 1960, p. 1; 23 August 1960, p. 1.

130. Malcolm MacDonald held talks with the French Acting High Commissioner for Indo-China to strengthen Anglo-French collaboration against communism (*Sarawak Tribune*, 27 February 1952, p. 3).

131. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 24 September 1960, p. 6; 4 February 1961, p. 5.

132. Appendix 10 covers the Fu Tze Man deportation trials.

133. Tan Chong Meng, member of the Council Negri, felt that 'some people [had] used it [Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1960] as an excuse to indulge in fanning the wind of narrow racialism' (Second Meeting of the Second Session of the Third Council Negri, 19 August 1960, col. 110, Sarawak Museum Archives).

## The Formation of Malaysia

AFTER the plans for a Borneo federation had collapsed due to Brunei being granted internal self-government on 29 September 1959,<sup>1</sup> British attention turned to forming a federation of North Borneo and Sarawak.<sup>2</sup> The only positive outcome was an interstate free trade agreement effective from January 1962.<sup>3</sup> Debate on a Borneo federation was revived on 27 May 1961 when the Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, introduced the Malaysia concept.<sup>4</sup> Party Pesaka Anak Sarawak (PANAS) favoured resolving the problems of bringing all three Borneo territories together first, the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) preferred closer association with North Borneo first, and the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) wanted complete independence.<sup>5</sup> The British High Commissioner in Brunei and the Governors of North Borneo and Sarawak all recommended closer association among the three Borneo territories before joining a Malaysian confederation.<sup>6</sup> Although Brunei's relations with Malaya were strained at this time, the Sultan's continuing concerns over loss of sovereignty and wealth sharing precluded a Borneo federation.<sup>7</sup>

Malaysia quickly became the major political topic. After the British government cautiously welcomed the concept,<sup>8</sup> the colonial administration's attention was turned to bringing it to fruition. Delegates from Brunei, Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak, and Singapore attending a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) conference in Singapore in July 1961 decided to set up a Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Council.<sup>9</sup> At the Council's second meeting in Kuching, 17–20 December 1961, to counter the smaller territories' fear of domination, Malaya offered state control over immigration and the state civil service, religious freedom, and weighted representation in the Federal Parliament.<sup>10</sup> All the delegates were in favour of Malaysia and the Borneo delegates called for more detailed proposals so that the plan could be put before their people.<sup>11</sup> At its fourth and final meeting in Singapore on 1 February 1962, the Memorandum on Malaysia approving the Malaysia plan was signed.<sup>12</sup> A Sarawak delegate, Yeo Cheng Ho,

told the meeting that the people in the Borneo states were divided over Malaysia and that too hasty an introduction could be as divisive as the 'unhappy episode in Sarawak when the Rajah ceded the country to the British government'.<sup>13</sup>

Malaya moved quickly after proposing the Malaysia plan in May 1961. PANAS support, which was secured in July by an assurance that Sarawak would maintain her full independent status as a state in Malaysia, was consolidated a month later when several of its leaders met Tunku Abdul Rahman when he was touring Malaya to view development projects.<sup>14</sup> After this success, the Federal government sponsored guided tours of Malaya to see rural development schemes and meet Malayan political leaders socially. These became a regular feature in Malaya's campaign to promote Malaysia.<sup>15</sup> Both Singapore and Malaya promoted Malaysia as the only way to counter communism, which by then had made extensive inroads into Chinese education, the SUPP, and the trade union movement.<sup>16</sup> However, neither SNAP nor the SUPP had been won over by the end of 1961. Indonesian affiliations were reflected in a letter to the *Sarawak Tribune* in August which suggested considering a merger with Indonesia.<sup>17</sup> Four months later, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) condemned Malaysia as a colonial intrigue that Indonesia would help Sarawak to resist.<sup>18</sup> By then, Britain and Malaya had agreed to appoint a Commission to assess the views of the people of North Borneo and Sarawak on Malaysia and thus legitimize any decision on their future.<sup>19</sup>

In January 1962, the Sarawak government issued a document recording the British and Malayan governments' agreement that forming Malaysia was a desirable aim and explaining in simple terms its advantages for Sarawak.<sup>20</sup> According to the document, Malaysia offered the best chance Britain had of 'fulfilling its responsibility to guide the Borneo territories to self-government in conditions that will guard them against dangers from any quarter' providing satisfactory merger terms were negotiated. The document suggested that otherwise Sarawak could be left with 'no other alternative than a perilous existence as a small, defenceless country in a large and predatory world'. Also in January, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations appointed the members of the Cobbold Commission, the Commission of Inquiry decided upon in November and named after its chairman, Lord Cobbold.<sup>21</sup> Prophetically *The Times* of London doubted if the Commission could 'swiftly fashion any formula for the future acceptable to all interests in this underdeveloped multi-racial country'.<sup>22</sup>

The Commission arrived in Kuching on 19 February 1962 for a two-month visit to Sarawak and North Borneo. A wide spectrum of people were interviewed, including political leaders, local authority delegations, traditional leaders, kampung groups, delegates from communal organizations, and trade union officials.<sup>23</sup> Meetings were held in camera, but factional anti-Malaysia feelings were made very public by demonstrations and posters.<sup>24</sup> Pre-empting the publication of the Commission's report by two months, Tunku Abdul Rahman announced in June that it showed a majority in favour of Malaysia.<sup>25</sup> Actual report findings were that one-third of the population in both North Borneo and Sarawak strongly favoured Malaysia, another third favoured Malaysia provided there were adequate safeguards, and the remaining third favoured independence before Malaysia or continued British rule for some years.<sup>26</sup> The report said that a hard core of about 30 per cent of Sarawak's population would remain opposed to Malaysia unless it was preceded by independence and self-government. Suggestions were made on religion, national language, immigration, Borneanization, land, the judiciary, citizenship, representation, the public service, division of state and federal powers, and the Federal Constitution. The only real divergence between the Commission's British and Malayan members was the timetable for change, the Malayan group calling for the earliest possible action. Based on the Commission's favourable report, Britain and Malaya signed an agreement that Malaysia would be established on 31 August 1963.<sup>27</sup> Only final legitimization remained.

The anti-Malaysia SUPP with the Partai Rakyat Brunei (PRB) and the United National Pasok Momgum Organization of North Borneo formed the Anti-Malaysia Alliance in September 1962.<sup>28</sup> The Alliance sent a joint memorandum to the UN calling for intervention or a plebiscite in the projected transfer of sovereignty of North Borneo and Sarawak, and the SUPP called for a referendum in Sarawak on Malaysia.<sup>29</sup> However, the SUPP was losing any semblance of a multiracial party as it lost Malay and Iban members to the new communal parties, Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BAR-JASA) and Party Pesaka Anak Sarawak (PESAKA). More seriously, it was losing any remaining rapport with its moderate members and the government as the inability of its executives to control growing communist infiltration unfolded.<sup>30</sup> It was left to the government in the wake of the Brunei uprising to take action against communist infiltration of the SUPP.

*The Inter-Governmental Committee*

To complete the legitimization of Malaysia, in August 1962 the Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) was formed to negotiate constitutional safeguards for North Borneo and Sarawak within Malaysia. Its Chairman, Lord Lansdowne,<sup>31</sup> and Vice-Chairman Tun Abdul Razak, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaya, met community and political leaders and senior civil servants in Kuching on 19 August 1962 to enable points of concern to be raised.<sup>32</sup> BARJASA's call for Native privileges in Sarawak similar to those in Malaya could hardly be refused.<sup>33</sup> As already noted, expatriate administrative officers in Sarawak played a role in forming political opinions and their view on Malaysia is possibly epitomized in a letter between two Residents at the time—grave concern but support in the absence of a viable alternative.<sup>34</sup> With Sarawak represented by the Supreme Council, the IGC held its inaugural meeting in Jesselton on 30 August,<sup>35</sup> completing its draft report in December shortly after the Brunei uprising broke out.

The terms on which Sarawak was prepared to join Malaysia were published in the IGC report on 27 February 1963.<sup>36</sup> These generally favourable conditions were negotiated by Sarawak's three most senior expatriate civil servants and five prominent citizens in the plenary sessions of the IGC.<sup>37</sup> Twenty-four seats of the 159 in the Federal House of Representatives were allocated to Sarawak, the largest number for any single state in Malaysia.<sup>38</sup> State control was retained over agriculture, education, forestry, immigration, land, local government, local public services, and Muslim and Native law. The Supreme Council and the Council Negri retained their names and the judiciary of the Borneo states retained its structure, apart from the Federal Supreme Court replacing the Borneo Court of Appeal. Indigenous peoples were granted the same privileges as those given to Malays on the peninsula and English was to remain the state's official language until the Council Negri decided otherwise. State revenue would accrue from export duty on petroleum products, timber and minerals, and other local charges; an annual balancing grant based on the 1963 state accounts; and a special grant for continued expansion of state services and infrastructure.<sup>39</sup>

There were less favourable clauses. Clause 30 (2) enabled a two-thirds majority of the Federal Houses of Parliament to bring Sarawak into line with the states on the peninsula, subject to the Sarawak government's consent where required.<sup>40</sup> In short, with a



pliant state government, the safeguards could be removed virtually at will. Under Clause 33, any serious opposition to the Federal government could be dealt with by a proclamation of emergency, enabling Parliament to make any laws that appeared to be required because of the emergency. This overruled anything in the Constitution and excluded only citizenship, language, Muslim and Native laws and customs, and religion. Nor did the IGC report include any means for Sarawak to secede from Malaysia.<sup>41</sup> During the Council Negri debate on the IGC report, there were a call for a plebiscite, a suggestion that an internationally experienced constitutional expert should be engaged to ensure Sarawak would enter Malaysia as an equal partner, and a comment that the report clearly revealed Sarawak would never achieve full independence since power would be transferred from London to Kuala Lumpur.<sup>42</sup> However, after speeches of assurance by government officials, the generally held view that there was no satisfactory alternative to Malaysia prevailed, and on 8 March 1963 the Council Negri unanimously accepted the IGC recommendations.

### *Political Party Platforms on Malaysia*

When formed on 31 January 1963, the Sarawak Alliance included all Sarawak's political parties apart from the SUPP, although PANAS withdrew after three months over the issue of the number of Council Negri seats it should be allocated after the 1963 elections.<sup>43</sup> Reflecting government support, Radio Sarawak's political correspondent wrote that the prime task of the Alliance was to draw up its manifesto quickly because its chances of becoming Sarawak's future government were overwhelming.<sup>44</sup> Finally published on 4 June some two weeks before elections began, the main points of the Alliance manifesto were a pro-Malaysia stand, opposition to communism and belief in democracy, the need for a neutral civil service, and the aim to expand social services and encourage economic development.<sup>45</sup> SNAP issued its own policy statement, promising to work for the welfare of the people, solve the unemployment problems, and distribute land to those willing to farm it.<sup>46</sup> The election manifesto of the independent pro-Malaysia PANAS included Borneanization of the civil service, raising the standard of living, and promoting economic development.<sup>47</sup> The SUPP election statement reiterated its opposition to Malaysia, saying that sovereignty would be transferred to the Federation and not to the people of Sarawak to whom it belonged.<sup>48</sup> Its stated aim

was to create a 'democratic, free, equal and happy society' and to remedy economic disparities through a programme of development based on socialism. Thus the electorate had two political choices, the anti-Malaysia socialist policies of the SUPP or the pro-Malaysia, anti-communist policies of the Alliance and PANAS, in addition to communal factional choice of individual parties.

### *The June 1963 Elections*

To provide Sarawak with a ministerial government before Malaysia was formed, further constitutional reforms were sought from the British government on 9 March 1963. Further, as many of the educated Natives were government employees, the government decided to allow civil servants to stand for election without loss of service or benefits.<sup>49</sup> The Sarawak Alliance was weakened to some extent by the withdrawal of PANAS and the post-electoral bargaining position of PANAS was not improved as the Malayan Alliance Party declared that, as it was a breakaway party, Tunku Abdul Rahman could not be expected to support it.<sup>50</sup>

The Council Negri was dissolved on 1 June 1963 in preparation for the general elections on 18 June. At the first stage of the three-tier electoral system, elections to the District and Urban District Councils, seventy-three candidates were returned unopposed. The remaining 356 seats were contested by 993 candidates, made up of 108 PANAS members, 205 SUPP members, 272 Alliance members, and 413 independent candidates.<sup>51</sup> Voting for the political parties was on communal lines, with a large number of independents in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Divisions voted in by their personal supporters.<sup>52</sup> The election results were not decisive as the Alliance won 32 per cent of the local Council seats compared with 14 per cent won by PANAS, 27 per cent by the SUPP, and 27 per cent by the Independents. In order to secure control of sufficient District Councils and return a majority to the Council Negri through the three-tier system of District Council to Divisional Advisory Council to Council Negri, obtaining the support of Independents then became crucial to all parties.<sup>53</sup> After considerable manoeuvring and intrigue, the Alliance gained control of thirteen District Councils and a pragmatic compact between PANAS and the SUPP secured control of nine District Councils.<sup>54</sup> PANAS was accused of selling out to the Chinese in a repeat of the 1946 cession issue when some Malays were said to have sold out to the British, a pointed reference to the Datu Bandar's role in each

TABLE 6.1  
Relative Representation of Political Parties at All Government Levels, 1963 (per cent)

<i>Level of Government</i>	<i>Sarawak Alliance</i>				<i>PANAS</i>	<i>SUPP</i>	<i>Independents</i>
	<i>BARJASA</i>	<i>PESAKA</i>	<i>SCA</i>	<i>SNAP</i>			
Federal							
Parliament	20.8	25.0	12.5	16.7	12.5	12.5	—
Council							
Negri	15.4	28.2	7.7	17.9	12.8	12.8	5.2
Divisional Advisory							
Council	13.0	16.0	1.0	23.0	13.0	23.0	11.0
District Council							
July 1963	17.1	14.3	1.2	17.1	14.7	28.7	6.9
District Council							
June 1963	10.3	10.0	0.7	11.2	13.8	27.0	27.0
Votes cast in 1963 elections	(For Sarawak Alliance, 'total' 34.2%)				14.3	21.4	30.1

Source: M. B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 78.

Note: The Council Negri figures are made up of the thirty-six elected members and the three members nominated by the Chief Minister.

event.<sup>55</sup> By 15 July, twenty-three Alliance members, five PANAS members, five SUPP members and six Independents had been elected to the Council Negri. The Alliance was represented in the Council Negri by eleven members from PESAKA, six from SNAP, six from BARJASA, and three from the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA).

The large majority of the Sarawak Alliance in the Council Negri from only 32 per cent of local council seats was the result of the distortions of the three-tier electoral system. In terms of representation on the Council Negri, this devalued electorate votes for the SUPP by 50 per cent and enhanced those for PESAKA by 50 per cent (Table 6.1).<sup>56</sup> The first Chief Minister, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, also the Secretary-General of the Sarawak Alliance and SNAP, was unanimously elected by the Sarawak Alliance on 18 July. In turn, the Governor in Council appointed five Council Negri members recommended by the Alliance to the Supreme Council, giving Sarawak its own elected executive for the first time.<sup>57</sup> Noticeably the election system failed to appoint any Malay (17 per cent of the population) or any Bidayuh (8 per cent of the population) to the Supreme Council.<sup>58</sup> The other political reward, the twenty-four seats allocated to Sarawak in the Federal Parliament, were divided proportionally to the number of seats each party held in the Council Negri, giving both PANAS and the SUPP representation in the Federal Parliament.<sup>59</sup>

### *The United Nations Inquiry, August 1963*

The new Supreme Council met for the first time on 26 July 1963 under the chairmanship of the last British Governor, Sir Alexander Waddell. By this time a decision to form Malaysia by 31 August had been reached and recorded in the Malaysia Agreement signed by the representatives of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Federation of Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak, and Singapore in London.<sup>60</sup> To appease the Indonesian and Philippine governments, under the Manila Joint Statement of 5 August the new Supreme Council made arrangements for a United Nations (UN) mission to visit and determine the wishes of the people of North Borneo and Sarawak on Malaysia by 'a fresh approach', taking into account the validity or otherwise of the elections.<sup>61</sup> The UN nine-man team arrived in Kuching on 16 August and was greeted by crowds shouting anti-Malaysia slogans and displaying anti-Malaysia posters.<sup>62</sup> Hearings were held in Kuching, Bau, Serian, Sibu, Kanowit, Bintulu, Miri, and Limbang; hostile street

receptions were encountered at all centres with only two exceptions, Kanowit and Bintulu.<sup>63</sup> After a week-long squabble between Sarawak and Indonesia over the number of Indonesians to be allowed into Sarawak to witness the UN team at work, the Indonesian and Philippine observers finally arrived on 1 September.<sup>64</sup> So that the UN team could complete its task, the date for the formation of Malaysia was postponed from 31 August to 16 September, enabling the UN team to attend the inaugural meeting of the first elected Council Negri on 4 September.<sup>65</sup> On the following day, after a lengthy debate, the Council endorsed the Malaysia Agreement with thirty-one votes in favour and five dissenting votes registered by SUPP members. The UN Secretary-General issued his findings that there was 'no doubt about the wishes of a sizeable majority of the peoples of these territories to join in the Federation of Malaysia' on 14 September.<sup>66</sup> Who should be the Governor still had to be decided.

### *The Governor Controversy*

While accounts of the controversy over the appointment of the Governor differ, records indicate that the Sarawak Alliance nominated Temenggong Jugah as its first head of state at the behest of the Malayan Alliance.<sup>67</sup> This was the prerogative of the Yang di-Pertuan Agung (the king of Malaya) and the British sovereign under the Malaysia Agreement, and on 7 September Tunku Abdul Rahman advised the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) that the Sarawak Alliance nomination was not acceptable.<sup>68</sup> He claimed that it contravened an unwritten agreement that the first Governor should be a Malay if the Chief Minister was a Dayak, adding that Temenggong Jugah's lack of literacy was another obstacle.<sup>69</sup> After a flurry of very difficult negotiations, Temenggong Jugah was persuaded to step aside and a compromise was finally reached on 13 September. The British Commonwealth and Colonial Secretary, Duncan Sandys, Tunku Abdul Rahman, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, and Temenggong Jugah issued a joint statement under which a well-known Malay, Dato Abang Haji Openg, was appointed Governor and the post of Minister for Sarawak Affairs, resident in Sarawak, was created specially for Temenggong Jugah.<sup>70</sup> This cleared the last obstacle in Sarawak to the formation of Malaysia but Indonesian opposition to Sarawak's participation remained.

### Konfrontasi: *Indonesia's Opposition to the Formation of Malaysia*

After the West Irian problem was resolved in Indonesia's favour in August 1962<sup>71</sup> and it became apparent that the British and Malayan governments were intent on forming Malaysia, Indonesia began its anti-Malaysia campaign supported by the PKI, the Indonesian communist party.<sup>72</sup> Timely for the Indonesian campaign, young Chinese communists, communist sympathizers, and left-wing SUPP members who had fled from Sarawak to escape detention during the Brunei uprising provided new recruits for the Tentara Nasional Kalimantan Utara (TNKU).<sup>73</sup> Indonesia officially declared its opposition to Malaysia on 13 February 1963 and set up a powerful radio station, the Voice of Freedom Fighters of Kalimantan Utara, to propagate anti-Malaysia propaganda to the Borneo states.<sup>74</sup> Faced with growing border tension and reported sightings of Indonesian volunteers carrying Russian arms, troops from the British Special Air Services Regiment were deployed in West Sarawak and an army camp was built near Kuching.<sup>75</sup> Armed *konfrontasi* began on 12 April when about thirty intruders from Kalimantan overran the Tebedu police station in the First Division, killing a police corporal, wounding two policemen, and taking the station's weapons.<sup>76</sup> British troop reserves and the helicopter-equipped 846 Royal Naval Squadron were sent to Kuching to provide a quick military response to any future border raids similar to the one at Tebedu.

Captured Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) documents indicating that the communists were preparing for armed struggle in the countryside intensified concerns over the border situation.<sup>77</sup> The government had already called in all unlicensed weapons and ammunition in the First Division during the Brunei uprising, but took further pre-emptive action by calling in all licensed firearms held by non-Natives in the First, Second, and much of the Third Divisions in April.<sup>78</sup> This and the increased presence of security forces forced the CCO to transfer its training to Indonesia, increasing the flow of young left-wing Chinese to Kalimantan.<sup>79</sup> By Malaysia Day, thirty-three intrusions, spread along the entire Sarawak border with Kalimantan, had been recorded in the Security Forces Incident Log, ten involving ten or more intruders (Table 6.2). Although the incursions were only reconnaissance and probing raids to set up guerrilla bases, seven battalions of security forces had to be deployed to protect the

TABLE 6.2  
Border Intrusions during *Konfrontasi*, 12 April-16 September 1963

<i>Number</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>No. of Intruders</i>	<i>Details</i>
1	Tebedu 1st Division	12 April	75	Police station overrun; 1 SF killed and 2 wounded.
2	Gumbang 1st Division	23 April	10	2 TNI killed; 3 wounded.
3	Pang Ampat 1st Division	4 June		Flare ignited.
4	Ensawang 2nd Division	6 June	8	1 Iban and 1 SF wounded.
5	Wong Panjoi 1st Division	17 June	30	Voice aircraft caused their retreat.
6	Kampung Enteboh 1st Division	20 June		Grenade thrown at police station; 3 shots fired.
7	Kandai-Panchau Area 1st Division	3 July	4	SF ambush; 1 Indonesian killed.
8	Sungei Tapang 2nd Division	4 July	25	Iban longhouse raided.
9	Sungei Puting Lulu 2nd Division	6 July	20	1 Indonesian and one civilian killed.

10	Kampung Silik 2nd Division	8 July	2	1 Indonesian killed and one wounded.
11	Gua 2nd Division	4 Aug.	10	SF ambush; no casualties.
12	Tinting Lalang 2nd Division	8 Aug.	15	Contact with TNKU; no casualties.
13	Song District 3rd Division	8 Aug.	70	1 SF officer killed; 15 Indonesians killed, and 3 captured.
14	Tinting Lalang 3rd Division	9 Aug.	6	1 Indonesian wounded.
15	Kapit 3rd Division	9 Aug.	9	SF ambush; 1 Indonesian wounded.
16	Lubok Antu 2nd Division	10 Aug.	-	SF patrol opened fire on intruders.
17	Tebakang 1st Division	10 Aug.	3	Exchange of fire with unidentified persons.
18	Gumbang 1st Division	13 Aug.	35	15-minute engagement and exchange of fire.
19	Stass 1st Division	15 Aug.	1	SF booby traps interfered with.

(continued)



TABLE 6.2 (*continued*)

<i>Number</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>No. of Intruders</i>	<i>Details</i>
20	Long Lopeng 5th Division	19 Aug.	26	1 SF killed; 1 wounded; and 6 ex-TNKU captured in follow-up operation.
21	Long Akah 4th Division	20 Aug.	1	Oyong Usat from Muljono's party captured.
22	Gumbang 1st Division	21 Aug.	8	Observed approaching, exchange of fire.
23	Gumbang 1st Division	22/23 Aug.	30-40	1 SF wounded; 5 Indonesians reported killed.
24	Gumbang 1st Division	22 Aug.	2	Exchange of fire.
25	Gumbang 1st Division	23 Aug.	3	Exchange of fire.
26	Pang Tebang 1st Division	23/24 Aug.	-	Exchange of fire.
27	Long Lopeng 5th Division	25 Aug.	3	3 members of Long Bawan party captured.
28	Long Merarap 5th Division	26 Aug.	2-3	Exchange of fire.
29	NE of Stass 1st Division	30 Aug.	3	2 killed and 1 wounded by SF during curfew.

30	Sungei Angkuah 3rd Division	2 Sept.	6	SF ambushed; SF killed 6; 1 SF wounded.
31	Sungei Angkuah 3rd Division	3 Sept.	2	SF killed 2 intruders and captured 1.
32	Sungei Angkuah 3rd Division	4 Sept.	1	1 Indonesian captured.
33	Kiek (near Stass) 1st Division	7 Sept.	-	Body of Indonesian found; tortured, with TNKU leaflets on body.
34	Kuching 1st Division	14 Sept.	1	Grenade thrown at SF personnel in open air market; no casualties.

*Source:* Extracts from the Incident Log compiled by the Security Forces, Malaysian Government, Department of Information, *Indonesian Involvement in Eastern Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Public Printers 1965, Appendix II, Part One, pp. 47-51.

*Note:* SF is an abbreviation for Security Forces. TNI is the *Tentera Nasional Indonesia* (the Indonesian Regular Army).

1600 kilometre border of Sarawak and North Borneo with Kalimantan.<sup>80</sup> In addition, Border Scouts were recruited from 20 May to provide early warning of incursions and Natives with licensed firearms in the First and Second Division curfew zones were given ten rounds of buckshot to protect their own kampungs and people.<sup>81</sup> While the British security forces were dealing with the military outfall of the Malaysia plan, the political outfall was being waged in a political battle between Malaya, Indonesia, and the Philippines, a battle that continued until the Bangkok Accord of 1966.<sup>82</sup>

### *Political Conclusion to the Colonial Period*

In the seventeen years of British colonial rule, Sarawak had been transformed from the independent sovereign state of the Brookes to a constituent state in the Federation of Malaysia, with its own elected state ministerial government, control over its own internal affairs, and a voice in Federal matters. Although the immediate post-World War II 'MacDonald' plan for Sarawak was eventually brought to fruition through the formation of Malaysia, a legacy of unresolved political problems remained. Communist subversion, communal tensions manifested in the make-up of the political parties, and Indonesian military opposition along the border presented formidable obstacles for the new state. The onus of implementing political solutions fell upon the administrative arms of government and, as will be seen, these had also been subject to substantial change and restructuring during the colonial era.

1. Brunei Government, *Annual Report on Brunei, 1959*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, pp. i and 203.

2. *Borneo Bulletin*, 24 September 1960, and *North Borneo News and Sabah Times*, 8 December 1960, in D. S. Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 155.

3. Sarawak Government, 'Borneo Free Trade Area Agreement, 1961', Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1961 (*Sarawak Tribune*, 1 December 1961, p. 1).

4. The Tunku said Malaya could not stand alone and there had to be an understanding with Britain, Singapore, North Borneo, Brunei, and Sarawak (*Straits Times* (Singapore), 29 May 1961, p. 1).

5. *Sarawak Tribune*, 31 May 1961, p. 1; 24 June 1961, p. 1.

6. A joint statement was issued after discussions with the British Commissioner-General for South-East Asia, Lord Selkirk (*Sarawak Tribune*, 29 June 1961, p. 3).

7. Friction developed between seconded Malayan personnel and Bruneians (*North Borneo News and Sabah Times*, 1 July 1961; 7 July 1961; 15 July 1961; in Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983*, pp. 157-9).
8. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 21 June 1961, p. 1).
9. Sarawak CPA representatives were Yeo Cheng Ho, William Geikie, and Ainnie bin Dhobie (*Straits Times* (Singapore), 28 July 1961, p. 1).
10. *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 December 1961, p. 1; 21 December 1961, p. 1.
11. CPA nominees were Council Negri members Yeo Cheng Hoe (SUPP), Temenggong Jugah (PANAS), Pengarah Montegrai, Ong Kee Hui (SUPP Chairman), Datu Abang Haji Openg, Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, James Wong, Remigius Durin (PANAS), and Ling Beng Siew. Illness prevented the Datu Bandar, Abang Mustapha (PANAS Chairman), from attending (*Sarawak Tribune*, 21 December 1961, p. 1).
12. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 14 February 1962, p. 4.
13. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 2 February 1962, p. 11.
14. *Sarawak Tribune*, 12 July 1961, p. 1; 26 August 1961, p. 1.
15. *Sarawak Tribune*, 26 August 1961, p. 1; *Straits Times* (Singapore), 5 September 1961, p. 16.
16. Sarawak Government, 'Subversion in Sarawak', Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1960; *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 December 1961, p. 1; *Straits Times* (Singapore), 18 November 1961, p. 1.
17. M. Sallehuddin wrote that the Chinese and Dayaks feared Malays would reap the most benefits and most of Sarawak's Native peoples were of Indonesian origin (*Sarawak Tribune*, 5 August 1961, p. 2).
18. Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *Twenty Years of Indonesian Foreign Policy, 1945-1965*, The Hague: Mouton, 1973, p. 455.
19. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 30 November 1961, p. 7; *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 November 1961, p. 1.
20. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1247 (31 January 1962): 9; *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 January 1962, p. 1.
21. *The Times* (London), 19 January 1962, p. 7. The Commission comprised Lord Cobbold, former Bank of England Governor; Anthony Abell, former Sarawak Governor; David Watherston, former Chief Secretary of the Federation of Malaya; Wong Pow Nee, Chief Minister of Penang; and Muhammad Ghazali bin Shafie, Permanent Secretary to the Minister of External Affairs of the Federation of Malaya.
22. *The Times* (London), 22 January 1962, p. 11.
23. For a typical Commission meeting with the public, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 March 1962, p. 1.
24. Over 650 anti-Malaysia posters were displayed along the Serian Road (*Sarawak Tribune*, 26 February 1962, p. 1).
25. *The Times* (London), 29 June 1962, p. 10.
26. White Paper (Cmd. 1794), *Report of the Commission of Enquiry, North Borneo and Sarawak, 1962* (Cobbold Report), London: HMSO, 21 June 1962, para. 144; *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 August 1962, p. 5.
27. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 1 August 1962, p. 1; 2 August 1962, p. 11.
28. *Borneo Bulletin*, 15 September 1962, in Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983*, p. 170.
29. Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad (ed.), *The People's Party of Brunei: Selected Documents*, Petaling Jaya: Institute of Social Analysis, 1987, pp. 30 and 168-78; *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 October 1962, p. 1; 31 October 1962, p. 2.

30. *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 June 1962, p. 3; 28 July 1962, p. 1; 7 November 1962, p. 1.

31. For a brief on Lord Lansdowne, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 8 August 1962, p. 3.

32. Cobbold Commission recommendations set the agenda to a large degree for submissions.

33. Fruitless requests were SUPP's call for a UN plebiscite; SNAP's desire for the position of Yang di-Pertuan Agong (sovereign head of Malaysia chosen by a conference of the hereditary rulers of the states for a period of five years) to be open to Sarawak's Head of State; PESAKA's wish for an Iban as Sarawak's first Head of State; and a parliamentary majority of 90 per cent to change the Federal Constitution (*Sarawak Tribune*, 22 August 1962, p. 8; 27 August 1962, p. 1; 30 August 1962, p. 1).

34. See Appendix 4 for one Resident's view that Malaysia was inevitable.

35. The delegation members were F. D. Jakeway, OAG; P. E. H. Pike, Attorney-General; B. A. Hepburn, Financial Secretary; Datu Bandar, PANAS Chairman; Temenggong Jugah, PESAKA President; Pengarah Montegrai, SNAP; Ong Kee Hui, SUPP Chairman; and Ling Beng Siew and Chia Chin Shin, pro tem SCA Vice-Presidents. The Acting Chief Secretary, A. R. Snelus, was unable to attend. With the exception of Ong Kee Hui, who withdrew because the SUPP opposed Malaysia, and the OAG, the members of the delegation were subsequently appointed official representatives by the Council Negri (*Sarawak Tribune*, 29 August 1962, p. 1; 19 September 1962, p. 1).

36. Malayan Government, *Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee*, 1962, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1963.

37. Twenty-nine Sarawak delegates, including fourteen expatriate officers, took part in IGC plenary and committee meetings (*Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee*, 1962, pp. 30 and 72-3).

38. In the Federal House of Representatives, North Borneo was allocated sixteen seats and Singapore fifteen seats (*Malaysia Report on the Inter-Governmental Committee*, 1962, p. 27).

39. The Federal government undertook to try to achieve and make up as necessary a planned \$300 million development programme in Sarawak over the first five years of Malaysia (*Malaysia Report on the Inter-Governmental Committee*, 1962, cl. 24 (10), p. 16).

40. Subjects excluded were immigration, citizenship, religion, language, indigenous rights, representation in the Federal Parliament, and the High Court of the Borneo states.

41. Cobbold Commission recommendations excluded secession (*Sarawak Tribune*, 3 August 1962, pp. 5-7).

42. *Sarawak Tribune*, 9 March 1963, pp. 1-3 and 10.

43. For two viewpoints of this event, see Bob Reece, *Datu Bandar: Abang Hj. Mustapha of Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Kesusasteraan Sarawak, 1993, pp. 160-2; *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 May 1963, p. 1.

44. *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 January 1963, p. 3.

45. Alliance guiding principles given were country first, welfare and progress of the people, honest and fair administration, and equal opportunities for all (*Sarawak Tribune*, 4 June 1963, p. 10).

46. *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 May 1963, p. 8. SNAP had produced a thirty-nine point election pledge and manifesto in January (*Sarawak Tribune*, 22 January 1963, p. 8).

47. *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 June 1963, p. 9.

48. *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 May 1963, p. 9.

49. *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 April 1963, p. 1.
50. *Sarawak Tribune*, 29 April 1963, p. 1.
51. *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 June 1963, p. 3.
52. M. B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, pp. 56-72.
53. Control over thirteen District Councils depended on the support of Independents and in five of those Councils, the support of only one or two Independents was needed for a party to gain control.
54. Accounts of the intrigue and drama involved are given in Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, pp. 72-8; Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 101-3.
55. *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 July 1963, p. 2.
56. Table 6.1 shows the extent of distortions due to the three-tier electoral process.
57. See Appendix 6. See also the *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 July 1963, p. 1.
58. Vote-splitting rivalry between PANAS and BARJASA, and the Bidayuh decision not to form their own political party resulted in this lack of representation on the Supreme Council.
59. See Table 6.1.
60. The Malaysia Agreement was signed on 9 July 1963 by Temenggong Jugah, Chairman of the Sarawak Alliance; Datu Bandar, Abang Haji Mustapha, Chairman of PANAS; and Ling Beng Siew, Chairman of the SCA on behalf of Sarawak (*Sarawak Tribune*, 13 July 1963, p. 1).
61. This ensued from an Indonesian, Malayan, and Philippine summit conference in Manila that ended on 5 August (J. A. C. Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute, 1963-1966*, London: Oxford University Press, 1974, pp. 336-40).
62. The team was led by Laurence Michelmore (America), Deputy Director, UN Office of Personnel, and its members were Jasushi Akashi (Japan), Irshad Baqai (Pakistan), Kenneth Dadzie (Ghana), Abdul Dajani (Jordan), George Howard (Argentina), George Janecek (Czechoslovakia), Neville Kanakaratne (Ceylon), and Jose Machado (Brazil) (*Sarawak Tribune*, 14 August 1963, p. 9; 17 August 1963, p. 1).
63. The street demonstrations at Sibu and Miri turned into riots (*Sarawak Tribune*, 28 August 1963, p. 1; 30 August 1963, p. 3).
64. Eight observers from Indonesia and seven from the Philippines were finally agreed (*Sarawak Tribune*, 2 September 1963, p. 1).
65. For the names of all the thirty-six elected members and the three nominated members in the Council Negri, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 September 1963, p. 1.
66. U Thant, 'Mission to Sarawak and Sabah (North Borneo), Secretary-General's Conclusion', *United Nations Review*, 10, 9 (October 1963): 15.
67. *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 July 1963, p. 1.
68. *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 September 1963, p. 1.
69. V. Sutlive, *Tun Jugah of Sarawak: Colonialism and Iban Response*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1992, p. 190. Rural education facilities were lacking in Temenggong Jugah's youth.
70. *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 September 1963, p. 1. The overriding political motive was to retain the support of the 112,000 Third Division Ibans who made up about 22 per cent of Sarawak's population.
71. When Indonesia achieved self-rule on 27 December 1949, the future status

of West Irian was left open for future negotiation, the Dutch Government holding that it was not part of Indonesia ethnologically. With American support following years of Indonesian political pressure and threatened military action, administration of West Irian was handed over to Indonesia on 1 May 1963. The proviso that the people of West Irian be given the opportunity to exercise their right of self-determination was conducted by representative councils in July 1969, not by a referendum, leaving the decision to remain part of Indonesia open to question.

72. Ide, *Twenty Years of Indonesian Foreign Policy*, pp. 458-9.

73. *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 June 1964, p. 2; Douglas Hyde, *Confrontation in the East*, London: Bodley Head, 1965, p. 67.

74. *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 May 1963, p. 1. Two of its announcers were from Kuching, Zainuddin bin Busrah, a small trader, and Kipli, a former Customs officer said to be wanted for swindling.

75. H. James and D. Sheil-Small, *The Undeclared War: The Story of the Indonesian Confrontation, 1962-1966*, London: Leo Cooper, 1971, p. 58; *Sarawak Tribune*, 27 March 1963, p. 9.

76. *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 April 1963, p. 8. Tebedu is 4 kilometres from the Kalimantan border. British troops at Serian took three hours to cover the 50 kilometres to Tebedu due to poor roads.

77. There was ample evidence that young Chinese CCO members and sympathizers from Sarawak were working with the TNKU (*Sarawak Tribune*, 20 April 1963, p. 1; 1 May 1963, p. 1).

78. In five days of 'Operation Parrot' from 19 April 1963, local police and British troops collected 7,188 of the 8,562 licensed firearms (*Sarawak Tribune*, 20 April 1963, p. 1; 25 April 1963, p. 1).

79. Malaysian Government, Department of Information, *Indonesian Intentions towards Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1964, p. 49.

80. James and Sheil-Small, *The Undeclared War*, p. 77; Mackie, *Konfrontasi*, p. 211.

81. *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 May 1963, p. 1.

82. Mackie, *Konfrontasi*, pp. 318-22; Ide, *Twenty Years of Indonesian Foreign Policy*, pp. 444-88.

## PART II

### Restructuring of the Administrative Arms of Government



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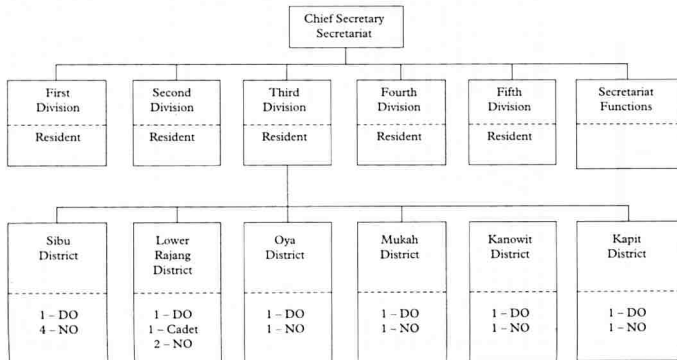
## The Administrative Service

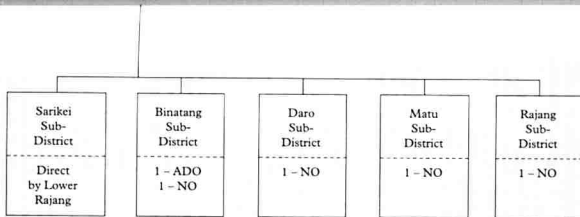
THE colonial era was one of rapid change: rapidly increasing political awareness, growing communist subversion, transition from an autocracy to a ministerial form of government, and early plans for a Borneo federation culminating in the formation of Malaysia. These changes affected all the three main administrative arms of government: the administrative service, the judiciary, and the forces of law and order. Their structures and roles had to be altered accordingly. The role of the administrative service altered dramatically from one of carrying out government policies to that of advising elected representatives. Brooke rule had already established an administrative structure and a civil service generally similar to British concepts of rule in its colonies, leaving the colonial government the task of moulding it to a changing role.

### *Development of the Administrative Structure up to 1946*

The foundation of the Brooke administrative structure can be traced back to 1476 when Sarawak became the most southern *jajahan* (district) of the Brunei empire with the status of a *kerajaan* (apanage of the sultan).<sup>1</sup> Appointed by the Sultan, the Governor of Sarawak in turn appointed Brunei *pengiran* to help him administer the apanage.<sup>2</sup> The *pengiran* exercised their authority over the local people through the Sarawak *datu*.<sup>3</sup> When the first Rajah became Governor in 1841, the *pengiran* in Sarawak were removed and the Sarawak *datu* became the Rajah's direct link with the people.<sup>4</sup> In 1843, the first Rajah initiated a formal Sarawak Civil Service (SCS) by appointing his Eurasian interpreter, Thomas Williamson, as the first Chief Secretary. By the end of the century, the Brookes had increased the size of the state from 7700 square kilometres to over 125 000 square kilometres, and the second Rajah had introduced an administrative structure of geographical Divisions with European Residents, Assistant Residents—later designated District Officers—and Cadets (Figure 7.1).<sup>5</sup> To complement the Sarawak Administrative Service (SAS), the Rajahs

FIGURE 7.1  
Structure of the Administration, 1949





Source: B. A. Hepburn, *The Handbook of Sarawak: Comprising Historical, Statistical and General Information Concerning the Colony Obtained from Official and Other Reliable Records*, Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1949, pp. 46-60.

Notes:

1. In 1949 all the Residents, the District Officers (DO), the Assistant District Officers (ADO) and the Cadets shown here were European, that is, members of the Senior Administrative Service as it was known at the time.
2. All the Native Officers (NO) were members of the Native Officers' Service and, with very few exceptions, were local Malays of the *abang* class.

3. The basic structure of administration in the Third Division shown here was common to all Divisions.
4. The administrative structure was common to Malaya and other British colonies including those in Africa.
5. The last stage in the structure, not shown here, was the direct administration of the people at 'village' level. This can be loosely defined as the *Penghulu* with immediate responsibility for the 'Dayak' longhouses in their areas, the *Tua Kampung* directly responsible for the Malay villages entrusted to them, and the *Kapitan China* responsible for the Chinese under their direct jurisdiction.

TABLE 7.1  
Listed Government Departments Excluding  
Field Administration, 1890-1947

1890	1913	1926	1940	1947
Armed Forces	Armed Forces	Agriculture Armed Forces & Prisons	Agriculture	Agriculture
-	Audit	Audit	Audit	Audit
-	-	-	Chinese Affairs & Protector of Labour	Chinese Affairs
-	Coal Mines	-	-	-
-	Constabulary & Prisons	Constabulary	Constabulary	Constabulary
-	-	-	Defence	-
-	-	-	Education	Education
-	-	-	-	Fisheries
-	-	-	Food Control	Food Control
-	-	Forestry	Forestry	Forestry
-	-	-	-	Geology
-	-	Health	-	-
-	Judiciary	Judiciary	Judiciary	-
-	-	Land	Land	Land
-	-	-	& Surveys	& Surveys
-	-	-	-	Legal
Medical	Medical & Immigration	Medical	Medical & Health	Medical & Health
-	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	-
-	Museum	Museum	Museum	Museum & Library
-	-	-	Native Affairs	-
Posts	Posts & Customs	Posts	Posts & Telegraphs	Posts & Telegraphs
-	-	Printing	Printing	Printing
-	-	-	-	Prisons
-	Public Works & Surveys	Public Works	Public Works	Public Works
-	-	-	Rubber Controller	-
-	Sarawak Gazette	-	-	-
-	-	Secretariat	Secretariat	Secretariat
-	-	-	Shipping	-
-	-	Surveys	-	-
-	-	Telecommunications	-	-
-	-	Trade & Customs	Trade & Customs	Trade & Customs
Treasury	Treasury	Treasury	Treasury	Treasury
-	Water Supply	Water Supply	-	-

Sources: Dominions Office, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List*, London: Waterlow & Sons, 1890, p. 293; 1913 p. 410; 1926, pp. 498-9; and 1940, p. 544; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 13.

Note: The departmental titles have been aligned as far as possible with their ultimate titles.

formed a Native Officers' Service drawn largely from the Kuching Malay *perabangan* (aristocracy) to provide an interface between the SAS and recognized local leaders.<sup>6</sup> Government functions were gradually extended, indicating that the generally accepted thesis of limited development of government during the Brooke era requires re-examination (Table 7.1).<sup>7</sup>

During the Japanese occupation, all the SAS officers who remained in Sarawak were interned and, as the Japanese had lost their civil affairs staff on vessels sunk off Tanjong Sipang on 23 December 1941, Sarawak was run by local personnel under the direction of a Japanese military administration board.<sup>8</sup> By appointing a number of Ibans and Malays as District Officers, the Japanese opened up the SAS to the indigenous people.<sup>9</sup> After reoccupation on 11 September 1945, the Allied military forces helped the remaining pre-war SAS officers and volunteer military officers to restore the pre-war administration structure and handed over the reins of government to the Rajah on 15 April 1946.<sup>10</sup>

### *Structure of the Administration, 1946–1963*

With the transfer of the Rajah's sovereignty to the British Crown on 1 July 1946, final authority over Sarawak was vested in the British Parliament and, more directly, in the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Overall financial, political, and operational control was exercised through a co-ordinating 'geographical department' in the Colonial Office, with a particular 'desk' that dealt with all normal business matters between the Governor of the colony and the Colonial Office.<sup>11</sup> The Governor had the delegated power of the British sovereign and was both the supreme authority in the colony and Commander-in-Chief of its armed services, although his commission could be withdrawn whenever it was deemed necessary.<sup>12</sup>

Political co-ordination between the British territories in Borneo and South-East Asia was exercised by a Commissioner-General based in Singapore, with whom the Governors of the two Borneo territories held regular conferences to discuss developments.<sup>13</sup> During the British era, a total of four governors served in Sarawak, none of whom had any previous association with Borneo.<sup>14</sup> The first, Sir Charles Arden Clarke, is associated with the development of local government and his determination to crush the anti-secession movement that resulted in the resignation of 13 per cent of the civil service. His successor, Duncan Stewart, was assassinated

TABLE 7.2  
Expenditure on Administration, 1947-1962

Year	<i>Direct Expenditure on Selected Headings (\$)</i>			Total (\$)	State Revenue (\$)	Expenditure as Percentage of Revenue	<i>Comparative Expenditure (\$)</i>	
	Governor	Adminis- tration & Clerical	Secretariat				Municipal & Local Authority	Pensions; Provident Fund; Gratuities
1947	73,735	661,642 <sup>a</sup>	91,363	826,740	12,756,358	6.48	312,368	1,077,459
1948	74,007	728,442 <sup>a</sup>	145,057	947,506	15,316,032	6.19	972,866	645,283
1949	93,595	913,489 <sup>b</sup>	184,659	1,191,743	14,673,511	8.12	593,882 <sup>c</sup>	984,110
1950	107,277	1,011,444	170,220	1,288,941	29,907,768	4.31	715,031	886,308
1951	93,119	1,752,762	370,142	2,216,023	44,093,799	5.03	896,993	927,592
1952	221,034	1,996,037	506,338	2,723,409	53,221,889	5.12	1,400,011	1,020,820
1953	128,216	2,142,949	784,856	3,056,021	42,966,299	7.11	973,474	1,207,574
1954	125,403	2,193,701	1,064,800	3,383,904	41,130,244	8.23	1,282,450	1,313,942
1955	128,472	2,447,992	1,279,098	3,855,562	49,003,354	7.87	1,586,918	1,667,165
1956	138,619	2,811,451	631,987	3,582,057	49,827,724	7.19	1,389,165	1,876,067
1957	178,690	2,628,419	705,041	3,512,150	51,543,360	6.81	2,118,780	2,251,990

1958	183,888	2,805,898	721,986	3,711,772	57,617,005	6.44	2,144,502	2,681,939
1959	162,983	2,821,963	803,250	3,788,196	68,562,381	5.53	2,260,611	2,777,672
1960	174,066	2,764,809	911,921	3,850,796	83,394,882	4.62	3,115,239	3,273,781
1961	165,405	2,879,512	962,462	4,007,379	81,475,474	4.92	3,479,091	3,175,684
1962 <sup>d</sup>	169,358	3,082,975	1,125,772	4,378,105	78,157,160	5.60	3,518,774	3,685,342

Sources: Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year, 1948-1952*, and *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953-62*.

Notes: The table is comparative rather than definitive as account headings and allocation of costs changed during the period. As an example, Municipal and Local Authority funding increased to meet their growing responsibilities and included major contributions by central government towards the cost of primary education.

<sup>a</sup>This figure is the total of Resident Offices and District Offices.

<sup>b</sup>This is the total of Resident Offices and District Offices plus the Clerical Service.

<sup>c</sup>This includes Local Treasuries, the forerunners of Local Authorities.

<sup>d</sup>All entries for 1962 are as estimated at the end of 1962.



shortly after arriving in Sarawak. Anthony Abell's period was one of constitutional reform, economic development, and growing preoccupation with controlling communism. Alexander Waddell's main concern was the smooth transfer of power to a locally born governor and an indirectly elected state government.

Under Section 3 of the Instrument of Cession signed by the Rajah and the British Representative, C. W. Dawson, on 21 May 1946, all civil servants were guaranteed continued employment and a minimum of pre-cession conditions of service. The basic structure of Sarawak's administration inherited from the Brookes remained unchanged (Table 7.2),<sup>15</sup> but within the service the rigid divisions between classifications were gradually removed and many field administrative functions were gradually handed over to local authorities. During the seventeen years of British rule, Sarawak had five Chief Secretaries, three of whom were transferred from other colonies and had no previous experience in Sarawak. The exceptions were R. G. Aikman (1950-5) and J. C. H. Barcroft who served only one month in 1958 prior to his death when visiting Limbang. Senior SAS and technical department officers were subject to transfer to Brunei from 1948 when Sarawak's Governor was also appointed the High Commissioner of Brunei, but this ceased in 1959 when administrative links were removed under the new agreement between Britain and Brunei.<sup>16</sup>

### *The Role of the Colonial Administrative Service*

In July 1946, the Colonial Administrative Service (CAS) became responsible for providing SAS officers in Sarawak who were paid from local revenue and came under state jurisdiction as public servants of the state.<sup>17</sup> Whereas the Brookes had shown a preference for young unmarried cadets and in-service training,<sup>18</sup> the Colonial Office Recruitment Division's policy was to make first appointments in the junior grades without undue emphasis on marital status.<sup>19</sup> Both the Brookes and the Colonial Office preferred to fill middle and higher grade posts by promotion or transfer within the Service. However, the Brookes were restricted to officers serving in Sarawak, whereas the Colonial Office was able to draw on officers from all British territories.

These policies were somewhat irrelevant in the immediate post-war period when there was a world-wide shortage of young graduates and personnel with colonial administrative experience.<sup>20</sup> In Sarawak the shortage of senior personnel was acute since almost

one-third of the SAS officers had been killed or had died during the war and others did not return for various reasons.<sup>21</sup> The Brooke officers and volunteers from the Australian armed forces who made up the SAS at the time of cession were absorbed into the CAS in a process lasting over two years.<sup>22</sup> Initially, the Colonial Office recruited a small number of mature personnel who had administrative experience in the armed forces, but returned to its usual practice of recruiting young university graduates as soon as they became available.<sup>23</sup> For many of the vacancies within the SAS, the Colonial Service arranged transfers from other territories. Within two years virtually all positions of power and influence in the SAS, apart from the Residencies, were held by officers who had no previous experience in Sarawak and its tradition of open offices and intimate association with the local people.<sup>24</sup>

In 1948, a House of Commons' select committee on the colonial estimates recommended that posts should be more widely advertised and qualified personnel in the colonies should be given the opportunity to apply on equal terms with Europeans.<sup>25</sup> This accorded with the Colonial Office policy of recruiting overseas staff only for posts where there were no suitable and qualified local candidates.<sup>26</sup> In Sarawak this process had already begun in 1948 with the promotion of a local officer to the Senior Service, but progress was negligible in the early 1950s due to a lack of local candidates with the requisite experience and qualifications.<sup>27</sup> The position was exacerbated by the proliferation of services requiring qualified and experienced personnel under British rule.

For the CAS and Sarawak, the reality of the late 1940s and the early 1950s was a continuing problem of unfilled administrative posts with about one in four consistently unfilled in South-East Asia.<sup>28</sup> By 1954, steps to prevent premature loss of experienced expatriate personnel and to attract new recruits as territories approached self-government became necessary. The British government therefore announced it would make a formal agreement with any territory attaining self-government to protect the conditions of service of colonial civil service officers serving there.<sup>29</sup> For this purpose, Her Majesty's Oversea Civil Service (HMOCS), which was open to all serving officers of the Colonial Service, was established on 1 October 1954.<sup>30</sup> Two years later, a special list was proposed of HMOCS members who could be seconded to colonial territories after they became self-governing, but the conditions offered were unattractive.<sup>31</sup>

### *Training of Administrative Officers*

During the Brooke and much of the colonial period, new appointees to the SAS had to rely on their support personnel and peers during their learning phase as there were no personnel training courses. Those recruited after the war by the CAS had to attend prescribed one-year courses at Cambridge, London, or Oxford universities under the Devonshire scheme.<sup>32</sup> These courses covered agriculture, anthropology, colonial and local government administration, economics, geography, history, languages, law, and sociology. A refresher course offered initially was replaced in 1954 by Overseas Services Course B, a more selective course for longer serving officers, with a content more appropriate for officers belonging to the territories themselves.<sup>33</sup> Concepts presented included the change in government functions from 'the end of *laissez-faire* of only preserving law and order' to the 'development of the Welfare State idea with all its implications'.<sup>34</sup>

Several Sarawak officers attended the course, some finding anthropology and economics relevant to Sarawak. One found the first course of little practical use apart from the language content, and one long service officer commented that the concepts of Margery Perham were of little help to Sarawak.<sup>35</sup> For younger administrative officers recruited locally, from the mid-1950s a number of short overseas courses were organized and local induction courses were arranged to teach the rudiments of administration and the structure of the service.<sup>36</sup>

### *Conditions of Service*

The Colonial Office sought standardization of service conditions in the three Borneo territories and suggested adoption of the North Borneo model that was based on conditions of service in Malaya.<sup>37</sup> However, the North Borneo salary scales were considerably lower than those in Malaya, and the Chief Secretary of Sarawak and the committee he set up in November 1946 to consider the proposals demurred.<sup>38</sup> Interim awards backdated to July 1946 were then made to the Sarawak officers to compensate for the higher cost of living after the war and the Borneo Salaries Commission, also known as the Trusted Commission, was set up in June 1947 to review conditions of service in all three Borneo territories.<sup>39</sup> Its recommendations were accepted by the Sarawak government with effect from 1 October 1948 and all thirty-four SAS officers who

were affected accepted the new conditions.<sup>40</sup> The conditions included retention of the existing cost of living allowance (COLA), salary scales similar to the interim award, an expatriation allowance to attract overseas recruits, and other service conditions comparable to those in North Borneo.<sup>41</sup> Officer interchange between the Borneo territories and Malaya was considered premature, but the Commission recommended that any future common Borneo service should be open to all officers, hinting at political union even in 1947.

The Trusted Commission was the first of a series of enquiries, each with its own terms of reference, but invariably the outcome was that improved conditions of service were awarded to the civil service. After the Trusted Commission, the next major issue was the cost of living. A proposal by the Sarawak government to increase the COLA in late 1949 was rejected by Whitehall on the grounds that the salary scales introduced by the Trusted Commission were more than adequate compensation.<sup>42</sup> Responding to civil service protests against Whitehall's decision, in 1951 F. C. Benham, the Commissioner-General's Economic Adviser, examined civil service salaries and the cost of living.<sup>43</sup> His report introduced automatic indexing of the COLA to reflect variations in price indices and increased housing allowances for expatriate personnel to compensate for rising rental costs.<sup>44</sup> In variations on his other recommendations, the Sarawak government also introduced a more attractive salary scale for professionally qualified officers in the Senior Service to attract recruits, and agreed to pay housing allowances to local personnel in the Senior Service.<sup>45</sup>

The 1956 Report of L. C. Bain, the Salaries Commissioner for the Borneo Territories, sought to unify and integrate the civil service.<sup>46</sup> It introduced higher inducement pay and education allowances for expatriate officers, and increased the salaries of all officers to offset higher rental charges and to reduce the demand for government housing.<sup>47</sup> His report also provided child allowances to compensate for the removal of differentials in cost of living allowances based on marital status. Pressure for increased emoluments by the Sarawak Government Asian Officers' Union (SGAOU) in 1962 was followed by the Watson Report of 1963, which examined the structure of the civil service with a view to improving efficiency and attracting the desired type of recruit.<sup>48</sup> Its recommendations for a unified segmented salary scale for Division II officers was rejected and its main impact was in improving career paths and prospects in the civil service.

### *Internal Restructuring of the Administrative Service, 1946-1963*

There was an important major restructuring of the administrative service during the British era that removed past ethnic constraints and class privileges emanating from Brooke obligations to the Malay aristocracy and protection of other indigenous people from exploitation. This was effected in two stages, the first in 1951 when the Secretary of State approved the formation of the Sarawak Administrative Service, a junior administrative service open to all races.<sup>49</sup> Recruitment to the Native Officers' Service, which was dominated by the Malay *abang* and limited to those legally defined as 'Natives' then ceased. The second, acceptance in 1956 of the Bain Report, finally removed any ethnic barriers between the senior and junior classifications by adopting five divisions, each with its own relatively clearly demarcated entry requirements.<sup>50</sup> Under these two reforms, local candidates of any race who had the requisite experience and qualifications were eligible for selection on a merit basis for any post in government service, and the Colonial Office recruited personnel only when asked by the state government. Locally, the comparatively low educational level of the Natives placed them at a serious disadvantage in the recruitment process relative to the Chinese and other non-indigenous races domiciled in Sarawak.

### *Civil Service Integrity*

To avert systematized corruption developing, an Anti-corruption Committee was established in 1957 under Justice Bodley.<sup>51</sup> Its terms of reference were to consider the incidence of corruption in the government service; to examine the extent of and the justification for public anxiety about corruption; to recommend steps to reduce any such corruption; and to investigate any allegations of corruption. Defining corruption as gifts, bribes, exaction, and favouritism, on 17 April, the Committee broadcast an invitation to members of the public with information to contact the Commission on a confidential basis. A year later, government officers in training were informed that Sarawak was fortunate to have very high standards of honesty in the government service although, as in every other country, there was the odd 'black sheep'.<sup>52</sup> The Committee reported that a publicity campaign

against the 'tea-money' habit was to be implemented and that there were no signs that corruption was practised extensively.<sup>53</sup> Acting on the Committee's recommendations, the Anti-Corruption Ordinance, 1959 (Ordinance No. 1 of 1959) introduced stricter laws on bribery and similar offences and increased penalties.<sup>54</sup>

### *Contradictions in the Philosophy of the Administrative Service*

Prior to cession, effective power rested with the senior officers of the SAS who embodied the customs, traditions, and myths of the Brooke dynasty.<sup>55</sup> For the Europeans in the SAS under the Brookes, this meant an intimate knowledge of local peoples, their customs, social structures, and languages.<sup>56</sup> In contrast, the post-war SAS became a more heterogenous group as personnel were recruited from the Australian military administration and from other territories by the CAS. In the late 1940s, there is some evidence of friction within the SAS between the pre-war and post-war officers, because the post-war officers had little or no knowledge of any local languages and customs prior to being appointed to positions of authority.<sup>57</sup> Different concepts were introduced by personnel more versed in dealing with the mandates of the Colonial Office. These officers had been transferred from other territories where there was not the same close relationship between the people and the administration and where society was more hierarchical.

This difference is perhaps illustrated by the dismay of two long-serving 'Brooke' officers, Fisher and Barcroft, when Governor Arden Clarke gave Awang Rambli a 'dressing-down', instead of listening and reasoning with him.<sup>58</sup> By 1956, the direct and everyday influence exercised by senior government officers in the interior was described in the House of Lords as almost insignificant, based on complaints by Tom Harrison, the Curator of the Sarawak Museum.<sup>59</sup> Ignoring the tradition in Sarawak that senior officers were readily available to the public, the official reply was that office work occupied more of an officer's time as administration became more complex and therefore the personal touch could not be maintained.<sup>60</sup> Although senior officials in the Secretariat, most of whom were from other territories, were unable to uphold this tradition, a number of Brooke officers remained in the field to retain the personal touch in the traditional Brooke manner.<sup>61</sup>

### *The Changing Role of the Administrative Service*

During the colonial period, apart from some continuing magisterial functions, the role of the senior officers of the Administrative Service changed from governing and administering to a largely advisory role. For the first ten years of colonial rule all legislative and executive power was vested in the Governor, his Residents, and government nominees through their absolute majority in both the Council Negri and the Supreme Council. At that stage, the administration was responsible for representing the public and assessing public opinion on any controversial matters. The amended Constitution of August 1956 introduced an unofficial majority in the Council Negri and an equal number of elected and *ex officio* members in the Supreme Council in April 1957. This removed the administration's monopoly of power and gradually rendered both the legislature and the executive vulnerable to political pressures.<sup>62</sup> In turn, the role of the Residents and other officials in both Councils gradually changed to that of defending the government's position rather than arguing the case for the people in their area. The Sarawak (Constitution) Order in Council, 1962, reduced the number of *ex officio* members in Council Negri to three, so that Residents no longer served on the Council, removing them entirely from any direct role in the executive and legislative processes.

Local authorities took over many of the responsibilities previously exercised by the administration. Starting with the establishment of five small Native Authorities in January 1948 and a list of responsibilities to be delegated as and when local government progress warranted, by the end of 1956 virtually the whole of Sarawak was under local government jurisdiction.<sup>63</sup> As an interim measure, the Councils were chaired by District Officers and their secretarial functions were handled by Native Officers.<sup>64</sup> These officers then became influential advisers who provided guidance and instruction in a transfer of power from the Administrative Service to local representatives, in contrast with their previous role of direct administration.<sup>65</sup> The process was accelerated in the latter part of the 1950s when elected councillors began to take their seats after the elections for individual councils and particularly after the state-wide elections for all councils at the end of 1959. By that time politics was beginning to intrude as the first political party had been formed. Residents and District Officers then became the communication link between the Secretariat and the Councils.

They retained some power over Council matters via the annual estimates that required their official acceptance before the central government would release funds and pay grants.<sup>66</sup>

Other changes influenced the role of field administrative staff. The speedier communication systems built up during the colonial era encouraged interchange of information and facilitated transfer of final responsibility to the Secretariat. The Secretariat, whose top personnel were from other colonial territories, was no longer imbued with the Brooke tradition of the supremacy of the Administrative Service in the field, and departmental heads were responsible for state-wide services and implemented state-wide programmes over which the Administrative Service had little influence or control. The growing complexity of government in running such things as mass health campaigns meant an increasing reliance on experts and a burgeoning bureaucracy largely independent of the Administrative Service, apart from local liaison work and co-ordination for field operations.<sup>67</sup>

A tendency to set up boards responsible for state-wide functions, the most important being the Development Board responsible for the state's development planning, also eroded the influence of the Administrative Service.<sup>68</sup> All these factors underlined the marked change in the role of the Administrative Service, from governing and administration to advisers to local government bodies and proponents of government policies through the local Councils, the District Advisory Councils, and the Divisional Advisory Councils. Administrative officers were of course expected not to question government policies in those forums.<sup>69</sup>

### *Borneanization*

The Sarawak government was responsible for planning the future staffing of the senior positions in the SCS by local people in accordance with the Colonial Office guidelines of 1946.<sup>70</sup> As at that time there were no indigenous people educated to the tertiary level for recruitment as cadets and no tertiary and technical education facilities in Sarawak, the government introduced sponsored scholarships for overseas tertiary education.<sup>71</sup> A co-ordinating advisory committee was set up in early 1949 to advise on the allocation of the scholarships to the various sections of the public service and to recommend candidates.<sup>72</sup> Its aim was to help Sarawak citizens 'acquire training ... for future tenure of senior posts in the Government, or practice of the learned professions'.<sup>73</sup> The scholarship



scheme was integrated in all subsequent development plans and by the end of 1963 had incurred costs of \$3.6 million.<sup>74</sup> Overseas scholarships were also funded by Colonial Development and Welfare (CD & W) allocations and by the Colombo Plan, the latter providing a larger number of scholarships for Sarawak than any other source.<sup>75</sup> A small number of overseas students were funded by their families and private organizations.

The number of students studying overseas gradually built up from twelve in 1949 to 358 at the end of 1963 and covered all professions in both academic and practical courses.<sup>76</sup> This was reflected in the number of returning students with degrees, professional postgraduate diplomas, or other recognized qualifications; 29 in 1959, 42 in 1960, and 71 in 1961.<sup>77</sup> As a result, the Deputy Chief Secretary was able to advise the Council Negri in 1962 that eight local candidates had been appointed direct to Division II posts in the SAS.<sup>78</sup> However, for a number of years after cession few candidates had adequate qualifications for tertiary scholarships, while the need for professionals was expanding rapidly.<sup>79</sup> Due to these factors, the sponsored scholarship schemes made their greatest contribution to Borneanization of Sarawak's services after Malaysia was formed.

The small number of Natives with the required educational levels for either scholarships or entry to the civil service, compared with the relatively large number of qualified non-Natives domiciled in Sarawak, presented problems of maintaining an equitable racial balance in the civil service.<sup>80</sup> Further, due to a shortage of qualified candidates, scholarships had been awarded freely, with most going to non-Natives. In 1960 Su'ut Tokei argued that scholarships and government service posts should be awarded on a community quota system based on population ratios, and in 1961 Council Negri member, Ainnie bin Dhoby, asked how a racial balance could be achieved.<sup>81</sup>

The Deputy Chief Secretary replied that the government was trying to redress the educational imbalance by giving a large number of local scholarships annually to Natives for primary and secondary education. He also advised that a directive had been issued to the Overseas Scholarship Committee pointing out the need to maintain a racial balance in scholarships as far as possible. Lacking Native candidates, the Committee had awarded only one Native an overseas scholarship in 1958, compared with ten Chinese, and even as late as 1961, fourteen Natives were awarded scholarships compared with twenty-two Chinese.<sup>82</sup> The Deputy Chief

Secretary also advised that the government had been maintaining a form of racial balance in the SAS 'for many years' by controlling the intake of entrants on the basis of one non-Native to three Natives. The effect of this was not evident at the higher levels where promotion, based solely on an officer's ability and merit, had no mechanism for achieving a racial balance (Table 7.3).<sup>83</sup>

No expatriate administrative officers were recruited after 1956.<sup>84</sup> On 22 May 1957, the Financial Secretary sought the Council Negri's approval to appoint a select committee to make plans for replacing expatriate officers.<sup>85</sup> Welcoming the motion, unofficial member Haji Su'ut bin Tahir said that it was in keeping with the Constitution, although there was no public pressure for it.<sup>86</sup> The committee's report was finally submitted in late 1959.<sup>87</sup> According to the report, local officers were being promoted regularly from Division III to Division II posts on merit and experience, and there were fourteen local officers amongst the fifty-two serving officers in the administrative establishment at the end of 1955.<sup>88</sup> The report also noted that by 1960, six sponsored scholarship holders would be aiming for direct entry to Division II posts by obtaining an honours degree and taking the Devonshire 'A' course.<sup>89</sup>

The committee prepared a programme to replace all expatriates in all Division II posts and the Division I posts in Co-operative Development, Information, Museum, and Printing, through internal promotions and direct entry of returning graduates.<sup>90</sup> Only the Agriculture and Marine Departments were considered to need 'permanent term' expatriate officers, agricultural scholarships not having proved attractive. The 1959 programme and action already taken resulted in a 44 per cent Borneanization of the Administrative Service by the time the British era ended.<sup>91</sup> However, only three of the fifty-three departmental and administrative heads listed in *The Colonial Office List, 1963* were local personnel as most local candidates lacked the experience required for those posts.<sup>92</sup>

The committee made two other proposals. The first was an attempt to revitalize the service and speed up Borneanization by introducing the '45 year rule'. Under this, an officer could be dispensed with at the age of forty-five if his performance was inadequate, but not such that disciplinary action could be taken. The Colonial Office warned that it was an improper means of accelerating Borneanization and that compensation would have to be paid, so the rule was not used.<sup>93</sup> The second proposal was to set up a Public Service Commission (PSC). This was subsequently approved by the Council Negri and established on 1 November

TABLE 7.3  
Analytical Listing of Senior Civil Servants of Local Origin, 1966

	<i>Ethnic Groups</i>		
	<i>Malay</i>	<i>Iban/Bidayuh</i>	<i>Chinese</i>
<i>Arm of Government</i>			
Secretariat	—	1	3
Field Administration	3	1	—
Judiciary/Legal	—	—	2
Other Departments	2	2	13
<i>Educational Level</i>			
Tertiary	2	—	7
Overseas Courses	2	1	9
Local Schooling	2	3	2

Source: Malaysian Government, Department of Information, *Sarawak Who's Who*, Kuching, 1964.

Notes:

1. By 1966, the number of expatriate officers was diminishing rapidly.
2. The pattern of local appointments to senior posts was becoming apparent by 1966.
3. The majority of senior civil servants were Chinese.
4. The senior posts in the Administrative Service in the field were the province of the Malays, Iban, and Bidayuh.
5. There was a paucity of Malays and even less Ibans and Bidayuh with tertiary education.
6. The main recipients of sponsored overseas courses amongst the listed senior civil servants were Chinese.
7. The tables reflect the disparity in general educational levels between the various communities and the ensuing ethnic imbalance amongst the senior civil servants listed in 1966.
8. Although not shown by the tables, the imbalance in general educational levels between the various ethnic groups was created by lack of educational facilities in the rural areas before the war and the time taken to establish facilities after the Japanese occupation, together with a reluctance on the part of Muslims to attend mission schools.

1961.<sup>94</sup> Responsibility for all appointments and promotions in the SCS was then transferred from the State Executive and the Colonial Office to the PSC, its independence underlined by giving its Chairman a status equivalent to that of a High Court judge. The importance of this was reflected in the recommendations of the Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC), 1962, that called for separate PSCs for the Borneo states.<sup>95</sup>

### *Preparations for Malaysia*

With the rapid development of the Malaysia concept following the speech of Malaya's Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, to the Foreign Correspondents Association of South-East Asia in Singapore in May 1961,<sup>96</sup> protection of the interests of state civil servants became an essential part of the subsequent negotiations. In addition to the protection given by the state PSC and in response to representations, the IGC Report gave preference to Borneans for all civil service recruitment in the Borneo states.<sup>97</sup> The career prospects for all existing officers, including expatriate officers, were enhanced through eligibility for promotion, secondment, or transfer to the Federal service, with no compulsion to serve outside Borneo. The problem then remained of retaining HMOCS expatriate officers for as long as their services were required.

The conditions of service of HMOCS personnel in territories that became self-governing were safeguarded by formal agreements in accordance with Colonial No. 306 of 1954.<sup>98</sup> In 1961 under the Overseas Service Aid Scheme, the British government agreed to pay the inducement allowances of HMOCS expatriate officers and half the cost of their passages for up to ten years.<sup>99</sup> A severance scheme was drawn up that provided favourable pension terms and compensation based on length of service, age, and salary for those who would forfeit their posts on the formation of Malaysia.<sup>100</sup> Other officers had the choice of retiring on the same terms or remaining with the Sarawak government for a guaranteed four years service for administrative officers and six years for professional officers, and payment of compensation spread over a five-year period. Sarawak guaranteed these conditions of service for all its HMOCS expatriate personnel under a further agreement effective from 16 September 1963.<sup>101</sup> Since only three administrative officers opted for retirement on that day,<sup>102</sup> the scheme was reasonably successful, although twenty-four administrative officers, a relatively large number, had left Sarawak between 1955 and 1963 for various reasons.

\* \* \*

By the time Malaysia was proclaimed, all posts in the administrative and civil services were open to Sarawakians, with selection on the basis of experience, merit, and qualifications. Political

influence over appointments had been minimized by the appointment of a PSC and legislation had been enacted to eliminate corruption as far as possible. Long-term plans for Borneanization of the civil service, including the administrative service, had been introduced through overseas scholarships for tertiary education and a rudimentary system to maintain future racial balances based on population ratios was in place. However, before the war the indigenous people had little access to—nor any great interest in—education, a situation compounded by the disruption to the educational system during the Japanese occupation.<sup>103</sup> For the indigenous people to fill senior service posts, the post-war task was to establish widespread rural primary education, raise general rural educational levels so that a significant number of indigenous people were eligible for overseas scholarships, and provide post-study, in-service working experience.

The seventeen years of colonial rule were inadequate to achieve this and the result was a dearth of suitable indigenous candidates for technical and senior posts. In the absence of indigenous graduates in any number, the majority of the professional posts in the civil service were filled by Chinese and other non-indigenous local peoples.<sup>104</sup> Further, because few professionally qualified local people of any ethnic group in the civil service had acquired much experience by 1963, virtually all senior posts were still held by expatriates. In this respect the mandate of preparing Sarawak for self-government was far from fulfilled by September 1963 and arrangements had to be made with the British government to retain the services of expatriate officers until they could be replaced. Colonial government plans to Borneanize the civil service were long-term through educational scholarship schemes first initiated in 1947. More directly, the select committee of 1957 was made responsible for producing firm plans, although at that time, the need for urgent action that developed in the early 1960s was not foreseen. In terms of organizational structure, the judiciary was better prepared for Malaysia as North Borneo and Sarawak had already integrated their judicial systems.

1. Amin Sweeney (ed.) 'Silsilah Raja-Raja Berunai, Text A & B', *JMBRAS*, 41, 2 (1968): 70; D. E. Brown, 'Socio-political History of Brunei: A Bornean Malay Sultanate', Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1969, pp. 163-75; Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 1-2.

2. Pengiran Indera Mahkota Muhammed, the Governor, established the town of Kuching, where initially most of the inhabitants were Brunei Malays (S. Baring-Gould and C. A. Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak under Its Two White Rajahs, 1839-1908*, London: Henry Sotheran & Co., 1909, pp. 55 and 64).
3. The Datu Patinggi headed the Sarawak *orang Bunsu* (nobility), the Datu Bandar headed the *atoang-awang* (high-status Malays), and the Datu Temenggong headed the *hamba raja* (common people).
4. Spenser St John, *Rajah Brooke: The Englishman as Ruler of an Eastern State*, London: Fisher Unwin, 1899, pp. 48-9.
5. Figure 7.1 shows the administrative structure evolved by the Brookes.
6. Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak*, pp. 421-2.
7. Table 7.1 shows the government departments created up to 1947.
8. Basil Collyer, 'The Period of the Japanese Occupation of Sarawak: Events Leading up to the Japanese Occupation', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society* (Sarawak Branch), 3 (December 1976): 3. Twenty-five SAS officers died during World War II, many in internment (*The Times* (London), 5 October 1950, p. 8).
9. Abang Haji Openg was appointed District Officer, Kuching, and Eliab Bay, an Iban court writer, was appointed Resident, Second Division.
10. F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-1946*, London: HMSO, 1956, pp. 183-7 and 194. Sarawak was administered by the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit (BBCAU) under Australian military control up to 5 January 1946, when it was replaced by the British Military Administration (BMA). The Rajah's last Chief Secretary was J. B. Archer who joined the SAS in 1912.
11. This fixed contact point (occupant of a desk dealing with the affairs of a particular colony) facilitated drawing on the expertise of the Colonial Office's specialist Divisions and Sections (Cosmo Parkinson, *The Colonial Office from Within*, London: Faber and Faber, 1947, pp. 55-6).
12. C. Jeffries, *Whitehall and the Colonial Service: An Administrative Memoir, 1939-1956*, London: University of London Press, 1972, p. 2.
13. Appendix 5 gives a brief on the Commissioner-Generals who served between 1946 and 1963.
14. Appendix 8 gives brief data on all the governors during the British era.
15. Figure 7.1 shows the administrative structure inherited in 1946 and Table 7.2 lists the operating costs from 1947 to 1962.
16. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 7 April 1959, p. 1; 'Notes on Talks in London on Brunei Constitution', March 1949, CO 1030/742, PRO.
17. Colonial Office, *Appointments in His Majesty's Colonial Service*, OCSR 1, London: HMSO, 1950, p. 5. All civil service appointments apart from those to the SAS were made locally.
18. S. Runciman, *The White Rajahs: A History of Sarawak from 1841 to 1946*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960, p. 163.
19. Colonial Office, *Appointments in His Majesty's Colonial Service*, London: OCSR 1, HMSO, 1950, p. 7.
20. There were 2,500 vacancies in the Colonial Service's united service grades at the end of World War II (Jeffries, *Whitehall and the Colonial Service*, p. 25).
21. K. H. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, Data Paper No. 114, South-East Asia Program, New York: Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1980, p. 73.
22. Naimah Talib, 'The Development of the Sarawak Administrative Service from Its Inception (1840s) to 1963', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 1993, p. 217.

23. Naimah, 'The Development of the Sarawak Administrative Service', pp. 222 and 226-7.
24. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 91.
25. *Singapore Free Press*, 26 July 1948, p. 5.
26. Colonial Office, *Appointments in His Majesty's Colonial Service*, London: OCSR 1, HMSO, 1950, p. 5.
27. The highest level of education available in Sarawak was third year secondary school.
28. Jeffries, *Whitehall and the Colonial Service*, Appendix 3.
29. HMSO, *Reorganization of the Colonial Service, 1954*, Colonial No. 306, London, *passim*.
30. Colonial Office, *Appointments in Her Majesty's Oversea Civil Service*, OCS 1, London: HMSO, 1955, pp. 6-7.
31. Colonial Office, *Her Majesty's Oversea Civil Service, Statement of Policy Regarding Organisation, May 1956*, Cmd. 9768, London: HMSO, 1956; Naimah, 'The Development of the Sarawak Administrative Service', pp. 280-1.
32. Colonial Office, *Appointments in His Majesty's Colonial Service*, OCSR 1, London: HMSO, 1950, p. 15.
33. 'Post-War Training for the Colonial Service', Col. No. 198 (1946), pp. 20-46, in J. M. Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967, p. 105.
34. 'Problems of Colonial Government' p. 1, Second Devonshire Course Material, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950/1, MSS Pac. s. 105 (1), RHL.
35. Naimah, 'The Development of the Sarawak Administrative Service', p. 225. Margery Perham's concepts, derived from colonial Africa with its colour bar and remote administration, did not appeal to Sarawak officers who had served in a sovereign state where they mixed freely with the people.
36. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1174 (31 December 1955): 310; 1199 (28 February 1958): 19.
37. Naimah, 'The Development of the Sarawak Administrative Service', pp. 188-9.
38. 'Memorandum of Committee of three government officers on proposal on new terms of service', c. December 1946, Kuching District Office File, in Naimah, 'The Development of the Sarawak Administrative Service', p. 193.
39. H. Trusted (Chairman), *Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo*, Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1947, p. 3.
40. Secretariat Circular, 1 October 1948, No. 16/1948, CO 954 2/1, PRO.
41. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 February 1948, p. 2. For an in-depth discussion of the Report, see Naimah, 'The Development of the Sarawak Administrative Service', pp. 198-207.
42. *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 March 1950, p. 2; 31 March 1950, p. 2; 5 September 1950, p. 3.
43. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1119 (12 June 1951): 110.
44. 'His Excellency's Address to Council Negri', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1124 (28 December 1951): 234-9.
45. *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 July 1951, p. 2. There were twelve local officers in the Senior Service.
46. L. C. Bain, *Report of the Commission on the Public Services of the Governments of Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei, 1956*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1956.

47. All Divisions I-IV government officers were awarded a 10 per cent housing allowance in 1963 to encourage them to invest in their own housing (*Sarawak Tribune*, 7 June 1963, p. 4).
48. Sarawak Government, 'The Structure of Public Service in Sarawak', Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1963 (*Sarawak Tribune*, 24 May 1963, p. 1).
49. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 4.
50. Bain, *Report of the Commission*, p. 7.
51. Anti-corruption Committee members were Tan Kui Choon, Ahmad Zaidi, C. B. Horn, Peter Ratcliffe, Philip Jones, and Chung Lian Fatt (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1190 (30 April 1957): 76.)
52. 'Delegation of Authority with Emphasis on District Officer Administration', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1200 (28 February 1958): 20.
53. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 6 November 1958, p. 1. 'Tea money' is a euphemism for money 'freely' given for favours done or services rendered, then a well-known practice.
54. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 108.
55. Much of the tradition is traceable to the Brooke promise in 1841 to respect the laws of customs of the Sarawak Malays forever and a tradition that public servants were servants of the people.
56. Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak*, p. 418; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1199 (31 January 1958): 1.
57. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1087 (1 October 1948): 202; Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, pp. 72 and 91; C. W. Dawson Diary, 17 July 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL.
58. Alastair Morrison, *Fair Land Sarawak: Some Recollections of an Expatriate Official*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 89.
59. *Hansard*, Fifth Series-Volume CC, col. 338, 15 November 1956.
60. *Hansard*, Fifth Series-Volume CC, col. 345, 15 November 1956.
61. The personal touch was evident when long service 'Brooke' officer John Fisher was told to expect serious trouble the day before the Brunei rebellion broke out (Morrison, *Fair Land Sarawak*, p. 142).
62. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 3 August 1956, p. 6.
63. British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey: A Record of United Kingdom and Commonwealth Affairs*, 3, 12, 11 June 1957, p. 539.
64. John Woods, *Local Government in Sarawak: An Introduction to the Nature and Working of District Councils in the State*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1968, p. 9.
65. The Chief Secretary issued guidance notes for district officers acting as advisers to local authorities (Memorandum CSO/222, 29 April 1961, RO/628, Sarawak Museum Archives).
66. For example, Third Division Council advisers were told that they should prevent Councils from applying for grants and loans exceeding project costs (Memorandum from the Resident, Third Division to all Council Advisers, RO/628/4, 12 October 1961, RO/628, Sarawak Museum Archives).
67. State-wide operations included major health campaigns, establishing primary education, state-wide cash crop replanting schemes, and developing airfield, road, and telecommunication networks.
68. Alastair Morrison, 'Development in Sarawak in the Colonial Period: A Personal Memoir', in R. A. Cramb and R. H. W. Reece (eds.), *Development in Sarawak*, Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1988, p. 38.



69. Memorandum 27/28/47, 28 January 1954, Chief Secretary to Resident Third Division, Sibu Resident Office's file, RO/100, Sarawak Museum Archives.

70. Colonial Office, *Organization of the Colonial Service*, London: HMSO, 1946, p. 3. By mid-1951, twelve local officers had been appointed to the Senior Service (*Sarawak Tribune*, 5 May 1951, p. 3).

71. There were no indigenous people who had completed university or technical college in 1946.

72. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 54.

73. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1953, p. 6.

74. Sarawak Development Board, *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-1963*, p. 22. \$468,980 was allocated to overseas scholarships in Sarawak's first development plan (see also *Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1951-1957*, p. 6).

75. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1963, Table IX, pp. 28-9.

76. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 54; Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1963, Table IX, pp. 28-9. The latter shows courses: 134 for degrees, 53 for diplomas, 46 for certificates, and 125 for practical training. Twenty degree courses were in Administration.

77. Second Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Third Council Negri, 1-3 May 1962, cols. 22-3, Sarawak Museum Archives.

78. Ibid.

79. In 1959, the government advised that the numbers graduating were small compared with the country's needs (Eighth Meeting of the First Session of the Third Council Negri, 2 June 1959, col. 3, Sarawak Museum Archives).

80. By 1960, ten Natives had completed university or technical college, compared with 205 Chinese.

81. *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 February 1960, p. 5; Second Meeting of the Third Session of the Third Council Negri, 28 March 1961, cols. 51-2, Sarawak Museum Archives.

82. *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 August 1962, p. 2.

83. Table 7.3 shows the lack of racial balance at higher levels in the SCS.

84. Morrison, *Fair Land Sarawak*, p. 103.

85. Third Meeting of the First Session of the Third Council Negri, 22 May 1957, cols. 50-1, Sarawak Museum Archives.

86. By 1959, non-Native pressure for Borneanization was developing (*Sarawak Tribune*, 2 December 1959, p. 2.)

87. Eighth Meeting of the First Session of the Third Council Negri, 2 June 1959, col. 4, Sarawak Museum Archives.

88. 'Report of the Select Committee to consider the replacement of officers drawing inducement pay', Fed. 103/583/01, CO 1030/648, PRO.

89. By the end of 1963, twenty Colombo Plan students were reading for degrees in Administration (Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary for 1963*, Table IX).

90. 'Borneanization of the Civil Service', file note, 19 January 1960, Fed. 103/583/01, CO 1030/648, PRO.

91. Naimah, 'The Development of the Sarawak Administrative Service', p. 289.

92. Tan Nyit Chin was the Secretary of the KMC, Chin Jin Lam the Controller of Essential Commodities, and Edward Brandah the Superintendent of Prisons.

93. Colonial Office to the OAG, message no. 247, 7 June 1960, Fed. 103/583/01, CO 1030/648, PRO.

94. The PSC comprised Chairman R. L. V. Wilkes (expatriate) and local members Edward Jerah, Kho Soon Ewe, and Abang Haji Mustapha (*Sarawak Tribune*, 14 July 1961, p. 1 and 1 November 1961, p. 6).

95. Malayan Government, *Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee*, 1962, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1963, Cl. 27.

96. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 29 May 1961, p. 1.

97. Malayan Government, *Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee*, 1962, Annex B.

98. HMSO, *Reorganization of the Colonial Service, 1954*, Colonial No. 306, London; *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 August 1960, p. 1.

99. 'The Overseas Service (North Borneo/Sarawak) Agreement, 1961', in Malayan Government, *Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee*, 1962, Appendix B, Clause 15.

100. 'Scheme of retirement benefits for members of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service and for officers designated under the Overseas Service (North Borneo/Sarawak) Agreement, 1961', in Malayan Government, *Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee*, 1962, p. 30.

101. 'Public Officers Agreement between Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of Sarawak', in Malayan Government, *Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee*, 1962, p. 42.

102. The three officers who left were M. J. Christie (thirty years old), T. M. Ainsworth (forty-three years old), and A. R. Snelus (fifty-two years old) (Naimah, 'The Development of the Sarawak Administrative Service', pp. 291-2).

103. See Chapter 16 for details of the education system during the Brooke and British eras.

104. See Table 7.3, p. 134, for an analytical listing of senior civil servants in Sarawak in 1966.

## The Law and the Judiciary

THE foundations for the structure of the judiciary system and administration of law in Sarawak during the British colonial era were firmly established during the preceding century of rule by the Rajahs. During the Brooke era, criminal law was 'based on English law and native custom in so far as they were considered suitable by the Rajah or the Magistrate who tried the case'.<sup>1</sup> No practising lawyers with right of audience in the courts were admitted.<sup>2</sup> At the Supreme Council meeting on 24 April 1946, Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke guaranteed that the principles of Sarawak's 1941 Constitution and *adat lama* (established custom) would be observed by the British authorities after cession.<sup>3</sup> The commitment to respect *adat lama* proclaimed by the first Rajah in 1841 was therefore an inalienable part of cession.<sup>4</sup> According to the common law of England, 'in ceded countries, which at the time of their acquisition had already laws of their own, [*adat lama* in Sarawak] the Crown has power to alter and change those laws, but until this is done the ancient laws of the country remain in force'.<sup>5</sup>

*Adat lama* encompassed the different laws and customs of the Muslim Malays and Melanaus, and the pagan and Christian Dayaks.<sup>6</sup> The British government inherited not only a commitment to uphold *adat lama*, but also a century of customs and practices adopted by the Rajahs in applying 'English law combined with commonsense'.<sup>7</sup> For a century the Brooke regime had been making decisions on which customs could be upheld and which were unacceptable. In 1928, some formality had been introduced by the 'Notes for the guidance of officers in interpreting Order No. L-4 (Law of Sarawak) of 1928'.<sup>8</sup> As an example, Clause 5 pointed out that head-hunting was unacceptable to the courts, whereas refusal to give legal recognition of polygamy would be oppressive in Muslim countries even though it was a penal offence under English law. Nor could Brunei's written law (*undang-undang*) be upheld completely, as the first Rajah found when sentencing a man from Pontianak for theft in Kuching in 1849. Unable to consent to the *undang-undang* penalty of cutting off the hand of the

thief, the Rajah commuted the sentence to 'three dozen lashes'.<sup>9</sup> This flexible approach to English law and *adat lama* between 1841 and 1941, once described as bringing 'justice but no law' to Sarawak, gradually developed into the rather unusual judicial and legal system inherited by the British in 1946.<sup>10</sup>

### *Military Occupation and Cession*

During the four years of Japanese occupation from December 1941, the niceties of English law and *adat lama* often received scant respect, especially from the *kempeitai*, although generally the Japanese continued to use the existing judicial and legal system.<sup>11</sup> By the time the Allied reoccupying forces accepted the official Japanese surrender in Sarawak on 11 September 1945, martial law declared throughout British Borneo on 10 June 1945 by the General Officer Commanding (GOC), First Australian Corps, had already been withdrawn.<sup>12</sup> It had been replaced by a proclamation establishing a Supreme Military Court in Labuan; Superior Military Courts; and First, Second, and Third Class District Military Courts.<sup>13</sup> An indication of a speedy return to normality occurred three days after the official surrender following a conference with the citizens of Kuching, when an order was issued that fixed price levels based on those in 1941.<sup>14</sup> The civil courts of Sarawak were re-established on 9 February 1946 and the British Military Administration (BMA) officially handed over administration to the Brooke regime on 15 April 1946,<sup>15</sup> the day the Rajah returned to Sarawak. There was a severe shortage of experienced magistrates since almost half the pre-war Sarawak Civil Service (SCS) officers had either been killed or had died during the war and others did not return because they disagreed with cession.<sup>16</sup> About a dozen officers of the BMA were transferred to the SCS, including the Chief Justice and those officers who had served with the SCS before the war.<sup>17</sup>

### *Post-Cession Problems*

Initially, the recruitment of Native Officers who also acted as magistrates proved very difficult because of the low standards of education then prevailing.<sup>18</sup> European university-trained cadets for the SCS to supplement the few graduates engaged in the 1930s did not appear for two or three years after cession. Ex-BMA SCS officers had little knowledge of local customs to guide them in their role as

magistrates and *adat lama* may not always have been upheld.<sup>19</sup> Hearing all cases involving Natives first in Malay or Dayak, a Brooke convention, had to be abandoned since those officers had little knowledge of local languages. Not fully conversant with Sarawak or English law, like their predecessors the new officers decided civil cases on their own 'general notions of equity and good conscience' and treated criminal cases with 'rough justice'.<sup>20</sup> Sentences were generally lighter than in Malaya and Singapore,<sup>21</sup> and any shortcomings were tempered by the limited powers of the lower courts. Serious criminal offences were outside the jurisdiction of the Native Courts under the Penal Code of 1934, apart from incest in which each ethnic group had its own levels of taboo and penalties.<sup>22</sup>

Pragmatic decisions had to be taken on matters arising from the Japanese occupation. Many pre-war debts had been paid in paper notes issued by the Japanese which were worthless and no longer legal tender after the war. Against the judgement of senior SCS officials who would have preferred court adjudication of cases on their merits, external pressure to fall in line with Singapore and Malaya prevailed and The Debtor and Creditor (Occupation Period) Ordinance of 1949 was introduced. This proved very harsh on debtors.<sup>23</sup> Largely due to the 'large number of Asian leaders ... whose services would have been lost to the Government', a decision was reached to limit prosecution of collaborators with the Japanese to those who met the 'acid test' of having taken part in actual acts of violence against members of the public.<sup>24</sup> Many local people found this decision rather perturbing.<sup>25</sup> Under the Brookes, the Dayak custom of head-hunting had been virtually eliminated, but had flourished during the guerilla operations led by officers of the Australian and British Services Reconnaissance Detachment (SRD) in the last months of the war.<sup>26</sup> The administration thus had the difficult task of making the Dayaks aware that it was once again a criminal offence.<sup>27</sup> Legal action on a number of known murders by Sarawak subjects during the Japanese occupation was not pursued by the colonial administration, although in some cases the identities of the murderers were known.<sup>28</sup> One notable exception was the trial of the suspected murderers of Acting Resident Arundell who had managed to avoid the Japanese and in 1942 was living with his Iban family in a longhouse in the interior. The suspects were tried twice, once by the Japanese and again by the British after reoccupation, but whether justice was finally served is open to question.<sup>29</sup>

The judicial system of the colonial government followed the pre-war pattern with a Supreme Court, Residents' Courts, District Courts, Police Courts, Petty Courts, and the Native Courts for which a statutory basis was established in 1940.<sup>30</sup> The Residents' Courts had very wide powers, but the Residents did not have the necessary legal training to interpret and apply the law in accordance with the various codes and established legal procedures. To remedy this, under the Circuit Courts Ordinance, 1948, two Circuit Courts were established, one centred on Kuching and the other on Sibü, to take over the work of the Residents' Courts apart from Native Court appeals.<sup>31</sup> The Circuit Courts began to operate on 23 September 1948, each under a legally qualified judge who had unlimited jurisdiction in almost all criminal and civil matters.<sup>32</sup> In all other respects, the two hierarchies of courts in the judicial structure remained unchanged. The ordinary courts constituted under the Courts Ordinance were the Supreme Court in which the Chief Justice exercised appellate jurisdiction, the new Circuit Courts, and the various Magistrates Courts. The Native Courts constituted under the Native Courts Ordinance were the District Native Court, the Native Officer's or Chief's Court, and the Headman's Court. There was an avenue of appeal from the Native Courts to the ordinary courts and to the Supreme Court. Jurisdiction of the Native Courts was limited to 'cases in which all the parties are native, including cases arising from the breach of native law and custom, civil cases where the value of the subject matter does not exceed fifty dollars, and claims to untitled land'.<sup>33</sup>

### *Adat Lama in the British Era*

An official description of Sarawak law was given in the *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*:

Sarawak Law is to be found partly in Imperial legislation, whether by Order in Council or otherwise, but mainly in local Ordinances and native customary law. The many indigenous tribes have their own *adat* or customary law, and in some cases native customs have been embodied in Codes. Among the best known of these Codes are the Malay *Undang-undang* and the *Tusun Tunggu*, the latter being a Code of the Sea Dayak (Iban) Fines in use in the Third Division. Chinese customary law, chiefly in matrimonial matters and in relation to inheritance, is recognised to a limited extent, but only in so far as such recognition is expressly or by implication to be found in a local Ordinance. Where Sarawak law is silent,

the Courts are required to apply English Law 'in so far as it is applicable to Sarawak having regard to native customs and local conditions'.<sup>34</sup>

Malay *Undang-undang*, the Malay customary law code, was applied in the *Datu's* Court and was equivalent to statute law, although it had not been tested in the Supreme Court.<sup>35</sup> To remedy this, the Majlis Islam (Incorporation) Ordinance was enacted in 1954, under which a Council of Religion and Malay custom, the Majlis Islam of Sarawak, was established to administer Muslim religious affairs in Sarawak. The Ordinance provided for a Legal Committee as an ancillary body of the Majlis Islam to determine questions of Muslim law, religious doctrine, and Malay customary law in Sarawak. The Ordinance also prescribed the duties, powers, and business of the Majlis Islam and the operation of the Legal Committee. One of the latter's first actions was to review the fines laid down in the Malay *Undang-undang* for offences against religious and social customs, and a landmark decision was made that borrowing money at interest did not conflict with *Undang-undang*.<sup>36</sup> The status of the Majlis Islam was enhanced by appointing to its board prominent members of the Malay community in Kuching, its first Chairman being Datu Abang Haji Openg Abang Sapi'ee who became the state's Governor in 1963 when Sarawak joined Malaysia.<sup>37</sup> With authority to change and implement customary law state-wide, the Majlis Islam under Malay administration was the guardian of Malay *adat* for the remainder of the colonial period.

Malay *Undang-undang* generally prescribed not unreasonable penalties and did not warrant interference by the executive, except in cases of incest.<sup>38</sup> However, the British authorities were unwilling to amend the *Undang-undang* because of the pledge in April 1946 that Native customs would not be affected after cession and the fear of possible political repercussions. Therefore, to ensure that punishment for incest was more in keeping with post-war western concepts of justice, such cases were reported to the Governor seeking his prerogative of mercy and the sentences were usually reduced. One interesting custom often followed in these courts was that of swearing to an alleged fact in the mosque. This was permitted under the Sarawak Oaths and Affirmations Ordinance, although it was rarely used in the ordinary courts.<sup>39</sup> In a pre-war case recorded by K. H. Digby, the relatives of a Malay found guilty of incest with his sister-in-law would not accept the verdict until she made an oath in the mosque that he was the father of her child.<sup>40</sup>

The problems arising from Dayak *adat* and associated *Tusun Tunggu* (Code of Law and Fines) were more complex as customs differed among Dayak groups settled on different river systems. Codification proved difficult and as Anthony Richards, a senior SCS officer and an acknowledged expert on Iban customary law,<sup>41</sup> wrote in 1963: 'The customary law is alive and always changing; it lives by spirit, and not by letter. If it is put into the straight-jacket of statutory form it will perish.'<sup>42</sup> In the early post-war years, the Native Courts in the Second Division were guided by the 1915 notes of A. B. Ward on Iban customary law and fines and the notations of subsequent administrative officers.<sup>43</sup> In July 1961 the notes were revised and brought up to date by an *aum*, or meeting of Dayak chiefs, held in Simanggang.<sup>44</sup> In the Third Division, the 1936 revised edition of the code of Dayak customary law, originally recorded in 1932, had statutory authority.<sup>45</sup> This was revised in July 1952 during the first *aum* held in Sibü for twenty years and a revised edition was published in 1955.<sup>46</sup> The codification of the *adat* of the Bidayuh of the First Division, a separate ethnic group with their own customs, was not completed and published until 1964.<sup>47</sup>

The way in which potentially troublesome situations could be resolved under Iban customary law was demonstrated in an international border incident in March 1956.<sup>48</sup> An Iban from Sarawak lost a fight when visiting an Iban longhouse in Indonesian Kalimantan and was sent back to Sarawak with an insulting message. In retaliation, 250 Ibans from Sarawak crossed the border into Kalimantan and attacked the longhouse. Pepper and rubber plantations were destroyed during the raid and threats of reprisals followed. British and Indonesian officials struggled for weeks to maintain peace, until the matter was finally resolved by a Sarawak *penghulu*. He negotiated an agreement under which the Sarawak Ibans agreed to pay indemnities for damage caused according to a traditional formula and a formal peacemaking ceremony (*aum*) was subsequently held at Lubok Antu.<sup>49</sup>

On Chinese customary law, the Chief Justice ruled on 7 January 1947 that this did not apply in Sarawak since the Schedule to the Interpretation Ordinance (Order No. I-1), 1933, did not include the Chinese as Natives of Sarawak.<sup>50</sup> He therefore stipulated that the Supreme Court would only apply Chinese customary law where any custom in question was regulated or recognized expressly or implicitly by a Sarawak Ordinance. This limited recognition of Chinese customary law in Sarawak to ancestral worship,



adoption, matrimony, divorce, and inheritance. The role of the *Kapitan China* in the post-war era was thus somewhat diminished, with their official duties in Kuching being generally restricted to registration of betrothals and marriages and occasional advice to the government on matters of Chinese custom.<sup>51</sup> However, outside Kuching the *Kapitan China* and his advisers continued to arbitrate on the majority of cases involving such matters as property, land boundaries, adoptions, and assaults.<sup>52</sup> Marriages carried out according to Chinese custom had to be registered in order to be recognized by Sarawak law, but there was no statutory provision for their dissolution. The Legal Department was reluctant to introduce such a provision because Colonial Office attention would have been drawn to the very wide terms for dissolution of Christian marriages in Sarawak. Therefore Circuit Courts applied an assumed common law jurisdiction to dissolve Chinese marriages according to the Court's 'notions of equity and good conscience'.<sup>53</sup> Since legal recognition of Chinese customs was limited, the magistrates' and higher level courts generally dealt with their civil cases, although most were settled out of court by arbitration. Officials of the larger dialect associations dealt with minor civil disputes.<sup>54</sup> The Secretary for Chinese Affairs, a part-time position reflecting limited recognition of Chinese customs, was abolished in 1955.<sup>55</sup>

Illustrating the problems of dealing with Chinese customs in the courts, a case was brought before the First Circuit Court over the location of a burial site that offended the Chinese geomantic belief in *fengshui*.<sup>56</sup> Initially the grave was excavated immediately behind the shrine in the *kéjiā* (Hakka) cemetery. When this was drawn to the attention of the Committee of the Community Association, the Committee had the excavation filled in and moved the site to a more propitious location. On the arrival of the funeral party, the mourners insisted that the original grave site be re-excavated and the corpse was buried there. The Committee had acted on the expert advice of the headman of the *kéjiā* community and appealed to the First Circuit Court.<sup>57</sup> Although the Court found the Committee to be substantially in the right, it had no jurisdiction to order exhumation. The matter was referred to the First Division Resident, who issued a disinterment order under the Corpses Ordinance which enabled the Committee to rebury the corpse at a site that did not transgress *fengshui*.<sup>58</sup>

During the first debate on colonial Sarawak in the House of Lords on 25 September 1956, Lord Lloyd, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, assured the House that customary law in

Sarawak was being scrupulously upheld among the interior peoples by the administrative officers.<sup>59</sup> The Labour peer, Lord Ogmore,<sup>60</sup> had cited articles by Tom Harrisson, Curator of the Sarawak Museum, and Hugh Hickling, Sarawak's Acting Attorney-General, that showed the ongoing tensions between *adat* law and statute law. He read out Hickling's statement that

we are reluctant to recognise custom and the native mind as an equally proper and valid source of law. Our Statutes are applied with all the rigid logic of an ancient Western legal system ... our reforms have begun with the administration not of justice, but of law, not with the training of magistrates in inferior courts but at the top with the establishment on English lines of a unified judiciary for Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo: not with a comprehensive literature on *Adat* law but a revised edition of the Statute Law and increasing complexities of an ever increasing number of ordinances, rules, regulations and bye-laws.<sup>61</sup>

Predictably, all criticisms were rejected by Lord Lloyd, although both Hickling and Harrisson felt that Native law and *adat* was being crushed by rote application of new legislation.<sup>62</sup>

### *Restructuring the Court System*

In early 1949, the Commissioner-General for South-East Asia, Malcolm MacDonald, the Governors of North Borneo and Sarawak, and the Resident of Brunei discussed the closer association of the three territories, and the High Commissioner set out to achieve integration within five years.<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, subsequent legislation in Sarawak was based on the assumption of the future integration of the Borneo territories and one of the results of this, the Sarawak, North Borneo, and Brunei (Courts) Order in Council, unified their judicial systems on 1 December 1951.<sup>64</sup> In a court structure that was retained until Malaysia Day, one Supreme Court of Judicature was established for the three Borneo states, consisting of a High Court and a Court of Appeal. In Sarawak, the High Court superseded the Circuit Courts and the Appeal Court exercised appellate jurisdiction previously vested in the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice was based in Kuching and Puisne Judges at Kuching and Sibiu replaced the Circuit Judges. Sarawak's lower courts, that is the Magistrates' Courts and the Native Courts, were not changed in any way.

The Courts of Magistrates remained little changed from their pre-war structures and were adjusted rather than altered during the colonial era. The Courts of Magistrates and their respective

powers under the Criminal Procedure Code and the new Courts Ordinance that became operative on 1 May 1952 were:

1. Courts of Magistrates of the First Class or District Courts. Magistrates of the First Class dealt with criminal offences having prison sentences of up to twelve months and a fine not more than \$2,000, and with civil cases up to \$500 in value.
2. Courts of Magistrates of the Second Class or Police Courts (Court of Petty or Small Causes in their civil case role). Magistrates of the Second Class could impose imprisonment sentences of up to six months or a fine up to \$1,000 for criminal offences and deal with civil cases up to \$250.
3. Courts of Magistrates of the Third Class or Petty Courts. Magistrates of the Third Class dealt with criminal cases with a maximum sentence of three months imprisonment or a maximum fine of \$500 for criminal cases, and with civil cases up to \$50.

The value of civil cases under their jurisdiction could be doubled for individual magistrates by the Chief Justice. In practice, fine limits were regarded as guides, not strict limits, since resolving cases quickly and trying to achieve objective fairness took precedence.<sup>65</sup> Courts of Magistrates had no jurisdiction over partition of immovable property, performance or rescission of contracts, cancellation or rectification of instruments, enforcement of trusts, and application for declaratory decrees.

Although the Native Courts Ordinance (Cap. 4) was repealed and superseded by the Native Courts Ordinance, 1955 (No. 2 of 1955), the Native Courts remained generally as originally constituted, thus providing continuity throughout the colonial era. The Native Courts consisted of the District Native Courts, the Native Officer's or Chief's Court, and the Headman's Court. These Courts were empowered to try cases involving breaches of Native law and custom as well as claims to untitled land and civil cases not exceeding \$50 in value, providing all the parties in the cases were Natives.<sup>66</sup> There was an avenue for appeal from the Headman's Court to the Native Officer's or Chief's Court and thence to the Resident's Native Court. A further appeal could be made to the Native Court of Appeal 'by way of a case stated on a point of law or native custom'.<sup>67</sup>

*Statutory Law under British Rule*

Post-cession British policy was to introduce legislation and make any necessary amendments to the existing laws required for the political, economic, and social development of the colony.<sup>68</sup> Within two years of cession, a three-volume revised edition of the laws of Sarawak incorporating the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code had been printed to replace the pre-cession laws and orders in the *Green Book* and the *Red Book*.<sup>69</sup> A year later, another volume was issued that included the Income Tax Ordinance, the first step towards ending the tax-free environment in Sarawak for companies and individuals.<sup>70</sup> Also included was the National Registration Ordinance to establish an identity card system, starting a trend towards restrictive legislation. This continued, reflecting local concerns in the aftermath of the assassination of the Governor in late 1949 and the growing influence of Communist China and its ideology on the overseas Chinese in South-East Asia, including Sarawak.<sup>71</sup> In addition to six anti-subversion ordinances, the Education Ordinance established greater government control over schools for the same purpose.<sup>72</sup> Even so, anti-communist ordinances were only a small proportion of the legislation enacted, much of which accorded with the policy of promoting social and economic development and welfare.<sup>73</sup>

Reasons for the rapid increase in the codification of statute law that was criticized by Sarawak's Acting Attorney-General were given by Lord Lloyd in the House of Lords debate on 15 November 1956.<sup>74</sup> He told the House it was due 'to the need of regulating the urban communities ... and the constant commercial and political contact with Singapore and Malaya'. The rapid pace of codification continued and by the end of 1962, there were nine volumes of codified law:<sup>75</sup>

1. Volumes I-V: all ordinances in force on 31 December 1958.
2. Volume VI: treaties; Constitutional Instruments; Sarawak, North Borneo, and Brunei (Courts) Order in Council; Royal instructions issued to the Commissioner-General; and Acts of the United Kingdom applicable to Sarawak.
3. Volumes VII-VIII: subsidiary legislation in force, 1 January 1957.
4. Volume IX: index to Volumes I to VIII.

To deal with the growing complexity of the law, the first magistrate with legal qualifications was appointed in 1951. By 1958 there were three qualified magistrates sitting at Kuching and Sibu, all

other magistrates being administrative officers who carried out magisterial work as part of their duties.<sup>76</sup> The first local SCS officer to obtain legal qualifications on a government scholarship returned to Sarawak in 1956 and by then another four local SCS officers were acquiring a legal education overseas. The first local magistrate with legal qualifications, Lee Hun Yen, was appointed in 1961.<sup>77</sup>

Growing concern over communist activities and the Brunei uprising in December 1961 created a climate for more anti-subversion legislation in the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>78</sup> From 1956 to 1962, eleven ordinances were enacted ranging from control of the Press to special powers of detention. These were all introduced to 'tighten up our legislation on matters affecting public security' and strengthen the government's hand in dealing with the CCO.<sup>79</sup> However, the courts did not allow administrative decisions taken in the anti-communist drive to go unchallenged. In August 1960, a Sarawak-born Chinese, a British subject, was served with a deportation order under the Undesirable Persons Ordinance, 1935. Although it was too late to assist the deportee, the Appeal Court showed its independence from the executive by ruling that he had the right to ask for a declaration stating that the order for deportation was *ultra vires*.<sup>80</sup> There were no further deportations of Sarawak-born British subjects.

As already indicated, the anti-communist subversion legislation represented only a small part of the whole, much of which was associated with constitutional, social, and economic development. The Local Authority Ordinance, 1948, the Kuching Municipal Ordinance, 1952, and the Council Negri Elections Ordinance, 1956, were indicative of constitutional development in the colonial era. Concern for social problems was reflected in much of the legislation, as in the Women and Girls Protection Ordinance, 1948, the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1956, and the Public Health Ordinance, 1962. Economic development and integration of Sarawak into the world market was a growing feature of legislation, typical examples being the General Loans and Stocks Ordinance, 1953, the Banking Ordinance, 1955, and the Merchant Shipping Ordinance, 1960. Some attention to environmental issues was given in the National Parks Ordinance, 1954, the Wild Life Protection Ordinance, 1957, and the Turtle Trust Ordinance, 1957.

*Retention of Control over Adat Lama*

The judicial structure of a Supreme Court consisting of a High Court and Court of Appeal for Brunei, North Borneo, and Sarawak, and Courts of Magistrates and Native Courts was retained up to 16 September 1963 when Sarawak became part of Malaysia. On that date, the Court of Appeal ceased to function and the Federal Court of Malaysia assumed jurisdiction to determine appeals from the High Courts, but all other aspects of the pre-Malaysia judicial structure in Sarawak were retained.<sup>81</sup> Responsibility for upholding Native law and custom was handed over to the elected representatives of the people of Sarawak on 16 September 1963 as, under the negotiated provisions in the Malaysian Constitution, Sarawak retained sole power in those matters.<sup>82</sup>

\* \* \*

The excesses of *adat lama* had been removed by 1946, thus enabling the British colonial administration to adopt a policy of non-interference, although the tensions between English law, customary law, and the Brooke heritage of informal justice remained. In the rural areas where the majority of the indigenous people lived and the lower courts dealt with most cases, many of the SCS officers were veterans of the Brooke era and carried on the Brooke tradition of administering pragmatic justice rather than applying the intricacies of statutory law. *Undang-undang Melayu* for the Malays and *Tusun Tunggu* for the Dayaks continued to be the sources of authority for offences against customary law; codification of *Tusun Tunggu* assisted in the formalization of penalties. However, there was increasing emphasis on statute law as acknowledged by the Acting Attorney-General in 1956. In the higher courts, the judiciary was remodelled to separate the powers of the executive and the judiciary to conform with British precepts. The Residents' Courts under the control of senior administrative officers were replaced by Circuit Courts with puisne judges trained in English law, thus completing the separation of executive and judicial power started by the pre-war Brooke appointment of a Chief Justice in the 1930s. Government determination to combat communist subversion was manifested in legislation that overrode UN principles of human rights and the freedom of expression in speech and writing promised in the fifth Cardinal Principle.

However, this legislation was supported and indeed welcomed by the indigenous members of the Council Negri. The remaining legislation imprinted on Sarawak the legal forms and trappings of a western, industrialized state that had little relevance to the indigenous people, but was seen to be a necessary prelude to self-government. For this, and to ensure the effectiveness of legislation, efficient law and order enforcement agencies were a necessity.

1. T. Stirling Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', Unpublished typescript, c.1934, p. 78.

2. The second Rajah did not welcome 'the substitution of complicated western laws for Native customs' (A. B. Ward, *Rajah's Servant*, Data Paper No. 61, South-East Asia Program, New York: Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1966, p. 166).

3. R. H. W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 220.

4. D. S. Ranjit Singh, *Brunei, 1839-1983*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. 223-4; *Hansard*, Vol. 425, col. 315, 9 July 1946.

5. Halsbury, *Laws of England*, Vol. X, para. 986, in Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', p. 15.

6. Pagan here means a belief system other than Christianity, Islam, or Judaism. The Chinese were not legally indigenous to Sarawak.

7. Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', p. 82.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-4.

9. R. Mundy, *Narrative of Events in Borneo and Celebes, Down to the Occupation of Labuan: From the Journals of James Brooke Esq., Rajah of Sarawak and Governor of Labuan, Together with a Narrative of the Operation of HMS Iris*, London: John Murray, 1848, Pt. II, p. 9.

10. 'Apa macham ini negri? Ada justice tetapi tiada law.' (K. H. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, Data Paper No. 114, South-East Asia Program, New York: Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1980, p. 2).

11. In four years the Japanese earned 'the odium even of those who had been most attracted to the conquerors of the unbeloved Europeans' (Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 68).

12. F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-1946*, London: HMSO, 1956, pp. 452-3.

13. The Superior Military Courts were constituted by senior Civil Affairs officers of the Districts, sitting alone (Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-1946*, p. 296).

14. Gavin Long, *Australians in the War of 1939-1945*, Series One: Army, Vol. VII, *The Final Campaigns*, Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1963, p. 563. On reoccupation, Japanese currency was worthless.

15. A contingent of twenty officers and forty other ranks, including officers from the SCS, arrived in Kuching on 11 September 1946 to set up civil administration (Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p. 563).

16. Only about twenty of the forty pre-occupation District and higher level officers were left by 1946 (Personal communication from A. J. N. Richards, 26 June 1993).

17. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 71.

18. Native Officers and office personnel had usually completed three years in secondary school, the highest level of education available in Sarawak in 1941.

19. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 72.

20. Ibid. Administrative officers were expected to use their discretion in applying the law in their Districts. In 1956 there were still only two qualified magistrates in Sarawak (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1177 (31 March 1956): 51).

21. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 72.

22. Sarawak Government, *The Penal Code, 1934*, Kuching: Government Printer, 1934.

23. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 74.

24. Ibid., pp. 75–6.

25. Robert Jitam, a prominent Iban, wrote on 14 October 1946: 'Take for instance ... Datu Pahlawan and Abang Openg, both of whom were working for the Japs in high posts. The way they preened themselves ... had to be seen to be believed. I was thinking in due course they would meet "justice", but ... they are now elevated.' (Robert Jitam to Anne Bryant, 14 October 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 255.)

26. For an account of SRD operations, see T. Harrison, *The World Within: A Borneo Story*, London: Cresset, 1959.

27. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 75. Some Dayaks did not differentiate between Japanese and Chinese heads, nor between Chinese collaborators and other Chinese.

28. Ibid., pp. 75–6. Decisions not to pursue such cases were rationalized as unlikely of a successful prosecution. Just after the Japanese collapse, a policeman who had been a zealous Japanese collaborator was shot, mutilated, and cannibalized. The perpetrators' position was considered so equivocal—were they loyalist guerrilla fighters or cannibalistic murderers—that the case was not pursued.

29. Ibid., pp. 77–80.

30. Appendix 9 shows the court structure on 1 July 1946.

31. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 59.

32. K. H. Digby was First Circuit Court Judge and Daniel Lascelles Second Circuit Court Judge.

33. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 75.

34. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 58.

35. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 75. Abang Haji Mohidin was the Datu Hakim (judge—a post created in 1866 to administer Muslim religious affairs) from 1941 to 1957.

36. C. A. Lockard, *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820–1970*, Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1987, p. 167. The powers given to the Majlis Islam reflected the diminishing power of the titled *datu*.

37. Datu Abang Haji Openg Abang Sapi'ee, a pre-war Native Officer and Council Negri standing member who voted against cession, was on the *ken sanjikai* (Prefectural Advisory Council) set up by the Japanese in 1943 (Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp. 144–5).

38. Personal communication from K. H. Digby, 3 October 1993.



39. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 97.
40. The incest case was in the Simunjan area and Digby as the District Officer was the trial magistrate (Personal communication from K. H. Digby, 3 October 1993).
41. Anthony Richards, an Oxford graduate who joined the SCS on 9 September 1938, was interned from 1942 to 1945. He served as Resident in both the First and Second Divisions and later was on special duties compiling Iban *adat* with particular reference to land.
42. A. J. N. Richards (comp.), *Dayak Adat Law in the Second Division*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1963, p. 5.
43. A. B. Ward first served in Simanggang from 1899 to 1901 and returned as Resident from 1909 to 1915 (Robert Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: The Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule 1841-1941*, London: Macmillan, 1970, pp. 146 and 233).
44. Richards, *Dayak Adat Law in the Second Division*, *passim*, records the results of the 1961 Simanggang *aum*.
45. The 1936 edition was mainly the work of Andrew Macpherson who was responsible for building the Meluan Fort (Personal communication from A. J. N. Richards, 26 June 1993).
46. *Tusun Tunggu Iban (Sea Dayak)*, Kuching, 1955, in Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 379.
47. A. J. N. Richards (comp.), *Dayak Adat Law in the First Division: Adat Bidayuh*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1964.
48. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 8 May 1956, p. 1.
49. Peacemaking ceremonies included feasting, payments, gifts or exchange of jars and gongs, and lengthy prayers and invocations (Personal communication from A. J. N. Richards, 26 June 1993).
50. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1067 (1 February 1947): 27.
51. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, p. 159.
52. Personal communication from A. J. N. Richards, 26 June 1993.
53. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 96.
54. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, p. 175.
55. Chinese and Native Affairs matters were devolved to the administration (Governor to Colonial Secretary, Letter 46/805/46, 5 February 1954, Fed. 36/7/02, CO 1030/107, PRO).
56. *Fengshui*, literally the wind and the water. A belief that the position of a house or a tomb should not impede the natural functioning of the wind and the water or the occupants will suffer.
57. First Circuit Court judge K. H. Digby adjudicated (Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 95).
58. Another Chinese custom, swearing by *potong ayam* (decapitating a chicken), was viewed with some reserve by legally trained judges, although often invoked (Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 97).
59. *Hansard*, House of Lords, Vol. CC, cols. 338, 352, and 362, 15 November 1956. This was the first debate on Sarawak in the House of Lords.
60. Lord Ogmore (Labour MP, D. R. Rees-Williams before he was knighted) and Conservative MP, L. D. Gammans, were charged with assessing the opinion of the people of Sarawak on cession in 1946.
61. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1182 (31 August 1956): 206-9.

62. Ibid.
63. Minutes of the 13th Commissioner-General's Conference held in Singapore on 1 November 1949, item 3, CO 954 5/3, PRO.
64. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, pp. 101 and 105.
65. Personal communication from A. J. N. Richards, 26 June 1993.
66. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1955*, p. 91. Prime importance was attached to reaching an agreed settlement and in practice the amount of the fine and the subject matter was of little import.
67. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 112.
68. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 55.
69. When sent to outstations, the law volumes were not always even unpacked, as a visiting officer found when visiting Tatau (Personal communication from A. J. N. Richards, 26 June 1993).
70. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 74.
71. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 13 August 1952, p. 6.
72. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, pp. 81-2.
73. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 101.
74. *Hansard*, House of Lords debate, Vol. CC, col. 362, 15 November 1956.
75. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, pp. 187-8. A revised edition of local government legislation was being prepared for issue in early 1963.
76. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1955*, p. 91.
77. HMSO, *The Colonial Office List, 1961*, London, p. 152.
78. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 6 November 1957, p. 4; 12 May 1958, p. 4.
79. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, pp. 189-90.
80. See Appendix 10 for details of the Fu Tze Man case.
81. *The Constitution of Malaysia*, Part IX, 'The Judiciary', Clause 121, in L. A. Sheridan and H. E. Groves, *The Constitution of Malaysia*, Singapore: Malayan Law Journal, 1987, pp. 271-2.
82. Paragraph (a), Clause (1), Article 6 of the Constitution of Malaysia prohibited the Federal parliament from legislating on Native law or custom in Sarawak. Malayan Government, *Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee, 1962*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1963, covers pre-Malaysia negotiations on judiciary and legislative powers.

## Law and Order Enforcement Agencies

A basic requisite for meeting United Nations Charter Article 73 in ensuring political, economic, social, and economic advancement, and just treatment and protection against abuse, was maintaining law and order so that the people could pursue their lawful interests in peace and free of government interference.<sup>1</sup> From 15 April 1946 when civil administration was restored in Sarawak, this was the responsibility of the Sarawak Constabulary, which can be traced back to the Fortmen who manned the military-style garrisons built at strategic points by the Brookes.<sup>2</sup> In 1852, Joseph Middleton was made Constable with mainly Malay police, supplemented by some Sepoys and Sikhs recruited after the 1857 insurrection at Bau.<sup>3</sup> A predominantly Dayak paramilitary force, the Sarawak Fortmen, was established in 1862 and its 120 strong company was re-formed as the Sarawak Rangers in 1872.<sup>4</sup> No doubt to reduce costs, the Sarawak Rangers and the Police Force were combined in 1932 to form the Sarawak Constabulary.<sup>5</sup> After World War II broke out, defence measures included dividing the Constabulary into a civil police force and a paramilitary force similar to the Sarawak Rangers.<sup>6</sup> Prior to the Japanese invasion, the Constabulary was constituted as a military force and augmented by various new defence bodies.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Japanese Occupation*

Many Malay policemen retained their positions in the Constabulary during the Japanese occupation and there was intensive recruitment of Dayaks.<sup>8</sup> There were only a few Dayaks in the Police Force before the occupation and the Japanese promoted many of those who continued in their posts after occupation to positions of considerable authority.<sup>9</sup> The Japanese found them to be particularly hard-working, honest, and loyal.<sup>10</sup> Apart from the feared *kempeitai*,<sup>11</sup> the Japanese initiated some interesting developments in social control somewhat different from the role of the

Brooke Constabulary. The *jikeidan* was a vigilante system with districts divided into blocks of about thirty houses each under a local man who was responsible to the Constabulary for what happened in those houses.<sup>12</sup> A *kyodohei*, a militia consisting mainly of Ibans from the Balau River in the Second Division, but with Malay senior officers, was formed.<sup>13</sup> A less direct control agency, the Kakeo Kokadai or United Overseas Association, was formed to ensure greater co-operation with the Japanese, whilst the Young Men's Association provided a form of conscript labour for work parties.<sup>14</sup>

### *The British Period: Post-war Problems*

When civil administration was restored in April 1946, the Constabulary retained virtually all its serving personnel as any collaborators with the Japanese were not charged or dismissed.<sup>15</sup> Digby noted that by 1951 some of its Asian officers with the worst reputations for collaboration during the occupation had received promotions and were wielding real authority.<sup>16</sup> One of the first non-European police officers to be commissioned before the war, Abang Hj. Mustapha bin Abang Hj. Moasili, actively championed Japanese interests during the occupation, but supported cession and was designated Datu Bandar by the Rajah in June 1946.<sup>17</sup> In one case the Dayaks took matters into their own hands after the occupation by killing a Malay constable at Serian for his over-zealous assistance to the Japanese.<sup>18</sup> Apart from such alienation, many of the Constabulary's personnel were in debt and lacked stamina due to malnutrition during the occupation.<sup>19</sup> Equipment was poor and in short supply. Also the Constabulary faced the aftermath of the war: a lessened value of human life and a revival of the old passion for head-hunting.<sup>20</sup>

Low literacy levels reflecting the level of educational services available to the state's indigenous peoples was a major problem. Although the 1940 Constabulary Regulations stipulated that all new recruits had to be literate, a large number of uneducated personnel had been recruited before the war and during the British Military Administration (BMA) period.<sup>21</sup> In 1948, only half of its 1,064 personnel were literate and a slowly rising level of education amongst the indigenous peoples did not provide adequately qualified recruits until 1958.<sup>22</sup> After the occupation, the Police Training School (PTS) therefore provided elementary teaching as a pre-requisite to tutoring in the rudiments of law and police work

in addition to drill and arms training.<sup>23</sup> However, even in 1955, half the 1,728 other ranks were illiterate and a quarter were semi-literate.<sup>24</sup> By 1960, a minimum of Primary VI in English or Malay was possible for new recruitments.<sup>25</sup> Although this was still a high requirement for the indigenous people who provided most of the recruits, it was barely adequate for personnel responsible for law and order defined by increasingly complex legislation.<sup>26</sup> To attract Cambridge School Certificate holders, a Constabulary Cadet rank was introduced at the end of 1960, but this did not produce its first external recruit until 1962.<sup>27</sup> The literacy levels for Constabulary recruitment reflected those of the community and were outside Constabulary control.<sup>28</sup>

Another problem facing the Constabulary in 1946, ethnic imbalance in the force, also proved intractable.<sup>29</sup> Although Chinese made up over 25 per cent of the population in 1949, only 2 per cent of the force was Chinese since few offered their services.<sup>30</sup> The shortage of Chinese in the force was a considerable handicap because the main population centres were predominantly Chinese with whom the constables and officers had some difficulty in communicating. Even by 1955 there were only twenty-two Chinese inspectors and nineteen Chinese of other ranks out of a total force of 1,390.<sup>31</sup> Although a growing number of Chinese were willing to join the inspectorate as direct entries, few were prepared to meet the requirement of going through the ranks. The lingua franca of the force, Malay, was an added deterrent to Chinese recruitment.<sup>32</sup> There was some success in recruiting Chinese in the late 1950s after the Chinese community was challenged to make the Constabulary an efficient force by encouraging their youth to join.<sup>33</sup> However, this was largely offset by resignations attributed to parental disapproval and dislike of discipline. In 1960 following twenty-nine resignations, only 110 Chinese remained in the 1,403 strong force,<sup>34</sup> but there were thirty Chinese officers out of a total of 101. This raised some concern over future imbalances at senior levels after Borneanization, as a number of Chinese but 'fewer Malays and still fewer Ibans' were deemed capable of filling the higher posts.<sup>35</sup> These concerns had not been resolved when control of the Constabulary was transferred to the Federal government of Malaysia in September 1963.

In the immediate post-war era the Constabulary lost ground both in its own numbers and in law enforcement. There were sixteen murders in 1947 compared to eight in 1940 and the services of 195 constables was lost during 1947, mainly due to resignations,

retirements, and dismissals, which left only 579 out of an approved establishment of 769.<sup>36</sup> In 1948 an improvement in conditions of service reduced the number of resignations, a twelve-month PTS course reduced the number of illiterates from 562 to 369, the number of dismissals for breaches of discipline fell, and recruitment increased the number of non-commissioned officers and other ranks to 1,037.<sup>37</sup> At the same time the crime rate dropped dramatically.<sup>38</sup> However the political situation in Sarawak was far from stable and there had been signs of incipient civil unrest emanating from the anti-cession campaign.<sup>39</sup> To supplement the Constabulary, the only armed force in the state in the immediate post-war period, there was a volunteer force called the Special Police. To remove the connotations of Special Branch work associated with this name, it was replaced under the Constabulary Ordinance enacted at the end of 1948 by the Special Constabulary, a reserve force with the defined role of carrying out normal police duties in time of emergency.<sup>40</sup> Recruitment to its expanded strength of 500 officers and men began in mid-1949, but the response was disappointing and by late 1950 it only had 295 personnel.<sup>41</sup> Concerns over the signs of possible internal unrest, coupled with the Malayan Emergency and the cold war, also found expression in other measures, including the formation of the Special Branch within the Constabulary for which an officer was specially recruited in 1949.<sup>42</sup>

However, the Constabulary was not prepared for the assassination of the Governor in Sibu on 3 December 1949, and within two months of that event a Defence and Security Officer had been assigned to protecting dignitaries and making all future security arrangements.<sup>43</sup> Security was increased by introducing surprise checks throughout the state—117,000 people were checked in 1950—and by close liaison on security matters with Brunei and North Borneo.<sup>44</sup> Also, a sub-office of the Special Branch was opened at Kuala Belait to cover Brunei and northern Sarawak, and a small Marine and Radio Branch was set up to police local waters and shipping and to operate newly developed UHF and VHF communication links.<sup>45</sup> To deal with civil unrest, riot control was made a standard part of training and a procedural manual was issued.

### *The Constabulary and the 1952 Emergency*

In what became known as the 'Batu Kitang incident', police Lance-Corporal Matu was killed and two of his men were

wounded while manning a routine road block at the 27th Mile on the Simanggang Road in the early hours of 6 August 1952.<sup>46</sup> This incident was deemed to have been a political act by communists from Kalimantan who were suspected of having ties in Sarawak.<sup>47</sup> The Constabulary immediately began to undertake paramilitary operations and the *Sarawak Tribune* called for it to be strengthened, adequately paid, and re-equipped to stamp out this lawlessness.<sup>48</sup> On 9 August 1952, the government declared a state of emergency in the First Division and emergency regulations followed. These provided powers to impose curfews, to control all roads and rivers, to detain persons without trial for up to one year, and to hang persons found carrying an unlicensed firearm.<sup>49</sup> Fears of incursions by communists from Kalimantan crossing the unguarded border with Sarawak and local sympathizers providing them with assistance prompted the government to call for outside help.<sup>50</sup>

North Borneo responded by sending two of their Constabulary platoons comprising sixty-eight men, the Commandant of the Singapore Police Training School took over the Kuching PTS, and uniforms, jungle boots, kits, food packs, and rations were flown in by the Royal Air Force.<sup>51</sup> The Sarawak Constabulary enforced curfews, carried out frequent and prolonged jungle operations along the border areas to discourage and uncover incursions, made sweeps of areas for security and arms checks, and searched for arms and evidence of communist affiliations.<sup>52</sup> Its duties during the five-month state of emergency also included the arrest of Chinese political suspects, leading to five deportations and twenty-five detentions.<sup>53</sup> Kalimantan and Sarawak reached agreement to co-operate in patrolling the frontier after a bizarre incident involving Sarawak government officials on their way to Pontianak by launch for talks.<sup>54</sup>

Concerns about the Batu Kitang incident were allayed by General Lockhart, Deputy Director of Operations, Federation of Malaya, who advised the Press on 1 September 1952 that there were no resistance movements, no organized communist party, nor evidence of any overall plan of communist activities in Sarawak.<sup>55</sup> His visit to Sarawak was a turning point for the Constabulary as he made a number of proposals that were raised in the Council Negri by the Governor, Sir Anthony Abell, on 2 December 1952.<sup>56</sup> These resulted in a larger Constabulary, a strengthened Special Branch, more police stations, enhanced police telecommunication systems, and improved conditions of service to attract recruits and more Chinese. The Constabulary's establishment was increased

TABLE 9.1  
Central Government Expenditure on Constabulary, Education, and  
Health, 1947-1962 (dollars)

Year	Constabulary	Education <sup>b</sup>	Health	Expenditure <sup>c</sup>
1947	641,583	235,162	970,583	10,798,014
1948	946,170	276,436	989,469	12,592,606
1949	1,137,995	328,994	1,166,057	16,684,325
1950	1,106,950	416,660	1,469,285	16,536,527
1951	1,756,879	564,752	2,064,975	22,517,206
1952	2,584,046	632,476	2,517,391	28,724,480
1953	3,230,386	769,291	2,881,597	34,280,449
1954	3,381,329	1,042,137	3,219,526	33,264,705
1955	3,305,850	1,292,827	3,733,245	43,170,607
1956	3,718,952	5,748,864	4,552,611	43,374,438
1957	3,879,412	7,194,015	5,133,278	50,587,350
1958	3,961,863	8,745,261	5,192,820	57,956,443
1959	4,119,496	9,502,587	5,626,127	64,944,932
1960	4,270,425	9,758,830	6,038,110	83,304,790
1961	4,443,266	10,710,625	6,653,245	80,258,700
1962 <sup>a</sup>	4,681,070	11,800,668	7,199,176	81,999,603

Sources: Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year* and *Sarawak Annual Report*, relevant years.

<sup>a</sup>The 1962 expenditure figures are estimates.

<sup>b</sup>The education figures are those of the department and do not include the costs incurred by the education agencies (the local authorities, the missions, the Chinese school boards, private schools, etc.) where virtually all the direct expenditure on education was incurred until the late 1950s.

<sup>c</sup>These total Central Government expenditure figures are those given in the *Sarawak Annual Reports* and are for general comparison since no corrections have been made for inclusion/exclusion of capital expenditure nor for differing accounting practices and presentations over the 1947 to 1962 period.

by twelve gazetted officers, twelve inspectors, and 401 non-commissioned officers.<sup>57</sup> Between 1952 and 1954, its operating costs exceeded those of all other departments as shown in Table 9.1.

### *Political Intelligence*

The Special Branch was placed under an Assistant Commissioner in 1953 and its operations were extended in the following year from Kuching to Simanggang, Sibul, Miri, and Kuala Belait.<sup>58</sup> Selected personnel were sent to the Special Branch school in



TABLE 9.2  
Prison Statistics, 1947-1963

Year	Number of Prisons	Persons Committed during the Period					Total	Daily Average Number in Prison
		Debt & Fine Payment Default	Safe Custody or on Remand	Serving Prison Terms	Public Security or Emergency	Detention Pending Deportation		
1947	2	4	-	625	-	-	629	173
1948	2	-	-	788	-	-	788	209
1949	2	-	4	471	-	-	475	186
1950	5	1	205	375	-	-	581	144
1951	5	-	123	294	-	1	418	119
1952	5	-	99	283	41	-	428	124
1953	5	-	98	411	-	-	509	120
1954	5	-	85	325	-	29	439	122
1955	5	-	129	308	-	-	437	117
1956	5	15	68	301	-	1	385	115
1957	5	13	84	198	-	13	308	112
1958	5	58	166	347	-	8	579	121
1959	5	23	106	149	-	13	291	123
1960	5	22	176	199	-	1	398	101
1961	5	102	168	330	-	49	649	124
1962	5	82	477	334	79	-	972	142
1963	5	69	270	703	803	157	2,002	675

Source: Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics, 1964*, Table 9.5.

Kuala Lumpur for training and two Chinese gazetted officers were provided by Hong Kong on transfer. In its lessened role after the administration of Brunei and Sarawak was separated in 1959, the Special Branch was placed under a Senior Superintendent. Its aim of countering communism was severely handicapped by too few Chinese detectives in all branches of the Constabulary.<sup>59</sup> However, sufficient intelligence was obtained to enable forty-nine suspected Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) members to be arrested over eight days following the Brunei uprising on 8 December 1962.<sup>60</sup> With a few exceptions, they were holding responsible positions in education, a political party, the Press, and trade unions. By the end of 1963, official records showed that 157 suspects were waiting deportation and 803 were detained under public security or emergency regulations as shown in Table 9.2. The intelligence gathered on the CCO was published in the 1963 White Paper, *The Danger Within* written by Tim Hardy, a Special Branch officer.<sup>61</sup> This gave a comprehensive survey of the communist movement in Sarawak, its method of operation, and the depth of communist penetration in education, politics, farmers' associations, and the labour movement.

The Brunei uprising of December 1962 included plans for local insurgents to seize the Miri oilfield and areas of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions.<sup>62</sup> Evidence of military training had been discovered on the borders of North Borneo, Sarawak, and Kalimantan in the Fifth Division, and the Sarawak police had made ten arrests in the Lawas area on 3 December.<sup>63</sup> Although the only recorded warning was given four days later to the Fourth Division Resident, John Fisher, by a Malay who told him to expect serious trouble in Miri in two days' time,<sup>64</sup> the Special Branch appeared to have had prior intelligence of the uprising and even its approximate timing.<sup>65</sup> When the uprising broke out on 8 December, police stations were primary targets. Those at Limbang and Bekenu were overrun and four policemen at Limbang lost their lives during the attack by 350 insurgents.<sup>66</sup>

### *The Field Force*

On 2 December 1952, the Governor asked the Council Negri for approval to establish a Field Force within the Constabulary, a paramilitary force specially trained to deal with disturbances and any militant anti-government political activities.<sup>67</sup> It was set up with five 42-man Dayak platoons trained in jungle warfare, crowd

control, and anti-riot procedures and was armed with Bren guns, Sten guns, Lee Enfield rifles, Sterling sub-machine-guns, and carbines. Initially a group of officers and men were trained in Malaya in jungle warfare and, on their return, gave new recruits a year of intensive training.<sup>68</sup>

In 1954, Kuala Belait and Miri were each allocated a platoon, and in 1955 a platoon was allocated to Sibu and another platoon to Miri.<sup>69</sup> The fifth platoon was held in reserve. Their activities included long distance patrols in remote areas of the country and combined exercises with military forces whenever possible.<sup>70</sup> By 1961 its establishment had been increased to six platoons with 271 personnel.<sup>71</sup> To augment the state's strike force for use in emergencies, the Auxiliary Police (Field Force Reserve) was formed in 1956 from Field Force personnel who had completed their service contracts, and by the end of 1961 had 295 men.<sup>72</sup> When the Brunei uprising broke out, all reservists were mobilized and reinforcements were sent to the Fifth Division and Miri. Apart from an abortive attempt to re-enter Limbang, their role was to support British troops brought in from Singapore.

### *The Sarawak Rangers and the Border Scouts*

Although not involved in the enforcement of local law and order but available should emergencies arise, during the colonial era the legacy of the Sarawak Rangers of 1862 and the *kyodohei* of the Japanese occupation was continued in various forms. In response to a request from the Malayan government in 1948 and against the objections of Attorney-General K. H. Digby, Governor Sir Charles Arden Clarke agreed to send Dayak volunteers to Malaya to act as trackers for British troops in the anti-communist insurgency operations.<sup>73</sup> Known as the Ferret Force, its numbers grew from an initial contingent of forty-nine men who arrived in Kuala Lumpur on 11 August 1948 to 301 by the end of 1952. Their zeal was apparent from two disparate events: Awan Anak Rawang was awarded the George Cross, and another Dayak, together with Capt. William Dunlop of the Malay Regiment, was convicted of threatening decapitation to obtain information.<sup>74</sup>

During 1952, two experimental platoons of Ferret personnel operated successfully as combat troops and, in response to a request from Malaya to provide Dayaks for military service, the Sarawak Rangers (Malaya Unit) was formed with the support of Dayak *penghulu* to serve in both combatant and tracker roles.<sup>75</sup>

They were engaged on two-year contracts with five years on reserve and were encouraged to join the Auxiliary Police when on reserve. A number were killed in action, including three in 1953 and one in 1957. Following reduced communist activity in Malaya, the Malaya Unit of 325 men was reduced to 225 at the end of 1957, and when its engagement ended on 31 March 1960 it was replaced by the Sarawak Rangers (Far East Land Forces) and made part of the British Army liable for service in any part of the world.<sup>76</sup> By 1961, it consisted of three platoons of trackers, eighteen dog handlers, and the Animal Transport Section, with a total complement of 142 men.<sup>77</sup> As part of the British Army, it took part in quelling the Brunei uprising, by which time one Iban had been commissioned.<sup>78</sup> Dayak skills in tracking were also utilized in the Border Scouts, formed as a branch of the Auxiliary Constabulary in 1963 to provide early warning of any incursions from Indonesia when *konfrontasi* began.<sup>79</sup>

### *The Crime Rate*

During the British era, the crime rate in Sarawak was low, although the war had lessened the value of human life and one Chinese secret society was uncovered.<sup>80</sup> Crime tended to decline until the early 1950s and then began to rise gradually, as shown in Table 9.3. In 1949, a policy to improve the police presence throughout the country was adopted, involving constant patrolling rather than a large number of small static police stations.<sup>81</sup> These were reduced from eighty-nine in 1947 to fifty-five in 1948, increased rapidly to sixty including Batu Kitang and the 32nd Mile Simanggang Road after the 1952 emergency, and then gradually reduced to thirty-six by 1961.<sup>82</sup> To improve crime investigation standards, after six years' preparation a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) was set up in 1958.

### *The Public Image of the Constabulary*

The disparate functions of the Constabulary which included collecting political intelligence, civil police work, and paramilitary duties presented problems in maintaining good rapport with the public. A balance had to be maintained between the tolerance and understanding of a civil police force and the toughness inherent in its paramilitary function.<sup>83</sup> Accordingly, considerable attention was given to its public image. Every week a contingent of the

TABLE 9.3  
Crime Statistics, 1947-1963

<i>Year</i>	<i>Murders</i>	<i>Robberies</i>	<i>Thefts</i>	<i>Break-ins</i>
1947	16	32	1,036	82
1948	5	5	879	49
1949	8	6	750	74
1950	9	7	720	69
1951	8	0	690	57
1952	7	9	789	61
1953	10	5	856	69
1954	6	2	990	59
1955	18	3	879	77
1956	24	0	898	83
1957	27	3	1,190	93
1958	25	11	1,226	80
1959	15	11	1,067	71
1960	9	11	1,211	131
1961	28	12	1,214	107
1962	23	23	1,539	96
1963	17	12	1,572	140

Sources: Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary*, 1947-63; Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics*, 1964.

Note: The figure for break-ins for 1953 is an estimate.

Constabulary in full dress uniform marched through the centre of Kuching to and from the mosque to attend Friday prayers. Also, ceremonial police parades were held at official functions including the Queen's birthday and guards of honour were mounted for visiting dignitaries.<sup>84</sup> The Constabulary was proud of its band which gave popular music concerts in the museum gardens on most Sundays, played at official functions, and toured Sarawak from time to time. Constabulary skills were also demonstrated in four public bi-annual tattoos held during the later years of the colonial period, joined occasionally by bands of the British forces. Reflecting the development of a modern society in Sarawak, in 1963 the first step was taken to establish a Women's Police Section by sending two female inspectors to Kuala Lumpur for training.<sup>85</sup>

The British colonial government inherited a working department but with inadequate equipment and low rates of pay. Some of its officers had not treated the public with due respect during the occupation and two-thirds of the Malay inspectors were said to have collaborated with the Japanese. Irrespective of any alienation from sectors of the public that this caused, there were indications of internal problems regarding morale in the high levels of resignations. The standard of literacy amongst the rank and file remained an unresolved problem; the twelve-month in-service course in elementary education could only provide very basic literacy; and conditions of service sufficiently attractive to the more highly educated candidates were not introduced. The problems of low literacy were compounded by a failure to attract more than a small number of Chinese, although the towns were predominantly Chinese who represented over one-quarter of the population. This obviously created communication problems between the police and much of the Chinese population.

Measured by the crime rate, the Constabulary was very successful in its conventional police role. In its military and paramilitary functions, the Constabulary had to carry out extensive patrol work, set up road blocks, make surprise checks, defend its stations against armed attack as in the 1962 Brunei uprising, co-ordinate and work with British troops when *konfrontasi* with border incursions from Indonesian Kalimantan began in April 1963, and deal with riots during the United Nations fact finding mission in August 1963. When emergencies of any magnitude arose, forces from outside the country were called in and the Constabulary acted in a supporting role, a realistic solution to avoid the cost of a large standing force.

The Constabulary also had a political function through the Special Branch in which it appeared to have had mixed success. Its intelligence gathering function failed in 1949 when there was no prior warning of the plot to assassinate the second Governor, Duncan Stewart. Fears that the 1952 Batu Kitang incident was the beginning of Malayan-type communist insurgency resulted in priority being given to uncovering and combating CCO plans to establish a 'socialist' state in Sarawak. Although the intelligence gathering activities of the Special Branch were inhibited by its inability to attract recruits from the Chinese and the more highly educated, it had some success as shown during the 1962 Brunei uprising when a large number of influential communists and communist sympathizers were detained. Nevertheless, communist

penetration of Chinese society appeared to have been well established by the time it was uncovered. Concentration on the potentially more serious Chinese communist subversion may well have diverted attention from anti-government activities by other ethnic groups, as in the assassination in 1949 of Duncan Stewart and the Kedayan take-over of Bekenu in the Fourth Division during the 1962 Brunei uprising, for which the authorities appeared ill-prepared. It is clear that during the colonial period the security aspects of policing in Sarawak became a major preoccupation of the Constabulary, although the low crime rate suggests that this did not detract from its everyday law and order functions. Law and order was essential for economic development, to which the colonial government was strongly committed.

1. H. G. Nicholas, *The United Nations as a Political Institution*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 228.

2. B. A. Hepburn, *The Handbook of Sarawak: Comprising Historical, Statistical and General Information Concerning the Colony Obtained from Official and Other Reliable Records*, Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1949, p. 62.

3. S. Baring-Gould and C. A. Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak under Its Two White Rajahs, 1839-1908*, London: Henry Sotheman & Co., 1909, pp. 322-3.

4. 'The 'mobile' Sarawak Fortmen were distinct from the locally recruited 'static' Fortmen who manned the forts (*Sarawak Gazette*, 48, 2 September 1872, in Robert Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: The Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941*, London: Macmillan, 1970, p. 167).

5. Hepburn, *The Handbook of Sarawak*, p. 62.

6. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 203.

7. There were the Sarawak Volunteers, the Auxiliary Constabulary, Auxiliary Fire Brigade, the Air Raid Precautions Department, the Sarawak Coastguards, and the Red Cross First Aid and Nursing Service (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1097 (6 August 1949): 194).

8. C. A. Lockard, *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970*, Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1987, pp. 152-3; 'Status of the Military Administration in North Borneo', Nishijima Collection, Waseda University, in R. H. W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 147.

9. 'Status of the Military Administration in North Borneo', in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 147.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Christopher Chan, 'The Period of the Japanese Occupation: The Japanese Occupation (Extracts from a Broadcast Interview by Christopher Chan with Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui on 14th February 1975)', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society* (Sarawak Branch), 3 (December 1976): 10-11.

12. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 146. This social control system originated in China.
13. Elaine McKay, 'The Kuching Communities and Their Response to Cession, 1946', MA preliminary thesis, Monash University, 1976, p. 57.
14. Ong Kee Hui says that the Japanese stopped using civilians for work on the airfield after March 1943 because they could be killed by Allied aircraft (Chan, 'The Japanese Occupation', p. 12).
15. Edward Brandah concluded that most of the *datu* and two-thirds of the Malay inspectors were collaborators (Edward Brandah to Anthony Brooke, 16 October 1945, Brooke Papers, Box 22, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 152).
16. K. H. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, Data Paper No. 114, South-East Asia Program, New York: Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1980, pp. 75-6.
17. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp. 68, 135, and 155.
18. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 75-7. No action was taken against the perpetrators.
19. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1947*, p. 3.
20. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1947*, p. 1. Dayaks were paid a bounty for each head by the Allied SRD and several hundred Japanese lost their heads towards the end of occupation.
21. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1947*, pp. 2-3.
22. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 59; *Sarawak Annual Report, 1957*, p. 94.
23. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 59.
24. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1955*, p. 1.
25. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 203. The same emphasis on literacy was not placed on Field Force recruitment as its role was paramilitary (Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1958*, p. 1).
26. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1958*, p. 2.
27. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 208.
28. In 1960, one in three of Sarawak's fifteen to twenty-nine year olds were literate (L. W. Jones, *Report on the Census of Population Taken on 15th June 1960*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1961, Tables 10 and 12).
29. *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 September 1948, p. 2.
30. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, pp. 9 and 76.
31. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1955*, p. 1.
32. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 127; *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 204.
33. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1957*, p. 1; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 89.
34. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1960*, pp. 1, 7, and 11.
35. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 118; Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1960*, pp. 1 and 6.



36. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1947*, p. 2, and Appendices 2 and 3.
37. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1948*, p. 1.
38. See Table 9.3.
39. Report by Johari Anang, 3 November 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22, cited in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 262; *Straits Times* (Singapore), 10 January 1947, p. 1; *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 September 1948, p. 2.
40. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1094 (7 May 1949): 98.
41. *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 March 1950, p. 2; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 90.
42. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 78.
43. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1950*, p. 7.
44. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1950*, p. 7; 1951, p. 10.
45. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1950*, p. 2; 1961, pp. 19 and 23.
46. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1138 (12 December 1952): 274-5.
47. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 12 August 1952, p. 1.
48. *Sarawak Tribune*, 8 August 1952, p. 2.
49. *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 August 1952, p. 1.
50. *Report on the Proceedings of the Council Negri Held in the Main Court House, Kuching, on 2nd, 3rd and 5th December, 1952*, p. 2.
51. *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 August 1952, p. 2; 14 August 1952, p. 1; 16 August 1952, p. 1.
52. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1952*, p. 17.
53. *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 August 1952, p. 1.
54. *The Times* (London), 29 August 1952, p. 4.
55. The state of emergency ended in January 1953 (*Straits Times* (Singapore), 17 January 1953, p. 1).
56. *Report of the Proceedings of the Council Negri Held in the Main Court House, Kuching, on 2nd, 3rd and 5th December, 1952*, p. 2.
57. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953*, p. 117. The increase included men for the Field Force and expansions to the Special Branch.
58. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1953*, p. 3; 1954, p. 4.
59. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1954*, p. 126; Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1953*, p. 15.
60. *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 December 1962, p. 8.
61. Sarawak Information Service, *The Danger Within: A History of the Clandestine Communist Organization in Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1963; Alastair Morrison, *Fair Land Sarawak: Some Recollections of an Expatriate Official*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 121.
62. *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 December 1962, p. 1.
63. *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 December 1962, p. 2; 10 December 1962, p. 1.
64. Morrison, *Fair Land Sarawak*, p. 142.
65. This information is from a reliable source cognizant with Special Branch activities at the time, but has been proffered only on the basis of anonymity.

66. Morrison, *Fair Land Sarawak*, p. 142.
67. *Report on the Proceedings of the Council Negri Held in the Main Court House, Kuching, on 2nd, 3rd and 5th December, 1952*, p. 3.
68. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1953*, p. 119.
69. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1953*, p. 4; 1954, p. 5; 1956, p. 7.
70. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1959*, p. 8; 1961, p. 3.
71. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1961*, pp. 18 and 22.
72. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1956*, p. 99; Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1961*, p. 19.
73. *Singapore Free Press*, 11 August 1948, p. 1; Digby, *Latex in the Wilderness*, p. 82.
74. *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 November 1951, p. 2; *Straits Times* (Singapore), 19 September 1952, p. 7.
75. The Sarawak Rangers (Malay Unit) was formed as a corps of the Sarawak Volunteer Force under the *Sarawak Rangers Ordinance of 1953* (Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1953*, p. 142).
76. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1956*, p. 129; 1957, p. 130; 1959, p. 154.
77. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 164.
78. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 272.
79. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 29 May 1963, p. 6.
80. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1244 (31 October 1961): 200.
81. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1948*, p. 1; 1949, p. 2.
82. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1952*, p. 106; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 127.
83. Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary, 1958*, p. 1.
84. In 1958, the Constabulary mounted twelve guards of honour.
85. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, p. 127.



## PART III

### Economic Intervention

III : F.A.R.

-- 1974-1975 --

1974-1975

## 10 Agriculture

### *Economic Development in the Pre-Brooke Era*

EVIDENCE suggests China had trading contacts with Borneo during the Han period (206 BC-AD 220).<sup>1</sup> That treasured heirloom of the Iban *bilek*, the *tajau lama* decorated with the royal dragon of China, is a well-known symbol of Sarawak's early trade with China.<sup>2</sup> Between the seventh and the thirteenth centuries when Borneo was probably under the control of the Hindu Kingdom of Sri Vijaya based in Sumatra, Santubong ('king of the jungle' in the Chinese Hakka dialect) in Sarawak grew into a busy port with a thriving iron industry.<sup>3</sup> Its subsequent decline may be linked to the destruction of the Kublai Khan's fleet in 1281.<sup>4</sup> The powerful maritime Hindu-Javanese Kingdom of Majapahit controlled Borneo's external trade from the fourteenth century until it collapsed in the early sixteenth century. This enabled its vassal sultanate of Brunei to establish an independent Moslem dynasty that included the present state of Sarawak. By that time the port of Santubong and its iron industry had disappeared and the Hindu monopoly of Borneo trade was broken by Malay traders, *nakhoda* (ship captains) trading directly with Malacca primarily in exotic forest products.

Portuguese, Dutch, and English competition, the increasing importance of Malacca as the entrepôt for the China trade, and the advent of piracy all contributed to the decline of direct trade between Brunei and China. Brunei's population declined from some 100,000 in the fourteenth century to 15,000 in 1809; most of the Chinese left, and the large-scale Chinese pepper plantations outside the township were abandoned.<sup>5</sup> When Sarawak's antimony came to the notice of Singapore traders in the early 1820s, it was mined on the orders of the Sultan, attracting Chinese miners from Sambas and Montrado.<sup>6</sup> However, by the start of the Brooke era in 1841, Sarawak's external trade had been reduced to negligible proportions by piracy and insurrection against Brunei rule.

*Brooke Policies on Economic Development*

Economic development under the Brookes was inhibited by a basically subsistence economy, supplemented by the export of cash crops, natural products of the forest, and mineral resources.<sup>7</sup> The resulting small tax base, low population densities, and limited production mitigated against heavy investment in infrastructure such as roads, the numerous river systems providing natural highways.<sup>8</sup> Exports increased from \$1.4 million in 1887 to over \$45 million in 1940, with oil and rubber predominating. Government revenues increased from \$351,000 to \$7.4 million. For agriculture, the Brookes preferred smallholdings farmed by owners practising subsistence, cash crop, or mixed cultivation. The Brookes promoted Chinese immigration, initially for intensive rice cultivation. Land policies were founded on customary rights and leasehold of unoccupied land in smallholdings for farming or dwellings. Brooke forest policy was to establish reserves to provide timber for export and local use, whilst allowing collection of the natural products in the reserves for export as income supplements for the indigenous people.

Foreign investment was not encouraged, particularly for plantation agriculture, although there were some exceptions. There were five large rubber estates that included the Borneo Company's Dahan (1902) and Sungei Tengah (1908) rubber estates, and the Nissa Shokai estate on the Samarahan River. The Borneo Company Limited (BCL) was granted sole public company operating rights in Sarawak in 1856 and had interests in agriculture, minerals, timber, trading, shipping, and financing governmental commercial schemes.<sup>9</sup> The other major exception was the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company formed in 1909 to develop the Miri oilfield.<sup>10</sup>

The Brooke preference for peasant-proprietor smallholdings rendered Sarawak's economy and people less vulnerable to the problems emanating from price fluctuations on the world commodity market and a landless, daily paid, labouring class employed on large estates.<sup>11</sup> However, the world depression of the early 1930s, coupled with exhaustion of economically viable mineral deposits and a declining oilfield, further limited expenditure on communications and social services. In a series of drastic economy measures, government expenditure was reduced from \$7.1 million in 1930 to \$3.6 million in 1933.<sup>12</sup> Decay of all aspects of the economy and infrastructure followed during the Japanese occupation.<sup>13</sup> Thus, when the Japanese occupation ended, there was an urgent

need for a substantial capital investment to rebuild and improve the infrastructure, and also to improve the standard of living.<sup>14</sup>

### *British Policies on Economic Development and Its Funding*

In 1946, the British government accepted the obligation imposed by the second Cardinal Principle in the preamble to the 1941 Constitution of Sarawak, that 'the standard of living of the people of Sarawak shall steadily be raised'. British policy was also based on self-sufficiency with balanced budgets and ability to service debts.<sup>15</sup> To achieve these objectives, Sarawak's British administrators sought to transform the agricultural, forestry, industrial, and mining sectors through increasingly ambitious development plans.<sup>16</sup> Between 1946 and 1963, \$291 million was spent on development, funded largely from internal surpluses, Colonial Development & Welfare (CD & W) funds, and loans (Tables 10.1-10.3).<sup>17</sup> CD & W funding was the largest external source of assistance to Sarawak's development plans between 1946 and 1963.<sup>18</sup> However, by the end of 1962 a public debt of \$24,885,623 had been incurred whereas on 1 July 1946 the state had reserves of £2.75 million (\$23,567,500).<sup>19</sup> Internal funding was from extraordinary revenues such as land sales, war damage compensation, loan repayments, and revenue surpluses. To finance development, the administration was under constant pressure to find new sources of revenue.<sup>20</sup>

Seeking to find new sources of revenue and move the taxation system away from an over-reliance on customs duties that penalized the poorer consumer and the primary producer who was the mainstay of the economy, the government in late 1949 introduced flat-rate trade licence fees and company tax.<sup>21</sup> This was followed by a rather inept move in late 1954 to increase the trade licence fees by up to two hundred times, causing a trade hartal in January 1955 that almost brought seaborne trade to a halt.<sup>22</sup> A compromise was reached, but at the cost of a \$1.5 million reduction in estimated government income for 1955, leaving a lasting impression on the Secretariat.<sup>23</sup> To spread the tax burden over a wider range of commodities and increase tax on the more wealthy sections of the community, import duties were completely reviewed in 1957.

The regressive nature of the import duties was reduced by removing the duty on salt and reducing the duty on milk and



TABLE 10.1  
Projects Financed by Colonial Development and Welfare Funds,  
31 December 1950

<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Amount Spent (\$)</i>
<i>Agriculture</i>		
D.816 & 6A	Soil Survey	66,698
D.826	Improvement of Rubber Industry	23,022
D.954	Cultivation of Cash Crops	44,485
D.973 & 3A	Mechanical Cultivation	66,485
D.1208 & 8A	Wet <i>Padi</i> Cultivation—Paya Megok	148,337
D.1424	Cocoa Cultivation	3,902
D.1519	Department of Agriculture Staff Training School	—
<i>Education</i>		
D.839 & 9A	Batu Lintang Teachers' Training Centre and School	342,684
D.838	Rural Improvement School, Kanowit	191,071
<i>Fisheries</i>		
D.837/R.209	Fisheries Survey	16,417
<i>Forestry</i>		
D.1120	Forest Department	27,347
<i>Geological</i>		
D.959 etc.	Geological Survey	417,761
<i>Medical and Health</i>		
D.830	Travelling Dispensaries	352,954
R.158	Malaria Survey	—
<i>Posts and Telegraphs</i>		
D.1117	Installation of Telecommunications Service, Kuching Airfield	175,765
<i>Public Works</i>		
D.1076	Communications—Roads	373,970
D.913 & 3A	Kuching Airfield	561,472
D.1273	Port Development	31,384
D.1430	Buildings	—
D.1542	Sibu Airfield	—
<i>Socio-Economic Survey</i>		
R.270	Sociological Research	62,722

Source: Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, pp. 5-6.

Note: Although no expenditure is shown for some projects at 31 December 1950, CD & W funding had already been made available by that date.

TABLE 10.2  
Financing of Development, 1946-1963

	<i>Development Plan Estimates (\$)</i>
1 January 1947 to 31 December 1954 <sup>a</sup>	
CD & W grants	9,809,171
War Damage compensation	2,300,000
Internal funds	61,471,331
Total	73,580,502
1 January 1957 to 31 December 1960 <sup>b</sup>	
CD & W grants	11,724,200
Loans	19,410,315
Internal sources	68,550,000
Total	103,234,515
1 January 1959 to March 1964 <sup>c</sup>	
CD & W grants	32,452,400
Loans	38,374,500
Internal sources	34,118,708
Total	114,945,608

Sources: <sup>a</sup>SDB, *Sarawak Development Plan, 1955-60*, p. 53.

<sup>b</sup>SDB, *Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1955-60*, Table 3.

<sup>c</sup>SDB, *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-63*, p. 3.

sugar. In a further move towards direct taxation, studies culminated in the introduction of taxes on salaries, profits, and interest from 1 January 1961, with provision for a future property tax.<sup>24</sup> These changes reduced the customs duty component of government revenues from 66 per cent in 1948 to 44 percent in 1962, and increased the income tax component from zero to 15 per cent over that period.<sup>25</sup> However, this did not avert increases in import duties in 1962 to provide 'much greater investment' since it was 'all too evident that the growth rate must be greatly accelerated if an acceptable standard of living is ever to be achieved for our people'.<sup>26</sup> Against this prognosis by the State Financial Secretary must be measured actual economic development in the various sectors of the economy during the colonial period. In Sarawak's economy, agriculture predominated as a means of livelihood.

TABLE 10.3  
Colonial Development and Welfare Funding of  
Capital Development, 1946-1962

Year	CD & W Fund Expenditure (\$)	Total Capital Expenditure (\$)	Year	CD & W Fund Expenditure (\$)	Total Capital Expenditure (\$)
1946	-	n.a.	1955	619,247	13,423,333
1947	188,618	n.a.	1956	1,248,338	19,952,507
1948	432,651	n.a.	1957	3,426,092	23,164,459
1949	1,260,829	n.a.	1958	2,398,878	22,679,427
1950 <sup>a</sup>	1,024,177	4,369,231	1959	1,033,510	27,469,167
1951	1,428,398	8,345,513	1960	n.a.	28,531,764
1952	2,096,384	9,105,013	1961	n.a.	32,678,045
1953	1,489,797	10,976,156	1962	10,128,663	44,907,996 <sup>b</sup>
1954 <sup>a</sup>	1,209,423	15,572,808			

Sources and Notes: Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year, 1948-52*; *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953-62*; and SDB, *Sarawak Development Plan and Revised Development Plan of Sarawak*, relevant years. The figures are indicative only, as methods of presentation changed from time to time.

<sup>a</sup>The *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, pp. 5 and 6, gives the cumulative CD & W expenditure to 31 December 1950 as \$2,906,275. Similarly, the 1956 *Report* on p. 8 gives the cumulative CD & W expenditure to 31 December 1954 as \$9,131,277. The 1950 and 1954 CD & W figures are assessed from these sources.

<sup>b</sup>Estimated from Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 25.  
n.a. = not available.

### *Agricultural Policy, 1946-1963*

Agriculture was recognized as the backbone of the country's economy and its key role was mentioned in the House of Lords in 1956 by Lord Ogmores, who described it as Sarawak's main hope in the light of depleted or diminishing mineral resources.<sup>27</sup> The post-World War II policy was to encourage a mixed system of agriculture by Native smallholders in preference to large, specialized plantations, thus continuing Brooke policies.<sup>28</sup> In 1949, the Acting Governor, C. W. Dawson, advised that there were three main economic problems confronting Sarawak.<sup>29</sup> These were a lack of communications, a need to diversify the economy by developing other cash crops besides rubber, and the wasteful farming methods of swidden cultivation. He also said that the state could be self-supporting in rice, provided that new methods of cultivation were

adopted in swamp land. Constant exhortations to plant more *padi* followed.<sup>30</sup>

A policy review in 1956 called for increasing and diversifying agricultural productivity with an emphasis on food; increasing exports of cash crops; developing new crops; promoting sound agricultural development of new lands; and safeguarding crops and livestock from disease.<sup>31</sup> Two years later, attention was drawn to the state's continuing inability to produce adequate rice for its own needs.<sup>32</sup> By 1960, a different emphasis began to emerge with the proposed injection of a 'modicum of high efficiency plantation agriculture' to 'stimulate the smallholders'.<sup>33</sup> Obstacles to rapid change were listed as indifferent soil, shifting cultivation, absence of individual titles to most of the land, prevalence of customary rights over land, lack of communications, and rural reluctance to change traditional ways of life. Subsistence farmers were viewed as under-employed and inefficient users of natural resources.<sup>34</sup>

These policies were inconsistent with the British government's commitment to uphold *adat lama* as promised by the Rajah on 24 April 1946, since slash-and-burn methods of growing hill *padi* embodied basic Dayak rituals and beliefs and provided 'for their spiritual and moral as well as their material well-being'.<sup>35</sup> Yet the government feared 'social and moral convulsions' if changes in the Dayak traditional way of life were made too quickly.<sup>36</sup> This sensitivity towards *adat lama* no doubt contributed to the Department of Agriculture's admission that it had made no material progress during the post-war decade.<sup>37</sup> The 1955-60 Development Plan was therefore 'based upon the modern procedure involving co-ordinated programmes of investigation and extension'.<sup>38</sup>

By the end of 1962 the Department had decided that climatic conditions in Sarawak dictated 'a "tree crop" economy for cash income' and had reconfirmed that 'any improvement in living standards must come from improved farming practices and the proper utilisation of natural resources, meagre though these may be'.<sup>39</sup> The pessimism of the official reports was borne out by the declining position of cultivated cash crops in exports between 1947 and 1962 and the increase in imports of rice to feed the growing population. In 1947, rubber, pepper, sago, *jelutong*, and copra made up 82.3 per cent of all exports; in 1962 this had declined to 56 per cent although pepper showed an increase. Rice imports increased from 19 266 tonnes (\$6,282,957) in 1947 to 52 156 tonnes (\$22,067,642) in 1962. Obviously, the policy objectives of increasing self-sufficiency in rice and diversification of cash crops

were not achieved during the British era. Yet under the series of Development Plans in Sarawak, about \$48 million had been allocated for agriculture and fisheries, second only to capital expenditure allocated to communications.

### *The Department of Agriculture*

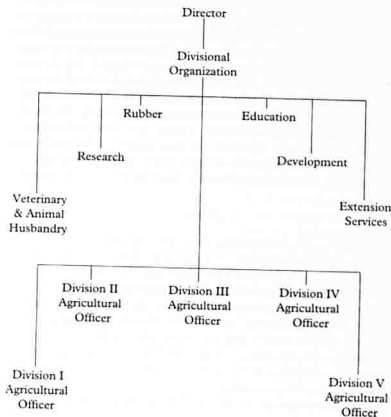
When the Japanese occupation ended in September 1945, agriculture was placed under the Department of Land and Survey and its personnel had the full-time role of encouraging food production. At the beginning of 1947, the Department of Agriculture was reformed to encourage mixed farming, increase rice production with particular attention to wet *padi* cultivation, and investigate alternative cash crops to rubber.<sup>40</sup> By 1951, the Department was claiming that Sarawak could support a much higher population if stabilized intensive methods of farming advocated by the Department were widely adopted.<sup>41</sup> Also in 1951, a staff training school was established with the aid of \$95,500 from CD & W funds. Supplemented by specialists from overseas, this provided the personnel for a number of development centres where stabilized methods of farming could be demonstrated in attempts to change the customary indigenous shifting cultivation. However, the Department had made little impression by 1956 and it was therefore restructured with specialist branches in research, field, veterinary, rubber, and freshwater fisheries and with administration centres in each division. Restructure increased departmental operating costs from \$969,201 in 1956 to \$2,174,206 in 1962, and the number of staff trebled.<sup>42</sup> By the end of 1962 the Department had developed into the organization shown in Figure 10.1.

### *Agricultural Research*

Most pre-1941 research records were lost after the Japanese landed in Kuching, when the first formal and main pre-war research station at Semongok was looted by people from the leper settlement nearby. The station was closed at the end of 1942.<sup>43</sup> Thus, after the occupation, preliminary surveys and empirical investigations became necessary.<sup>44</sup> A Regional Agricultural Research Organization proposed for South-East Asia was considered over-ambitious for Sarawak in 1949 and a proposal a decade later to establish a central research centre for Brunei, North Borneo, and Sarawak was rejected because their needs were dissimilar.<sup>45</sup> Some research work on wet *padi* was carried out at Rantau Panjang

FIGURE 10.1

Structure of the Department of Agriculture, 1 January 1963



Source: Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, Appendix B.

Notes: The Samarahan rubber estate was directly under the Director with a Manager in charge. The Director was responsible for policy and the Deputy Director for direct administration. The Extension Branch covered home economics, publicity, youth services, and extension teams.

on the Igan below Sibu and on pepper at Tarat, but formal research became essential when the 'sudden death' disease began to appear in the pepper gardens between Kuching and Serian.<sup>46</sup>

A new laboratory, the forerunner of a research department, was opened at Batu Lintang in 1955 specifically for this purpose. Throughout the colonial period, research was very dependent on

CD & W funding, which amounted to \$1,682,487 in the first decade after the war.<sup>47</sup> Research projects included pepper disease investigations, soil surveys, wet *padi* land surveys, *padi* cultivation at Paya Megok and Niah/Sibuti, pot culture experiments on *padi*, cultivation of cash crops, a cocoa seed production station, a soil laboratory, and experiments in mechanical cultivation and farm mechanization. Following the 1956 Departmental restructuring, research was emphasized by establishing a dedicated branch within the Department and \$1,167,134 allocated under CD & W Research Scheme 1004 in 1959 enabled 'a greatly expanded and much more comprehensive research programme to be drawn up'.<sup>48</sup> By the end of the British era the research branch had been expanded to include divisions for agronomy of rice, pepper, field crops, and soils; soil surveys; agricultural economics; plant pathology; and entomology. Also Tarat had become the main experimental station.

### *Rubber*

Rubber, the most important cash crop throughout the British period, absorbed over \$36.5 million of the \$48 million allotted to agriculture in the 1959-63 Development Plan and over 16 per cent of all the state's development expenditure.<sup>49</sup> Para rubber was first introduced into Sarawak in 1882 and developed commercially by the Borneo Company Limited at its Dahan (1902) and Sungei Tengah (1908) estates and by immigrant Chinese farmers and indigenous smallholders.<sup>50</sup> After the Japanese occupation, the Agriculture Department evaluated much of the rubber as a wasting asset of old seedling rubber in a very poor condition.<sup>51</sup> Over 95 per cent of the estimated 97 000 hectares planted with rubber was made up of holdings under two hectares and the smallholders' usual practice of tapping their existing rubber trees to meet their need for cash was accentuated by poor rice harvests.<sup>52</sup> Thus, although the Agriculture Department offered supplies of high-yielding varieties (HYV) of budwood, there was little replanting in the immediate post-war years.<sup>53</sup> This was reversed in 1950 and 1951, when the boom market in rubber created by the Korean War over-stimulated interest in planting new holdings to such an extent that *padi* planting suffered.<sup>54</sup> In order to give primacy to growing food, appropriate sections of the pre-war Rubber Regulation Ordinance were introduced to prevent rubber being planted on swamp land suitable for growing wet *padi*.<sup>55</sup> A Rubber Regulation

Officer was appointed, but interest in planting was quickly dissipated by low rubber prices in 1952-3.

At this time the former Japanese-owned Samarahan rubber estate of 1600 hectares was acquired by the Sarawak Rubber Fund Committee. This was one of only five estates in Sarawak that were over 400 hectares. All five estates accounted for only 2854 hectares of the total area under mature rubber, compared with over 80 000 hectares of smallholdings. The committee of Sarawak Rubber Estates Ltd. managed the estate as an economic concern in close co-operation with the Department of Agriculture and carried out a rebuilding programme that provided the estate with a modern smoked sheet factory, a large budded stump nursery, and staff and labour housing and amenities.<sup>56</sup> Seasonal labour was available from nearby Malay villages when it was required to complement the permanent staff. A small school for training rubber gardeners and personnel from the Department in modern production techniques was established in 1954 and the estate became a source of budded stumps for smallholders and estate use. Subsequently an experimental land settlement scheme was introduced to resettle part of the estate with smallholders.<sup>57</sup> About 80 hectares were replanted with HYV rubber, and drainage and irrigation works were established for 120 hectares of wet *padi*. The scheme was designed to assist those without land and provided each settler with four-fifths of a hectare of high grade rubber and with the same area of irrigated land for planting *padi*.<sup>58</sup> However, potential settlers showed little interest and the First Division Development Committee took over the scheme in 1961.

From 1946 to 1956, the Agriculture Department viewed natural rubber as a declining asset gradually being replaced by synthetic rubber. It therefore concentrated on searching for alternative cash crops, but without success.<sup>59</sup> This policy changed in 1956 when the Department was reorganized and attention was turned to large-scale planting of HYV material as quickly as possible. The 1946 Rubber Planting Scheme was revised to include a subsidy of \$1,120 a hectare in cash and kind to approved re-planters and \$494 a hectare to new planters.<sup>60</sup> Under the subsidy scheme, fertilizers, clonal seeds or seedlings, and budwood were issued, as well as crop seeds, weedicides, and pesticides where necessary. The scheme aroused such interest that the 1956 target of 4000 hectares over five years was revised to 24 300 hectares in 1958 and to 36 400 hectares in 1959.<sup>61</sup>



This ushered in a new development: large blocks of land subdivided into lots allocated to Iban, Malay, and Chinese (Foochow) farmers for planting rubber, which simplified control and supervision. In 1958, approval was given to blocks of 200 hectares at Roban in the Second Division, 43 hectares at Senga in the Fourth Division, and 1376 hectares near Bintulu also in the Fourth Division. Another innovation at this time was use of the recently introduced airstrips in the interior to deliver seeds to more remote areas, as in the case of Long Akah in the Fourth Division where a one-hour flight replaced three days by river.<sup>62</sup> To promote new planting further, the subsidy was increased from \$494 to \$617 per hectare. Also from 1 January 1959, under the Rubber Ordinance, 1958, rubber planting permits were abolished, except for planting on land suitable for wet *padi* and on land required to conserve indigenous hill *padi* crops.<sup>63</sup>

To help pay for the Rubber Planting Scheme, a cess of 4.4 cents per kilogram was levied on all rubber exports.<sup>64</sup> Initially, the Department insisted on a high standard of plant husbandry where subsidies were provided, thus confining the scheme to the more accessible areas. To cover the more remote areas, the Supplementary Assisted Rubber Planting Scheme was introduced in 1960.<sup>65</sup> This provided training at selected centres and after training, planters were issued with sufficient material to plant four-fifths of a hectare. Material for another two years was issued if inspection during the first year showed that plant husbandry was satisfactory.

Steps were taken to reduce dependence on Malaya for supplies of Tjir clonal seeds when the Malayan government introduced an export tax of three cents a seed in 1958, followed by an increase to ten cents a seed in 1959.<sup>66</sup> This 60 per cent cost increase was significant since large quantities of seeds, six million in 1959, were imported and the germination rate was about two in three. The Malayan Rubber Research Institute was approached and granted certification of some 40 hectares on the Sungei Moyan Estate for the collection of Tjir clonal seeds, but the trees did not bear seed. Attention then turned to green budding techniques pioneered in North Borneo.<sup>67</sup> After successful trials, 80,000 green seedlings were budded for issue in 1963 and preparations were made to bud 250,000 for issue in 1964. The Department decided to issue this material exclusively as soon as adequate supplies could be produced, supplemented in the interim by imported Malayan clonal seeds, but Malaysia was formed before the plan could be fully implemented.

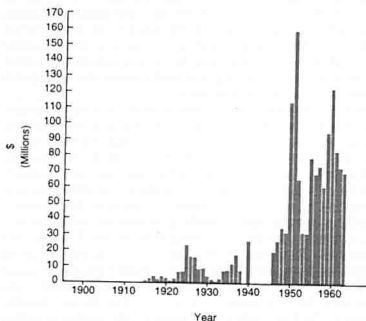
The Rubber Planting Scheme was the most important component in the Development Plan and was said to represent 'the first major step to break the vicious cycle of subsistence dry *padi* farming which for generations has slowed down worthwhile development'.<sup>68</sup> By the end of 1962, 35.5 million clonal seeds had been imported from Malaya and 13 million clonal stumps as well as 83,600 yards of budwood had been issued.<sup>69</sup> Some 23 900 hectares of subsidized new rubber had been planted, equal to about 16 per cent of the 149 000 hectares estimated to be under rubber in Sarawak at that time. The total area under HYV stock, that is virtually all the rubber planted after the war, was about 66 300 hectares. This was made up of 23 900 hectares planted under the scheme, 13 400 hectares planted under the scheme from which subsidies were withdrawn due to unsatisfactory plant husbandry, and an estimated 29 000 hectares planted prior to the scheme becoming operative.<sup>70</sup> Only 1620 hectares of existing rubber was replanted under the scheme as smallholders preferred to retain their old trees to provide a source of income whenever required, or to tap when rubber prices were high, even though the yield was low.<sup>71</sup> Thus the scheme was not successful in persuading smallholders to replace the 83 000 hectares of older rubber. However, it did stimulate accelerated planting of HYV material under high standards of plant husbandry, although the lead time of over six years to first tapping of latex precluded any real benefits accruing before Malaysia was formed.

Grower incomes and export values were reduced due to the generally low standard of rubber sheets resulting from the crude processing methods used by smallholders. To improve standards, in 1950 the Department installed a small, modern, mechanized rubber processing factory twelve miles from Kuching 'to collect latex from the smallholder and take processing and marketing entirely out of his (the smallholder's) hands'.<sup>72</sup> Following the success of this pilot scheme, groups of smallholders were encouraged to provide communal processing centres built to the Department's specification. By the end of 1961, fifty-two communal processing centres had been built, helped by the Rubber Planting Scheme which provided funds for purchasing materials beyond the resources of the community.<sup>73</sup> However, there is no evidence that the centres had any significant impact on the quality of rubber sheets produced in Sarawak.

The rubber industry faced many problems during the British period, including inadequate management, substandard tapping

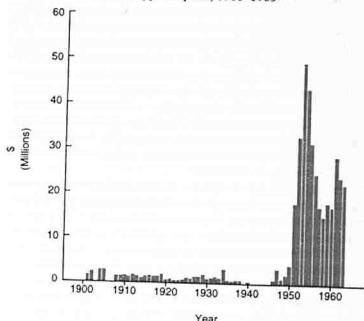
and production techniques found in many smallholder operations, and a large residue of old rubber trees of limited production value. These problems were not amenable to short-term solutions. A 'lost' decade after the war, when the Department of Agriculture concentrated on seeking alternative cash crops to no avail,<sup>74</sup> delayed effective action on the rubber industry until the mid-1950s. Generally, the subsequent heavy expenditure allocated to overcome the problems of the rubber industry only began to take effect after the formation of Malaysia, due to the long lead time between planting and tapping.<sup>75</sup> The post-war aspirations of the Department to reduce Sarawak's heavy dependence on rubber as the major export earner were not fulfilled and it remained the state's most important cash crop (Figure 10.2).<sup>76</sup> However, smallholder and export earnings fluctuated widely, due to rapid changes in international prices and competition from substitutes.<sup>77</sup> When

FIGURE 10.2  
Rubber Exports, 1900-1963



Sources: Dominions Office, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List, 1886-1941*, London: Waterlow and Sons, relevant years; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year, 1948-52*; and *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953-62*.

FIGURE 10.3  
Pepper Exports, 1900-1963



Sources: Dominions Office, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List*, 1886-1941, London: Waterlow and Sons, relevant years; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year*, 1948-52; and *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1953-62.

rubber prices were low, production fell as smallholders turned to *padi* and when prices were very high, *padi* was neglected.<sup>78</sup> The foundation for rubber remaining Sarawak's most important cash crop lay in the 97 000 hectares planted before 1941.<sup>79</sup> This provided some income for smallholders and supported the balance of payments until the rather belated government action to resolve the problems facing the industry began to take effect.

### *Pepper*

Pepper made a valuable contribution to export earnings immediately after the war, peaking at 1597 tonnes valued at \$3,213,417 in 1947 (Figure 10.3).<sup>80</sup> Much of this had been stockpiled before the Japanese occupation, during which most pepper gardens had been abandoned.<sup>81</sup> Over the following three years, export volumes

declined very quickly, falling to 285 tonnes in 1950. Encouraged by price increases from \$1,366 a tonne in 1946 to \$14,801 a tonne in 1950 and loans by Chinese export merchants against future crops, the pre-war level of 900,000 vines under cultivation had been equalled by 1950. Although the pepper industry remained principally in Chinese hands, in the late 1940s and early 1950s Ibans in the interior took up pepper planting with enthusiasm in gardens of about one-fifth of a hectare.<sup>82</sup> Usually the gardens were on clear-weeded hill slopes, often without any terracing, which caused severe soil erosion.<sup>83</sup> The Department of Agriculture carried out an anti-erosion drive and occasionally used its powers under the Natural Resources Ordinance, 1950, to direct smallholders to take corrective action.<sup>84</sup>

In late 1952, 'sudden death', a virulent, unidentified root disease, destroyed many pepper gardens between Kuching and Serian and most of the vines at the Tarat agricultural station.<sup>85</sup> A preliminary study in 1953 culminated in the appointment of two pathologists in 1955 to study the disease and the opening of Sarawak's first plant pathology laboratory at Batu Lintang.<sup>86</sup> Fortunately, 'foot rot' disease, the name adopted in 1956 when the cause was identified,<sup>87</sup> entered a quiescent phase a year later, which continued throughout the British period. The disease was finally brought under control in the early 1960s by growing short grass between the vines and removing the lower branches of the vines, which prevented the disease from being spread through soil infection.

By 1956, Sarawak was exporting over 20,000 tons a year, over one-third of the world's pepper.<sup>88</sup> The Pepper Marketing Advisory Board established in 1957 advocated that Sarawak pepper merchants should bypass Singapore merchants to secure better prices and overcome the Singapore practice of mixing inferior pepper with that from Sarawak.<sup>89</sup> This did not eventuate, probably due to the strong links between the Singapore and Sarawak pepper merchants. More successfully, a \$300,000 processing plant was built at Sarikei in 1959 so that exporters in the Third Division could produce high quality pepper.<sup>90</sup> In further support of the industry, the Sarawak Development Finance Corporation (SDFC) introduced storage and short-term credit facilities in Sarikei in 1959, so that exporters could hold their stocks until prices were favourable.<sup>91</sup> This scheme was extended to Kuching and Sibu in April 1960. The small world market of 50 000 tonnes a year made prices vulnerable to speculation, and in the second half of 1959 a Chinese syndicate cornered the market by buying up stocks.<sup>92</sup>

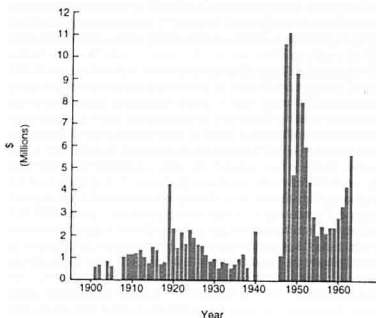
However, Sarawak saw little of the huge profits reaped by the Singapore merchants from the ensuing shortage.<sup>93</sup> The last action of consequence during the British era was to introduce an export duty based not on weight, but on price.<sup>94</sup> This was intended to discourage speculation and hopefully bring some stability to the Sarawak pepper market.

Government policies affecting the pepper industry succeeded in terms of maintaining pepper as the second most important export in Sarawak. However, they did not succeed in maintaining the 1956 export levels or Sarawak's position as the world's largest pepper supplier, since by 1962 Sarawak was ranking behind Indonesia and India. The pepper farmer had been helped to overcome problems, but had not been offered any direct incentives to plant that were similar to the rubber planting scheme.<sup>95</sup> Together with an unstable market, the need for intensive labour, and the ravages of disease, the result was a decline in exports from a peak of 20 116 tonnes in 1956 to 11 663 tonnes in 1962. By then, the Department had concluded that traditional methods of pepper cultivation were not sufficiently competitive and that research was necessary to reduce costs through improved culture methods and more economic fertilizing.<sup>96</sup> For the Iban farmer, pepper, together with rubber and illipe nuts, provided cash to buy salt, dried fish, sugar, and tinned milk for babies. If pepper and rubber prices were low and the wild illipe nut trees did not fruit, many Ibans went 'hungry and wild sago and a few fern' did 'little more than sustain a miserable existence'.<sup>97</sup> For the many Chinese farmers who were largely or entirely dependent on pepper for their cash income, price levels were critical.<sup>98</sup> The few Hakka farmers fortunate enough to own large pepper plantations in the First Division during the post-war boom had been able to accumulate capital, buy shophouses, and change their occupation to traders and merchants.<sup>99</sup>

### *Sago*

Sago, a traditional Sarawak export, was a useful food and cash crop. Planting a few sago palms for sago flour helped the shifting cultivator to survive when rice crops were inadequate.<sup>100</sup> For the Melanaus of the Mukah, Oya, and Dalat regions of the Third Division, smallholdings of sago provided their staple food and livelihood.<sup>101</sup> Most of the Mukah sago factories were destroyed by Allied bombing, but the industry was quickly rehabilitated and exports of sago flour made a continuing but varying contribution

FIGURE 10.4  
Sago Exports, 1900-1963



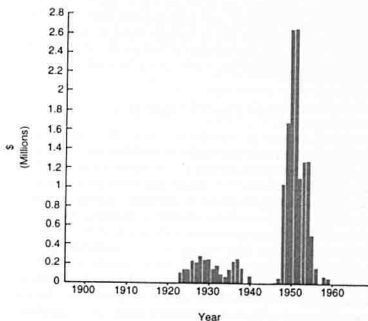
Sources: Dominions Office, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List, 1886-1941*, London: Waterlow and Sons, relevant years; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year, 1948-52*; and *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953-62*.

to Sarawak's export earnings. Exports ranged between \$11 million in 1948 and \$2 million in 1955 (Figure 10.4).<sup>102</sup> Of some 60 000 hectares under sago in the immediate post-war period, about 30 000 hectares were productive. High prices in the early post-war period led to more cutting than planting, but this had little effect since the market slumped and prices fell in the early 1950s after Britain began to reduce its huge stocks.<sup>103</sup> Export of substandard sago flour, common in the early post-war period, led to the Sago Flour (Control of Exports) Ordinance, 1948, which introduced minimum export standards. These proved difficult to enforce and were replaced in 1959 by a proven system of established quality marks.<sup>104</sup> The industry was also faced with competition from maize starch.

In an attempt to widen the market for Sarawak sago, a technical study in conjunction with the Imperial Institute produced a high

viscosity flour for the packaged food trade, but there was no demand for the product.<sup>105</sup> To make Sarawak sago more competitive, export duties were waived in October 1957, resulting in a steady increase in the volume of exports from 13 000 tonnes in 1957 to over 32 000 tonnes in 1962. To encourage a better quality product, making fully refined sago flour for human consumption was declared a pioneer industry in 1961, but this had no short-term result.<sup>106</sup> By the end of the British era, due to falling prices the industry was unable to support families who depended on sago growing and the men had to seek other means of employment.<sup>107</sup> Although sago was once again the third most important export crop, the Agriculture Department viewed this as an aberration and decided on a policy of diversifying agriculture in the sago growing areas. This was being planned when Malaysia was formed.

FIGURE 10.5  
Copra Exports, 1900-1963



Sources: Dominions Office, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List, 1886-1941*, London: Waterlow and Sons, relevant years; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year, 1948-52*; and *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953-62*.



### *Copra*

Copra, a small but regular export before the Japanese occupation, continued to provide export earnings up to the mid-1950s from 8500 hectares of ageing coconut palms (Figure 10.5).<sup>108</sup> The highest value, \$2,654,196 from the export of 3926 tonnes, was recorded in 1951. To improve the quality of exports, the Department of Agriculture began demonstrating simple methods of production in 1952. By 1957, a declining industry and increasing local demand resulted in copra having to be imported.<sup>109</sup> To investigate corrective action, a Coconut Advisory Committee was formed in 1957. It first obtained government funding of \$30,000 for seed cultivation and then \$1.2 million for a subsidized coconut planting scheme launched in January 1959.<sup>110</sup> Initially this scheme covered a four-year programme of planting 4000 hectares made up of two to four hectare smallholdings supplied with free materials and a cash grant of \$2 a palm, and for the domestic needs of householders, free supply of up to fifteen palms.<sup>111</sup> The planting area was later increased to 8000 hectares and by the end of 1962, 18,637 smallholders and householders had planted 6000 hectares.<sup>112</sup> Although too late to halt the rapid decline in exports during the British era, the hectares of new palms provided a reasonable foundation for the future of copra in Sarawak.

### *Cash Crop Diversification*

The British policy of introducing new crops of economic significance followed Brooke tradition and was funded by allocations totalling \$529,584 in the Development Plans of 1951-7, 1955-60, and 1959-63.<sup>113</sup> Tobacco had been grown on a small scale since the 1880s and gained in popularity among smallholders during the 1950s. Government incentives stimulated development of a small cigarette manufacturing industry in 1959 consisting of three factories, two in Sibu and one in Niah, using blends of local and imported tobacco.<sup>114</sup> The industry served to reduce imports and smallholders achieved good returns. However, problems of inferior quality and plant disease were not resolved and this made export difficult, limiting Sarawak-grown tobacco to local blending and local use.<sup>115</sup>

Cocoa was tried after a post-war study reported that Sarawak should be able to produce 10 000 tonnes a year.<sup>116</sup> CD & W funding provided \$17,950 to produce second generation seedlings from

500 seeds imported from Ghana in 1952.<sup>117</sup> However, the venture was not a success due to pest attack, seed drying problems in Sarawak's humid climate, and an end product tasting of mould, although post-1963 studies benefited from the experiment.<sup>118</sup> Another cash crop, coffee, was introduced in Sarawak in the late nineteenth century and was grown on a small scale for local use round the villages. To meet demand for stock in the 1950s, the Department of Agriculture distributed large numbers of seedlings of selected types of *Robusta* after inquiries indicated that this could be marketed overseas.<sup>119</sup> However, without the incentives as those given to planting rubber, pepper, and copra, coffee remained a minor crop grown for village use during the colonial era.

Oil palms, a crop tried without success at Kanowit in the 1930s, had also been planted in small groups in other parts of the state. These had survived and were fruiting satisfactorily in the late 1950s.<sup>120</sup> Based on this positive evidence, a suitable site was located on the Limbang River in 1960 and plans for an \$80 million pilot scheme, sponsored jointly by the Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) and the Sarawak government, was drawn up.<sup>121</sup> Little material progress was made prior to the formation of Malaysia, although the foundation was set for future development of large oil palm estates. Another crop, mandarin oranges, was believed to offer export prospects, so budded and marcotted trees supplied by the Department of Agriculture were planted on a substantial scale at Sarikei and Binatang.<sup>122</sup> No immediate export market developed from a trial shipment sent to Singapore in 1960 so the oranges were sold locally. With more success, a small export trade of fresh vegetables from Miri to Brunei was developed in the late 1950s.<sup>123</sup> Although locally grown tobacco, cocoa, and coffee did assist the balance of payments by reducing imports, none of the cash crops selected for trials made a worthwhile contribution to export earnings between 1946 and 1963.

## Padi

For the Dayak, apart from the nomadic groups, growing *padi* was not merely an economic activity but also a ritual of tradition. The third Rajah wrote in 1944 that 'the one crucial thing which makes natives happy or discontented is *rice*'.<sup>124</sup> In 1947, most of the Dayaks, two-thirds of the Malays, and half the Chinese were farmers and of these, 92 per cent or 183,458 were *padi* farmers. The Natives said 'that the cost of living, the prices of everything, all

depend on the price and abundance of rice'.<sup>125</sup> J. B. Archer, the Officer Administering the Government (OAG) at the time of cession, articulated the hopes of both the Brooke and the British regimes, saying that 'the day will come, and must come, when it will be no longer necessary to import it'.<sup>126</sup>

For many urban dwellers, food supplies were precarious during the Japanese occupation and were further disrupted during the reoccupation campaign.<sup>127</sup> After reoccupation, the Australian military authorities provided relief supplies for 850,000 persons for one month.<sup>128</sup> Apart from the rice supplies in Sarawak which had been requisitioned by the Japanese, emergency supplies were initially obtained from Australia and later through War Office procurements.<sup>129</sup> To combat inflation, imported rice was sold below cost at controlled prices.<sup>130</sup> When food controls were removed in late 1945 and there were problems in distributing supplies, the price of rice rose to \$4 a *gantang* (\$12.50 a kilogram) and Sibuhodjohs were suspected of hoarding.<sup>131</sup> The situation was relieved by the incoming harvest of 1946, rationing which continued for some years, and by the import of 4450 tonnes of rice allocated by the International Food Committee. In the early post-war years, basic foodstuffs including rice were imported on government procurement.

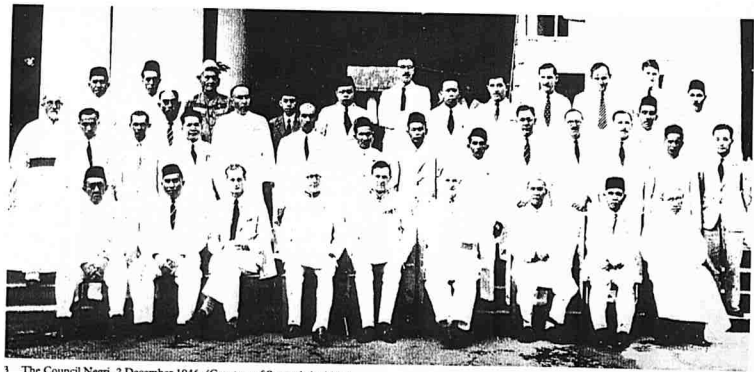
To encourage planting, the colonial administration introduced a *padi* purchasing scheme at the end of 1946.<sup>132</sup> Fixed minimum prices of \$1.72 per kilogram of *padi* and \$4.06 per kilogram of hulled rice were offered to try to reduce dependence on imported rice and provide the grower with a reasonable return. The guaranteed support prices were adjusted occasionally to reflect market levels, but annual sales to the government were dependent on the amount harvested and whether the market or the government price was higher. Government purchases of *padi* varied from 12 466 tonnes in 1955 to 144 tonnes in 1962.<sup>133</sup> The scheme did not deter growers from abandoning *padi* planting when the prices of cash crops were high and even when cash crop prices were low, rice had to be imported to supplement locally grown supplies. Rice imports varied from a minimum of 4450 tonnes in 1946 to a maximum of 60 241 tonnes in 1962. However, local rice production did increase at a rate matching that of population growth, no doubt helped by the *padi* purchasing scheme, but self-sufficiency remained elusive, with Sarawak producing about half its needs at the end of the British period. This was very similar to the position before the occupation.



1 The signing of the cession document on 21 May 1946 by Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke and British Representative C. W. Dawson. (Courtesy of Raymond Allas)



2 The Astana, the official residence of the Brookes and the British governors, built in 1870. (Courtesy of Raymond Allas)



3 The Council Negri, 2 December 1946. (Courtesy of Sarawak Archives)



4 Radio Sarawak started broadcasting in June 1954. (Courtesy of Raymond Allas)



5 The Queen's birthday parade in the 1950s. (Courtesy of Raymond Allas)



6 The opening of the Kuching International Airport, 26 September 1950.  
(Courtesy of Raymond Allas)



7 The General Post Office, Kuching, built in 1931. (Courtesy of Raymond Allas)





8 The Kuching Mosque in the 1950s. (Courtesy of Raymond Allas)



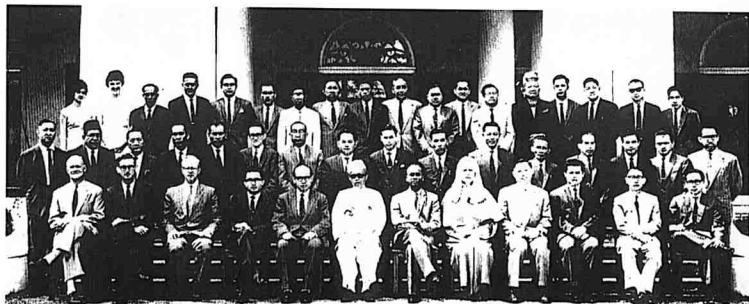
9 The Kuching riverfront in the 1950s. (Courtesy of Raymond Allas)



10 The Education Department headquarters—the 'Pavillion'—built in 1909.  
(Courtesy of Raymond Allas)



11 Departure of the last British Governor, Sir Alexander Waddell, 15 September 1963.  
(Courtesy of Ho Ah Chon)



12 The Council Negri, 2 December 1963. (Courtesy of Sarawak Archives)

General promotion of *padi* growing presented a basic dilemma for the Department of Agriculture. Over half the *padi* grown in Sarawak was by shifting slash-and-burn cultivation of hill *padi* that yielded only two-thirds of the amount produced per hectare by wet swamp *padi*.<sup>134</sup> Further, the official view was that the bush fallow method of growing hill *padi* seldom enabled the farmer's standard of living to rise above subsistence level.<sup>135</sup> Also, its demand for land was held to be prodigal and there were serious concerns over falling yields and land degradation as population pressures reduced bush fallow periods to unsustainable levels.<sup>136</sup> Yet growing hill *padi* was an integral part of the local culture that the British government had pledged to uphold. Thus, although the Natural Resources Ordinance 1950 contained legal powers to control the practice, voluntary methods were used.<sup>137</sup> These included trying to improve yields, promoting cultivation of cash crops through assisted planting schemes to reduce dependence on hill *padi*, and providing material assistance for wet *padi* cultivation.

In May 1949, the Acting Governor, C. W. Dawson, told the Council Negri that there was enough swamp land in Sarawak to produce all Sarawak's rice requirements if new methods of cultivation were adopted.<sup>138</sup> A week before, the Colonial Secretary had advised the House of Commons that small-scale trials of growing rice on a large scale using mechanical methods were being carried out in Sarawak.<sup>139</sup> This was the Paya Megok scheme located in a Bidayuh area 43 kilometres from Kuching. Ten months later, the OAG reported that the scheme had become a major project involving housing, communications, pump station, power, potable water, staff, land acquisition, and earth moving equipment.<sup>140</sup> He also advised that a settlement scheme for the Bidayuh people would be tried in the Paya Megok/Paya Chupak area. The Treasury approved CD & W funding of both schemes after the Colonial Office presented a statement of objectives: to make Sarawak self-sufficient in rice, to reduce dependence on shifting hillside cultivation, and to reduce the pressure for land by draining and irrigation of a 'useless swamp'.<sup>141</sup> These two schemes cost \$586,071, of which \$493,192 was met from CD & W funds.

By the end of 1952, eight smaller wet *padi* cultivation projects had also been established at Paloh and Muara Tuang, First Division; Bijat and Tanjong Lubok Nibong, Second Division; Rantau Panjang and S'Tpang, Third Division; Sibuti, Fourth Division; and Bangkita (Limbang), Fifth Division.<sup>142</sup> Although official reports indicated excellent progress in community development and

agricultural practice, these early projects had no lasting value.<sup>143</sup> By 1954 it was clear that conventional machinery could not deal with Sarawak's swamps, that irrigation pumps had limited application, and that major water control works were necessary for any large-scale wet *padi* development.<sup>144</sup> The Department of Agriculture then decided that developing new wet *padi* production areas would serve no useful purpose until new means of mechanization were developed. In anticipation, \$270,000 was provided from CD & W funds to locate areas suitable for large-scale wet *padi* cultivation between 1955 and 1956, but the consultant's survey of three large areas was 'discouraging in the extreme'.<sup>145</sup> By 1957, the Department had concluded that the shortfall between local production and local consumption was not serious since other starch crops such as sago, tapioca, and sweet potatoes could be produced in adequate quantities in an emergency and there was economic merit in growing more valuable export crops.<sup>146</sup>

Another approach was taken in 1959 through the Assistance to *Padi* Planters Scheme. This provided technical planning, advice, and issue of tools for making bunds to small groups of wet *padi* farmers who co-operated in improving their sawahs (irrigated *padi* fields).<sup>147</sup> Annual planting in the same area was not traditional in Sarawak so the scheme was slow to develop, increasing from 19 areas covering 480 hectares in 1960 to 90 areas covering 2100 hectares by the end of 1962. This succession of schemes had made little impact on the proportion of rice that had to be imported, the average yield remained low, and traditional methods of *padi* cultivation had prevailed.<sup>148</sup> As the *Singapore Straits Times* pointed out in September 1960, 'The old dream that Sarawak and Borneo would be turned into a rice bowl' could 'be forgotten'.<sup>149</sup> Aptly, the article said that it was a matter of opinion whether the Department of Agriculture was making a sufficient impression and that there were still some elementary problems to overcome before the Dayaks would be appreciably better off.

### *Animal Husbandry*

There was little tradition of animal husbandry among the rural people of Sarawak as they could supplement their meat-protein-deficient diet by hunting. Their tradition of shifting agriculture, the climate, and the topography all detracted from animal husbandry other than on a minor household scale.<sup>150</sup> Livestock numbers were seriously reduced during the Japanese occupation due to

shortage of food and the livestock that survived the war was in poor condition. In the early post-war period, animal husbandry was given little attention, although there were a few applications for land on which to graze cattle. Control over imported livestock was exercised under the Animal Health Ordinance, and the Cattle (Control) Ordinance was introduced in 1950 to regulate the slaughter of cattle and draught animals then occurring due to a meat shortage.<sup>151</sup>

To improve the small herds of cattle kept mainly by Indians along the coast and near the towns, the Agriculture Department introduced selected Kelantan and Red Sindhi dairy cattle from 1952 onwards under a \$50,000 CD & W grant. A major outbreak of tick fever (Theilariasis) at Tarat, where the animals were kept to study their reaction to local conditions, proved difficult to eradicate.<sup>152</sup> Coupled with intestinal parasites and endemic piroplasmosis, this inhibited plans to improve local stock.<sup>153</sup> The introduction of new strains of cattle proved to be an expensive long-term process, with a pedigree Hereford bull, donated by Australia, failing to produce any progeny. By the end of 1962, Bali cattle had been moved to the Third Division due to their susceptibility to protozoal conditions and the Department was aiming to build up a herd of fifty breeding cows plus followers of Sindhi or Sindhi-crossed animals.<sup>154</sup> By then, there were over 10,000 privately owned cattle kept alongside longhouses, on drier coastal stretches, and in small dairy herds in Kuching and Miri. However, most of Sarawak's beef and mutton was still imported from Singapore, North Borneo, and Brunei.

There were an estimated 5,500 buffaloes in 1949 in the Fifth Division providing an important export trade to Brunei for meat, but introduction into other parts of Sarawak was not very successful.<sup>155</sup> In Sarawak, the only agricultural use of buffaloes was in trampling wet *padi* land. To stimulate interest in the type of buffalo-drawn farming implements widely used in North Borneo, the Department held demonstrations in the Fifth Division and imported seventeen trained buffaloes from North Borneo in 1960.<sup>156</sup> Their handlers broke a number of local buffaloes to the plough and trained farmers and departmental staff in their use. The Department introduced a scheme that provided farmers with training and broken-in buffaloes at heavily subsidized prices.<sup>157</sup> By the end of 1962, 142 farmers had been trained and thirty-one buffaloes had been distributed. Although the total number of buffaloes in Sarawak reached 12,310, the number broken in was

too small to have an effect on the manual labour involved in growing wet *padi* or on increasing the area under wet *padi*.

Traditionally, goats were reared by Malays and Dayaks and their meat was an integral part of their diet. Departmental interest was confined to protective inoculations and importing a few Saanen milking goats from Australia for cross-breeding.<sup>158</sup> Chinese small-holders kept pigs to provide pork for home consumption and for sale, and longhouses in the interior kept pigs for home consumption.<sup>159</sup> Pure Middle Whites were introduced by the Department in 1951 to improve local stock but deteriorated rapidly. Tamworth and Berkshire boars and gilts were introduced in 1955-6 to offset the shortcomings of the Middle Whites. Berkshires proved to be the most suitable for Sarawak conditions and in 1961 the Department decided to maintain only the Berkshire herd, which was reinforced by animals donated under the Colombo Plan. Recognizing the inherent dangers of high proportions of pure stock in commercial herds, the Department also maintained a small herd of 'the Chinese type breed' so that farmers could reintroduce its excellent nurturing capabilities.<sup>160</sup> Selected commercial piggeries were given pure-bred Tamworth and Middle White pigs to produce weaners for sale at controlled prices to farmers preferring these breeds. By the end of 1962, 2,511 animals had been issued, 90 per cent of them for breeding, and the number of pigs in the state was estimated to be 287,518.<sup>161</sup> However, an unsatisfied demand for breeding pigs and the lack of a locally produced cheap animal protein limited local production, and imports of pigs continued to rise throughout the British era.

Poultry was also reared, although production of eggs and meat was subordinated to 'the cult of the fighting cock' according to the Department.<sup>162</sup> Farmers were encouraged to keep ducks since these were easy to keep and fitted in well with local farming systems. Domestic poultry did not do well in Sarawak until the ravages of Ranikhet (Newcastle disease) were gradually brought under control in the early 1950s by routine vaccine treatment services. After experiments failed in 1951 with Rhode Island Red day-old chicks imported from Australia, the Department decided to concentrate on improving local stock. A caponizing service was also introduced to increase the weight of birds for the table.<sup>163</sup>

By the mid-1950s, poultry keepers were developing large-scale commercial operations in eggs and poultry in Kuching and introducing hatcheries for day-old chicks and ducklings in the larger towns. Battery poultry-keeping methods were first adopted in the

late 1950s and expanded rapidly to compete with imported low priced eggs from Singapore.<sup>164</sup> White Leghorns which were imported as day-old chicks from Australia proved to be suitable stock. Although the industry suffered a temporary setback in 1961 when there was an outbreak of pullorum disease in Sibui, by the end of 1962 there were ninety-eight poultry farms housing some 129,000 birds in batteries holding up to 5,000 birds each. The Department's role in the poultry industry was to provide veterinary services to overcome the ravages of Ranikhet and to carry out prophylactic treatment.

Livestock played only a minor role in Sarawak's economy and among the Ibans, was kept 'either for ceremonial purposes or for marketing' rather than daily fare.<sup>165</sup> However, its importance as a much needed local source of animal protein was recognized and a departmental veterinary section was established in 1953. The section dealt with localized outbreaks of various diseases, took steps to control Ranikhet diseases in poultry and, after the veterinary clinic was established in Kuching in 1956, carried out a growing amount of diagnostic work.<sup>166</sup> It also began prophylactic treatment of the more prevalent livestock diseases in 1956. This service increased rapidly and in 1962 about 350,000 poultry, 12,000 pigs, and 450 cattle were treated.<sup>167</sup> Expanded services included a veterinary clinic in Miri, opened in 1960. The veterinary section played a key role in controlling and preventing diseases that inhibited the growth of the number of livestock but made little impact on the level of animal husbandry in the longhouse.<sup>168</sup>

### *Fisheries*

Many people living on the coast depended on fishing by traditional methods, working in small syndicates.<sup>169</sup> In 1948, there were over 3,000 coastal fishermen, mainly Chinese Henghua, Malays, and Melanaus, who each caught an average of 1 ton of fish a year. By 1960, their number had risen to 4,367, made up of 2,408 Malays, 1,276 Melanaus, 651 Chinese, and 52 of other races. Most of their catch was sold through Chinese dealers, who either bought the catches from Malays or owned the fishing gear and hired Malay labour. However, local demand far exceeded local supply, as in 1951 when imports valued at \$3.8 million were registered.<sup>170</sup> To reduce imports, the government initiated two studies. A marine fisheries survey, funded by CD & W at \$80,000, found that fish concentrations in Sarawak waters did not justify large-scale fishing.



To test this, a motor fishing vessel, the *Saripah*, was launched in 1948 to conduct trials with trawls, Dutch seines, and long lines. Trials continued for ten years and modified fish traps of local design (*bubu*) were tested, but all without success. The Agriculture Department's Marine Fisheries Division was finally disbanded in June 1958.

When it was becoming apparent in 1951 that traditional fishing methods were the most appropriate for Sarawak's shallow coastal waters, attention was turned to freshwater fish farming. Freshwater fish from rivers and streams provided an important source of protein for the rural population and Chinese farmers were already obtaining large yields with fry imported from China.<sup>171</sup> From the mid-1950s, the Department was actively promoting the construction of fish ponds and issuing fry from its rearing ponds in the First Division.<sup>172</sup> The number of fish ponds increased rapidly, both in number and size, as communal pools over 0.4 hectares in area became more popular and, in 1957, ninety-three new ponds were constructed.<sup>173</sup> Almost every one of the fifty-five ethnic groups recognized in Sarawak, from the urban Chinese to the Kelabits dwelling in the remote interior, constructed fish ponds. By the end of 1962, there were 5,559 fish ponds, mostly stocked with some of the 995,000 fry issued free of charge by the Department.<sup>174</sup> The Freshwater Fisheries Development Scheme provided technical and commercial help in all aspects of fish pond farming, which enabled fish ponds to be built even in the more remote hilly regions. These provided their owners with their own source of fish and a few hundred dollars profit each year if the pond was large.<sup>175</sup>

\* \* \*

The smallholder's standard of living continued to be defined more by demand, market price levels, and vagaries of yield due to weather and disease, rather than by government schemes. Tradition and custom prevailed over departmental efforts to reduce swidden agriculture. Departmental attempts at crop diversification had little success, serving only to absorb departmental and government resources during the first ten years after cession. This delayed effective action on Sarawak's most important agricultural export, rubber, until the replanting schemes of the late 1950s, as the Department of Agriculture was aware in 1946 that rubber was a declining asset due to the age and condition of the standing trees. Post-war fears of natural rubber being replaced by

synthetics may also have contributed to the delay. Although the smallholder system was able to respond quickly to change, the delayed rubber replanting and other government schemes were essentially long-term and had limited impact during the colonial era. Improvements brought about in animal husbandry and promotion of fresh water fisheries had a more immediate impact. Although limited in scope compared with the long-term schemes, these helped in providing for the dietary needs, hence the well-being, of the people in the interior. British policies continued rather than changed the basic structure of agriculture in Sarawak and overall had little impact on the rural way of life. Farming and agricultural exports remained the foundation of Sarawak's economy, although increasingly supplemented by the most rapidly growing export of the colonial era, timber.

1. Chèng Tè-K'un, *Archaeology in Sarawak*, Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1969, p. 1.
2. S. Baring-Gould and C. A. Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak under Its Two White Rajahs, 1839-1908*, London: Henry Sotheman & Co., 1909, p. 37.
3. Ibid.; J. W. Christie, 'On Po-Ni: The Santubong Sites of Sarawak', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 34, 55 (December 1985): pp. 80 and 84-6.
4. Chèng, *Archaeology in Sarawak*, p. 22.
5. Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak*, pp. 43-4.
6. Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, Vol. 2, London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1862, p. 321.
7. The exports during the Brooke era were: cash crops (rubber, pepper, sago, and copra); natural produce (bees wax, birds' nests, camphor, cutch, damar, gambier, gutta percha, illipe nuts, jelutong, rattan, sugar nuts, timber, and tuba); and minerals (oil, gold, antimony, and mercury).
8. Early Brooke revenues were from opium, gambling, arrack and pawn monopolies, and forms of poll tax, but were gradually overtaken by customs tariffs and mineral royalties.
9. H. Longhurst, *The Borneo Story: The History of the First 100 Years of Trading in the Far East by the Borneo Company Limited*, London: Newman Neame, 1956, pp. 17-18.
10. G. C. Harper, 'The Miri Oilfield, 1910-1972', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 20, 40-1 (January-December 1972): 26.
11. Sarawak Agriculture Department, *Annual Report, 1933*, p. 12.
12. Dominions Office, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List, 1940*, London: Waterlow & Sons, p. 545.
13. R. A. Cramb, 'The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Agricultural Development in Sarawak', Agricultural Discussion Paper 2/93, University of Queensland, Brisbane, September 1993, p. 22.
14. C. W. Dawson Diary, 16 May 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL.

15. Sarawak Development Board (SDB), *Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1951-1957*, p. 1.
16. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1066 (2 January 1947): 4.
17. Table 10.1 shows projects financed by CD & W funds.
18. See Appendix 11.
19. *Hanuard*, Vol. 474, col. 1294, 20 June 1946; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 26.
20. Minute by M. Scott, Colonial Office, 15 September 1950, file 58926, CO 954/7/1, PRO.
21. The Income Tax Ordinance and the Trades Licensing Ordinance were effective from 1 January 1950.
22. V. L. Porritt, 'The 1955 Trade Hartal', *Sarawak Gazette*, 71, 1530 (December 1994): 58-60.
23. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1955*, p. 3; Personal communication from John Pike, 20 July 1994.
24. Sarawak Government, *Inland Revenue Ordinance, 1960* (No. 14 of 1960); *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 February 1960, p. 1 and 9 December 1960, p. 1.
25. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 12; Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics, 1964*, Table 7.1.
26. Budget speech to the Council Negri, 11 December 1962 (*Sarawak Tribune*, 12 December 1962, p. 1).
27. *Hanuard*, House of Lords, Vol. CC, col. 335, 15 November 1956.
28. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 25.
29. Dawson's report to the Council Negri on 16 May 1949 (British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey: A Record of United Kingdom and Commonwealth Affairs*, London: HMSO, 3 (6 August 1949), p. 25).
30. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1120 (12 July 1951): 134.
31. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 83.
32. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 39.
33. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, p. 3.
34. *Sarawak Tribune*, 25 March 1961, p. 5.
35. A. J. N. Richards, 'The Ibans', in T. Harrison (ed.), *The Peoples of Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1959, p. 13.
36. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, p. 3.
37. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 82.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
40. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 81.
41. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 38.
42. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, pp. 21 and 83.
43. J. R. Dunsmore, 'A Review of Agricultural Research in Sarawak', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 16, 32-3 (July-December 1968): 309-10.
44. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 37.
45. Dunsmore, 'A Review of Agricultural Research in Sarawak', p. 310.
46. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1952*, p. 55.
47. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, pp. 211 and 213.
48. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, pp. 62-3.
49. SDB, *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-1963*, Table 3, p. 16.
50. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1273 (31 March 1964): 51-2.
51. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 25.

52. R. A. Cramb, 'The Commercialization of Iban Agriculture as Agricultural Development in Sarawak: An Overview', in R. A. Cramb and R. H. W. Reece (eds.), *Development in Sarawak*, Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1988, p. 119.
53. *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 October 1946, p. 6; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1947*, p. 17.
54. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1113 (11 December 1950): 311; Land applications for rubber planting increased from 777 applications for 1547 hectares in 1949 to 2,323 for 3481 hectares in 1951.
55. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 50.
56. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1953*, p. 54; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1954*, p. 55.
57. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 56.
58. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 28 November 1960, p. 6.
59. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 88.
60. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1169 (31 July 1955): 179-80.
61. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 2 September 1957, p. 7; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 42; 1959, p. 54; 1961, p. 49.
62. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 42.
63. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, pp. 54-5.
64. Sixth Meeting of the First Session of the Third Council Negri, 10 December 1958, cols. 57-65, Sarawak Museum Archives.
65. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, pp. 53-4.
66. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 56.
67. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 91.
68. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 53; SDB, *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-1963*, pp. 5 and 16.
69. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, pp. 89-90.
70. The estimate of 29 000 hectares is based on applications for land to plant rubber over the 1949 to 1956 period.
71. John K. Wilson, *Budu or Twenty Years in Sarawak*, North Berwick: Tantallion Press, 1969, p. 264.
72. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1116 (10 March 1951): 44-5.
73. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 51.
74. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 88.
75. A film, *Sarawak Prospers with Rubber*, was made in 1962 (*Sarawak Tribune*, 12 October 1962, p. 1).
76. See also Figures 10.3, 10.4, and 10.5.
77. In 1949, rubber was \$0.79 a kilogram, \$3.67 in 1951, and \$1.30 in 1953.
78. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1150 (December 1953): 233.
79. Rubber exports were 35 709 tonnes in 1940, and in the British era, a maximum of 56 362 tonnes in 1950 and a minimum of 23 559 tonnes in 1954. (Ngui Kien Koon, *A Digest of Agricultural Statistics*, Kuching: Department of Agriculture, 1965, p. 7).
80. Pepper exports in 1940 were 1315 tonnes valued at \$362,569.
81. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1071 (2 June 1947): 94-8.
82. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1953*, p. 55; *Sarawak Gazette* (1947): 215, in Cramb, 'The Commercialization of Iban Agriculture', p. 121.
83. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 39.

84. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, pp. 147-8; *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953*, p. 56.
85. Sarawak Agriculture Department, *Annual Report, 1952*, p. 20.
86. Dunsmore, 'A Review of Agricultural Research in Sarawak', p. 310.
87. P. Holliday and W. P. Mowatt, 'A Root Disease of *Piper nigrum* L. in Sarawak caused by a Species of *Phytophthora*', *Nature*, 179, p. 543, in Dunsmore, 'A Review of Agricultural Research in Sarawak', p. 335.
88. The demand on Sarawak for pepper was due to the collapse of the industry in Indo-China, India's inability to increase production, and Indonesia's low output.
89. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 5 April 1958, p. 9.
90. SDB, *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-1963*, p. 5; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 59; 1961, p. 54.
91. The SDFC was established in 1959 to provide credit for agricultural undertakings (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 111; *Straits Times* (Singapore), 6 April 1960, p. 2).
92. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 15 January 1960, p. 5.
93. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 12 January 1960, p. 7.
94. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 2 December 1960, p. 10.
95. A Pepper Subsidy Scheme introduced in 1972 helped during the three-year establishment phase.
96. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 86.
97. Wilson, *Budu*, pp. 87 and 255.
98. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1231 (30 September 1960): 204.
99. J. M. Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 105.
100. Wilson, *Budu*, p. 247.
101. R. G. Aikman, 'The Melanaus', in T. Harrison (ed.), *The Peoples of Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1959, pp. 91-2.
102. Cf. Figures 10.2, 10.3, and 10.5.
103. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 1 March 1950, p. 7. The Ministry of Food in Britain absorbed all the post-war sago production of Sarawak until 10 February 1950, accumulating huge stocks. Then import was restored to private traders but British importers had to purchase an equal amount from stocks held in Britain to reduce the accumulated stocks held by the British Government.
104. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1231 (30 September 1960): 203.
105. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1953*, pp. 54-5.
106. SDB, *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-1963*, pp. 5 and 16; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, pp. 135-6.
107. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 78.
108. Cf. Figures 10.2, 10.3, and 10.4.
109. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1957*, p. 46.
110. SDB, *Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1955-1960*, Table 4; *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-1963*, pp. 4 and 16.
111. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 60.
112. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 93. Ngui Kien Koon, *A Digest of Agricultural Statistics*, p. 38.
113. SDB, *Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1951-1957*, Appendix I; *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-1963*, Table 3.
114. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 25; 1961, p. 84.

115. Dunsmore, 'A Review of Agricultural Research in Sarawak', p. 322.
116. E. E. Cheesman, *Report on the Potentialities for the Cultivation of Cocoa in Malaya, Sarawak and North Borneo*, Colonial No. 230, London: HMSO, 1948, p. 44.
117. SDB, *Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1951-1957*, Appendix I, p. 1.
118. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1955*, p. 48; Dunsmore, 'A Review of Agricultural Research in Sarawak', pp. 323-4.
119. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1955*, p. 48.
120. Dunsmore, 'A Review of Agricultural Research in Sarawak', p. 326.
121. J. R. D. Wall, 'Report on a Reconnaissance Soil Survey in the Ukong-Danau Area, Limbang District, Fifth Division', in Dunsmore, 'A Review of Agricultural Research in Sarawak', pp. 326-7; Colonial Development Corporation (CDC), *Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for Year to 31 December 1961*, London: HMSO, p. 44.
122. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 57.
123. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 61.
124. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 28 July 1944, Brooke Papers, Box 29, in R. H. W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 43.
125. J. B. Archer, 'Sarawak', in H. H. Bolitho (ed.), *The British Empire*, London: B. T. Batsford, 1948, p. 211.
126. Ibid.
127. Gavin Long, *Australians in the War of 1939-1945*, Series One: Army, Volume VII, *The Final Campaigns*, Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1963, p. 396.
128. F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East 1943-1946*, London: HMSO, 1956, pp. 188 and 248.
129. SCS officer C. D. Adams to Brigadier C. F. C. Macaskie, 27 November 1945, 'C. F. C. Macaskie Papers', MSS Pac. s. 71, RHL; Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East*, p. 247.
130. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East*, p. 227.
131. Adams to Macaskie, 27 November 1945. 'C. F. C. Macaskie Papers', MSS Pac. s. 71, RHL.
132. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 35.
133. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 76.
134. Figures for 1961 are used in compiling this comparison. (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 53.)
135. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, pp. 32 and 77.
136. Dunsmore, 'A Review of Agricultural Research in Sarawak', p. 316. The Agricultural Department claimed hill padi growing practices were 'devastating the forests and silting up the rivers with the country's best soil' (Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year, 1949*, pp. 2 and 3; 1952, p. 52).
137. R. W. Miller, Director of Agriculture, to G. F. Clay, Agricultural Adviser, Colonial Office, 28 December 1949, CO 938/12/7, PRO.
138. British Information Services, 'General Surveys', in *Commonwealth Survey: A Record of United Kingdom and Commonwealth Affairs*, London: HMSO, 1949, p. 25.
139. *Hansard*, Vol. 464, col. 1834, 11 May 1949.
140. OAG to the Colonial Secretary, Saving No. 91, 13 March 1950, CO 938/12/7, PRO.

141. Colonial Office minute to Mr Bourdillon, Treasury, 15 April 1950, CO 938/12/7, PRO.

142. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year, 1951*, p. 38; 1952, p. 51.

143. R. A. Bewsher, 'Report on Visit to Muara/Bundong', 27 September to 8 October 1955, MSS Pac. s. 59, RHL; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, pp. 81 and 180.

144. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1954*, p. 53.

145. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 82.

146. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1957*, p. 41.

147. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, p. 55; 1961, p. 52.

148. There were about 75 000 hectares of hill padi at the end of 1962, compared with 38 500 hectares of swamp or wet padi. (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 52; 1962, p. 77.)

149. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 15 September 1960, p. 6.

150. Dunsmore, 'A Review of Agricultural Research in Sarawak', p. 330.

151. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 80.

152. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1954*, p. 60.

153. Piroplasmosis—protozoa destructive to red blood cells leading to anaemia and death or reduced resistance to other infections and diseases. The protozoa are carried by ticks.

154. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 96.

155. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953*, p. 58.

156. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, p. 64.

157. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, pp. 97-8.

158. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1952*, p. 57.

159. Longhouses had no waste disposal systems, latrines, or pig pens, creating serious hygiene problems. (Wilson, *Budu*, pp. 29, 80-1, 86, 153-4, and 223-4.)

160. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, pp. 98-9.

161. *Ibid.*, pp. 96 and 98-9.

162. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 67; V. Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar: Urbanization in Sarawak, East Malaysia*, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1980, p. 246.

163. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953*, pp. 58-9.

164. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 66; 1960, pp. 64-5.

165. Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar*, p. 245.

166. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1956*, p. 53; 1957, pp. 49-50.

167. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 49; 1959, p. 67; 1962, p. 97.

168. Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar*, p. 245.

169. There were over thirty fishing villages in the bay of Sarawak and nearly two hundred Chinese drift-net fishing vessels were based in Kuching.

170. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 43.

171. One account placed aquatic life as the principal source of protein in the Iban diet. (Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar*, pp. 244-5.)

172. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) funded studies overseas by a senior Fisheries officer and on his return, he concentrated on developing inland fisheries.

173. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1957*, pp. 50-1.

174. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, pp. 99-100.

175. Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar*, p. 243.

## Forestry and Forest Produce

TERRITORIAL expansion under the Brookes, from 7700 to 125 000 square kilometres between 1841 and 1905, had endowed Sarawak with the natural resource of 92 000 square kilometres of tropical rain forest.<sup>1</sup> This was made up of the following five broad forest classifications:<sup>2</sup>

1. Mangrove forest of the river estuaries covering 1500 square kilometres. This forest provided firewood, charcoal, and cutch.
2. Peatswamp forest on coastal flat lands and lower reaches of rivers. Extending over 14 600 square kilometres, its valuable timber species included *ramin*, *meranti*, *medang jonkong*, *semayur*, *kapur payar*, and *jelutong*.
3. *Kerangas* or heath forest. This covered 4500 square kilometres and grew on very poor acid soils unsuitable for *padi*.
4. Lowland forest from sea level to 450 metres, providing *selangan batu*, *kapur*, *keruing*, and *meranti* timber. This classification included the few hundred square kilometres of riparian forest along many river banks, the main source of *belian* timber and the valuable, oil-bearing illipe nut (*engkabang*).
5. Hill forest growing above 450 metres. This comprised hill dipterocarp species and, above 1200 metres, oaks, chestnuts, and conifers. It did not become economically important during the British era but was a source of *damar daging* (resin).

### *Forest Produce Other than Timber*

Historically, forest produce was collected by the people of Borneo to exchange for goods such as beads, brass cannon, cloth, iron, salt, *tajau*, and utensils from the outside world.<sup>3</sup> For centuries, they had gathered exotic forest produce such as bezoar stones, camphor, *damar*, edible birds' nests, hornbill casques, feathers of kingfishers, rattan, and rhinoceros horns. In Sarawak, money began to replace barter after copper coins were introduced in 1842 by the first Rajah, and for the Dayaks, collecting jungle produce for cash occasionally even took precedence over their farming.<sup>4</sup>



Territorial expansion and European industrial needs later added to the extracting of more forest produce, including *engkabang* (illipe nuts) used in chocolate and the guttas (wild rubbers) used in chewing gum and dentistry (*jelutong*), and as electrical insulation (gutta-percha). However, by the twentieth century, jungle products were of less economic importance than agricultural products and minerals.<sup>5</sup>

World market demand rather than government initiatives determined the degree of exploitation of jungle produce. With the exception of *engkabang*, jungle produce exports continued to decline, falling from some \$5 million in 1947 to \$2.4 million in 1962, as they were either replaced by plastics or over-exploited (Table 11.1 and Figure 11.1).<sup>6</sup> However, forest produce continued to be an important source of income for the rural dweller, the trader, and the import/export merchant. Although erratic, the occasional bumper crop of *engkabang* provided both an important rural income supplement and a major boost to the economy.<sup>7</sup> The first bumper crop after World War II boosted exports by nearly \$2 million in 1947.<sup>8</sup> Seven years later, the heaviest *engkabang* crop in over thirty years was recorded, resulting in exports of 16 304 tonnes valued at \$12.6 million. This was eclipsed by both the 1959 crop of 22 358 tonnes worth nearly \$20 million and the 1962 crop of 20 201 tonnes, which boosted exports by over \$16 million. Unfortunately, the season when *engkabang* nuts were falling was also the time when farmers were preoccupied with the *padi* harvest and considerable amounts were left to waste.<sup>9</sup> Evidence suggests that some farmers were even prepared to abandon their *padi* for the greater return to be made from collecting *engkabang* nuts.<sup>10</sup> When a poor *padi* crop coincided with low prices for cash crops and the *engkabang* did not fruit, many forest dwellers went hungry.<sup>11</sup> Conversely, when there was a bumper crop, the entire economy benefited. The rural family could acquire sufficient capital to purchase outboard motors, sewing machines, gold and other valuables, and pay off their loans; the Chinese merchants who had made loans against the future crop reaped handsome profits; the business of the import and export trader boomed; and government income was boosted from customs revenues.

Apart from the unpredictable *engkabang* crops, exports in forest produce during the post-war years were dominated by refined gutta *jelutong* for the United States and pressed gutta *jelutong* for Singapore.<sup>12</sup> Refining *jelutong* was an uncertain industry beset by variations in demand due to competition from a synthetic substi-

TABLE 11.1  
Value of Exports of Various Forest Produce, 1952 and 1962 (dollars)

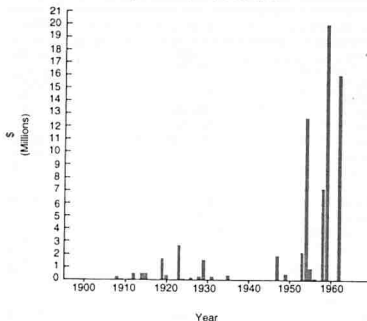
Exports	1952	1962
Beeswax	2,538	16,782
Birds' Nests, edible	54,397	81,702
Canes, Malacca	121,364	12,177
Charcoal	—	384
Copra	1,106,541	—
Cutch	480,293	—
Damar	738,564	418,182
Firewood	—	211,520
Gaharu Wood	—	35,238
Gutta		
<i>jangkar</i>	110,932	5,902
<i>jelutong</i> raw	161,305	13,621
<i>jelutong</i> refined	1,375,509	1,303,965
<i>jelutong</i> pressed	571,137	444,392
<i>percha</i>	110,542	19,707
Illipe Nuts ( <i>engkabang</i> )	15,465	16,011,630
Nipah sugar	31,417	—
Oil (vegetable)	353,793	—
Rattan	235,164	78,517
Timber	8,925,910	40,835,364
<i>The following are shown for comparison purposes:</i>		
Pepper	33,031,835	23,886,852
Rubber	65,182,029	72,597,147
Sago flour	5,954,774	4,169,921

Sources: Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report for the Year 1952*, pp. 35-6; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1961*, Form XI, p. 59.

Note: Nil value shows a very low export value and/or one that is not listed separately in statistics.

tute. This caused exports to decline from a peak of 3048 tonnes worth over \$2.7 million in 1947 to 618 tonnes valued at just over \$1.7 million in 1962. Several other forest produce exports contributed to the income of the rural dweller, even though they were of little significance to the economy. These were beeswax, edible birds' nests, malacca canes, damar, gutta *jangkar*, gutta *percha*, nipah sugar, and rattan.<sup>13</sup> Damar remained a reasonably constant export even though demand declined, export of gutta *percha* had

FIGURE 11.1  
 Illipe Nut Exports, 1900-1963



Sources: *Sarawak Gazette*, 1206 (31 August 1958): 148; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1958-62.

virtually ceased by 1962, nipah sugar showed a similar fall, and exports of rattan recorded a steady decline.

With the exception of the minor exports of beeswax, edible birds' nests (a Chinese delicacy), and *engkabang* nuts, the world trend towards less costly manufactured substitutes was clearly shown by the declining market for the 'exotic' products of the tropical rain forest in Sarawak throughout the British period. However, the forests also provided charcoal, firewood, and *bakau* poles from the mangrove swamps for scaffolding and foundation piles. Charcoal output increased from about 4000 tonnes annually in the 1940s to nearly 5000 tonnes in 1962, firewood production fluctuated between 21 700 and 46 700 tonnes and recovery of *bakau* piles varied from 80 000 to over 223 000 tonnes.<sup>14</sup> The volume and value of forest products, excluding the timber industry, show their important contribution to rural incomes and living standards

during the colonial era and the economic value of the natural forest to rural people.

### *Forestry: Policies, Reserves, and the Timber Industry*

During the Brooke era, although overseas trade in timber was recorded in 1870 with the export of *belian* timber to Hong Kong and the heavy investment of the Borneo Company Limited (BCL) in timber recovery before World War II, timber remained well below 1 per cent of total exports even in the late 1930s.<sup>15</sup> To regulate use of this valuable asset, in 1899 the Brookes introduced controls on timber felling in the First Division under Order No. XI and extended them to the entire state under the Forest Rules, 1919.<sup>16</sup> To empower the government to establish forest reserves where unlicensed felling and shifting agriculture would not be permitted, the Forest Reservation Order, 1920, was introduced. Local people were not allowed to take timber for their own use from forest reserves or collect the natural products, a position which was corrected by Order F-1 Forests, 1934 and the Forest Rules. The forest reserves also served to control the inland advance of shifting cultivators and acted as a buffer between 'certain native tribes'.<sup>17</sup> The pre-war government declared the following official forestry policy:

1. The primary aim is to ensure permanent maintenance of a sufficient area of forest to supply all the needs of the inhabitants.
2. The secondary aim is therefore to encourage the export of timber which is surplus to internal requirements and to maintain and increase the export of minor forest products.<sup>18</sup>

During the Japanese occupation, both gazetted and unprotected (open) forests were worked heavily.<sup>19</sup> Apart from departmental records destroyed at Miri and Bintulu during reoccupation, most records were intact, which enabled speedy post-war redelineation of the 6490 square kilometres of Permanent Forest gazetted during the Brooke era.<sup>20</sup>

The Forestry Department was faced with post-World War II staff shortages, problems of recruitment, especially senior staff, and rebuilding the Department, B. C. J. Spurway being the only senior officer with departmental experience before the occupation. In the late 1940s, it adopted a policy of issuing fifteen- and twenty-year logging licences, frequently covering very large areas and sometimes including reserved forests.<sup>21</sup> Open forests were worked

first, the Department viewing licensees as providing a public service by recovering and paying for timber which would otherwise be cut down and burnt by shifting cultivators.<sup>22</sup> To encourage efficient recovery of the timber, only large and reputable firms were given licences, which generally excluded Natives.<sup>23</sup> When the BCL's 'cruising' licence in the upper Rajang expired in late 1947, its replacement covered 1620 square kilometres.<sup>24</sup> The Company then rebuilt its sawmill at Sibu and began to extract timber from the Kapit district again, but later closed down its hill forest operations entirely when *Ambrosia* beetle infestation, an ill-located sawmill, transport problems, and a falling market made the operation no longer viable.<sup>25</sup> Subsequently, its subsidiary, the Austral Timber Company, turned to extracting timber from the swamp forests using light railways, a technique developed by the Colonial Timber Company, in 1948-9.

The swamp forest provided one of the most important natural assets found after World War II, *ramin*, although it had to be chemically treated at site and dried quickly to prevent discolouration and fungus.<sup>26</sup> This hardwood was ideally suited to many uses in Europe and Australia, both 'timber hungry' after World War II, and extraction quickly developed on a large scale. Timber exports, including *ramin*, grew rapidly from 5790 tonnes in 1947 to 39 128 tonnes in 1949, valued at \$2,018,896 or 3.8 per cent of all the state's exports.<sup>27</sup> Seven medium-size sawmills of the twenty-nine in operation met the export market from production surplus to local needs, increasing shipments to Australia, China, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.<sup>28</sup>

In late 1948, the Forestry Department submitted a plan under the Colonial Development and Welfare (CD & W) scheme to establish not less than 25 per cent of the area of the state as Permanent Forest. This was the minimum considered necessary to ensure a sustained yield, protect the main catchment areas, and 'check the all too rapid spread of devastation' from shifting *padi* cultivation in the hills.<sup>29</sup> By then, shifting cultivation had removed the virgin forest around the lower and middle Rajang River and the Balleh River further inland, which the government concluded was causing record floods in Sibu.<sup>30</sup> Of the total planned Permanent Forest, 10 per cent (11 910 square kilometres) would be 'fully productive of major forest produce [timber] under intensive management'.<sup>31</sup> The planned reserves included the drainage basin of the Baram River and its tributaries (5180 square kilometres), the headwaters of the Bintulu and Tatau rivers and their tributaries as

well as the true right bank of the Batang Rajang between Belaga and Pelagus (3100 square kilometres), the headwaters of other rivers, and the central range of hills along the border with Kalimantan.<sup>32</sup>

The plan included 'improvement of existing virgin forests by means of regeneration by controlled exploitation and by removal of unwanted species by poisoning or other means'.<sup>33</sup> Rehabilitation of denuded hillsides by natural or artificial means was also included. Although large-scale reforestation had been discounted in 1946, the plan predicted this would be necessary.<sup>34</sup> Logging control was to be exercised by setting minimum tree girth limits for felling and by restricting areas of working. To carry out the plan, an increase in staff from 86 to 100 officers was sought. The plan was favourably received by both the Council Negri and the Colonial Office, and a CD & W grant of \$392,694 was provided to cover the cost from January 1950 to March 1956.<sup>35</sup> However, the grant did not include reafforestation and from that time, forest rehabilitation plans centred on natural regeneration. Before work started on the plan, the Land and Survey Department gave the Forestry Department photographic mosaics covering 24 000 square kilometres of Sarawak.<sup>36</sup> These were based on RAF aerial surveys in 1947 and 1948 and enabled suitable areas to be selected for demarcation without laborious ground exploration.

A supplement to the plan was submitted to the Colonial Office in early 1952, stressing the need to control shifting cultivation and describing main belts of forest to be demarcated. The plan also called for a Permanent Forest estate of 38 970 square kilometres by 1960.<sup>37</sup> This increase from 25 per cent to 32 per cent of the total land area was welcomed by the Colonial Office. In response to a timely question in the House of Commons on 29 March 1952, the Colonial Secretary, Oliver Lyttelton, advised the House that timber licensees had to work to approved plans designed to maintain sustained yields from the forests.<sup>38</sup> To achieve this, yet to be defined working circles on a rotation period of about 80 years were suggested. Working plans were developed for timber licensees to maintain sustainable yields of preferred timber and were brought into force during the 1950s. These plans were based on girth-limit felling, followed by silvicultural operations favouring the desired species and a felling cycle to suit the restocking time.<sup>39</sup> By the end of 1959, 2150 square kilometres of Permanent Forest was covered by working plans.

Working-plan felling cycles were too short for restocking the slow-growing *belian*, one of the most important hardwoods in the

forest that was already over-exploited.<sup>40</sup> This was perhaps exemplified by the prosecution in 1949 of licence holder Wong Ban Hin, who was only authorized to remove fallen and dead trees in the Balai Ringin Protected Forest, but was found guilty of felling live *belian* trees. By late 1950 export of *belian* had to be prohibited entirely to conserve the dwindling stocks for local consumption. Departmental studies showed that conservation could not be justified economically due to its slow rate of growth and its growth pattern in scattered pockets, and because of competition from cheaper timbers readily impregnated with preservatives.<sup>41</sup>

When the Ten-Year Plan began in 1950, Permanent Forest reserves covered 8645 square kilometres or 6.9 per cent of Sarawak. CD & W grants enabled staff levels to be increased and, with the aid of maps made from RAF aerial surveys, the Department made rapid progress on demarcating new reserves. By the end of 1959, 29 620 square kilometres, 23.5 per cent of Sarawak, had been gazetted and the programme was virtually complete.<sup>42</sup> Forest offences, the natural consequence of increased forest reserves, escalated, with 824 in 1956, 531 in 1957, and 717 in 1958. There were a series of deliberate and carefully planned offences against the Forest Ordinance, Customs Ordinance, and Financial Regulations, including heavy illegal felling, and numerous cases of illegal cultivation in northern Sarawak that were even more difficult to deal with.<sup>43</sup> Control of shifting cultivation was acknowledged as the major reason for establishing a series of protected forests to form a 'wooden curtain' in the headwaters of the Rajang from Ulu Katibas to Bukit Temedau in the Third Division, and in the headwaters of the Batang Ai in the Second Division.<sup>44</sup> Indirectly, even resettlement was involved, since constituting the Permanent Forest to protect the headwaters of the Balui was delayed until the remaining group of Kenyahs were moved out for administrative reasons.<sup>45</sup> In one interesting case, over 67 square kilometres of farming land was excised from the Lanjak-Entimau (North) Protected Forest in 1953 and handed back to the Ibans as a reward for good behaviour.<sup>46</sup> Dubbed the 'Lanjak-Entimau Political Forest' when first gazetted in 1940 and 1941, originally the forest was constituted to make it 'strictly illegal for the late rebels [of the early 1930s Asun group] to move into the extreme headwaters of their rivers'.<sup>47</sup>

On 1 January 1954, a revised Forests Ordinance and associated Forest Rules were introduced that reflected the growing importance of the timber trade. Following the recommendations of the

Commonwealth Forestry Conference, the government issued a policy statement on forestry on 23 December 1954 that served to consolidate rather than revise the policies already in place.<sup>48</sup> Classes of Permanent Forest were re-stated, namely: Forest Reserves where the strictest form of control was necessary; Protected Forest where the people were allowed to take forest produce for their own use; and Communal Forests set aside to provide the domestic needs of a settled community. The precedence of settled agriculture and mining over forestry was reconfirmed and the Conservator of Forests was charged with maintaining sustained timber yield at district and country level. Fostering a profitable export trade in forest produce compatible with the prior claims of local demands was spelt out as government policy and embodied in the responsibilities of the Conservator of Forests.<sup>49</sup>

This policy was actively pursued and during the 1950s timber exports increased dramatically in volume, value, and as a proportion of total exports (Table 11.2 and Figure 11.2).<sup>50</sup> In 1950, 46 214 tonnes of timber valued at \$2.8 million, 2 per cent of the state's exports, were sold to Australia, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and other countries.<sup>51</sup> Faced with dwindling supplies from the Philippines, in 1959 Japan started to buy logs in every available market in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific. Sarawak supplied 76 632 tonnes of round timber to Japan in 1959, and total timber exports increased to 322 320 tonnes worth over \$31 million, 16.8 per cent of all exports. Timber was shipped to twenty-five countries, the major importers being the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and Japan.<sup>52</sup> Pressure to exploit the state's timber resources from the seventy licensed sawmills then in operation even extended to the 125 square kilometres of Communal Forests specifically reserved for domestic use.<sup>53</sup> The one-to-one ratio of sawn timber to logs in exports represented lack of local added value on half the exports, but there was no significant improvement during the 1950s.

By late 1950, one species, *ramin*, made up 52 per cent of all timber exports, although twenty-three other species were also exported.<sup>54</sup> The 1955 and 1956 recession in the United Kingdom furniture industry reduced the demand for *ramin* and to avoid excessive stocks building up in Sarawak, an export quota system was imposed in August 1956.<sup>55</sup> This was still in force two years later when the Forest Rules were amended to reduce the minimum girth limit for felling *ramin* from five to four feet. By 1959, a major timber export industry had developed, mainly of *ramin* which had



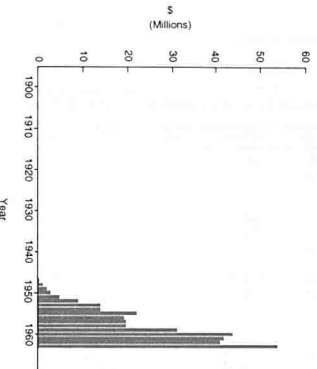
TABLE 11.2  
Timber Exports from Sarawak, 1962<sup>a</sup>

Destination	<i>Hardwoods</i>				<i>Softwoods</i>			
	<i>Ramin</i>		<i>Total</i>				<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Round</i>	<i>Sawn</i>	<i>Round</i>	<i>Sawn</i>	<i>Round</i>	<i>Sawn</i>	<i>Round</i>	<i>Sawn</i>
Australia	12 648	19 441	14 004	20 895	902	45	14 906	20 940
Belgium	22	2 085	22	2 212	—	—	22	2 212
Brunei	19	94	7 093	1 947	—	29	7 093	1 976
Canada	—	118	—	118	—	—	—	118
Denmark	—	892	—	892	—	—	—	892
Finland	—	12	—	12	—	—	—	12
Formosa	—	—	1 044	—	—	—	1 044	—
France	—	1 178	—	1 178	—	—	—	1 178
Germany	243	10 019	244	10 019	—	—	244	10 019
Greece	—	164	—	164	—	—	—	164
Hong Kong	20 632	17 386	165 346	20 374	—	122	165 346	20 496
Indonesia	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Iran	—	16	—	16	—	—	—	16
Iraq	—	360	—	360	—	—	—	360
Ireland	—	10	—	10	—	—	—	10
Italy	36 060	1 809	38 727	2 347	279	—	39 006	2 347
Japan	8 519	848	147 047	1 370	2 315	—	149 362	1 370
Lebanon	—	218	—	218	—	—	—	218

Netherlands	1 862	13 170	1 862	13 170	-	-	1 862	13 170
North Borneo	584	507	11 666	7 421	838	166	12 504	7 587
Norway	-	508	-	508	-	-	-	508
Singapore	-	225	-	226	-	-	-	225
South Africa	-	434	-	445	-	-	-	445
Spain	258	-	411	-	-	-	411	-
Sweden	-	529	-	529	-	-	-	529
Syria	-	134	-	134	-	-	-	134
UK	11	45 182	11	45 477	-	-	11	45 477
USA	-	1 122	27	1 223	-	-	27	1 223
Total	80 858	116 461	387 504	131 266	4 334	362	391 838	131 627

Source: Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1962*, Form X, pp. 57-8.

\*Volumes in tonnes of 15.24 Hoppus metres (round) and tonnes of 1.42 cubic metres (sawn).

FIGURE 11.2  
Timber Exports, 1900-1963

Source: B. C. J. Spurway, 'Forestry in the Colony of Sarawak (1935-1940)', A Statement Prepared for the Fifth Empire Forestry Conference, London, 1947; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year, 1948-52*; and *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953-62*.

a near monopoly in temperate countries, and export quotas were removed.<sup>56</sup> In 1959, an expert of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), M. N. Gallant, visited Sarawak to advise on marketing and establishing an equitable royalty on *ramin* logs. Based on his recommendations, an export duty on *ramin* logs was introduced on 1 February 1960 to inhibit export of logs. The effect was exports of 142 240 tonnes of sawn *ramin* and 38 608 tonnes of *ramin* logs in 1960.

Whether to restock *ramin* was questioned by the Forestry Department as the Department had overestimated its rate of growth, 120 years to reach a girth of 5 feet.<sup>57</sup> By 1960, this over-estimate had led to over-exploitation in nearly half of the state's *ramin* forests. Cutting rates were reduced and the thirty-year felling cycle introduced in 1950 was doubled.<sup>58</sup> However, on a sixty-year felling cycle the *ramin* forests were not large enough to

maintain production at the 1960 levels, or to provide all licensees with adequate areas, and a future reduction in output became unavoidable.<sup>59</sup> Inevitably the longer felling cycle and reduced cutting rates took time to implement, especially since long-term licence renewals were not due until 1965.

Timber licences became a political issue in 1961 when Council Negri member, John Meda, asked the government to give Natives timber working licences.<sup>60</sup> Of seventy-eight licensed sawmills operating in Sarawak in 1962, seventy-four were owned by Sarawak Chinese. The government responded by restating its policy of issuing licences to those having the necessary capital, knowledge, and experience to work the forest efficiently.<sup>61</sup> However, to ensure some benefit accrued to the public purse apart from royalties, all long-term licensees had to convert to, and pay tax as, limited liability companies by the end of 1962.<sup>62</sup> In the interests of the Natives, a special cess of \$1 per ton was imposed in 1963 on hill forest licences to compensate Natives in licence locations, and a system of licensing Native sawmills beyond the reach of river launches strictly for domestic use was introduced.<sup>63</sup>

Following virtual completion of the Permanent Forest estate in 1959, attention was turned to research in the 1959–1963 Development Plan. An Assistant Conservator was appointed Forest Research Officer in 1960 and a full-time botanist was engaged in October 1962 to take charge of the new herbarium building funded by a CD & W grant.<sup>64</sup> A silviculturist, also paid from CD & W funds, assumed responsibility in 1960 for encouraging natural regeneration of selected species by poisoning relicts and weed species left behind by timber licensees. Silvicultural treatment for peat swamp forest was developed and first applied in 1962 on 8100 hectares, with an ongoing programme to treat areas where there had been felling previously.<sup>65</sup> To encourage fuller utilization of the many tree species in Sarawak's forests, in late 1962 \$500,000 was allocated to establish a Timber Research and Technical Training Depot.<sup>66</sup>

Timber exports continued to increase rapidly, from 322 230 tonnes in 1959 to 523 292 tonnes in 1962, with logs making up almost all the increase after Japan's entry into the market in 1959. *Ramin* continued to dominate timber exports throughout the colonial era, although *meranti*, growing at twice the rate of *ramin*, was beginning to assume increasing importance.<sup>67</sup> By 1962, the major sawmills were becoming more sophisticated and, on the advice of a sawmilling engineer from the FAO, J. McVeigh, were converting

to vertical bandmills. This increased recovery of timber in the milling process by no less than 10 per cent, a major saving considering the tonnages being exported in the early 1960s. A brisk demand in Japan for one species, *seraya* (red *meranti*), created a sudden interest in the less accessible hill forests of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions in the early 1960s.<sup>68</sup> North Borneo had met Japan's rapidly growing demand for some years, but a number of its annual logging licensees were running out of forest and turned to Sarawak for licences.<sup>69</sup> To meet this demand, a policy of advertising hill forest logging concessions was introduced and the first six were advertised in June 1963.<sup>70</sup>

Adding value to exports by pre-working and processing timber held out obvious advantages to the economy. Cutch, a tanning extract from mangrove bark, was first produced by the Island Trading Company at Selalang in 1909 and in the late 1940s earned a considerable amount of American currency.<sup>71</sup> However, falling prices and competition from North Borneo where mangrove bark had a higher tanning content forced the factory to close in late 1960.<sup>72</sup> To foster manufacture, including processes using timber, two ordinances were introduced in 1957. These were the Pioneer Industries (Encouragement) Ordinance, 1957, providing relief from customs duty and income tax for new industries and the Development Finance Corporation Ordinance, 1957, establishing the Sarawak Development Finance Corporation to provide financial credits. Veneer manufacture was granted pioneer status and in 1960 the Sarawak Company (1959) Limited began manufacture at Selalang in the Third Division, processing both *ramin* and *alan bunga* logs. In 1962, the company was acquired by the Jones Plywood Corporation of America and with a labour force of 280 exported 3020 tonnes of veneer sheets. In 1961, the Borneo Timber Company started another pioneer industry—the manufacture of Tarporelle shutters for use in Italy. Due to marketing difficulties, the company ceased production in 1962 and turned to manufacturing *ramin* mouldings for the UK and dowels for Hong Kong. However, due to the growing demand for logs from Hong Kong and Japan, exports of logs far exceeded those of sawn and processed timber in 1962 and were increasing far more rapidly.<sup>73</sup> Prior to 1962 the timber industry was said to have been based on exporting the better logs and sawing the remainder as lumber.<sup>74</sup>

Conservation was not entirely overlooked. A National Parks Board, chaired by the Conservator of Forests, was set up and the Bako National Park covering 27.2 square kilometres was gazetted

in 1956, although territorial animals were not well represented in that area.<sup>75</sup> Two other national parks were under consideration, Niah, encompassing 31 square kilometres, and Gunong Mulu, covering 528 square kilometres, but these were not gazetted until 1974.<sup>76</sup>

\* \* \*

During the British era forest policies were not altered in direction or intent. Brooke policies were continued and developed to give the Forestry Department closer control over Sarawak's forests. The Forestry Department had been built up from a small department with operating costs of \$75,111 in 1947 to an organization with a budget in excess of \$1 million and 220 personnel in 1962. Nearly one-third of the forests of Sarawak had been gazetted as Permanent Forest, not only to protect the headwaters and catchment areas of many of the state's rivers, but also to limit perceived forest and land degradation from shifting cultivation. Firm control over the forest's timber resources had been established through a licensing system, supported by mandatory working plans for licensees aimed at providing sustained timber yields by natural regeneration of economic species. In the open forests, marketable timber was removed as the Forest Department felt it would be destroyed by shifting cultivation.<sup>77</sup> A major export market had been developed that contributed \$1,364,150 to the state's revenue in export duties in 1962.<sup>78</sup> With royalties adding another \$4,704,694, the timber industry provided 7.4 per cent of the state's revenue in that year and had become a major feature of the state's economy. A start had also been made on developing timber processing and manufacture for export by offering incentives to establish new industries. Most importantly, negotiations before the formation of Malaysia enabled the state to retain control over forestry after Malaysia was formed and forestry revenues continued to accrue to the state.<sup>79</sup>

On the other hand, from the Natives' viewpoint the drive to create forest reserves had led to one-quarter of the state's land being closed to their traditional shifting agriculture and customary migrations to new forests. This was a direct contradiction of their cultural values and *adat* that the British government had agreed to uphold at the time of cession. Economics was given precedence over *adat*. Yet creating forest reserves was a continuation of Brooke policies that the British government had also agreed to maintain.

Forest management had not protected the most highly regarded hardwood in the forest, *belian*, from over-exploitation and its conservation had been rejected on economic grounds.

A slower than projected growth rate of *ramin*, the hardwood in most demand, had led to over-exploitation in about half of the *ramin* forests. Silviculture was driven solely by economics since forestry policy did not include any reference to maintaining species diversity or overall ecological balance in the forest to support its plants and animals. Policies had not prevented a high ratio of unsawn timber being exported, thus depriving the state of the added value of working the timber prior to export, employment opportunities, and acquiring industrial expertise. Most of the profits accrued to a relatively small number of non-Native licensees, seventy-eight in 1962, and apart from some casual employment in the timber concessions, the Natives appear to have reaped little benefit from the timber industry. By the end of the British era, the timber industry had been allowed to become largely a supplier of raw material to Hong Kong and Japan, although revenue generated had served to offset minimal returns from depleted oil and mineral resources.

1. HMSO, *The Colonial Office List*, 1963, London, p. 191.

2. Appendix 14 gives the botanical and local names for the more common trees of Sarawak.

3. *Tajau*, large dragon jars made in China, were highly prized heirlooms in longhouses.

4. *Sarawak Gazette*, 16 April 1877, in Robert Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: The Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941*, London: Macmillan, 1970, p. 63.

5. 'Dayak Enterprise', *Sarawak Gazette* (1 July 1889): 95.

6. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak*, 1948, p. 21; 1953, pp. 32 and 37-8; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1962*, p. 59.

7. Table 11.1 and Figure 11.1 show *engkabang* exports up to 1963.

8. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 43.

9. HMSO, *The Colonial Office List*, 1950, p. 315. About 75 per cent of the nuts were not collected. *Engkabang* is 'a riparian tree and many of the nuts fall into water and are washed away if not collected' (Information 2 June 1993 from B. E. Smythies, Conservator of Forests, 1960-3).

10. *Sarawak Gazette*, 839 (1923), in V. Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar: Urbanization in Sarawak, East Malaysia*, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1980, p. 30.

11. John K. Wilson, *Budu or Twenty Years in Sarawak*, North Berwick: Tantallion Press, 1969, p. 87.

12. See Table 11.1. For *jelutong* exports from 1946 to 1962, see Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 42.
13. See Table 11.1. (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953*, pp. 37-8; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1962*, p. 59).
14. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 29; Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics, 1964*, Table 2.6.
15. Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar*, p. 44; B. J. C. Spurway, 'Forestry in the Colony of Sarawak (1935-1940)', A Statement Prepared for the Fifth Empire Forestry Conference, London, 1947, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office; H. Longhurst, *The Borneo Story: The History of the First 100 Years of Trading in the Far East by the Borneo Company Limited*, London: Newman Neame, 1956, pp. 54-6, 65-6, and 93.
16. *Sarawak Gazette*, 402 (1 July 1899): 230; B. E. Smythies, 'History of Forestry in Sarawak', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1243 (30 September 1961): 169.
17. Spurway, 'Forestry in the Colony of Sarawak (1935-1940)', p. 1.
18. *Sarawak Gazette*, 844 (January 1924), in Smythies, 'History of Forestry in Sarawak', p. 169.
19. Spurway, 'Forestry in the Colony of Sarawak (1935-1940)', p. 2.
20. Smythies, 'History of Forestry in Sarawak', p. 171; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1940*, p. 1.
21. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1950*, p. 5.
22. Personal communication from B. E. Smythies, 7 July 1993.
23. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1950*, p. 5.
24. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1947*, p. 7.
25. Smythies, 'History of Forestry in Sarawak', p. 172; Longhurst, *The Borneo Story*, pp. 109-10.
26. *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 March 1955, p. 3. Ramin was being poisoned in favour of *jelutong* in the Daro Forest Reserve as late as 1948.
27. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 29; 1949, pp. 42-3.
28. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, pp. 42-3.
29. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year, 1948*, p. 1; 1950, p. 5.
30. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1094 (7 May 1949): 97-8.
31. 'Sarawak Development Plan', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1099 (7 October 1949): 270.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, p. 271.
34. Spurway, 'Forestry in the Colony of Sarawak (1935-1940)', p. 2; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1099 (7 October 1949): 271.
35. 'Forest Resources of British Borneo', in British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey: A Record of United Kingdom and Commonwealth Affairs*, London: HMSO, 1950, p. 28.
36. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 47.
37. Governor to the Colonial Secretary, Saving No. 37/52, 18 January 1952, Ref. 31/388/48, CO 1022/356, PRO.



38. *Hansard*, Vol. 497, col. 2309, 19 March 1952.
39. Typical working circles were 70 square kilometres of swamp forest at Sedilu, First Division over a 60-year cycle and 300 square kilometres of swamp forest in the Lower Mukah over a 54-year cycle.
40. Governor to State Secretary, Saving No. 37/52, 18 January 1952, CO 1022/356, PRO.
41. Personal communication from B. E. Smythies, 7 July 1993.
42. R. F. Austin, 'Land Policy and Social Control: The British Presence in Sarawak', MA research paper, University of Michigan, 1974, p. 26.
43. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1958*, pp. iii, 6, and 7.
44. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year, 1949*, p. 3; 1953, p. 5.
45. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1953*, p. 3.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
47. T. Corson memorandum, 14 February 1938, Lanjak-Entimau file, Forest Department, Kuching, in Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 280.
48. Appendix 12 details the forest policy approved by the Governor in Council.
49. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1954*, pp. 1-3.
50. Figure 11.2 shows timber export values during the Brooke and British periods.
51. Original reports use and summate Hoppus tons of 50 Hoppus feet for logs and long tons of 40 cubic feet for sawn timber. The conversion factor used here for both is 1 ton to 1.016 tonnes. Strictly, 1 sawn ton is equal to 2 Hoppus tons (Smythies, 'History of Forestry in Sarawak', p. 174).
52. Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics, 1964*, Table 2.6.
53. Some timber companies gave drinks and money to the *tuai rumah* concerned in return for logging permits in the local Communal Forest (Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar*, p. 55).
54. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1952*, p. 62.
55. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1956*, p. 56.
56. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 73. Ramin was particularly favoured in the United Kingdom.
57. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1960*, p. 16. Growth trials on ramin only started in the late 1940s (Personal communication from B. E. Smythies, 7 July 1993).
58. *Sarawak Tribune*, 26 April 1960, p. 1.
59. In the peat-swamp forests, sawmill licences exceeded the forest available and issue of new licences ceased after 1960 (Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1960*, p. 13).
60. *Sarawak Tribune*, 9 December 1961, p. 1.
61. Capital investment was considerable. James Wong's timber operations in the Fifth Division required an investment of \$1.5 million and Yong Khaw's operations an investment of \$5 million (*Sarawak Tribune*, 19 April 1962, p. 12; 30 October 1962, p. 2).
62. About twenty sawmills were affected (*Sarawak Tribune*, 29 November 1962, p. 1).

63. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1960*, p. 24; *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 June 1963, p. 9.
64. The herbarium building cost about \$50,000 (Sarawak Development Board, *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-1963*, Table 3).
65. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 113.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
67. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1960*, p. 16.
68. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 114.
69. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1963*, p. 19.
70. *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 June 1963, p. 9.
71. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, pp. 31-2. Cutch exports peaked in 1949 at \$1,480,237.
72. Smythies, 'History of Forestry in Sarawak', p. 172.
73. Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics, 1964*, Table 2.6. Export figures were:

Year	Round Timber (Hoppus tonnes)	Sawn timber (cubic tonnes)
1960	198 824	167 935
1963	495 628	1 469 004

74. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 115.
75. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1956*, pp. 57-8.
76. M. Kavanagh, 'Planning Considerations for a System of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries in Sarawak', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 61, 1491 (April 1985): 22.
77. The destructive type of logging that was to develop later in the interior was not foreseen by forestry officers during the colonial era (Personal communication from B. E. Smythies, 7 July 1993).
78. See Figure 11.2 for timber export earnings up to 1963.
79. *The Constitution of Malaysia*, Ninth Schedule, List II, State List No. 3(b); Tenth Schedule, Part III, Sources of Revenue assigned to States No.2; and part V, Additional Sources of Revenue assigned to States of Sabah and Sarawak, No. 2 (L. A. Sheridan and M. A. Groves, *The Constitution of Malaysia*, 4th edn., Singapore: Malayan Law Journal Pte. Ltd., 1987, pp. 522-5).

## Oil, Mining, and Industrialization

GOVERNMENT policy was to develop new fields of production including the recovery of mineral resources to raise the standard of living as required by the second Cardinal Principle.<sup>1</sup> In 1892, the geologist Posewitz wrote of Borneo that 'from the day the unfortunate Magellan cast anchor before Brunei . . . the wildest ideas have been in circulation with regard to its mineral wealth'.<sup>2</sup> However, by World War II all the marketable minerals discovered in Sarawak that could be recovered economically had either been worked out or were in decline. Antimony was the mainstay of the early operations of the Borneo Company Limited (BCL) under a royalty agreement made in 1856, but production had peaked in 1872.<sup>3</sup> By 1907, mining had ceased, although small amounts were recovered up to the early 1950s from gold recovery operations.<sup>4</sup> Although mercury was the leading mineral product in the late 1880s, following depletion of high-grade ores and closure of the Tegora mine in 1877, production was negligible.<sup>5</sup>

Coal mining had proved an expensive venture for both the BCL and the Brookes.<sup>6</sup> Although it was the most important export from 1889 to 1899, oil from Miri in 1910, difficult working conditions, and falling production led to the closure of the Simunjan coal mine, the only one in Sarawak, in 1932.<sup>7</sup> A mineral success of the Brooke era, gold, reached maximum production in 1907.<sup>8</sup> However, due to flooding, by 1921 the mine at Bau was no longer economic to operate and mining had virtually ceased. In the late 1930s the remaining gold content in the tailings proved lucrative for small operations, but otherwise only scattered alluvial pockets worked by small Chinese syndicates remained. The output of Sarawak Shell Oilfields Limited (SSOL) from its oil field in Miri declined from over 5.5 million US barrels (873 000 tonnes) of crude oil in 1929 to less than 700 000 US barrels (111 000 tonnes) by 1940 as reserves were depleted.<sup>9</sup>

There was an energetic search for other mineral deposits between 1850 and 1900, but records were inadequate to reveal the

full extent in 1946 (Table 12.1).<sup>10</sup> Therefore the British government sent a technical mission in September to investigate coal possibilities in Sarawak and North Borneo, but no new information was uncovered.<sup>11</sup> In 1949, three steps were taken to foster mining: a Geological Survey Department was formed to serve Brunei, North Borneo, and Sarawak; a new Mining Ordinance reflecting up-to-date practices and methods was enacted; and, to give an immediate boost to mining, some mineral royalties were removed temporarily.<sup>12</sup> Colonial Development and Welfare (CD & W) funds amounting to \$730,941 financed collection of data by the Department to produce a geological sketch map of the three territories.<sup>13</sup> The highlight for the Department in 1949 was the discovery of bauxite, the raw material for aluminium, in viable quantities for mining.

In the 1951-7 Development Plan, geological survey was given an 'A' priority, CD & W funding provided \$1,853,815 for the three Borneo territories, and in Sarawak the state allocated \$340,000 to cover recurrent expenditure.<sup>14</sup> A special study in 1953, financed by CD & W, surveyed the coking coal deposits at Silantek worked by the Japanese during the occupation.<sup>15</sup> Their post-war expression of interest in developing a mine there did not eventuate. The Department's primary goal of producing a geological map showing the distribution and economic value of the main mineral resources of the three territories was largely completed during 1956.<sup>16</sup> In 1957, the Department surveyed a canal to transport stone from the Baram River to Brunei via the Belait River and studied the possibility of using limestone deposits in the Baram area to start a cement industry in Brunei.<sup>17</sup> None of the plans came to fruition. Although glass sand and kaolinitic fire clay as well as bauxite were discovered during the British era, only bauxite was mined commercially.

### *Bauxite*

High-grade bauxite deposits were discovered in the Sematan area of the First Division in 1949 and prospecting was completed by the Department of Geology in 1951. The British Aluminium Company extended the search for further deposits to the Second and Third Divisions. A 21-year mining lease for the workable tonnage of some 5.6 million tonnes of ore in three deposits at Munggu Belian, Bukit Gedong, and Tanjong Serabang was granted to Sematan Bauxite Limited, a joint Canadian and Japanese company

TABLE 12.1  
Major Mineral Production and Export Values during the British Era, 1946-1963

Year	<i>Bauxite<sup>a</sup></i>		<i>Gold<sup>b</sup></i>		<i>Petroleum</i>		<i>All Exports</i>
	<i>Tonnes</i>	<i>\$</i>	<i>Fine Ozs.</i>	<i>\$</i>	<i>Tonnes<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>Net \$<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>Net \$<sup>e</sup></i>
1946	-	-	1	47	5 240 <sup>f</sup>	4,430,000 <sup>f</sup>	27,558,673
1947	-	-	430 <sup>f</sup>	29,508	24 347	20,582,996	51,912,935
1948	-	-	599	41,061	47 708	62,992,811	59,496,991
1949	-	-	1,523	126,749	58 892	72,501,992	52,510,458
1950	-	-	1,440	117,580	59 063	27,959,937	144,278,402
1951	-	-	931	73,780	52 025	36,019,450	205,162,757
1952	-	-	813	90,432	50 129	31,669,466	131,502,366
1953	-	-	442	44,527	49 053	30,283,837	125,147,180
1954	-	-	531	52,240	70 258	34,721,500	132,340,400
1955	-	-	463	47,746	65 806	30,170,296	147,861,000
1956	-	-	606	61,737	71 003	35,164,046	130,296,467
1957	-	-	883	91,095	66 960	57,361,997	122,602,124

1958	136 319	1,836,780	864	85,027	57 812	37,077,578	119,399,005
1959	206 848	3,842,537	2,450	— <sup>b</sup>	55 693	46,101,073	182,208,114
1960	289 396	4,995,202	3,326	— <sup>b</sup>	60 393	36,914,931	203,035,575
1961	257 451	5,545,854	4,132	— <sup>b</sup>	60 450	20,197,597	178,027,915
1962	229 073	4,076,863	2,885	— <sup>b</sup>	58 190	19,038,817	183,525,489
1963	157 731	3,115,482	2,771	— <sup>b</sup>	51 944	14,534,442 <sup>e</sup>	202,800,000 <sup>e</sup>

Sources: Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics, 1964*, Table 3.1; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year, 1948-52*; and *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953-62*.

<sup>a</sup>Bauxite mining began in 1958.

<sup>b</sup>Official gold exports ceased in 1958 when the government decided to allow the miners to sell their gold locally on the free market.

<sup>c</sup>Petroleum production values are those from the Miri oilfield.

<sup>d</sup>Petroleum export values are net (exports minus imports).

<sup>e</sup>Exports are net, that is not inflated by Brunei oil imports and exports.

<sup>f</sup>Interpolated from graphs and comparative costs and hence approximations.

<sup>g</sup>Estimates based on Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics, 1964*, Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

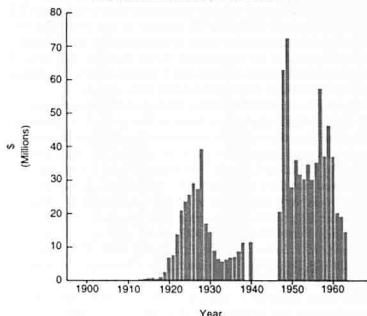
registered locally in 1955.<sup>18</sup> Open-cut ore recovery started in early 1958 and by the end of the year, 101 000 tonnes of ore had been exported. Handling the ore was expensive as it had to be taken by lighter from the stockpile to 10 000-tonne freighters lying five kilometres offshore for delivery to Japan.<sup>19</sup> Ore had to be stockpiled during the October to March monsoon period as rough seas prevented ship-loading. From 1958 to 1963 inclusive, 1.22 million tonnes of ore had been mined with an export value of \$23 million, although by 1963 production was falling due to high production costs.<sup>20</sup> By then, the state had benefited \$2.15 million from royalties, export duty, and mine rent, apart from the contribution to the balance of payments, but the project proved short-lived.<sup>21</sup>

### *Oil*

British planning for the rehabilitation of oilfields in the Far East began during World War II when a committee was set up in 1943 to make supplies of petroleum products available as near as was practical to the centre of military operations.<sup>22</sup> Some 710,000 US barrels (112 700 tonnes) of oil had been extracted from the Miri oilfield by the Japanese during the occupation, despite denial action taken before the British withdrew (Figure 12.1).<sup>23</sup> The Japanese in turn put the oilfield and Lutong refinery out of action before surrendering and this, coupled with allied bombing during the reoccupation campaign, resulted in serious damage.<sup>24</sup> After the Australians regained control of Miri on 23 June 1945, restoring production of crude oil for refining overseas was given priority.<sup>25</sup> Oil production was resumed in late 1945 but the oilfield was already in decline and the average output during the British era was less than one-tenth of the peak years in the late 1920s.<sup>26</sup> Local refining was restored on 25 December 1946 at Lutong, utilizing a Lummus crude oil distillation unit originally designed for the US War Department. Ninety-nine per cent of the crude oil treated at the SSOL Lutong refinery was imported by pipeline from the Seria oilfield of Brunei Shell Petroleum and was used to produce gasoline, kerosene, gas oil, fuel oil, diesel oil, and diesel fuel.<sup>27</sup>

Faced with a declining oilfield, SSOL started an ambitious exploration programme. By 1950, a considerable amount of inland geological reconnaissance mapping had been carried out, using holes sunk by hand-augers and shallow core-drilling where necessary. Any favourable indications were followed up by seismic surveys and, if positive results were recorded, deep exploratory drills

FIGURE 12.1  
Petroleum Product Exports, 1900-1963



Sources: Dominions Office, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List*, 1886-1941, London: Waterlow and Sons, relevant years; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year*, 1948-52 and *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1953-62.

were sunk. Embarrassingly for the Sarawak government, public attention was drawn to the ludicrously favourable terms of the SSOL lease by Gerard MacBryan, the former political adviser to the Rajah.<sup>28</sup> On 28 August 1951, *The Times* of London published his letter which pointed out that SSOL only paid royalties of 2s. 5½d. (\$1.05) a tonne whereas Anglo-Iranian in Persia paid 18s. 2d (\$7.78). This no doubt hastened Sarawak government and SSOL negotiations already taking place and a new oil mining lease was signed on 23 June 1952.<sup>29</sup> The fixed royalty was replaced with a percentage royalty based on the value of oil recovered and the minimum royalty payable a year was increased from £5,400 (\$46,278) to £10,000 (\$85,700). Also, a royalty was introduced on sales of casing head spirit and natural gas. Under the new lease, royalty per tonne of oil from the Miri oilfield increased from 4s. 3d. (\$1.82) in 1951 to 12s. 3d. (\$5.25) in 1953.<sup>30</sup> SSOL also became



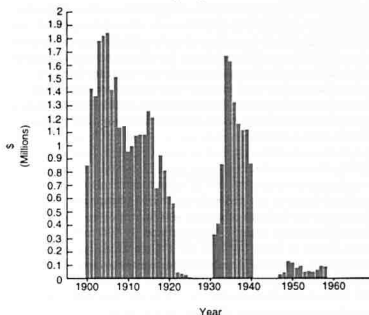
subject to company income tax introduced in Sarawak on 31 December 1949, and agreed to spend £50,000 (\$428,500) a year on exploration or oil mining operations when production fell below 40 640 tonnes (256,000 US barrels) in any year. The original concession covered the whole of Sarawak and the Company agreed to surrender its exploration leases over 25 per cent of Sarawak within five years, followed by a further 25 per cent within ten years, and another 25 per cent within fifteen years.<sup>31</sup>

SSOL began exploration off the Brunei and Sarawak coasts in 1952, using a drilling platform fixed to the seabed, a technique used for the first time in the Commonwealth.<sup>32</sup> Two years later, Sarawak assumed jurisdiction over the continental shelf and its resources by Orders in Council.<sup>33</sup> More intensive offshore exploration followed but the cost of dry wells drilled from offshore fixed structures was very high, that at Siwa, 13 kilometres offshore, costing over \$2 million. To provide flexibility and reduce costs, Brunei Shell Petroleum had a 3000 tonne mobile steel drilling barge, the *Orient Explorer*, built in England in 1958. Costing nearly £1 million (\$8,570,000), the *Orient Explorer* was able to operate in water up to 40 metres deep and began work in 1961 off Bintulu.<sup>34</sup> To allow more flexibility in selecting offshore drilling sites, it was replaced later by the floating platform *Side-winder*. However, the exploratory wells drilled both on land and offshore in Sarawak during the British period did not uncover any commercially viable oil deposits to replace the Miri oilfield, although gas deposits found off Bintulu later proved of significant economic benefit.<sup>35</sup> By 1960, SSOL oil royalties, export duty, company tax, and mining rents had fallen to \$792,298, about 1 per cent of total state revenue. However, the Company, with its labour force of some 1,000, was one of the largest industrial employers in the 1946-63 period and it had invested heavily in exploration.<sup>36</sup> The industry also played a substantial role in the generally favourable balance of payment figures as a major export earner between 1947 and 1963, surpassed only by rubber from 1950, pepper in the mid-1950s and early 1960s, and timber in the 1960s.<sup>37</sup>

### Gold

A small number of Chinese syndicates recovered a limited amount of gold from irregular deposits in limestone and alluvium in the Bau area during the British period (Figure 12.2).<sup>38</sup> Bau had thrived on illicit overland trade with Kalimantan in the past,<sup>39</sup> but officially this gold had to be sold to the government at the interna-

FIGURE 12.2  
Gold Exports, 1900-1963



Sources: Dominions Office, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List*, 1886-1941, London: Waterlow and Sons, relevant years; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year*, 1948-52 and *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1953-62.

tionally controlled price and a royalty of 5 per cent was deducted. Larger companies were also interested in the search for gold. Anglo-Oriental (Malaya) Limited was granted a prospecting licence in 1950, concluding, after eighteen months' work in the Bau and Marup areas, that the gold content in the alluvium was uneconomic for dredging operations.<sup>40</sup> The BCL prospected for gold in the Bau area and in the Poak River area, where alluvial gold had been worked by Chinese miners thirty years earlier, but did not find any areas warranting recovery operations. By 1955, only three Chinese organizations were producing gold in the Bau district and output had fallen to 463 fine ounces a year valued at \$47,747, a post-war minimum. However, the official decline was reversed in 1958 when the government decided to eliminate gold royalties and allow the miners to sell their gold locally on the free market.<sup>41</sup> This restored interest in prospecting and over the

1958-9 period, the number of working mines increased to nine, although all were small-scale operations. Declared production increased rapidly to a peak in 1961 of 4,132 fine ounces, the maximum reached during the British era. This encouraged the Geological Department to study drilling for gold down to 300 metres at Bau and the government of Japan agreed to provide a portable diamond drill, a driller, and a mechanic for two years from 1963.<sup>42</sup> However, large-scale gold mining operations remained uneconomic until the 1980s when new technology enabled disseminated microscopic traces of gold to be extracted economically from the ore.<sup>43</sup>

### *Fertilizers*

The soils of Sarawak are generally poor and phosphate recovered locally, mainly in the form of guano, was an important agricultural fertilizer. The largest deposit, an estimated 29 500 tonnes, was in the Niah Caves at Bukit Subis in the Fourth Division and during the British era about 610 tonnes a year was recovered under the supervision of the Agriculture Department. Supervision was necessary to ensure that the swiftlets in the caves were not disturbed during guano recovery, as they produced edible birds' nests, a Chinese delicacy which was a remunerative export for the local economy.<sup>44</sup> Dolomite, a fertilizer that reduces soil acidity and is particularly useful for pepper gardens, was sought by the Geological Department in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture in 1960. Although two years later about 191 000 cubic metres were found near the Berar River, a tributary of the Melinau upriver from Marudi, these were not mined during the British era.<sup>45</sup>

### *Building Materials*

In 1946, there were no known sources of good quality stone for building and roadworks in Sarawak outside the Kuching/Bau area, and stone had to be imported from as far away as Hong Kong for the rapidly growing towns in the Rajang estuary.<sup>46</sup> To overcome this inhibition on the construction industry, by 1953 the Geological Department had located an estimated 10 million cubic metres of granite at Sebuyau on the coast in the Second Division and had identified another source at Aup near Sibü. In 1954, the Department also located fourteen possible stone quarry sites along

the proposed Serian to Simanggang road and two years later uncovered a source of stone for the Fourth Division at Batu Gading. After finding a further source of granite at Bukit Piring in the Balingian valley for the future trunk road from Sibu to Miri, the Department decided that enough stone had been uncovered to supply all the state's needs.<sup>47</sup> Between 1950 and 1962 the amount of stone recovered by the Public Works Department and private contractors increased five-fold to over 190 000 cubic metres. Supplies of gravel were drawn from the Rajang valley and lime was prepared from the limestone at Gunong Staat in the First Division. The Geological Department also uncovered all the main raw materials for manufacturing cement in Sarawak with the sole exception of gypsum. A booklet, *Cement-making Possibilities in British Borneo* was issued by the Department in 1961 to solicit interest, but without result.<sup>48</sup>

### *Other Minerals*

Workable deposits of glass sand were discovered at Bintulu and near Sematan in 1962, and kaolin fire clay was found in nine areas adjacent to the Kuching-Simanggang Road in the same year.<sup>49</sup> With the exception of bauxite, the Geological Department did not discover any new mineral deposits to supplement state revenues during the British era. All the other economically viable marketable minerals, including oil, had either been fully exploited or were very much depleted during the Brooke era. This limited the opportunities for industrialization in Sarawak.

### *Industrialization*

Excluding timber, the British administration inherited four processing industries in 1946: oil refining, catch extraction, processing of *jelutong*, and manufacture of sago flour. As previously indicated, the oil refinery at Lutong was badly damaged from aerial attacks and Japanese denial action prior to reoccupation. However, by November 1945 two thousand gallons of motor spirit were being produced monthly at Miri and a new crude oil distillation unit was commissioned at Lutong on 25 December 1946.<sup>50</sup> Most of the oil refined at Lutong was from Brunei and its processing made a significant contribution to Sarawak's economy. Net exports peaked at over \$72 million in 1949, gradually declining to about \$14.5 million in 1962.

Cutch exports earned a considerable amount of US dollars after the reoccupation and peaked in 1949 with exports valued at \$1,480,237. After that, production declined due to falling prices and competition from North Borneo where the mangrove bark had a higher tannin content, and the factory at Selalang closed at the end of 1960.<sup>51</sup> The *jelutong* refining factory at Bintulu continued to operate throughout the British era. Used for chewing gum, its product was exported to the United States and made a significant but declining contribution to export earnings, from some \$3 million in 1954 to just over \$800,000 in 1960. Sago flour also declined in importance and was beset with price fluctuations, problems of using primitive machinery, inability to meet minimum export standards, and competition from maize starch.<sup>52</sup> After the government waived export duties in 1957, export volumes increased steadily, but by 1963 the industry could not support the sago-growing family unit. By then the Department of Agriculture had decided that agricultural diversification was necessary in the sago growing districts, although sago flour was one of the major export earners between 1947 and 1963.<sup>53</sup>

The first notable British initiative to promote new industries was taken in 1957 with the enactment of the Pioneer Industries (Encouragement) Ordinance and the Development Finance Corporation Ordinance. These provided new industries with relief from customs duty and income tax, and promoted economic development through financial credits. The Sarawak Development Finance Corporation (SDFC) was established in 1958 to provide finance for private economic development in the agricultural sector, and the Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) registered the Borneo Development Corporation (BDC) to finance private economic development in the industrial sector.<sup>54</sup> By 1960, the government was involved both directly and indirectly in developing factory sites for industry and announced that it would enter into joint ventures, either directly or through the SDFC.<sup>55</sup> Further government measures to foster private investment were in developing the country's infrastructure and establishing free trade with North Borneo from 1 January 1962.

In the immediate period after World War II, manufacturing in Sarawak was confined to light industries, meeting a few local needs, such as matches, liquors such as arrack, soap, and aerated waters.<sup>56</sup> Manufacturing gradually extended to include edible oils, fats and margarines, and more sophisticated products. The government declared cement a pioneer industry under the Pioneer

Industries (Encouragement) Ordinance in 1958, although no investors came forward during the colonial era. More successfully, the Ordinance attracted the interest of other manufacturers and, in 1958, particle board and metal containers were declared pioneer industries.<sup>57</sup> These were followed in 1959 by plywood, knitted products, printed batek cloth, canvas rubber-soled shoes, and wooden venetian blinds.<sup>58</sup> By the end of 1962, fourteen industries and products had been declared pioneer industries and seven companies had been granted pioneer status. The total authorized capital of six of these largely Chinese-owned companies was \$7.7 million, and by the end of 1961 about 50 per cent was paid up.<sup>59</sup> However, many of the pioneer industries established prior to the formation of Malaysia were largely directed to local needs and all were too small to have any material impact on Sarawak's overseas trade during the British era. In 1963, manufactured goods made up just over 3 per cent of Sarawak's exports.<sup>60</sup> To fulfil even these small steps towards industrialization, there had been heavy investment in the state's infrastructure.

1. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 1.

2. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1955*, p. 58.

3. H. Longhurst, *The Borneo Story: The History of the First 100 Years of Trading in the Far East by the Borneo Company Limited*, London: Newman Neame, 1956, pp. 14, 55, and 57.

4. Nine tonnes of antimony were recovered in 1948, 2.5 tonnes in 1949, and 4 tonnes in 1950.

5. James Lau and Victor Han, 'History of Mining in Sarawak', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society* (Sarawak Branch), 2 (March 1976): 25 and 28.

6. The BCL lost about £20,000 (\$171,400) in 1874 on the Semunjan mine (Spenser St. John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke: Rajah of Sarawak, from His Personal Papers and Correspondence*, London: Blackwood, 1879, p. 139).

7. Daniel Chew, *Chinese Pioneers on the Sarawak Frontier, 1841-1941*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 192.

8. G. E. Wilford, 'The Bau Goldfield', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1250 (30 April 1962): 77-9.

9. Sarawak Shell Oilfields Limited (SSOL), *Oil in Sarawak 1910-1960*, Kuala Belait: Brunei Press, 1961, p. 8. SSOL, the name adopted by the company in 1958, is used exclusively in the text for clarity.

10. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1952*, p. 63.

11. HMSO, *The Colonial Empire, 1947-1948*, Cmd 7433, London: 1948, p. v.

12. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 45.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 3 and 7; 1951, p. 193.

14. Sarawak Development Board, *Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1951-1957*, p. 7 and App. II, p. 2.

15. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1063 (1 October 1946): 25; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1953*, pp. 69-70 and 188; A. H. Moy-Thomas, 'Some Notes on Coal', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1246 (31 December 1961): 239-40.
16. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1956, pp. 62, 174, 178, and map facing p. 62; 1958, p. 6.
17. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1957, p. 5.
18. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 20 September 1957, p. 4.
19. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1958, pp. 57-8.
20. The bauxite statistics given have been compiled from Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, various years, and Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics*, 1964.
21. Table 12.1 shows the production and export values of bauxite during the British era.
22. Ministry of Fuel and Power to Lieut.-Col. Denis Capel Dunn, letter, 25 August 1943, War Cabinet Offices, File 35932, FO 371, PRO.
23. A. V. N. Horton, 'A Note on the British Retreat from Kuching, 1941-1942', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 36, 57 (December 1986): 246; G. C. Harper, 'The Miri Oilfield, 1910-1972', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 20, 40-41 (January-December 1972): 28-29.
24. SSOL, *Oil in Sarawak 1910-1960*, p. 12; Harper, 'The Miri Oilfield 1910-1972', p. 29.
25. F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-1946*, London: HMSO, 1956, p. 180.
26. Figure 12.1 and Table 12.1 show petroleum production and export values.
27. Oil imports from Brunei and re-exports dominated and distorted import, export, and trade balance figures (Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, pp. 28 and 51).
28. Digby described SSOL's lease terms as 'ludicrously favourable' (K. H. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, Data Paper No. 114, South-East Asia Program, New York: Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1980, p. 88).
29. *Sarawak Tribune*, 26 June 1952, p. 1.
30. In 1951, royalties were \$98,952 on 372,780 US barrels of oil (59 171 tonnes), compared with royalties of \$262,775 on 351,484 US barrels (55 791 tonnes) in 1953.
31. *The Times* (London), 26 June 1909, p. 7; 9 December 1957, p. 14.
32. *Singapore Free Press*, Singapore, 22 December 1952, p. 1.
33. HMSO, *The Colonial Territories*, Cmd. 9489, London, 1955, p. 22; *Hansard*, Vol. 1623, cols. 14-2, 10 May 1960.
34. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 28 April 1961, p. 12.
35. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, p. 74 forecast that extending Sarawak's jurisdiction to cover the continental shelf could prove to be the most significant event in Sarawak's economic history.
36. In 1956, SSOL spent \$31.5 million on oil exploration in British Borneo, a considerable proportion of it in Sarawak, and over \$9 million in 1958.
37. Table 12.1 gives the comparative value of the major mineral exports.
38. See also Table 12.1. In 1951 the Bau district registered production of 931 fine ounces valued at \$73,780, paying \$3,689 in royalty and \$8,237 for mine rental.
39. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 15.

40. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 53.
41. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 58.
42. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 74; 1962, p. 121.
43. Ling Lee Soon, 'All That Glistens Is Not Gold', *Sarawak Gazette*, 66, 1507 (April 1989): 8.
44. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 125.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
46. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953*, p. 71. Imported stone was expensive and inhibited development.
47. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 83.
48. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, pp. 75-6.
49. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 125.
50. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-1946*, p. 178; SSOL, *Oil in Sarawak, 1910-1960*, p. 12.
51. B. E. Smythies, 'History of Forestry in Sarawak', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1243 (30 September 1961): 172.
52. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 38; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1954*, p. 34; 1956, p. 52; 1959, pp. 59-60.
53. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1957*, p. 46; 1961, p. 55.
54. CDC was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1948 to increase the productive capacity and wealth of the colonies (CDC, *Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for Year to 31 December 1962*, London: HMSO, pp. 42-3).
55. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, p. 90; 1961, p. 80; 1962, p. 31.
56. The Excise Ordinance of 1950 was applied to liquor manufacturers, replacing revenue on the lines of excise duty collected previously under licence under the Monopolies Ordinance.
57. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 9.
58. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 25.
59. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 80; 1962, p. 129.
60. Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics, 1964*, Table 6.2.



## Infrastructure for Economic Development

IN the free enterprise economy of Sarawak, during the British era public sector investment concentrated on providing the environment in which the private sector could develop.<sup>1</sup> This included improving all forms of communication and public services to provide the infrastructure for economic development.

### *Maps and Mapping*

Maps are an essential prerequisite for developing infrastructure. In 1946, the largest-scale map of Sarawak was 1 to 126,720 (two miles to an inch) and only three of the eighteen sheets had been printed. During the war, the Allied military authorities produced 1 to 253,440 maps but the details were not reliable. To meet the need for larger-scale maps, the RAF agreed to carry out aerial photography using Mosquito aircraft based in Singapore.<sup>2</sup> Ground control was provided by the Land and Survey Department and the Directorate of Colonial Surveys in London produced the 1 to 50,000 scale maps. By the end of 1953 aerial photography had covered about 75 per cent of Sarawak, and by the end of 1962, 145 of the complete set of 206 maps had been issued, although only 8 were fully contoured.<sup>3</sup> Between 1948 and 1961 climatic conditions thwarted attempts to photograph the entire country at contact levels of 1 to 60,000 and 90,000, but contact levels of 1 to 40,000, started in 1962, proved more successful and were continued in 1963. Virtually all the maps were planimetric until a detachment of the Eighty-Four Survey squadron of the Royal Engineers provided the necessary planimetric and height control in the early 1960s for production of fully contoured maps.<sup>4</sup>

The Land and Survey Department published 1 to 500,000 scale maps of the whole of Sarawak in 1951; 1 to 1,000,000 scale maps in 1949 with later editions in 1953, 1956, and 1963; and a series of land use maps of 1 to 250,000 scale in 1956-7. It also started work on a 1 to 125,000 series consisting of twenty-nine sheets in 1957,

completing about one-third before the formation of Malaysia. To meet the demand for large-scale maps for land utilization and planning, the Department obtained a modern air survey camera and photogrammetric plotting machines in 1962, and stereo-plotting machines in 1963. Using a hired aircraft, an extensive programme of aerial photography was started in 1963, but with no tangible results prior to the formation of Malaysia.

### *Roads*

Numerous rivers and a long coastline formed Sarawak's natural highways with river and coastal craft the traditional mode of transport. There were only two roads of note outside the immediate vicinity of the major towns in 1946: the unmetalled 40-kilometre road to the mining district at Bau completed around 1901 and the 64-kilometre partly metalled road to Serian.<sup>5</sup> Opened in September 1930, the Serian Road was built to open up agricultural land. By the end of the Japanese occupation, the Bau Road was in dire disrepair and the Serian Road was impassable.

Until 1952, CD & W funding of \$1.7 million financed road development and the government met post-war road rehabilitation and maintenance costs.<sup>6</sup> Usually maintenance failed to keep up with the deterioration caused by increasingly heavy traffic. As a result, in 1951 roads in Sibu were compared to buffalo fields and the Bau Road had to be closed periodically, in one instance for over twelve months.<sup>7</sup> The Serian Road was kept open, but had to be completely rebuilt in a two-year programme completed in 1953. By 1951 the Public Works Department (PWD) had concluded that existing road designs were inadequate and an \$11.5 million reconstruction programme was introduced in the Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1951-7. Work to bitumen standard was started on the Bau Road in 1952 and finally completed three years later, although ferry breakdowns at Batu Kitang hindered its free use for some time.<sup>8</sup> Construction costs were so high, \$150,000 a kilometre, compared with the cost of \$50,000 a kilometre for the 7th Mile airport road, that questions were raised in the Council Negri.<sup>9</sup>

The 1951-7 Development Plan also included \$12,720,000 for the 130-kilometre trunk road from Serian to Simanggang. First proposed in 1928, the road's prime purpose was to open up agricultural land. By the end of 1955, all pre-construction work was complete and sources of stone and gravel had been located. Prices

tendered by contractors were considered so excessive that the government directed the PWD to construct the road by direct labour.<sup>10</sup> By 1959 the estimated cost, excluding the cost for permanent bridges, had risen to \$22 million, \$7 million of which was met by Colonial Development and Welfare (CD & W) funds. When opened to restricted traffic in May 1962, the road surface was temporary and only two of the fourteen permanent bridges had been completed.<sup>11</sup>

The 1952 to 1957 programme envisaged a comprehensive territorial network of trunk and secondary roads. However, to place more emphasis on rural development, this was changed in the 1959-1963 Development Plan to open up undeveloped areas for agriculture and rubber by building feeder roads and developing a line of communication from Sematan in the west to Durin near Sibul.<sup>12</sup> The programme for feeder roads was increased by a further 340 kilometres in 1961.<sup>13</sup> Although this scheme was too late to have any material effect on development before Malaysia was formed, work was well advanced on the 29-kilometre Simanggang to Engkilili connection and the 16-kilometre road from Limbang to Pandaruan. By the end of 1962, 348 kilometres of the programme for 810 kilometres of roads had been built, providing Sarawak with 1363 kilometres of roads compared with 736 kilometres in 1947 (Table 13.1).<sup>14</sup> This included the important 35-kilometre link road between Sarikei and Binatang completed in

TABLE 13.1  
Roads in Sarawak, 1947 and 1962 (kilometres)

<i>Type of Road</i>	<i>1947</i>	<i>1962</i>
Bituminous, macadam, and concrete surface all-weather roads	106	290
Gravel or stone	135	555
Unmetalled	495	518
Total	736	1363

Sources: Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 74; *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 254.

Note: Roads varied from under 2.4 metres to over 3.6 metres wide and the types of road are loosely defined to provide indicative rather than absolute comparisons between 1947 and 1962.

TABLE 13.2  
Licensed Motor Vehicles, 1951-1963

Year	Private Motor Cars	Private Motor Cycles	Taxis and Motor Cars	Lorries and Vans	Buses	Government Vehicles	Total
1951	210	414	82	n.a.	222	n.a.	928 <sup>a</sup>
1954	699	848	153	391	243	n.a.	2,334 <sup>a</sup>
1955	946	1,055	188	507	172	n.a.	2,868 <sup>a</sup>
1956	1,270	1,243	191	614	166	n.a.	3,484 <sup>a</sup>
1957	1,510	1,270	178	684	161	n.a.	3,803 <sup>a</sup>
1958	1,873	1,426	184	750	169	n.a.	4,402 <sup>a</sup>
1959	2,272	1,612	175	830	159	n.a.	5,048 <sup>a</sup>
1960	2,807	2,081	200	854	160	759	6,861
1961	3,304	2,617	199	1,015	176	1,006	8,317
1962	3,573	3,577	202	1,083	206	1,340	9,981
1963	4,167	4,590	241	1,182	224	1,434	11,838

Source: Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics*, 1964, Table 5.1, p. 29; Sarawak Constabulary, *Annual Report on the Sarawak Constabulary*, 1951, p. 6.

<sup>a</sup>These totals are incomplete as government vehicles are not included. The Constabulary gave the 1951 figures as 14,257 licensed vehicles

including 13,000 tricycles and bicycles, 210 cars, 222 buses, 24 rickshaws, 15 bullock carts, 166 hand carts, 412 motor cycles, and 82 taxis.

n.a. = not available.

1961. Transport of goods by road was beginning to develop, as shown by the growing number of registered lorries, 391 in 1954 and 1,083 in 1962, but apart from a bus service to Simanggang, public road transport showed little sign of expansion (Table 13.2).<sup>15</sup> Sarawak still had no road network connecting most of the population centres by September 1963, although \$51 million had been spent.

### *Railways*

The only public railway in Sarawak, a metre gauge line from Kuching towards Serian as far as the 10th Mile, was opened on 9 April 1916 and by 1925 had reached the 13th Mile.<sup>16</sup> Built to open up land and provide public transport, its purpose was duplicated by the Serian Road completed in 1930, leading to its closure to regular traffic on 31 March 1933.<sup>17</sup> By then, losses of over \$1 million had been incurred. After that, the rolling stock was used from time to time to transport stone from the 7th Mile quarries, but by the end of the Japanese occupation the three steam locomotives were beyond repair and the track was unusable.<sup>18</sup> The line was re-commissioned to the 7th Mile by 1949 and carried stone and equipment between the quarries, Kuching, and the new Kuching airfield, but it was superseded within two years by the new road to the airport.

### *Ports and Shipping*

With a 750-kilometre coastline facing the South China Sea and numerous river outlets, Sarawak was readily accessible to seagoing trading vessels. The Brooke government established the Brooke Dockyard and Engineering Company in Kuching in 1912 with a dry dock for vessels up to 1000 tonnes, a slipway, and an engineering workshop for shipping and plant repairs.<sup>19</sup> Sarawak had its own shipping line, the Sarawak and Singapore Steamship Company registered on 1 July 1875, which was reconstituted as the Sarawak Steamship Company on 1 June 1919. The company provided a regular shipping service to Singapore until World War II, during which six of its vessels were lost.<sup>20</sup>

From 1946 to 1950, priority was given to the rehabilitation of existing port facilities. Apart from the Miri open sea anchorage, all other ports, including Kuching and Sibu, were on rivers or in shallow inlets with limitations on vessel access (Table 13.3).<sup>21</sup> A

TABLE 13.3  
Ports in Sarawak, 1948

Port	Vessels		Wharf (m)	Depth L. W. (m)
	Draft (m)	Length (m)		
Kuching	4.9	92.3	58.8	3.7
Kuching			68.3	2.5
Kuching			39.1	1.8
Kuching			248.9	1.2
Kuching			12.3	0.9
Kuching, Pending Anchorage	6.2	138.5	—	—
Binatang	4.9	86.1	44.3	4.9
Sarikei	4.9	86.1	30.8	4.6
Sibu	7.5	86.1	43.1	4.9
Sibu			30.8	2.5
Sibu			43.1	1.5
Miri	Open sea anchorage		—	—
Lundu	2.5	30.8	—	—
Simunjan	3.7	66.7	—	—
Lingga	3.7	67.7	—	—
Simanggang	1.8	24.6	—	—
Betong	1.8	15.4	—	—
Kabong	1.8	15.4	—	—
Mukah	2.5	36.9	—	—
Oya	2.5	30.8	—	—
Balingian	2.5	18.5	—	—
Tatau	2.1	30.8	—	—
Bintulu	2.6	46.1	30.8	1.5
Niah	1.5	12.3	—	—
Sibuti	1.5	12.3	—	—
Baram	2.3	61.5	—	—
Limbang	2.5	61.5	46.1	4.9
Lawas	2.5	61.5	6.2	1.6

Source: B. A. Hepburn, *The Handbook of Sarawak: Comprising Historical, Statistical and General Information Concerning the Colony Obtained from Official and Other Reliable Records*, Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1949, p. 171.

L. W. = Low water.

consultant was appointed to report on future port development in 1949, providing a basis for future plans.<sup>22</sup> Under the 1951-7 Development Plan, a 150-metre concrete wharf was erected at Sibu and commissioned in 1956. For Kuching, to improve facilities and reduce congestion in the town centre, the government decided to build a new port at Tanah Puteh 4 kilometres down-river from the town. The new port and its 246-metre concrete wharf was built under the 1955-60 Development Plan at a cost of over \$8.7 million and was opened on 5 June 1961.<sup>23</sup> Plans made in 1952 for a deep-water port were deferred indefinitely, although neither Kuching nor Sibu could accept European ocean-going freight vessels.<sup>24</sup>

For general cargo, expensive transshipment in Singapore continued. Timber was exported via the river anchorages near the coast of the Sarawak (Sejingkat), Batang Lupar (Truso and Lingga), and Rajang (Tanjong Mani) rivers; bauxite was shipped via lighters and offshore anchorages off Sematan; and oil was pumped via pipeline to sea anchorages off Lutong.<sup>25</sup> To cater for increases in coastal shipping, all main coastal lights were converted to electricity in 1957 and Very High Frequency (VHF) radio stations were installed at four main lighthouses. Facilities provided for internal and coastal traffic were concrete wharves at Lingga, Simanggang, and Miri; timber wharves at Kuala Baram and Mukah; a timber jetty at Sebuyau; reinforced concrete pontoons at Kanowit, Betong, and Sibu; and a timber pontoon at Nanga Medamit.

### *Air Communications*

There were no regular air services to or within Sarawak before World War II.<sup>26</sup> For defence purposes, an airfield with two 740-metre grass airstrips was opened 11 kilometres from Kuching on 26 September 1938, a 330-metre airstrip was completed at Lutong, Miri, prior to World War II, and another at Bintulu was nearing completion.<sup>27</sup> All were damaged during the war, but by 1946 Kuching had a 920-metre metalled airstrip for military use and both the Kuching and Miri airfields had been reopened to light aircraft.<sup>28</sup>

RAF Sunderland flying boats maintained regular air communications between Singapore, Kuching, and Labuan from 1945 until June 1949, when Malayan Airways provided a regular service from the Kuching airport, for which the runway was extended to 1110 metres.<sup>29</sup> To accommodate larger aircraft, a new airport,

funded mainly by CD & W allocations of \$703,344, was built about 1600 metres north of the existing Kuching airport. Commissioned on 26 September 1950 with a 1380-metre runway, this was the only international (alternate) airport in Sarawak. Its runway was extended in 1958-9 to accept Vickers Viscount aircraft and further extended in 1962 to 1940 metres for the Comet service. A flight information centre was set up at Labuan in 1959 to meet the demands of increasing air traffic in the British Borneo area and relieve the Singapore centre of that task.<sup>30</sup>

Construction of secondary aerodromes began in 1951.<sup>31</sup> To meet an urgent need for an alternative airfield to Kuching, Sibuluan airport, begun but not completed by the Japanese, was given a priority rating in the 1951-7 Development Plan. With CD & W grants of some \$542,000 and government funding of \$151,346, by May 1952, a 1110-metre gravel runway had been completed and accepted for commercial use by Malayan Airways. Scheduled services to Kuching started two months later.<sup>32</sup> The next secondary aerodrome, Bintulu, had been started before the occupation and made operable by the Japanese but was unusable after reoccupation. It was rebuilt using Sarawak funds and opened in December 1955 with a 950-metre all-weather grass airstrip.<sup>33</sup> The last secondary aerodrome was at Lutong (Miri). Owned by Sarawak Shell Oilfields Limited (SSOL), its 330-metre runway was quickly recommissioned after the war. After licensing for commercial operations, it was integrated into airline feeder services linking Sarawak with Labuan and Brunei.<sup>34</sup>

The third phase of developing Sarawak's air communications, providing airstrips for feeder services and occasional charter work, was allocated \$750,000 in the 1955-60 Development Plan. Airstrips were built at Sematan (c.1957), Long Akah (1957), Simanggang (1958), Mukah (1958), Lawas (1958), Marudi (1959), Bario (1961), and Belaga (1963).<sup>35</sup> Construction of a 320-metre runway at Ba-Kelalan was started in 1962. The Borneo Evangelical Mission built small airstrips in the interior at Ba-Kelalan, Lawas Mission, Lio Matu, Long Tebangan, Long Gong, Long Atip, Long Banga, and Long Semado. Interconnecting services by Malayan Airways to and from Lutong started in 1954 and all internal air services were taken over in 1958 by Borneo Airways, a consortium of the Borneo states and British Overseas Airways Corporation. By then, there were international and local connection services at Kuching, Simanggang, Sibuluan, Mukah, Bintulu, Lutong, and Lawas.

Government policy was to bring about economic development



through the use of airstrips and air travel instead of making airstrips after development had taken place.<sup>36</sup> Civil aviation in Sarawak started in 1949 with a weekly service to Singapore and had increased to 12,346 aircraft movements carrying 74,175 passengers by 1962. Connecting population centres by air rather than by road reflected the historical and ongoing dependence on the network of rivers and coastal transport for movement of people and produce. The role played by the rural airstrips in development is problematic. Only three airstrips had direct connections with business interests: Lutong (oil), Selalang (plywood), and Sematan (bauxite). Most of the airstrips in the interior were built by the missions for proselytization. However, the airstrips improved travel and access for the government official, the more affluent businessman, the politician, visiting specialists, the missionary, and those in urgent need of medical treatment.<sup>37</sup> For the rural dweller living on the fringes of a cash economy, transport continued to be a traditional *perahu* fitted with an outboard motor.

### *Postal Services*

After a century of gradual development, Sarawak's postal services were reduced to near-chaos during the Japanese occupation.<sup>38</sup> After the war, overseas services were quickly re-established by Sarawak Steamship vessels and RAF Sunderland flying boats. However, several years elapsed before order and efficiency were restored to the internal services.<sup>39</sup> Services improved as civil aviation developed, roads were built, and another six post offices were added to the thirty-six already existing.<sup>40</sup> Postage stamp revenue increased from \$242,000 in 1952 to \$1,096,000 in 1962 and the number of parcels handled rose from 46,630 to 92,862.

### *Telecommunications*

The Brookes had developed a chain of nineteen wireless telegraph (W/T) stations and a telephone system in Kuching connected to Bau and Bidi.<sup>41</sup> By 1941 much of this equipment was old and by the end of the Japanese occupation, that which was still operating needed complete overhaul. The British administration initially continued to use W/T for overseas and local communication, thus obviating the high cost of building long land lines through difficult terrain. By the end of 1948, there were eighteen W/T stations in operation; a new transmitter had been set up in Kuching for the

Kuching/Singapore circuit; repairs to the station at Miri were nearing completion; and the Tatau station was about to be reopened. To improve communication and replace the deteriorating W/T equipment, the government allocated \$6,710,660 for installing VHF radio-telephone (R/T) systems and new telephone exchanges in the 1951-7 Revised Development Plan. Phase one covered replacing the W/T stations between Divisional headquarters and outstations, and providing connections between police stations and lighthouses. By the end of 1956, VHF radio junctions connecting outstations to the Divisional zone centres of Kuching, Sibul, and Miri had been commissioned and fifty-five VHF stations were in operation.<sup>42</sup>

Phase two was under the 1955-60 Development Plan and involved replacing the W/T links between the Divisional zone centres by a VHF multichannel system, with speech circuits for public use, telegraphs, and broadcasting. This system was commissioned in 1960. Finally, the system was connected to the international R/T service from Kuching to Singapore and Malaya on 3 November 1960, after a new High Frequency (HF) transmitter at Stapok near Kuching was commissioned. Three years later, HF independent sideband circuits were installed to provide 24-hour Kuching-Jesselton and Kuching-Miri services. However, the heavy traffic routes, Kuching-Sibu and Simanggang, did not meet international standards so funds were allocated in 1962 for a post-Malaysia radio survey.<sup>43</sup>

Concurrently with the R/T programme, new telephone exchanges were commissioned, switchboards were replaced, the number of lines was increased, the telephone system was extended, and the larger exchanges were automated.<sup>44</sup> During the colonial era, the telephone network was expanded from twelve telephone exchanges in 1948 to fifty-one in 1962, and telephone numbers increased from 720 in 1952 to 6,451 in 1963.

### *Broadcasting*

The first live test broadcast in Sarawak was made on 30 August 1922, although regular broadcasts only began after the outbreak of World War II with a Sunday morning programme of news, information, and instructions.<sup>45</sup> These ceased on Christmas Eve 1941 when the Japanese occupation began and the equipment was removed during the occupation. When the government sought to build a broadcasting station in May 1952, several members of

the Council Negri dissented, arguing that other projects warranted priority.<sup>46</sup> Faced with losing this means of countering communist propaganda and a \$406,238 CD & W grant, the Council's President exercised his casting vote in favour of the project.<sup>47</sup> Radio Sarawak was officially opened in June 1954 with a single transmitter broadcasting on 353 metres in the medium waveband and 5.025 megacycles in the short waveband.

The station took pride in voicing public opinion and its freedom to criticize government policy.<sup>48</sup> Within six months, it had established a daily programme of five and three-quarter hours in English, Malay, Chinese, and Iban. By the end of the year, there were 7,000 receivers in Sarawak, although the government was criticized privately for not ensuring that receivers were available in the rural areas.<sup>49</sup> Over the next eight years, broadcasting was increased to fourteen hours daily, outside programmes using an FM VHF programme link were introduced, more local languages were added, frequencies were altered to improve reception, and licence fees were introduced in 1957. Aided by further CD & W grants of \$900,000 between 1956 and 1962, the broadcasting complex was extended and rebuilt; a new short wave transmitter was commissioned in 1958 allowing simultaneous transmission on medium and short wavebands;<sup>50</sup> and a new 10kW transmitter was brought into operation in 1960 to strengthen medium wave reception. Also, the transmitting site at Stapok, a new site for all telecommunications, was developed in 1963 with the aid of a \$450,000 CD & W grant. From 1959, Radio Sarawak had an important role in rural primary education.<sup>51</sup> Regular educational services were established and within two years over 400 schools were participating with the aid of powerful receivers donated by the Asia Foundation and the Australian government. The number of Radio Sarawak's listeners increased dramatically, reflected in the increase in licensed radios from 7,000 in 1954 to 45,000 in 1961.<sup>52</sup>

### *Town Planning*

This essential part of development was the responsibility of the Land and Survey Department. The aftermath of the war left ten bazaars either wholly or partially destroyed by military action and four were accidentally destroyed by fire. By the end of 1951, the Department had acquired all sites apart from that at Limbang, and by the end of 1952 eleven of the fourteen bazaars had been wholly

or partly rebuilt.<sup>53</sup> The 1930s programme of replanning the smaller bazaars to improve hygiene and reduce fire hazards was continued, and for Simanggang, Sibu, Sarikei, Binatang, and Miri, by 1952 new layouts had been made to form regular townships. In Kuching, which suffered from a housing shortage after World War II, the Department acquired land for road reserves based on a post-war master town plan. In a major step forward, the Town and Country Planning Ordinance (1952) made provision for the 'orderly control of the planning and development of towns, land and other areas'. Two years later, the Land (Control of Subdivision) Ordinance, 1954 was enacted and brought haphazard development in Kuching and Sibu under control by making all land subdivisions subject to departmental approval. A small town and county planning section was set up in late 1960, followed by Divisional town and country planning committees in 1961 to deal primarily with town development.<sup>54</sup> When Malaysia was formed, recommendations on legislation to bring the Town and Country Planning Ordinance (1952) up to date, and a planning development structure prepared by the Building Research Station in England, were under consideration.

### *Electricity*

Public electricity supplies were first provided by a section within the PWD in 1923, followed by the Electricity Department from January 1929.<sup>55</sup> A limited liability company with an authorized capital of \$300,000, the Sarawak Electricity Supply Company (Sesco), took over in 1932.<sup>56</sup> DC electricity supply systems were established in Kuching (1923), Sibu (1927), Mukah (1929), Sarikei in 1934, Binatang (now Bintangor) in 1936, and Bintulu and Simanggang (now Sri Aman) in 1939. The Kuching system cost \$252,876 and utilized two 250kW coal-fired direct-current generating sets from the Bau gold mine that had closed down in 1921. Both sets were removed in 1935 in a DC to AC conversion programme that was not completed until 1951. Although the power stations were operated during the Japanese occupation, the Company was left with a largely derelict system in need of a large-scale reconstruction and plant replacement programme in 1945. Two generating sets at Kuching had been removed, damage at Mukah and Bintulu was severe, and a generating set had been taken from Jesselton and installed at Miri.<sup>57</sup>

Limitations on resources although tariffs were raised, long delivery times for diesel plant and equipment, and a rapidly growing demand, created severe power shortages.<sup>58</sup> In Kuching, there were blackouts, rostered load shedding, and tardiness in connecting new consumers and new loads until at least 1952.<sup>59</sup> The Sibu network experienced similar problems, with completion of the DC to AC conversion in 1954. Miri was faced with returning a generating set installed by the Japanese to its rightful owners in Jesselton. After negotiations with the government and SSOL, SESCO installed a 75kW DC generator at the end of 1947. A continuous service was introduced in June 1950, but there were supply restrictions every night until 1953. Due to serious wartime damage to the Mukah and Bintulu DC systems, the 12-hour a day service was not restored until 1948, the other pre-war DC generating stations at Simanggang, Sarikei and Binatang being more fortunate in being able to continue functioning after reoccupation.<sup>60</sup> The Company began to supply other minor population centres by opening small generating stations at Betong (1948), the 10th Mile Bazaar, Bau, Kanowit, and Limbang (all in 1953), and Serian and Marudi (both in 1954).

Enactment of the Electricity Supply Ordinance on 19 August 1952 was a turning point in SESCO's history. The Ordinance set out to regulate the electricity supply industry and control charges, but breached the original 1932 agreement by seriously prejudicing the rights of United Engineers Limited (UEL), the holders of 48.4 per cent of SESCO's shares.<sup>61</sup> After lengthy negotiations and discussions, the government retained UEL as manager with sole purchasing rights for the following three years and purchased the entire UEL shareholding in SESCO for \$1.25 million.<sup>62</sup> Outright government ownership cleared the way for increased funding of capital works by charging the issue of 1.2 million one-dollar shares against future loans and borrowed monies.<sup>63</sup> The government exercised its buy-out option and assumed full control of SESCO during the 1956/7 financial year.<sup>64</sup>

Capital works during the 1954 to 1963 period enabled the number of electricity consumers to be trebled from 5,586 to 16,906 and energy sales to be increased from 5.8 million kilowatt-hours to over 26 million (Table 13.4).<sup>65</sup> A new power station was built in Kuching, enabling the town centre and 7th Mile power stations to be closed in 1959.<sup>66</sup> All remaining DC systems had been converted to AC by 1962 and an additional plant was installed to provide continuous electricity supplies when daytime demand from pumped

TABLE 13.4  
Generating Capacity of SESCO Diesel Plant, 1947-1963 (kilowatts)

Power Station	1947	1949	1951	1953	1955	1957	1959	1961	1963
Kuching	790	790	995	1,100	2,275	3,469	4,062	5,249	6,579
Bau	-	-	-	-	50	50	100	100	100
Serian	-	-	-	-	42	42	92	95	170
Betong	-	18	18	18	25	50	100	100	175
Simanggang	25	25	25	25	50	118	192	320	465
Sibu	215	215	265	422	765	1,100	1,500	2,145	2,145
Sarikei	50	50	50	72	72	172	172	339	382
Binatang	25	25	25	43	43	68	118	166	340
Kanowit	-	-	-	25	25	50	100	100	175
Kapit	-	-	-	-	-	-	125	125	200
Mukah	-	47	47	47	47	72	132	128	230
Miri	-	75	75	430	430	652	784	1,210	1,210
Bintulu	-	22	22	44	44	66	125	125	390
Marudi	-	-	-	-	50	50	100	175	175
Limbang	-	-	-	-	68	68	111	154	373
Total	1,105	1,267	1,522	2,226	3,986	6,027	7,813	10,531	13,109

Source: Sarawak Electricity Supply Corporation, *Annual Report, 1963*, p. 52.

water supplies or light industry warranted.<sup>67</sup> Minor power stations operated at a loss and economic constraints resulted in only one new, minor power station at Kapit being commissioned between 1954 and 1963. The station at Kapit was justified by the installation of a pumped water scheme and the construction of a large mission hospital. All the older power stations had been built in town centres and, as many of the land leases were due to expire in 1967, a programme to remove power stations from town centres was started.<sup>68</sup> Binatang station was relocated in 1958, Kuching in 1959, and work had started on resiting the Simanggang, Sibu, and Marudi stations before Malaysia was formed. SESCO remained primarily a supplier to domestic consumers and commercial buildings, industry accounting for only 7.8 per cent of its electricity sales in 1963.<sup>69</sup>

Looking to the future, a hydroelectric survey of Sarawak was carried out in 1961 under the Colombo Plan. This showed considerable potential although the sites were too remote from load centres to be developed economically at that time.<sup>70</sup> A panel of experts on rural electrification from the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) visited Sarawak in 1962 and conceded that economic restraints were the limiting factor. By the end of 1962, SESCO's authorized and issued share capital had risen to \$12 million. Primarily for raising loans on the open market, all the functions, assets and liabilities of the company were transferred to a new body corporate, the Sarawak Electricity Supply Corporation (SESCO) on 1 January 1963. The Corporation was empowered to raise and borrow capital and was given a mandate to encourage the generation of energy to help economic development.<sup>71</sup> To finance the construction of a new power station at Sibu, \$3.6 million was borrowed from the Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) in 1963 and in a joint venture between the government and CDC, it was agreed that a seven-storeyed commercial building would be erected on the old power station site in the centre of Kuching town.<sup>72</sup>

### *Water*

Public water supplies, another essential for urban development, had been established by the Brookes in Kuching, Bintulu, Limbang, and Mukah before the Japanese occupation. Kuching water was drawn from the Matang hill range and piped 16 kilometres, crossing the Sarawak River by suspension bridge, to Kuching. Bintulu and

Limbang had gravity-fed supplies and Mukah supplies were drawn from the river. Miri drew its supplies from the SSOL water main and a supply system drawing water from the Rajang River was being built at Sibu. The entire Mukah installation was removed by the Japanese during the occupation. Possibly due to the abundance of rivers and a high rainfall, expenditure on public water supplies was not given a high priority after cession. An allocation of \$4.5 million was finally introduced in the 1951-7 Revised Development Plan and approved in 1952. All funding was from government revenues.

The Kuching system was limited by the lack of a suitable site for a large reservoir; low rainfall during the drier months of the year when consumption exceeded run-off by 900 cubic metres a day; and severe corrosion in the Matang to Kuching pipeline.<sup>73</sup> Although the pipeline was replaced by 1954, increasing consumption by a growing population very often outstripped the Matang supply and created recurrent water restrictions up to 1957.<sup>74</sup> By then, a new water treatment plant had been commissioned at Batu Kitang on the Sarawak River, about 18 kilometres from Kuching, at a cost of over \$3.5 million. This plant was designed to provide up to 13 640 cubic metres of water a day and, together with Matang, was adequate for Kuching throughout the 1957 to 1963 period. Looking to the future, in 1962 the Kuching Water Board was formed and a capital programme was started to double the capacity and to construct a new water treatment plant at Matang.

The Sibu water supply plant at Bukit Lima was commissioned in part at the beginning of 1947 and completed in 1949. Water was drawn from the Rajang River, purified, and pumped to header tanks. By 1955, demand exceeded plant capacity and the hours of supply were restricted until 1957. Larger pumps were installed and storage capacity was increased at a cost of \$720,000. This increased the plant capacity from 2000 to 3400 cubic metres a day, which was adequate up to and beyond the formation of Malaysia. In Miri, treated water was purchased in bulk from the SSOL, with the PWD providing and maintaining the reticulation system. The Mukah water supply system was finally restored in 1954 although problems of discolouration were not fully resolved by 1963. Both the Bintulu and Limbang gravity-fed schemes were developed and a new supply was provided at Santubong in December 1957. Allocations had increased dramatically from zero in the original 1951-7 Development Plan, to \$18,950,654 in the 1959-63 Development Plan.



The Water Supply (Amendment) Ordinance, 1958, enabled water boards to be set up in Kuching and Sibuan, and water authorities to be established for the smaller installations. The government then announced that only schemes providing first class quality water would be built and that economic water rates would have to be paid.<sup>75</sup> Due to the high cost of these schemes, the government adopted a policy of providing loans rather than outright grants to the boards and authorities, to ensure that the schemes were run on an economic basis. This proved to be the key to the rapid expansion of public water supplies to the smaller population centres in Sarawak. In the early 1960s, public water supplies were provided to seven population centres: Lundu, Simanggang, Sarikei, Bintang, Kanowit, Kapit, and Lawas.

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After a slow start in the early post-war years, building an infrastructure to foster development had begun to make material progress by 1963, but was still in its early stages due to limitations on resources and had made little impression on rural areas. The rationale for heavy investment in airfields other than for security was debatable, although it did permit rapid intercommunication with the more isolated areas of Sarawak. Also, opening up land for intensive agriculture involved more than merely building roads. Land ownership rights based on traditional *adat* presented a formidable problem.

1. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1961, pp. 77-8.
2. *Singapore Free Press*, 12 July 1947, p. 5.
3. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 65.
4. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1961, p. 38; 1962, pp. 64-5.
5. Dominions Office, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List*, 1902, London: Waterlow and Sons, p. 334; 1934, p. 509; 1940, p. 543.
6. Sarawak Development Board (SDB), *Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1951-1957*, App. I, p. 3.
7. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1116 (10 March 1951); 55-6; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 135.
8. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1955, p. 113.
9. *Report of the Proceedings of the Council Negri Held in the Main Court House, Kuching, on 1st, 2nd and 4th December, 1953*, pp. 20-1.
10. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1956, p. 5.
11. SDB, *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-1963*, pp. 6 and 18; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, pp. 252-3.

12. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1959, p. 145; 1962, p. 252.
13. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1961, pp. 151-2.
14. Table 13.1 provides a comparison of the roads in Sarawak in 1947 and 1962.
15. Table 13.2 gives a comparison of vehicle registrations between 1951 and 1963.
16. Dominions Office, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List*, 1916, p. 433.
17. A. H. Moy-Thomas, 'Economic Development under the Second Rajah (1870-1917)', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 10, 17-20 (July-December 1961): 55-7.
18. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 91.
19. Moy-Thomas, 'Economic Development under the Second Rajah', pp. 57-8.
20. H. Longhurst, *The Borneo Story: The History of the First 100 Years of Trading in the Far East by the Borneo Company Limited*, London: Newman Neame, 1956, p. 61; Moy-Thomas, 'Economic Development under the Second Rajah', pp. 53-4.
21. Table 13.3 lists the ports in Sarawak in 1948 and shows their draft limitations.
22. The consultant, C. R. Elliot, advised against building a port on the Batang Lupar for exporting Silantek coal. (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1100 (7 November 1949): 286-9).
23. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 6 July 1961, p. 5.
24. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 238.
25. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1959, pp. 141-2.
26. A government air service for mail and land development was introduced on 1 December 1928 but was uneconomic and closed after seven months (W. J. Chater, *Sarawak Long Ago*, Kuching: Borneo Literature Bureau, 1969, pp. 103-4).
27. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1111 (10 October 1950): 254-5.
28. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 72.
29. *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 February 1948, p. 3.
30. The Flight Information Centre provided aeronautical and meteorological information, and search and rescue co-ordination services in its area (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1959, p. 139).
31. The Japanese had started to build the Sibu aerodrome but it was destroyed by Allied bombing before reoccupation (Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 108).
32. *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 June 1952, p. 1.
33. *New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), 28 April 1991, p. 17; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1955, p. 111.
34. Feeder services linked Labuan, Brunei, and Sarawak.
35. For runway lengths, see the Royal Air Force, *Airstrip Directory: Malaysia and Brunei*, Edition No. 7, Changi, 1966; and Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1956-62.
36. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1956, p. 115.
37. A twelve-year-old Iban with a spear through his head but who was still conscious was transported by military helicopter from Ng Entebai to Sibu and survived (John K. Wilson, *Budu or Twenty Years in Sarawak*, North Berwick: Tantallion Press, 1969, pp. 165-7).
38. J. C. B. Fisher, 'Sarawak Postal History 1858-1956', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 8, 10 (December 1957): 236-49.
39. *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 July 1952, p. 2.
40. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 75; *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 262; B. A. Hepburn, *The Handbook of Sarawak*:

*Comprising Historical, Statistical and General Information Concerning the Colony Obtained from Official and Other Reliable Records*, Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1949, p. 166.

41. In 1940, there were W/T stations at Kuching, Lundu, Simanggang, Saratok, Sibul, Sarikei, Meluan, Kanowit, Kapit, Meluan, Matu, Mukah, Balingian, Tatau, Bintulu, Miri, Baram, Limbang, and Lawas (Dominions Office, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List*, 1927, p. 504; 1940, p. 543).

42. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1957, p. 121.

43. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 261.

44. Automated exchanges were installed at Kuching (1955), Sibul (1955), Miri (1958), Binatang (1959), 7th Mile, Penrissen Road, Kuching (1961), and Sungei Merah, Sibul (1961).

45. Chater, *Sarawak Long Ago*, pp. 119-20.

46. *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 May 1952, p. 1.

47. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1125 (31 December 1952): 282; *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 May 1952, p. 2; 23 May 1952, p. 1.

48. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, pp. 154-6.

49. District Officer A. J. N. Richards to L. B. Walsh in London, Letter, 6 June 1954, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 213.7, RHL.

50. *Hansard*, Vol. 565, col. 1027, 20 February 1957.

51. J. A. Young, 'Final Report on the Group Headmaster Scheme', 1960, MSS Pac. s. 70, RHL.

52. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1961, p. 267.

53. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year*, 1951, p. 148; 1952, p. 45.

54. The Divisional town and country planning committees were sub-committees of the Divisional development committees and their duties were absorbed largely by the latter in 1962 (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1961, p. 40; 1962, p. 68).

55. Sarawak Electricity Supply Corporation (SESCO), *25 Tahun dalam Perkhidmatan: Kemajuan di Masa Depan yang Cerah*, 1988, p. 17.

56. Excluding oilfield concessions, SESCO had sole generating rights under the agreement of 18 November 1932 between Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke and United Engineers Limited (UEL), Singapore.

57. SESCO, *25 Tahun dalam Perkhidmatan*, p. 19.

58. The pre-war lighting tariff of 20 cents a unit was increased to 30 cents, reduced to 27.5 cents from 1 January 1948, and reverted to 30 cents on 1 June 1950.

59. *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 March 1946, p. 4; 5 July 1952, p. 1.

60. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year* 1949, pp. 82-3. The rural stations were very small, consisting of one or two 25kW generating sets, and were very expensive to run.

61. File note, September 1952, Colonial Office file SEA 339/122/01, CO 1022/407, PRO. The authorized and issued capital at that time was \$600,000 which needed to be increased to \$2.2 million.

62. UEL continued as managers at \$1,500 a month rising annually by \$100, and remained sole purchasing agent, at 10 per cent commission (excluding fuel oil), to 30 June 1967 (Anthony Abell to Colonial Secretary, Saving No. 561, 20 October 1953, Ref. 28/2/45, CO 1022/407, PRO).

63. Total charges were \$2,038,000, made up of \$1.25 million for UEL shares

less a credit of \$412,000 for extension of their sole buying agency to 30 June 1967 and the \$1.2 million share issue (Anthony Abell to the Colonial Secretary, Oliver Lyttelton, Saving No. 561, 20 October 1953, CO 1022/407, PRO).

64. The government paid UEL \$294,285 in compensation (Sarawak Electricity Supply Company (Sesco), *The First Annual Report of the Sarawak Electricity Supply Company Limited, 1st July 1956 to 30th June 1957*, insert facing p. 30).

65. Table 13.4 gives the generating capacity installed to meet the growing demand.

66. SESCO, *The Fourth Annual Report of the Sarawak Electricity Supply Company Limited, 1st July 1959 to 30th June 1960*, pp. 5-6. Noise and fumes from diesel plants were eliminated from Kuching's town centre.

67. Continuous supplies began at Sarikei in 1956, Simanggang in 1957, Limbang in 1958, Binatang in 1960, Kapit, Bintulu, and Marudi in 1960, Betong and Mukah in 1962, and Bau and Serian in 1963.

68. SESCO, *The Sixth Annual Report of the Sarawak Electricity Supply Company Limited, 1st July 1961 to 30 June 1962*, p.13.

69. SESCO, *Annual Report, 1963*, chart facing page 8.

70. SESCO, *The Sixth Annual Report of the Sarawak Electricity Supply Company Limited, 1st July 1961 to 30th June 1962*, pp. 8-11.

71. Clauses 14 (1) and 16, Sarawak Electricity Supply Corporation Ordinance, 1962.

72. A new company, Electra House Limited, was formed with the government, CDC, and SESCO as equal partners (SESCO, *Annual Report, 1963*, pp. 7 and 11).

73. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, pp. 67-8.) The *Sarawak Tribune* sought allocation of funds for a supplementary water supply (*Sarawak Tribune*, 19 September 1949, p. 2).

74. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1107 (7 June 1950): 146.

75. SDB, *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-1963*, p. 11.

## 14

### Land

IN May 1946 under Clause 2 of the Instrument of Cession, all land in Sarawak was ceded to the Crown, subject only to Native customary rights and all private rights already established. It was estimated that twenty-eight hectares was required to support a family growing dry hill *padi* using swidden agriculture with a 12–15 year fallow period between planting.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally throughout the eastern archipelago, Native rights over land were based on customary law (*adat*).<sup>2</sup> Prior claim to land in Sarawak had been secured by clearing the primary forest from the selected tract and, after farming, the land was recognized as a family asset.<sup>3</sup> When a household migrated to another district or memories of the original forest clearers had faded, the land became the common property of the longhouse (*tanah rumah*) under the control of the *tuai rumah*.<sup>4</sup> Native customary rights over land were a serious obstacle to British plans for economic development and the British authorities became somewhat preoccupied with preventing customary rights being established over more land and with releasing land already held under those rights for intensive farming. Customary land rights also presented problems for the Brookes.

#### *Land Policies under the Brookes*

The Land Regulations of 1863 declared all 'unoccupied and waste lands' as government property, thus not abrogating any customary land rights.<sup>5</sup> However, pragmatism and economics overruled customary land rights from time to time. During the Brooke era, land disputes were common and contentious customary land disputes among different groups were mediated by fixing boundaries to separate contenders.<sup>6</sup> Groups were resettled as punitive measures for unpaid taxes or head-hunting practices, as in the case of the Ibans of Upper Batang Lupar in 1886.<sup>7</sup> For development purposes, Foochow settlers were given land in the Sibu area in the early

1900s that was subject to customary land rights.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, to protect Native land holdings and loss of their land rights, an edict was issued in 1915 that prohibited disposal of Native land holdings without first obtaining special permission.<sup>9</sup>

The newly formed Department of Agriculture assumed responsibility for land matters from the Residents in 1915 and three years later was renamed the Land and Survey Department.<sup>10</sup> In 1920, Orders Nos. VIII and IX consolidated all previous land orders and regulations, redefining state lands as 'all lands not leased or granted or lawfully occupied'.<sup>11</sup> Three land classifications were introduced: Town and Suburban Lands, Country Lands, and Native Holdings. The right of every Native-born subject to 1.2 hectares of land free of all charges was established under Section 15 of Order IX.<sup>12</sup> Order No. L-2 (Land), 1931, in turn replaced all previous orders and edicts. State lands were redefined as 'all lands for which no document or title has been issued' and under Clause S.4, land classifications became Town and Suburban, Kampung or Village, and Country.<sup>13</sup> Schedule B redefined 'Native' as certain listed races which were considered indigenous.<sup>14</sup> The list excluded Chinese, Indian, Eurasian, and mixed races from blood lines not confined to those listed even if they were born in Sarawak.

In 1933, Notification No. 729 of 1933: Land Rules introduced Mixed Zone Land, where leases could be granted to both Natives and non-Natives, and Native Area Lands 'in which no *alien* will be granted any rights to land'.<sup>15</sup> The next important legislation, Order L-7 Land Settlement, 1933, (Land Settlement Ordinance) was introduced to guarantee boundaries and titles by creating a new Land Register based on accurate Cadastral surveys, a task which proved beyond departmental resources.<sup>16</sup> Section 66 (b) defined Native customary rights in part as 'land that is in continuous occupation or has been cultivated or built on within three years' and Section 12 stated that 'any land held under title which has been abandoned for three consecutive years, shall be liable to forfeiture'.<sup>17</sup> This was in direct conflict with the need for fallow times of twelve to fifteen years required for shifting cultivation and customary tenure of land in perpetuity. However, legislation did not prevent encroachment by Chinese farmers on land held under customary rights, often under informal payment agreements.<sup>18</sup>

In one case of bureaucratic error, a reserve created along the Binatang tributary in 1925 for rubber planting by Foochow settlers included land held under customary tenure.<sup>19</sup> When the new settlers moved in, the Binatang Ibans attacked some Foochows and

looted Chinese shops along the Tulai and Mador tributaries, leading to the dismissal of Lani, the *penghulu* of Binatang, and the arrest and imprisonment of a number of Ibans. Compensation of some \$1,300 was paid to customary landowners, Native rights over that land were extinguished, and the Foochow settlers were given legal occupation rights.<sup>20</sup> Customary land rights were overridden legally under the Forest Reservation Order, 1920 and subsequent forestry legislation. One example was the 19 300 hectare forest reserve at Lanjak-Entimau established in 1939 and 1940 to act as a buffer against encroachment by Second and Third Division Ibans.<sup>21</sup> Although economic or political considerations occasionally took precedence over customary land rights during the Brooke era, there was 'a consistent respect for Native customary rights'.<sup>22</sup>

### *The Japanese Occupation*

When the Japanese occupied Sarawak at the end of 1941, the Department reopened after a few weeks with a reduced staff and a Japanese civil affairs officer in charge. Some Occupation Tickets and leases were issued with the approval of the military authorities, including one lease issued in the name of the Imperial Japanese Government.<sup>23</sup> In 1942 the Japanese demanded that all land titles be 'confirmed and ratified', levying a \$2 fee for the service. Also a special tax was imposed on transfers of land valued at over \$1,000.<sup>24</sup> In response to Japanese demands to grow more rice, a number of Chinese moved into the countryside during the Japanese occupation to plant rice and grow food for their survival—and to avoid the Japanese. Where land was allocated to them by the Japanese, it was often Native land, the areas mainly affected being Bidayuh lands in the First Division and Iban farming land along the Rajang River in the Third Division.<sup>25</sup> Departmental affairs were handled by the local staff generally in accordance with Brooke legislation and procedures. Few records were lost apart from those destroyed at Miri by Allied bombing raids before reoccupation.<sup>26</sup>

### *The British Era*

D. L. Leach, one of six pre-war senior officers who returned after the war, was appointed Director of Land and Survey and was also made responsible for the Department of Agriculture up to 1947.<sup>27</sup> Although not articulated immediately, serious land problems,

inherited from the Brooke regime and the Japanese occupation, were:

1. Reconciliation of local *adat* law with written legislation.
2. Resolving the conflicting aims of protecting Native customary rights over much of the farming land and providing prospective Chinese farmers with land.
3. Resettling Chinese farmers who had settled on Native lands during the occupation and providing them with land.
4. Recovery of abandoned land held under customary rights to allow others to grow food for consumption and cash crops for export.
5. Protection of Native customary lands against intrusion and against illicit sale for short-term gain contrary to Native long-term interests.
6. Collation of large blocks of land suitable for planned crops to enable systematic alienation and orderly development.

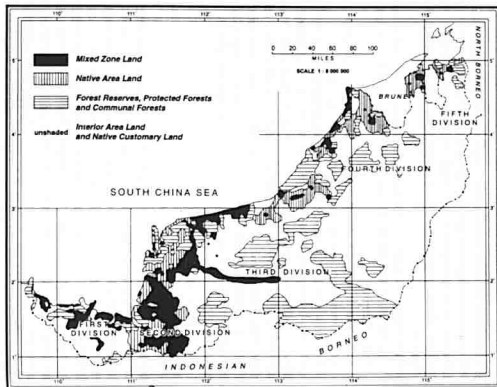
The underlying aims were to raise the standard of living in the rural areas by improving Native agricultural practices and output, reduce or eliminate the negative aspects of shifting cultivation, improve the economy by increasing exports of cash crops, and change the Native subsistence economy into a cash economy.<sup>28</sup> There were 'vast areas of farming land' under shifting cultivation held under untitled customary rights by the indigenous people in the interior.<sup>29</sup>

### *Legislation*

Order No. L-2 (Land), 1931, and Order L-7 Land Settlement, 1933, with their amendments were incorporated in the Laws of Sarawak (Revised Edition) 1948 and entitled the Land Ordinance (cap. 27 laws of 1948) and the Land Settlement Ordinance (cap. 28 laws of 1948).<sup>30</sup> The first notable land legislation of the British era, the Land (Classification) Ordinance, No. 19 of 1948 was intended 'to control non-native colonisation, and also protect native interests in land'.<sup>31</sup> For this purpose, the Ordinance clarified the classification of lands, provided for the transfer of one class of land to another, and defined the rights of Natives and non-Natives within the various classes.<sup>32</sup> The Ordinance defined the following five land classifications (Map 14.1).



MAP 14.1  
Land Classification of Sarawak



### **Mixed Zone Land**

This could be alienated to a person of any race. About 10 per cent of all land was in this category throughout the British era with little change. Any Mixed Zone land held under Native customary rights could only be alienated after survey and issue of title.

### **Native Area Land**

Only those legally defined as Natives of Sarawak could occupy this land. Land in this category increased from 0.5 per cent of all land in 1951 to over 5 per cent in 1962.

### **Native Customary Land**

This was all land held under customary tenure, including that held in Mixed Zone and Native Area Lands. Interior Area Land and Native Customary Land covered about 60 per cent of the land mass in 1963.

### **Reserved Land**

This included all land reserved by the state for forestry, national parks, and government use. The amount of land reserved for forestry was gradually increased from less than 7 per cent of the land mass to about 24 per cent between 1946 and 1962.

### **Interior Area Land**

This was land not covered by the Mixed Zone Land, Native Area Land, or Reserved Land categories. Much of the Interior Area Land was subject to native customary rights and hence was also Native Customary Land. This land was largely primary forest, but included some areas of cleared land. The area decreased between 1946 to 1963 as forest reserves were created and by 1963, with Native Customary Land it covered about 60 per cent of the land mass.

The Land Ordinance and the Land Settlement Ordinance both dealt with registration of titles. The former was deficient in settlement of Native rights and the latter involved reinvestigation and resurvey of all titles previously issued in any area to which it was applied.<sup>33</sup> Working with these overlapping Ordinances and the Land Classification Ordinance of 1948 proved difficult and in 1954, a former New Zealand Registrar-General of Land drafted a new Land Code that consolidated all existing land laws.<sup>34</sup> The

ensuing Land Code Ordinance No. 8 of 1957 was passed by the Council Negri in August 1957 and came into force on 1 January 1958. However, the Department quickly found that the new Land Code imposed difficulties in land reclassification and transfer that inhibited alienation of land for growing export cash crops. Inevitably, evasion of restraints on land transfers by unofficial leasing and renting increased.<sup>35</sup>

### *Land Registry*

A sound land register is generally regarded as essential for development planning. In Sarawak, the Brooke and British regimes adopted English concepts of formally registering individual leaseholders with perceived advantages for development, although in Sarawak's rural areas, traditionally land tenure was community-based, as was recognized and promised in the late Brooke period.<sup>36</sup> Most of the applications for rural Crown land during the British era were for isolated lots, but attempts were made to replace this with planned development of large blocks under the 1955-60 Development Plan. Applications tended to follow the fortunes of the main cash crops and government incentives, with 777 applications for land to plant rubber in 1950 compared with 3,162 in 1959, and for pepper, comparative figures of 538 in 1949 and 148 in 1959. There was a consistent twelve months' backlog of applications, caused to some degree by logistic difficulties in organizing surveys of scattered lots.<sup>37</sup> Current land titles increased from 103,420 in 1948 to 176,670 in 1963, reflecting rubber and copra planting schemes and, to a small extent, the official policy of encouraging customary land holders to take out titles on their land. The overlapping Land Ordinance, 1947 and the Land Settlement Ordinance, 1948; the rigidity of the 1957 Land Code Ordinance; and dealing with Native customary rights all affected the Department's ability to operate the land registry quickly and efficiently.

### *Land for Landless Farmers and Intensive Agriculture*

After World War II the Department had to find land to resettle genuinely homeless Chinese squatters who had occupied Native lands with Japanese encouragement during the occupation.<sup>38</sup> Resettlement areas had to be found where there was either no conflict with Native interests or where those interests could be

extinguished by paying compensation yet leave adequate land for Native needs. Further, prior to resettlement, land had to be reclassified by the Governor in Council as Mixed Zone Land to allow both Native and non-Native occupation. The largest resettlement area established in the First Division was 630 hectares at Batu Gong near the 18th Mile on the Serian Road, where by 1950, 248 families had been issued with sixty-year titles and compensation had been paid to customary landowners.<sup>39</sup>

Under the 1948 Land Classification Ordinance, every agricultural smallholder was to be issued with a secure land title transferable from one class of land to another. This began a change from the simple concept of resettling squatters to one of opening up land for intensive settled cultivation on a large scale. In 1950, thirty new Mixed Zones were established in the Rajang delta.<sup>40</sup> These legalized occupancy by 2,123 Chinese families already settled there, enabled 743 families in Native Areas to be resettled, and provided land for 877 landless Chinese farmers from other parts of the country. The scheme covered 4144 square kilometres of potential wet *padi* land, entailing a considerable amount of survey work, mapping, and compensation costs for extinguishing Native customary rights.<sup>41</sup> Natives were said to be 'relieved' that action was being taken 'to contain the non-indigenous farmers' who had been renting their land, often on unfavourable terms.<sup>42</sup>

In 1952, the government began to address the demand from landless Chinese wishing to plant rubber which was then attracting high prices due to the war in Korea.<sup>43</sup> Fifteen blocks of land varying from 202 to 1010 hectares had been selected by 1953. After payment of compensation to extinguish Native rights and after millable timber had been extracted under licence, applications were invited through Chinese Area and Native headmen for lots not exceeding 4 hectares per person. By 1957, 6224 hectares of the 9757 hectares available had been taken up. Also in 1953, the government acquired 828 hectares of land from the Custodian of Enemy Property at a cost of \$135,000 'to settle Chinese in the First Division, where there is a genuine shortage of land'.<sup>44</sup> In the following year 'a very promising settlement scheme covering 405 hectares at Sungai Beluboh in Luak Bay near Miri' was nearing completion and taken up by Foochow settlers.<sup>45</sup> Also in the Fourth Division, in 1955 a 1295-hectare settlement scheme was established at Sungai Sibiew near Bintulu, where about 150 Foochow families planted rubber and other crops.

In 1954, land policies began to move away from alienation of Crown land being dependent almost entirely on private initiative and any existing customary rights. The new policy was alienation to the best advantage and for maximum economic benefit in planned schemes to meet the clearly defined aims of the 1955-60 Development Plan.<sup>46</sup> These were to increase self-sufficiency in foodstuffs, especially rice, and to develop alternative export crops to rubber. To implement the new policy, in the Development Plan the Department was allocated \$2.5 million to select suitable blocks of about 22 230 hectares for subdivision and settlement. As the blocks were large, usually both Crown land and Native Customary Land were included and compensation had to be paid to customary landowners. The Department became responsible for ensuring that alienation of any Crown land conformed with development planning. Anticipating future demands for land for permanent agricultural settlement then became part of land policy.<sup>47</sup>

An Internal Migration Committee was set up in 1956 to identify areas capable of absorbing migrants and areas where the density of population was too high to be sustained by the land available.<sup>48</sup> Its powers included reserving land for investigation and resettling people from overpopulated areas. The Land and Survey Department had started to carry out land utilization surveys in the First, Second, and Third Divisions on swamp *padi* lands in 1955 and followed this with a study of hill *padi* areas in 1956. With the Agriculture Department, it then began to create large blocks of land for settled agriculture. A few blocks were established in the First and Second Divisions where land was limited, but most were in the other Divisions.<sup>49</sup> Schemes ranged from 688 hectares classified as Mixed Zone at Julau in 1956 to 4856 hectares at Kabong under consideration for coconuts and wet *padi* in 1962.

Redistribution proved complex. Any land suitable for permanent agricultural settlement on the blocks was already occupied, at least in part, under Native customary rights and was generally classified as Native Area Land. Simple reclassification to Mixed Zone Land to allow occupation by non-Native farmers was not favoured since experience suggested Native rights would be sold to non-Natives for attractive cash payments without due consideration of the seller's long-term needs for land. To prevent this, the Department first ascertained the extent of the land held under customary rights and then assessed the needs of the community concerned. Land that was surplus to the needs of the community was then acquired either by paying compensation or by providing other

land in lieu, after which planning, subdivision, and alienation could be implemented. This was a protracted process, reflected in the small increase in Mixed Zone Lands from 11 292 square kilometres in 1955 to 11 914 square kilometres in 1965.<sup>50</sup>

The demand for agricultural land was fuelled by the subsidy schemes for rubber and coconut planting.<sup>51</sup> It was not abated by the 1956 Land Utilization and Settlement Scheme which proved slow to implement due to the complicated process of classifying Mixed Zone Lands, the shortage of land available within reasonable proximity of the larger centres, and departmental staff shortages.<sup>52</sup> Nor did the consolidated Land Code of 1958 prove to be any more effective than the separate but overlapping ordinances it replaced, since it dictated rather than interpreted government policy.<sup>53</sup> In 1960 the Department estimated that 12 140 hectares could be taken up immediately in the Third Division for growing high-yielding rubber if land was available.<sup>54</sup> The increasing problem of illegal occupation of customary lands by non-Natives was not resolved by the Settlement Scheme since 1,600 cases of unlawful occupation of Native land were recorded in 1961, and there was reason to believe that many more had not been uncovered.<sup>55</sup> Coupled with this, even when shifting cultivators had been resettled from degraded farmed-out land in Western Sarawak to virgin land in the Fourth and Fifth Divisions, farming methods had not changed.<sup>56</sup>

Land problems were seen as delaying rural development and the 1960 *Sarawak Annual Report* foreshadowed new policies to remove the obstacles.<sup>57</sup> A new broad land policy was forecast with a complete review of existing land usage and reconsideration of government attitudes to Native customary land tenure. The stated aims were to augment the future state revenues and improve the standard of living, particularly for the farmers. To achieve this, the government considered that the time had come to reach a compromise between the conflicting interests of the Native peoples, the holders of much of the land under customary tenure, and the Chinese who needed land for cultivation and development.<sup>58</sup> Thus, after fourteen years of colonial rule, Native customary land tenure was being openly questioned.

*Native Customary Land Tenure*

The post-World War II policy on land tenure was to encourage smallholders to own their own land, 'especially when the type of crop or particular use of the land suits native or immigrant economy'.<sup>59</sup> On Native customary land rights, stated government policy was 'to pay sympathetic regard to Native customs and Native rights established thereby in the matter of Native Customary Land'.<sup>60</sup> This was reflected in the Land and Survey Department's aim—ensuring that rights to land were fully investigated and then protected by registration.<sup>61</sup> Native tenure was preserved by land classifications established in 1920 and as refined in subsequent legislation.<sup>62</sup> However, farming rights were restricted to no more than the family could farm effectively, allowing for fallow periods to retain soil fertility.<sup>63</sup> Traditional rights of establishing customary tenure were extinguished in Mixed Zone Land and Native Area Land by the Land Classification (Amendment) Ordinance, 1954. This prohibition was extended to Interior Area Land by the Land Classification (Amendment) Ordinance, 1955, unless written permission was given by a District Officer.<sup>64</sup> In another break with tradition, the Land (Classification) Rules, 1954, permitted renting of swamp *padi* land held under customary rights to non-Natives, but this was limited to defined localities, a maximum of three years, and to fallow land surplus to the owner's immediate needs.<sup>65</sup>

The government assumed that the promotion of permanent crops and settled agriculture to replace shifting cultivation would lead to a greater demand for individual titles and that customary tenure would eventually disappear.<sup>66</sup> Since titles attracted rent, this broke a government pledge and abrogated 1920 Order Nos. VIII and IX providing free occupation of Native agricultural holdings.<sup>67</sup> Government charges left no incentive for customary landowners to take out titles other than in Mixed Zones where a title enabled the owner to sell the land to a non-Native. By the late 1950s, the Land and Survey Department had found that the 1957 Land Code Ordinance inhibited reclassification and transfer of land, thus delaying acquisition and alienation for cultivation of export cash crops.

In its 1959 *Annual Report*, the Department called for a complete review of the Land Code and lamented that such a review 'with a determination of problems arising out of native customary rights' had not preceded its enactment.<sup>68</sup> This public articulation of the

tensions between customary rights and development plan pressures to secure land for intensive agriculture triggered a response in a letter to the *Sarawak Tribune* in October 1959.<sup>69</sup> This letter asked the government to revert to the Brooke policy of putting the 'natives first and the aliens second'. The letter also said that giving more land to the Chinese because they could develop it better than the Natives was tantamount to the conquest of Sarawak by the Chinese through the British government and 'that is something we abhor'. The government's view was expressed in the 1960 *Sarawak Annual Report*: in order to reflect the need for sound agricultural development on a greater scale and changing agricultural trends, and to improve the standard of living, its attitude towards Native customary land tenure would have to be reconsidered.<sup>70</sup>

In an attempt to resolve the issue, a detailed study of Native customary rights to land was commissioned in February 1961 and the results were published ten months later under the title of *Sarawak Land Law and Adat*.<sup>71</sup> In early 1962, a Land Committee was appointed to recommend what measures should be taken 'to ensure the best use of the land in the national interest and for the social and economic advancement of the rural communities'.<sup>72</sup> The Committee reported that economic farming must replace subsistence agriculture and that this would release land for alienation. According to the Committee, the underlying problem was 'finding the right approach to native customary tenure'.<sup>73</sup> More controversially, the report recommended abolition of land classification, protection of Native interests by not allowing a Native to dispose of his or her land without the Resident's permission, abolition of individual applications for land, and adoption of a village or block system for administration and registration.<sup>74</sup> The government accepted these recommendations in principle but rejected the recommended abolition of rent on agricultural titles that conferred a right of sale.<sup>75</sup> In early 1963 a working party was appointed to formulate a national land policy, work out the practical application of that policy, and prepare official statements of any action proposed.<sup>76</sup> However, lack of time prevented material progress in replacing the Land Code before Malaysia.<sup>77</sup>

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In land matters, the British authorities had what were perceived to be two conflicting objectives: honouring Native customary rights and improving the standard of living. In the absence of mineral



wealth and a manufacturing industry, export cash crops were necessary to pay for essential imports. For this purpose, the British administration considered settled farming to be more efficient, although a number of Dayaks had been planting cash crops such as rubber for years on Native customary land as income supplements to their swidden-type *padi* farming, providing a useful basis for the progressive commercialization of Dayak farming. Also, Native customary land rights were perceived to tie up land in swidden-type agriculture and entrench a subsistence existence for the Dayak farmer. The British emphasis on settled agriculture benefited the landless Chinese farmer in a continuing programme of alienating land for that purpose. Land was provided to squatters after the war and subsequently large blocks of land were acquired, subdivided, and alienated specifically for settled farming.

To overcome the major obstacle of Native customary rights in securing more land for settled agriculture, the British administration began moves to eliminate the existing land classifications. This would not only have allowed more land to be released for settled agriculture, but was also intended to bring about an agrarian revolution from shifting cultivation to settled farming of cash crops, which the administration deemed necessary to improve the living standards of the Dayak farmers. However, new Land Bills were not presented prior to the formation of Malaysia and in 1965 the motion introducing the Bills was defeated in the Council Negri. Thus it could be said that British pledges to uphold Native customary land rights were kept, albeit reluctantly and almost by default. Conversely, the tradition of establishing customary rights over new land had been virtually prohibited and the standard of living of the Dayak farmer was still primarily one of subsistence. As will be seen, paid labour in government service, government instrumentalities, commerce, and industry, fared somewhat better in terms of improved conditions.

1. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Report for the Period 1961-1965*, p. 40.

2. A. F. Porter, *Land Administration in Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1947, p. 10. Ibans believe that their gods (*petara*) gave them *adat* for the well-being of their society (P. M. Kedit, 'Iban Cultural Heritage', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 40, 61 (December 1989): 6).

3. A. J. N. Richards (comp.), *Dayak Adat Law in the Second Division*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1963, p. 107; J. D. Freeman, 'Extracts and

Notes from a Report on the Iban of Sarawak', in Richards, *Dayak Adat Law in the Second Division*, pp. 133-5.

4. A. M. Phillips, 'Notes on Dayak Land Tenure with Particular Reference to Inheritance, for the Dayaks of the Saribas District', in Richards, *Dayak Adat Law in the Second Division*, p. 130; W. R. Geddes, *The Land Dayaks of Sarawak: A Report on a Social Economic Survey of the Land Dayaks of Sarawak Presented to the Colonial Social Science Research Council*, Colonial Research Studies No. 14, London: HMSO for Colonial Office, 1954, pp. 59 and 69.

5. Appendix 15 gives the 1863 Land Regulations in full because of their importance.

6. Conflicting land claims by the Malays of Spaoh and the Ibans living along the Paku River in 1870 were mediated by fixing a boundary between the communities in 1882 (Robert Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: The Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941*, London: Macmillan, 1970, p. 303).

7. Deshon Second Division report (no date), *Sarawak Gazette*, 244 (1886) in Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 219.

8. Daniel Chew, *Chinese Pioneers on the Sarawak Frontier, 1841-1941*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 250-2; Thirty-first Session, Methodist Conference (Singapore), 1923, in Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 308.

9. *Sarawak Gazette*, 672, (16 August 1915), in Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 309. Melanaus sold land on Pulau Selalu to the Chinese which the government reclaimed after refunding monies paid.

10. B. A. Hepburn, *The Handbook of Sarawak: Comprising Historical, Statistical and General Information Concerning the Colony Obtained from Official and Other Reliable Records*, Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1949, p. 66.

11. *Sarawak Government Gazette*, 13, (1 March 1920): 54, 61, 74 and 81, in Porter, *Land Administration in Sarawak*, p. 47.

12. Porter, *Land Administration in Sarawak*, p. 48.

13. Clause S 1, Order No. L-2 (Land), 1931, 13 December 1931 (Cap. 27), *The Laws of Sarawak*, revised edition 1947, Vol. 1, p. 179, in Porter, *Land Administration in Sarawak*, p. 49.

14. Indigenous peoples were defined as 'Bukitans, Bisayuhs, Dusuns, Dayaks (Sea), Dayaks (Land), Kadayans, Kelabits, Kayans, Kenyahs (including Sabups and Sipengs), Kajangs (including Sekapans, Kejamans, Lahanans, Punans, Tanjongs, and Kanowits), Lugats, Lisums, Malays, Melanaus, Muruts, Penans, Sians, Tagals, Tabuns, Ukits. And any mixture thereof' (T. Stirling Boyd (comp.), *Laws of Sarawak, 1927-1935 (The Red Book)*, London: Bradbury, Wilkinson, 1936, p. 258).

15. Porter, *Land Administration in Sarawak*, p. 60; Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 316.

16. Land and Survey Department file 6-1/8, folio 140, in Porter, *Land Administration in Sarawak*, p. 51; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1130 (31 May 1952): 93.

17. Austin argues that Order L-7 limited shifting cultivators to a clearly inadequate 1.2 hectares (R. F. Austin, 'Land Policy and Social Control: The British Presence in Sarawak', MA research paper, University of Michigan, 1974, pp. 30-2).

18. V. Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar: Urbanization in Sarawak, East Malaysia*, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1980, p. 108.

19. Le Sueur Third Division September-October Report, *Sarawak Gazette*, 867 (1 December 1925); Archer Third Division August Report, *Sarawak Gazette*, 865

(1 October 1925); Third Division Annual Report for 1925, *Sarawak Government Gazette* (16 August 1926); all in Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 311-3.

20. *Sarawak Gazette* (1 February 1926): 38; (1 April 1926): 98; (1 October 1926): 268; all in Chew, *Chinese Pioneers on the Sarawak Frontier*, p. 168.

21. T. Corson memorandum, 14 February 1938, Lanjak-Entimau file, Forest Department, Kuching, in Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 280.

22. Porter, *Land Administration in Sarawak*, p. xiv.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

24. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Annual Report, 1956*, p. 3.

25. Sarawak Tribune, 18 March 1948, p. 2; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 118.

26. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Annual Report, 1956*, p. 3.

27. W. Harnock, the pre-war Director of Land and Survey, was killed in 1942. Senior officers who returned were D. L. Leach, N. Mace, R. N. Baron, F. R. K. Kitto, C. B. Murray, and B. A. Reeves.

28. This is a free adaptation of the writings accompanying virtually every piece of legislation and report issued between 1946 and 1963, some of them echoing views expressed during the Brooke era.

29. Hepburn, *The Handbook of Sarawak*, pp. 67-8. In 1938, 78,250 Natives held rubber gardens averaging 0.6 hectares, compared with 18,544 non-Natives whose gardens averaged 2.45 hectares.

30. For a listing of land legislation in the Brooke and British eras, see Porter, *Land Administration in Sarawak*, App. B (1).

31. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 143.

32. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Annual Report, 1956*, p. 4.

33. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Report for the Period 1961-1965*, p. 21.

34. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Annual Report, 1956*, p. 4. The New Zealander was J. Caradus.

35. A. J. N. Richards, *Land Law and Adat*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1961, pp. 15-22 and 59.

36. R. A. Cramb and I. R. Wills, 'The Role of Traditional Institutions in Rural Development: Community-based Land Tenure and Government Land Policy in Sarawak, Malaysia', *World Development*, 18, 1 (1990): 350-4.

37. In 1949 there were 5,693 applications with a backlog of 4,398. In 1959 there were 6,548 applications with a backlog of 6,495.

38. Some Chinese 'squatters' had paid quit rent to the customary owners during the occupation (*Sarawak Tribune*, 29 December 1949, p. 2).

39. *Sarawak Tribune*, 29 December 1949, p. 2. A total of 487 squatters had been resettled by the end of 1950 (Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 116).

40. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, pp. 116-7.

41. During 1951, \$10,533 compensation was paid to extinguish Native customary rights (Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 146).

42. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, pp. 116-17.

43. Landless Chinese demands were considered exaggerated by their leaders (Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1952*, p. 41).

44. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

45. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1953*, p. 43.
46. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Annual Report, 1954*, p. 3; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1957*, p. 29.
47. Chinese pressure on land was increasing and there were still Chinese squatters occupying isolated lots in the Simanggang Road area (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1956*, pp. 31-2).
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4.
49. Schemes in hand or implemented before the formation of Malaysia included 1010 hectares at Balai Ringin, 1214- and 2023-hectare blocks near Simanggang, 4856 hectares at Kabong, 688 hectares at Julau, 1888- and 2063-hectare blocks on the Oya Road, 4047 hectares near Bukit Tanggi, 810 hectares at Bakong, 3845 hectares on the Lawas-Trusan Road, and 810 hectares at Limbang.
50. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1956*, p. 34; Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Report for the Period 1961-1965*, pp. 19 and 21.
51. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1956*, p. 47; 1959, p. 60.
52. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, pp. 36-7.
53. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Annual Report, 1959*, para. 27, in Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 112.
54. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, p. 38.
55. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 61.
56. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Report for the Period 1961-1965*, p. 42.
57. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, p. 35.
58. Acting Chief Secretary, B. A. Hepburn, to all Residents, 'Land Policy', 21 January 1961, circular memorandum CSO File C/3095/60; also confidential memorandum, February 1961, CSO File C/3093/60 (MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 213, RHL).
59. Hepburn, *The Handbook of Sarawak*, 1949, p. 67.
60. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Annual Report, 1956*, p. 5.
61. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 114.
62. M. B. Hooker, *Native Law in Sabah and Sarawak*, Singapore: Malayan Law Journal, 1980, p. 33.
63. S. Baring-Gould and C. A. Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak under Its Two White Rajahs, 1839-1908*, London: Henry Sotheran & Co., 1909, pp. 433-4; Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Annual Report, 1956*, p. 5.
64. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1955*, p. 31. For permissible methods of creating customary rights in Interior Native Land after 1955, see Porter, *Land Administration in Sarawak*, pp. 83-4.
65. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Annual Report, 1954*, p. 4.
66. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1956*, p. 29.
67. Porter, *Land Administration in Sarawak*, pp. 48 and 80.
68. Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Report for the Period 1961-1965*, p. 11.
69. *Sarawak Tribune*, 12 October 1959, p. 4.
70. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, p. 35.
71. The study was carried out by A. J. N. Richards, an Iban-speaking pre-war senior administrative officer of the SCS who was an authority on Iban *adat* and had served extensively in the outstations.
72. The Committee consisted of C. M. Johnston, a former Minister of Community Development and of African Affairs; S. R. Simpson, formerly of the Sudan Service; and A. J. N. Richards.

73. 'Report of the Land Committee in Brief, 9 October 1962', p. 1, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 213, RHL.

74. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

75. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 March 1963, p. 1; Sarawak Land and Survey Department, *Report for the Period 1961-1965*, pp. 12-13.

76. The working party comprised Chairman A. J. N. Richards, Land and Survey Department nominee R. H. Logie, and Agriculture Department nominee S. J. R. Dunsmore ('First Report of the Working Party appointed to give effect to the recommendations of the Land Committee', MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 213, RHL).

77. Four Bills were drawn up based on the working party's recommendations but raised widespread controversy and were withdrawn on 11 May 1965, but not before significantly damaging Kalong Ningkan's government (Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, pp. 112-15).

## 15

### Labour in Paid Employment

ON annexation, the British government accepted obligations to raise the standard of living and prevent any exploitation of the people in accordance with the second and third Cardinal Principles of Sarawak's 1941 Constitution. In 1947, about 72 per cent of the economically active population of Sarawak were subsistence farmers, another 13 per cent were cash crop farmers, and 15 per cent were paid workers in a direct employer-employee relationship (Table 15.1).<sup>1</sup> By 1960, 20 per cent of the economically active population were paid workers, which included virtually all the forestry workers and

TABLE 15.1  
Change in Employment in Industry between 1947 and 1960

<i>Industries</i>	<i>1947</i>		<i>1960</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Rice or mainly rice	183,458	72.1	169,666	57.6
Other Agriculture	16,791	6.6	15,919	5.4
(General Agriculture)	(200,249)	(78.7)	(185,585)	(63.0)
Rubber	17,822	7.0	41,691	14.2
Commerce	8,835	3.5	13,821	4.7
Manufacturing	2,153	0.8	11,524	3.9
Transport & communications	2,918	1.1	5,554	1.9
Building & construction	1,539	0.6	4,589	1.6
Fishing	4,331	1.7	4,413	1.5
Timber production	1,543	0.6	3,533	1.2
Oil production	1,847	0.7	1,568	0.5
Other industries	13,365	5.3	22,007	7.5
All industries	254,602	100.0	294,285	100.0

Source: L. W. Jones, *Report on the Census of Population Taken on 15th June 1960*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1961, p. 114.

many of the fishermen, but excluded the farmers who were self-employed (Table 15.2).<sup>2</sup> To honour its obligations, the colonial government had to provide these paid workers with the protective mechanisms of the industrialized world, namely legislation controlling working conditions and minimum rates of pay.<sup>3</sup>

### *Labour Policies under the Brookes*

The colonial government did not have to contend with forced labour which was made illegal under Regulation No. 2 of the first Rajah's Code of Laws in 1842, nor with slavery which was officially abolished by Order S-2 Slavery, 1928.<sup>4</sup> The Brooke era was not free of labour problems, the worst incidence being in 1923 when thirteen people were killed at Miri during demonstrations by oil company workers.<sup>5</sup> There is also ample evidence of harsh working conditions, especially in the mines, in common with much

TABLE 15.2  
Labour Employed by the Major Industrial Sectors, 1960

<i>Industries</i>	<i>Total Persons (No.)</i>	<i>Employer (%)</i>	<i>Employee (%)</i>	<i>Self- employed (%)</i>	<i>Family Worker (%)</i>
Agriculture, forestry, & fishing	239,613	0.2	7.1	38.9	53.8
Services	16,252	2.4	88.3	7.1	2.2
Commerce	13,821	10.8	38.4	36.8	14.0
Manufacturing	11,524	4.2	70.2	18.3	7.3
Transport & communica- tions	5,554	1.8	86.0	11.6	0.6
Building & construction	4,589	2.4	94.1	2.9	0.6
Mining & quarrying	2,392	0.6	95.7	2.6	1.1
Electricity, water, & sanitary services	540	0.2	99.0	0.4	0.4
All industries	294,285	1.1	19.3	34.7	44.9

Source: Jones, *Report on the Census of Population Taken on 15th June 1960*, p. 113.

of the world's industry at that time.<sup>6</sup> However, the Brookes did introduce legislation giving paid labour a degree of protection. Following the first Rajah's 1842 Code of Laws, labour matters were dealt with piecemeal by orders that were finally collated in Order L-3, Labour Protection, 1927, when a Labour Protectorate was also established.<sup>7</sup> This was followed by Order L-6 Labour Conventions, 1933, implementing International Labour Convention recommendations on restrictions of employment of children and young persons. Trade unions were not illegal under the Brookes but did not exist as such. Guild, clan, and occupational societies, registered under Order S-1 Societies, 1930, represented labour interests.<sup>8</sup>

### *The Japanese Occupation*

During the Japanese occupation, labour rights became secondary to survival for many people. The Japanese cut down the number of government employees, many Chinese moved into the rural areas to become self-sufficient as farmers, and urban dwellers became increasingly preoccupied over food as supplies became scarcer and rations were reduced to inadequate levels.<sup>9</sup> On re-occupation, short-term relief supplies of food from Australia and basic foodstuffs procured by government were issued through a rationing system with controlled prices, which helped to re-establish more normal lifestyles.<sup>10</sup> The only large employers of paid labour were government agencies and Sarawak Shell Oilfields Limited (SSOL).

### *The British Era, 1946-1963*

After reoccupation, the pre-war administrative structure was restored. The posts of Secretary of Chinese Affairs and Protector of Labour were held by one officer, the latter role incorporating the Protector of Women and Girls and the Registrar of Societies. District Officers were Deputy Protectors of Labour and were responsible for ensuring compliance with Labour Protection and Labour Convention Orders in their districts.<sup>11</sup> There was no legislation dedicated to registration of trade unions, accident compensation, sick leave, or retirement benefits. Nor was there any regulated system for workplace inspection, although District Officers provided rudimentary control by visiting important industrial undertakings in their areas.



The Sarawak government became very much aware in 1948 that labour matters were liable to raise questions in the House of Commons. William Teeling, MP, sought a statement on forced labour in Sarawak from the Colonial Secretary, Arthur Creech Jones, when two Bidayuh were fined for refusing to provide portage for a District Officer on tour in his district.<sup>12</sup> In this *cause célèbre*, the local administration was not unduly embarrassed as the fine had been imposed by a local magistrate under the Native Administration Ordinance 1940, not by the District Officer.<sup>13</sup> However, the Colonial Secretary was placed in the awkward position of having to explain to the House that providing portage was a long-established custom and that ways and means of abolishing the practice were being studied. Sensitivity to questions in the House no doubt contributed to the underlying attitude of conciliation that characterized the British era, although, when the need arose, controlling legislation was introduced very quickly.

Several ordinances were introduced to improve the conditions of employment of the paid worker, which accorded with the government's stated policy that new legislation dealt with social development, economic development, and welfare.<sup>14</sup> Mandatory payment of compensation to workers and their dependents for injury or death during their employment was introduced for the first time in 1949 by the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance. As this did not comply with International Labour Convention No. 17, it had to be amended.<sup>15</sup> In 1950, daily hours of work were reduced from nine to eight hours by an amendment to the Labour Protection Ordinance and the Protector of Labour was empowered to call for labour returns from employers.<sup>16</sup> Protection of labour embodying the principles of the International Labour Conventions was brought up to date by Labour Ordinance, No. 24, 1951, effective from 1 July 1952 and included an eight-hour, six-day working week. On a more negative note, the Weekly Holiday Ordinance enacted in 1952 had not been promulgated eight years later, nor was there any mechanism for establishing labour boards even by 1955.<sup>17</sup> However, a Labour Advisory Board was set up subsequently to provide a direct working link with the unions and to deal with such matters as draft rules for domestic servants.<sup>18</sup> The Board also submitted a draft Shop Assistants Employment Bill for government approval in 1962, as shop assistants were not covered by the Labour Ordinance.<sup>19</sup>

In May 1954, the post of Protector of Labour for Sarawak was coupled with that of Controller of Labour for Brunei and the incumbent was stationed at Kuala Belait in Brunei. This was a

convenient location between the Brunei and Miri oilfields and enabled the Controller to be in close touch with labour relations in SSOL, the major private employer in Sarawak for much of the British period.<sup>20</sup> In August 1946 employees of SSOL had sought post-war rehabilitation pay of three months, half a month's bonus, doubling of their pay, free medical treatment, and Malayan levels of compensation for injury. A short unsuccessful strike of about 400 Chinese artisans in the Miri-Lutong area had followed after the company rejected the claims on the grounds that generous living allowances were being paid.<sup>21</sup> To improve labour relations, the Protector of Labour encouraged the setting up of workers' consultative committees so that elected representatives of the labour force could meet the management regularly and discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. This averted any further labour unrest in SSOL during the colonial period and achieved liberal labour conditions for its employees. By the end of 1962, conditions of service for its direct employees included a forty-three and a half hour working week with two weeks' annual paid leave and four weeks' sick leave a year on full pay. SSOL also provided its employees with high standard housing, social club premises, and sports facilities, setting the benchmark for optimal conditions of service for paid labour in Sarawak.

The Sarawak government also experienced pressure for improved conditions from its Divisions III and IV officers, the Junior Civil Service, very shortly after cession. Dawson, the Officer Administering the Government (OAG), wrote in his diary on 3 August 1946 that the Junior Service was pressing for back pay during the occupation similar to that granted to Senior Service officers who had been interned by the Japanese.<sup>22</sup> This was followed by the formation of the Sarawak Government Junior Service Association (SGJSA) on 10 November 1946 to promote the interest of members.<sup>23</sup> Over the next twelve months, the government provided premises for the Association and appointed two of its 1,228 members to the government's Promotion Board.<sup>24</sup> Interest-free loans were made available to help members pay debts caused by the Japanese occupation and the high cost of living in the immediate post-war period. The importance of registering as a trade union was raised at the SGJSA Annual General Meeting in late 1949.<sup>25</sup> Subsequently the name of the Association was changed to the Sarawak Government Asian Officers' Union (SGAOU) so that Asian members promoted to the senior service could continue to be members.<sup>26</sup>

The Association continued to apply pressure for improved conditions of service at a time when Whitehall was trying to enforce economy.<sup>27</sup> An increase in the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) was supported by the Supreme Council, but was rejected by Whitehall in early 1950 on the grounds that recently revised salary scales provided adequate compensation.<sup>28</sup> The local Press refuted this and the Governor managed to persuade Whitehall to reverse its decision.<sup>29</sup> Pressure then arose to grant the increase to bachelors, the *Sarawak Tribune* arguing that bachelors also had dependants such as non-earning parents, sisters, and brothers.<sup>30</sup> To negotiate such matters, in 1952 Whitley Councils, similar to those established in the United Kingdom in 1919, were set up.<sup>31</sup> Their constitutions were negotiated by the government and representatives of the Senior Service and Junior Service staff associations. The Whitley Councils provided a mechanism for regular meetings between top-level government administrators and staff representatives chosen by the staff associations. Their aim was to maintain a harmonious relationship between the government and its employees at all times.<sup>32</sup> Bain's 1956 review of Sarawak Civil Service (SCS) conditions of service was accepted and implemented and the Watson Report of 1963 providing for inter-Division promotion and a more attractive salary structure was about to be implemented when Malaysia was formed.<sup>33</sup>

The British government did not consider close scrutiny of labour conditions in the colonies to be necessary, the Colonial Secretary, Oliver Lyttelton, rejecting a call for a Royal Commission by Labour MP Ellis Smith in 1953.<sup>34</sup> With the degree of attention given to the two major employers in Sarawak, the oil industry and the civil service, and the latter setting the pattern for conditions of service for all government bodies and agencies, labour unrest was rarely recorded.<sup>35</sup> There were only two serious labour disputes between 1952 and 1963. One was in 1957 when 150 workers of a Singapore building contractor went on strike over the appointment of a foreman and 1,452 working days were lost.<sup>36</sup> The other was in 1958, over allegations of harsh treatment by three members of the staff of the Sarawak Electricity Supply Company (Sesco). About 170 workers went on strike, 340 working days were lost, and an employee who had been dismissed for leaving work before the designated time was reinstated.<sup>37</sup> This strike resulted in the promulgation of the Essential Services Arbitration Ordinance, 1958, which prohibited lock-outs or strikes in essential services for twenty-one days after a trade dispute arose to allow time for settlement with-

out disruption to the service. Also, a tribunal was set up by the Governor to settle disputes in essential services.

After administrative connections between Brunei and Sarawak ended in 1959, the Commissioner of Labour was stationed in Sarawak and was able to maintain a closer contact with labour and the unions.<sup>38</sup> By the time Malaysia was formed, many of the main industries worked a forty-four hour week with office personnel on a thirty-six hour week, and most employers granted between seven and fourteen working days' holiday a year. 'Casual' daily paid labour employed by the Public Works Department worked a forty-four hour week and had twelve working days a year annual leave.<sup>39</sup> However, for many workers not employed by the major concerns, the basic week was six eight-hour days with minimum daily rates of pay prescribed by the Labour Ordinance.

Provisions in the Colonial Development and Welfare (CD & W) Act called for adequate trade union legislation before any assistance could be provided and as there was no such legislation in Sarawak, the Governor tabled the Trade Unions and Trade Disputes Bill in the Council Negri in December 1947.<sup>40</sup> Although the Attorney-General argued that trade unions should be allowed to develop unfettered by legislation, the Bill was passed.<sup>41</sup> Trade union registration was compulsory under the Bill and the government kept itself fully informed by instructing the Registrar of Trade Unions to report to the police the names of the officers of every new union.<sup>42</sup> This legislation brought about a gradual change from past traditions of guilds and dialect-specific organizations to trade unions embodying different ethnic, language, and dialect groups.<sup>43</sup> Four trade unions were registered in 1948, the largest being the Kuching Labourers' Trade Union with 302 members of various dialect groups.<sup>44</sup> This was described by the Press as another example of the progressive element being increasingly felt in the country.<sup>45</sup>

Government policy of promoting the healthy growth of trade unions resulted in forty-one being established by Malaysia Day, although a number of the smaller unions were considered to be more in the nature of guilds and too limited in number and scope to be very effective.<sup>46</sup> The unions covered workers ranging from the predominantly Malay Kuching Municipal Labourers' Union, formed in 1951 with 200 members, to the predominantly Chinese Sibu Coffee Shop Employers' Union, formed in 1962 with sixty members.<sup>47</sup> In 1955, a specially trained officer was appointed Registrar of Trade Unions, in an advisory capacity to the unions.

This appears to have met with little success since union members had very little and limited knowledge of trade union procedures even by the end of the British era.<sup>48</sup> Also, as already seen, the CCO quickly managed to establish control over the Chinese sector of the union movement.<sup>49</sup>

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The inherent conflict between encouraging unionism yet combating communism led to legislation that detracted from union power. Yet legislation improved conditions of service for most workers by laying down minimum standards and providing a degree of protection. The government set an example by providing standards of employment for its own employees that progressive employers sought to match but only SSOL could emulate. Possibly the most important factor in the generally harmonious labour relations in Sarawak between 1946 and 1963 was recorded by a senior Colonial Office official: 'the peaceful disposition of their workmen and ... the good sense and friendly attitude of employers'.<sup>50</sup> One major factor inhibiting the prospects of many paid employees other than in artisan and clerical occupations was the generally low educational standard in Sarawak at the end of World War II.

1. Table 15.1 shows employment patterns in 1947 and 1960.

2. L. W. Jones, *Report on the Census of Population Taken on 15th June 1960*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1961, pp. 109 and 111.

3. Table 15.2 shows the major sectors of employment in 1960.

4. Conrad P. Cotter, 'Some Aspects of the Administrative Development of Sarawak', MPA thesis, Cornell University, 1955, pp. 40-2; T. Stirling Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', Unpublished typescript, c. 1934, pp. 120-1.

5. *Sarawak Gazette* (1 August 1923): 226, (3 September 1923): 277; see also Daniel Chew, *Chinese Pioneers on the Sarawak Frontier, 1841-1941*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 197-8.

6. K. H. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, Data Paper No. 114, South-East Asia Program, New York: Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1980, pp. 28-9.

7. Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', pp. 110 and 115; B. A. Hepburn, *The Handbook of Sarawak: Comprising Historical, Statistical and General Information Concerning the Colony Obtained from Official and Other Reliable Records*, Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1949, p. 61.

8. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1078 (January 1948): 3. The primary aim of Order S-1 Societies, 1930, was to discourage secret societies and the formation of triads (Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', p. 121).

9. Christopher Chan, 'The Period of the Japanese Occupation: The Japanese Occupation (Extracts from a Broadcast Interview by Christopher Chan with Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui on 14th February 1975)', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society* (Sarawak Branch), 3 (December 1976): 7, 12-13, and 19; Chong Ah Onn, '1943-1946, Fifth Division, Sarawak', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1137 (November 1952): 263-4.
10. F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-1946*, London: HMSO, 1956, pp. 188 and 248.
11. Labour and Labour Convention Orders covered health conditions, dismissal without notice, labour agreements, definition of a day's work, and international conventions on labour, industrial undertakings, and child and female labour (Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 11).
12. Hansard, Vol. 451, cols. 2154-5, 9 June 1948. The two Bidayuh refused to carry the baggage of District Officer J. R. Outram from Kampung Senu to Kampung Hundon, saying they were anti-cession.
13. Digby, *Lateyer in the Wilderness*, p. 90. The question in the House of Commons sought to embarrass the Labour government by suggesting that supporters of the Brooke regime were being suppressed.
14. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 101.
15. Notes for E. W. Bartrop, Labour Adviser, the Colonial Office, late 1955, File Fed. 336/7/02, CO 1030/369, PRO; Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 11.
16. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 13.
17. The trade unions pointed out that the Weekly Holiday Ordinance had not been promulgated to a Colonial Office Labour Adviser in Kuching on 31 October 1955, and to visiting MP, C. A. Howell, on 11 August 1960 (*Sarawak Tribune*, 12 August 1960, p. 1).
18. *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 June 1958, p. 1.
19. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 17.
20. D. B. Petherick, the first full-time appointee, had served with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (Bartrop to Morris, file note, 1 February 1956, File Fed. 336/7/02, CO 1030/369, PRO).
21. *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 August 1946, p. 6. Sarawak Junior Civil Service claims at this time may have influenced SSOL to rebuff the claims (C. W. Dawson Diary, 3 August 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL).
22. C. W. Dawson Diary, 3 August 1946, MSS Pac. r. 7 & 8, RHL.
23. *Sarawak Tribune*, 12 November 1946, p. 2.
24. *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 January 1948, p. 2. Tommy Attenborough and Zen bin Malek were the SGJSA Promotion Board members.
25. *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 December 1949, p. 2.
26. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1108 (7 July 1950): 173. Eleven local personnel were promoted to the senior service between 1 July 1946 and 22 March 1951 (*Sarawak Tribune*, 22 March 1951, p. 4).
27. 'Bagai-Mana' wrote that the lot of the members of the public services was an unhappy one and that Whitehall was very unsympathetic (*Sarawak Tribune*, 31 March 1950, p. 2).
28. *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 February 1950, p. 2.
29. 'Speech by His Excellency the Governor at the opening of the Council Negri, 22nd May 1950', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1107 (7 June 1950): 143.
30. *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 January 1951, p. 2.

31. C. Jeffries, *The Colonial Office*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956, p. 126.

32. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1952, p. 10; 'Address by His Excellency the Governor to Council Negri on 2nd December, 1952', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1138 (31 December 1952): 278-9.

33. 'Speech by His Excellency, The Governor at The Opening of Council Negri, 6th December 1955', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1174 (31 December 1955): 307; *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 May 1963, p. 1. Information on Bain's 1956 review of SCS conditions of service and the Watson Report of 1963 are given in Chapter 7 in the subsection entitled 'Conditions of Service'.

34. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 11 December 1953, p. 3.

35. A typical state annual report read: 'Industrial disputes are rare. There has been no labour unrest for a considerable time' (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, p. 19).

36. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1957, p. 16.

37. Sarawak Electricity Supply Company Limited, *The Second Annual Report of the Sarawak Electricity Supply Company Limited, 1st July 1957 to 30th June 1958*, pp. 32-3.

38. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1959, p. 4. The new title replaced that of Protector of Labour.

39. *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 November 1962, p. 1; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 15.

40. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1078 (2 January 1948): 3-4.

41. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, pp. 83-4.

42. Digby considered this created an atmosphere of suspicion and fear. He said that no virile trade union existed in Sarawak for some time because of this (Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 84).

43. C. A. Lockard, *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970*, Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1987, p. 173.

44. William Chew Hon Fatt, 'Report (dated 18th June, 1952) on Kuching Wharf Labourer's Union', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1135 (31 October 1952): 220-2.

45. *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 June 1948, p. 2.

46. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, pp. 16 and 17.

47. *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 November 1951 and 4 December 1951, in Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, p. 183.

48. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 17.

49. See Chapter 5 for an account of communist penetration of the trade union movement.

50. File minute by Sir Gerald Whiteley (a Principal Officer in the Far Eastern Department of the Colonial Office), 7 February 1956, CO 1030/69, PRO.

## PART IV

### Social Intervention





## 16

### Education

A literacy rate of 12 per cent, a wide imbalance in literacy among the main ethnic groups, and an obligation to develop and improve educational services under the second Cardinal Principle defined the task of the British authorities in 1946.<sup>1</sup> Stated government policies and aims evolved during the colonial era were:

1. Continued reliance on the mission and Chinese school systems, as shown by government financial support.
2. Providing a four-year primary course for as many children as possible, stated in the Education Department's *Annual Summary, 1954*.
3. Local authority responsibility for primary vernacular schools, under Governor Arden Clarke's proposals for local government.<sup>2</sup>
4. Education Department role of control and providing teachers, as in an Education officer's article on the teacher training centre.<sup>3</sup>
5. Overcoming educational disparities among ethnic groups as stated in the Education Department's *Triennial Survey, 1955-1957*.
6. Forming a national education system from the existing fragmented system, as articulated in Arden Clarke's local government proposals.
7. Providing local qualified people to fill higher government posts, also indicated in Arden Clarke's local government proposals.

#### *Education before World War II*

Prior to 1841, education comprised readings of the Quran in Arabic by religious leaders to the Malay chiefs and their families.<sup>4</sup> The Brookes, having derived their power from the Malay nobles of Sarawak Proper in 1841 and subsequently ruling indirectly through them, invested in Malay education, opening the first Malay school at Kampung Jawa in 1883.<sup>5</sup> Both the first and second Rajahs had serious misgivings about the effects of western-style education on the Dayaks and left their education to the missionaries, giving their

TABLE 16.1  
Number of Pupils, Teachers, and Schools, 1941-1954

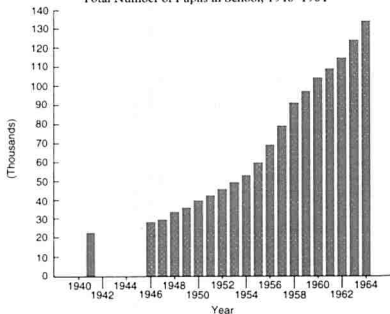
	1941	1946	1948	1950	1952	1954
Chinese						
Schools	158	178	204	215	225	242
Teachers	572	585	679	804	936	1,084
Pupils	13,416	18,222	21,282	23,906	28,528	31,839
Mission						
Schools	45	34	56	59	71	94
Teachers	-	146	196	243	218	381
Pupils	4,097	4,068	5,743	7,166	8,293	10,622
District						
Schools	54	76	56	47	41	37
Teachers	146	169	104	102	103	74
Pupils	4,831	5,559	4,080	4,037	3,424	2,239
Local Authority						
Schools			18	67	94	112
Teachers	-	-	21	77	113	174
Pupils			804	2,545	3,429	5,515

Private						
Schools		2	30	35	36	54
Teachers	—	3	47	45	49	66
Pupils		136	1,555	1,769	1,758	2,573
Unclassified						
Schools				3	1	
Teachers	—	—	—	19	1	—
Pupils				233	19	
Total School population	22,344	27,985	33,464	39,656	45,451	52,788

Source: Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1954*,  
Table X.

schools patronage and some financial support.<sup>6</sup> Mission schools accepted all races, the first being opened by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) in 1847. Chinese-medium education was provided by the Chinese clans and associations with some government support, the first Chinese school mentioned being in Bau in 1852.<sup>7</sup> The second Rajah opened the Government Lay School in 1903 to provide a trade-oriented secular multi-stream vernacular education, but it did not survive.<sup>8</sup> Lack of government schools led, by default, to a fragmented education system based on race and religion with an inbuilt bias in favour of the town dweller.<sup>9</sup> Education was not accessible to most of the rural population. To redress the imbalances, a 1937 study by a retired Malayan Civil Service (MCS) officer, J. R. Hammond, recommended opening government primary schools in longhouses and villages, arguing that a primary education was a basic right of every child.<sup>10</sup>

FIGURE 16.1  
Total Number of Pupils in School, 1940-1964



Source: Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1954, 1963, and 1966.

Notes: The graph includes all primary and secondary school pupils in Sarawak. Secondary School pupils numbered 1,050 in 1948, 5,245 in 1954, and 14,779 in 1962.

Although these recommendations had only begun to take effect with a rural school opened at Belaga in 1940, when the Japanese occupation began in late 1941 the education system had grown considerably.<sup>11</sup> By then there were fifty-four district primary schools with 146 teachers and 4,831 pupils catering for Muslims (Table 16.1 and Figure 16.1). Chinese dialect groups were operating 158 schools with 572 teachers and 13,416 pupils for Chinese wishing to follow their own culture. The mission schools run by the SPG, the Roman Catholics, the Seventh Day Adventists, and the Borneo Evangelical Mission were open to all ethnic groups, although their pupils were predominantly Chinese urban dwellers. These schools offered English-medium primary education and had an enrolment of 4,097 pupils in forty-five schools by 1941. The largest, St Thomas's, catered for about 400 Chinese, 100 Dayak, and 100 Malay, Indian, and other pupils.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Japanese Occupation*

The Japanese occupation did little to further education in Sarawak. The mission schools were closed, most of the government Malay schools continued to function but with low attendances, and only some of the Chinese schools remained open with much reduced enrolments.<sup>13</sup> Teaching of English ceased and was replaced by Japanese, with an emphasis on training interpreters.<sup>14</sup> St Thomas's School housed three to four hundred labourers building coastal vessels and the main building of St Mary's School was used as an army mess and brothel.<sup>15</sup> Towards the end of the war seventeen schools were totally destroyed, another thirty-five were damaged, and at most other schools furniture and equipment were looted. Education services were restored remarkably quickly after reoccupation and in June 1946, the British authorities became responsible for education in Sarawak.

### *The First Priority: Training Teachers*

Education in Sarawak was voluntary and under the general control of the Education Department.<sup>16</sup> Restoration of the pre-war educational structure and system was the immediate task. The condition of the schools was perhaps illustrated by the Agricultural Education Officer's comment on 6 June 1947, when there were 30,000 primary school pupils: 'A report on any school in the Colony would record

inadequate buildings, furniture, teaching equipment, teachers and lesson material; also inadequately trained teachers.<sup>17</sup> Apart from rehabilitation work, since only one in four primary school children had been attending school at the time of the Japanese occupation, the expansion of educational facilities was essential.<sup>18</sup> This required many more trained teachers and a teachers' training college in addition to the Malay-medium Sarawak Malay Teachers' College.<sup>19</sup>

In February 1948, a Colonial Development and Welfare (CD & W) grant of \$704,806 was approved to set up what became known as the Batu Lintang Training College (BLTC) under Murray Dickson, who later became the Director of Education.<sup>20</sup> Starting in temporary premises in early 1948, the college moved to Batu Lintang in July 1946, taking over a site and buildings originally built as a military camp.<sup>21</sup> For most of the trainees, those preparing to teach in vernacular rural primary schools up to Primary 4, there was a two-year Grade IIIA training course with a minimum entry level of Primary 4. This course gave them some knowledge of teaching principles and methods, and improved their academic standard. To honour the inherited pledge to uphold *adat lama*, the Education Department placed some 'emphasis on traditional skills and indigenous cultures'.<sup>22</sup> Amongst the first intake of fifty-six student-teachers from the rural areas, there were nine ethnic groups.

The first forty teachers graduated at the end of 1949 and were posted to local authority schools throughout the country. From an annual enrolment of 100 to 120, the BLTC had trained 257 Grade IIIA teachers by the end of 1954.<sup>23</sup> By then, 125 of the 225 teachers in the local authority and district schools were registered as trained teachers, together with seven teachers who had completed a secondary school education.<sup>24</sup> Primary 5 and 6 levels, taught in the central, English-medium mission schools, required teachers with a higher level of education. To train these, a two-year course for Grade IIA teachers was started in 1952 with a minimum entry level of Form 3, a level normally reached after nine years' schooling. The first batch of twenty-three Grade IIA teachers completed their training in 1954.<sup>25</sup> This did little to relieve the dire shortage of Grade IIA trained teachers as in 1954 in the aided schools—that is, schools receiving government grants—out of 669 Grade IIA teachers, only ten were trained. E. W. Woodhead, who was commissioned by the government in 1954 to advise on education, felt that ten years' satisfactory service could be accepted in lieu of training and recommended in his 1955 Report that untrained

Grade IIA teachers with such service should be reclassified as trained Grade IIA teachers.<sup>26</sup> This was put into effect in 1956 but the teacher training programme clearly needed to be expanded.

An additional centre was opened in Sibü in 1957 to train teachers for the Chinese schools and counter communist subversion, and to teach Mandarin in English-medium schools.<sup>27</sup> It was designed to accommodate one hundred students and accepted the first fifty trainees in 1957, followed by a further fifty-two in 1958. The next step was taken in 1958 after BLTC teaching facilities for indigenous pupils at higher primary and post-primary levels were transferred to Kanowit.<sup>28</sup> With the aid of a \$1,875,000 CD & W grant and the transfer of \$428,571 from the Brooke Education Fund to the Development Plan, improved and enlarged facilities with permanent modern buildings and a new assembly hall, named the Brooke Hall, were erected at Batu Lintang in 1959 and 1960. Enrolments were increased to over 300 and, together with the Sibü centre, 198 teachers completed their training in 1963 compared with 92 in 1957.<sup>29</sup> As a result of the Education Department's decision in 1952 to accept Chinese students with Junior Middle Certificate, by 1963, 59 per cent of the trainee-teachers were Chinese. This helped to provide the teachers to meet the increase in government and local authority primary schools, increasing the numbers from 76 in 1946 to 593 in 1963, although there were still more untrained than trained teachers.<sup>30</sup>

### *Primary Education*

Arden Clarke established the pattern for rural primary education during the colonial era in his 1947 'Note on Development of Local Government'.<sup>31</sup> He wrote that the 'educational and unifying process' necessary to weld the plural society of Sarawak into a united body involved the 'use of a number of agencies such as schools, mass education, public relations, development of lingua franca etc'.<sup>32</sup> He proposed forming local authorities which would establish and run local vernacular primary schools, supported when necessary by government grants. By the end of 1947, educational strategies were clear. Mission and Chinese schools were to receive some financial support, but the major thrust would be to establish rural primary schools run by local authorities, handing over the existing vernacular government schools to those authorities as soon as their level of competence permitted. The acute imbalance between both the number and percentage of the children



from the main ethnic groups attending school is evident from Table 16.2. In 1947 about 14.8 per cent of the Chinese population of 145,158 was attending school compared with 5.3 per cent of the 97,469 Malay population and about 1.0 per cent of the other 297,958 indigenous people.

The Local Authority Ordinance, 1948, introduced Arden Clarke's concepts and local authorities gradually assumed responsibility for primary schools in their areas. A local community had to show its support by building its own schools and supplying furniture before the local authority provided a teacher and accepted responsibility for running the school. By the end of 1948, local authorities were managing eighteen local schools with 804 pupils, catering entirely for Dayak communities.<sup>33</sup> Where local authorities took time to introduce schools, grants were given to encourage village committees to build and run their own 'private' schools as an interim measure and by 1954 there were 606 pupils enrolled in such schools. Local authorities were responsible for paying teachers' salaries, purchasing school equipment, and raising their revenue from a \$1 poll tax, fines, and other local charges. To overcome inadequacies in revenue and foster tax collection, from the beginning of 1949 the central government made a grant of \$5 for each \$1 collected in poll tax.<sup>34</sup> These additional funds enabled more schools to be built and by the end of 1954 local authorities were managing 112 schools with 5,515 pupils and 174 teachers. Extending the policy to major population centres, all primary schools in the Sibuan area were handed over to the Sibuan Urban District Council (SUDC) and Sibuan Rural District Council (SRDC) in 1953 and the primary schools in Kuching were handed over to the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC) on 1 January 1954. The KMC then became responsible for four district schools, five mission schools, six Chinese schools, and five private schools with a total enrolment of 8,000 pupils representing one-sixth of the state's total enrolment, a major step in the devolution of responsibility for primary education.

The Chinese education system started with six years in primary school. This was followed by a three-year Junior Middle course and completed with a three-year Senior Middle course prior to tertiary studies (Table 16.3). The enrolments in Chinese schools had risen to 31,839 by 1954, a 63 per cent increase from 1947, mainly in the primary school sector. In 1950, the Third Division Chinese Schools Common Examination Board conducted its first Primary Examination, thus introducing common standards for all Chinese

TABLE 16.2  
Number of Pupils by Ethnic Classification, 30 September 1954

<i>Race</i>	<i>Estimated Population</i>	<i>Types of Schools</i>					<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage of Population</i>
		<i>District</i>	<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Mission</i>	<i>Chinese</i>		
Chinese	174,618	15	32	19	5,563	31,648	37,277	21.35
Malays	108,533	1,476	2,703	1,846	986	56	7,067	6.51
Dayaks	309,142	736	2,771	606	3,809	132	8,054	2.60
Others	9,665	12	9	102	264	3	390	4.03
Total	601,958	2,239	5,515	2,573	10,622	31,839	52,788	8.77

Source: Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1954*, Table IX.

TABLE 16.3  
The Two Parallel School Systems, 1946-1963

<i>English and Vernacular Medium</i>				<i>Chinese Medium</i>			
<i>Stage</i>	<i>Years in School</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Exams</i>	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Years in School</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Exams</i>
Senior Secondary	12		CHSC	Senior Middle	12		CSM
	11	F6	COSC		11	SM3	
		F5			10	SM2	
	10	F4				SM1	
Junior Secondary	9		SJSC	Junior Middle	9		CJM
	8	F3			8	JM3	
		F2				JM2	
	7	F1			7	JM1	
Upper Primary	6		SSE	Primary	6		CPE
	5	P6			5	P6	
		P5				P5	
Lower Primary	4				4		
		P4				P4	
	3				3		
		P3				P3	
	2				2		
		P2				P2	
	1				1		
		P1				P1	
	0				0		

Source: Sarawak Education Department, *Triennial Survey, 1955-1957*.

Notes:

English and Vernacular Education:  
CHSC = Cambridge Higher School Certificate  
COSC = Cambridge Overseas School Certificate  
SJSC = Sarawak Junior School Certificate

Chinese Education:  
CSM = Common Senior Middle Examination  
CJM = Common Junior Middle Examination  
CPE = Common Primary Examination  
SM = Senior Middle School

SSE = Secondary School Entrance  
Examination

F = Form in Secondary School

P = Primary Year

JM = Junior Middle School

P = Primary Year

primary schools in the Third Division.<sup>35</sup> Fifty Chinese schools were established in towns and bazaars between 1947 and 1954, including new schools at Kuching, the Kuching-Serian Road, Simanggang, Sibu, Sarikei, Miri, and Lutong. However, by 1951 the problems associated with an education system isolated from all other education streams by language, curriculum, and culture were becoming apparent, as increasing Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) influence became evident in the Chinese schools.<sup>36</sup> The ensuing struggle between the CCO and the government to establish control over the Chinese education system is set out in Chapter 5. The Colonial Secretary agreed in 1954 with the Woodhead Report recommendation that the best means of securing control would be through financial assistance.<sup>37</sup> There were few problems of control in the mission schools, with the exception of the Sibu Methodist School where CCO influences led to the Director of Education describing it as one of the two most unsatisfactory schools in Sarawak.<sup>38</sup>

The schools run by the six Christian missions in Sarawak doubled their pupil enrolment between 1947 and 1954, although the ethnic imbalance in the number of their pupils was marked. Their total enrolment in 1954 of 10,622 pupils consisted of 5,563 Chinese, 986 Malays, 3,809 other indigenous peoples, and 264 other races.<sup>39</sup> In the large urban mission schools, most of the pupils were Chinese whose parents valued the employment opportunities in the government and commercial sectors for those educated in English. The small number of Malay pupils was due in part to the reluctance of parents to allow their children to attend Christian schools on religious grounds.<sup>40</sup> The number of indigenous pupils was increasing as new outstation mission schools offering primary education to boarding and day pupils were established.<sup>41</sup> The missions worked closely with the Education Department and the Sarawak Civil Service (SCS) and, provided their own funding apart from relatively minor government grants.<sup>42</sup>

Malay vernacular education suffered a severe setback in December 1947, when twenty-two district schools were forced to close after 87 of the 152 Malay teachers in the Education

Department resigned in protest after they, as government servants, were prohibited from taking part in anti-cession activities. To provide primary education for Malay children who had been withdrawn by their parents from government schools in 1947, a number of private *sekolah ra'ayat* (Malay primary schools) were opened, including eight in Kuching.<sup>43</sup> However, few survived due to inadequate financing and facilities, coupled with the decline of the anti-cession movement. The traditional Malay school, often with only one teacher, tended to concentrate on the teachings of Islam. At the end of 1954, there were 1,846 pupils in private Malay schools.<sup>44</sup> Following the decision to devolve responsibility for primary education to local authorities, thirty-five government-run district schools, the main source of primary education for Malays, were handed over between 1947 and 1954. Standards were improved in the larger district schools such as those at Simanggang, Saratok, and Bintulu, but the smaller rural Malay schools suffered from falling attendances and neglect.<sup>45</sup> The indifference of many Malay parents to education changed after the *Sidang Pelajaran Melayu* (Malay Education Board), a voluntary committee chaired by the Datu Bandar, was set up in April 1954.<sup>46</sup> From 1955, there was a substantial increase in Malay primary school enrolments.

Although the total number of pupils of all races increased from 27,985 in 1946 to 52,788 in 1954, the wide disparity in enrolments among ethnic groups remained. In 1954, an estimated 21.3 per cent of the Chinese population were attending school, compared with 6.5 per cent of the Malays and 2.6 per cent of all other indigenous peoples. The early post-war rural enthusiasm for education did not last. Rural schools suffered from low retention rates and attendances due to parental indifference to education and the withdrawal of children from school at critical times in the subsistence farming cycle.<sup>47</sup> Since primary school attendance was not compulsory, there were no penalties for withdrawing children from school to help with farming and, as the curriculum had limited relevance to their lives, parental and pupil interest was difficult to sustain.<sup>48</sup> To enthuse rural schools, group supervisors were introduced in 1951, and by 1954 central boarding schools to provide lower primary education in the rural areas were being considered. The need for reform was evident and progress in education was even questioned in the House of Commons in 1952.<sup>49</sup>

A wide disparity in expenditure among the various school sys-

tems added to the need for reform. About \$13.5 million was invested in education by the Chinese community between 1948 and 1954, supplemented by government grants of approximately \$400,000 and local authority grants of some \$125,000. In comparison, the missions spent about \$4.2 million, plus \$901,000 in government grants and \$127,000 in local authority grants. The government incurred costs of \$5.25 million over the same period in operating the Education Department, the Division schools, the BLTC, and in grants to aided Chinese, mission, and private schools. Local authorities were subsidized to the value of \$1.27 million and private schools received grants totalling \$63,500. Thus, over \$14 million was spent on Chinese schools and 21.3 per cent of the entire Chinese population of 309,142 attended school, whereas under \$10 million was spent on all other schools and only 3.6 per cent of the indigenous population of 419,706 attended school.<sup>50</sup>

In his address to the Council Negri in August 1954, Governor Anthony Abell mentioned the unsatisfactory progress in increasing the number of indigenous pupils and reported that the methods of providing government financial assistance to the educational agencies would be reviewed.<sup>51</sup> E. W. Woodhead, the Chief Education Officer of Kent, was selected to advise the government and visited Sarawak in September and October 1954.<sup>52</sup> His report and a White Paper outlining proposals on financing education were tabled in the Council Negri in March 1955.<sup>53</sup>

The report put forward two basic principles: increased funding to expand the education system more rapidly and more government control over all schools, primarily the Chinese education stream where CCO indoctrination was evident.<sup>54</sup> To relieve the educational agencies of most of their costs, Woodhead proposed public funding of the net running costs and half the approved capital expenditure of all schools receiving government grants, which were known as aided schools.<sup>55</sup> Public service salary scales were recommended for all teachers to enhance their social status and improve their standard of living. To receive these benefits, schools had to accept government control over the appointment, transfer, and dismissal of teachers, a step intended to curb CCO activities in the education system. The report and White Paper were widely circulated in English, Chinese, and Malay to facilitate public discussion, arousing strong opposition from the Chinese sector. However, the report and White Paper were accepted in principle by the Council Negri in September and a new Grant Code was

approved by the Governor in Council at the end of October. All schools were invited to apply for grants and by the end of 1956 only 31 of the 605 schools in the country were not receiving aid, compared with 228 out of 541 schools in 1954.<sup>56</sup>

The Grant Code gave a new impetus to education and had a marked effect on primary education. In the 1956 to 1960 period, primary school enrolments increased from 61,852 to 94,773 and 245 new schools were opened.<sup>57</sup> Of these, 200 were single-teacher schools set up in the rural areas by local authorities for the indigenous people and 30 were rural schools set up by the missions. Maintaining a sense of purpose and reasonable achievement levels was difficult in the isolated, single-teacher rural schools.<sup>58</sup> Regular supervisory visits were essential to help these teachers who had a very limited education and training but had to teach all primary school subjects and manage a number of classes simultaneously. A group supervisory scheme was introduced in 1952, but was not very effective due to the lack of experience and the educational background of the supervisors.<sup>59</sup>

A Group Headmaster Scheme was then introduced in July 1957, staffed by teachers provided under the Colombo Plan.<sup>60</sup> Five groups of promising Dayak primary schools were chosen for intensive guidance and assistance. The first group headmaster, a Canadian government nominee J. A. Young, supervised seven Iban primary schools in the Second Division's Saratok district. As it proved to have a stimulating effect on the schools and on the local communities, the scheme was extended to a group of primary schools on the upper Baram, Fourth Division, and a group in the Mukah area, Third Division.<sup>61</sup> Young completed his term of service in 1960 and reported that the weakest link in running rural primary schools was the local authority as it failed to provide encouragement, leadership, and guidance. The Group Headmaster Scheme brought about strong residual improvements and was extended when the Canadian government seconded two more teachers in 1961.<sup>62</sup> However, the number of schools involved was small, thus limiting the overall impact and effectiveness of the scheme.

As the following figures show, universal primary education and the elimination of ethnic imbalance in education levels were still far from being achieved by 1960 although public funding of school operating costs increased from \$1,292,827 in 1955 to \$9,588,830.<sup>63</sup>

	1956		1960	
	No. of Pupils	% of Population	No. of Pupils	% of Population
Malays	10,211	8.80	14,173	10.96
Dayaks	11,033	3.47	27,079	7.16
Chinese	40,471	21.70	52,798	23.00
Others	327	3.80	723	8.90

This is underlined by the literacy rates in the 1960 Census, given as 53 per cent of Chinese, 25 per cent of Malays, 17.8 per cent of Melanau, 11 per cent of Bidayuh, and 7 per cent of Ibans.<sup>64</sup> Public funding of school running costs absorbed between 17 and 18 per cent of state revenue and had risen to an estimated \$13,643,000 in 1963.<sup>65</sup> By then the school-age population was an estimated 244,279, but only about half that number was attending primary and secondary schools. Over 78 per cent of all Chinese school-age children were at school, compared with 45 per cent of the Malay, 33 per cent of the Dayak, and 40 per cent of the other races.<sup>66</sup> Neither universal primary education nor ethnic educational parity had been achieved, although significant advances had been made in providing rural primary education, due largely to the efforts of the local authorities.

The Education Department's *Triennial Survey, 1958-1960* outlined the main obstacles to providing rural children with a primary school education.<sup>67</sup> These were a low rural population density; travel difficulties and parental aversion to very young children living in boarding houses; shifting cultivation with parents leaving their longhouses and taking their children with them for the clearing, planting, and harvesting cycle; lack of interest in some areas in contributing towards the cost of erecting a school; and too few candidates qualified for training as teachers. Apart from too few qualified applicants, these factors were outside the control of the Education Department. The limited relevance of an academic education to a subsistence farming community no doubt also contributed to low school retention rates and parental indifference.<sup>68</sup> Further, the conditions in some rural schools left much to be desired, as revealed by Young in his 'Final Report on the Group Headmaster Scheme' in 1960.<sup>69</sup> During his first visit to the schools in 1957, he found buildings and furniture in disrepair, and a critical shortage of text books.



Study of the 1955 Grant Code allocations indicates that these increased disparities in education levels and facilities, even though public funding of education had increased dramatically. Under the Grant Code, the Chinese committee schools received more in grants than the local authority schools and double the amount received by the mission schools. Chinese schools received \$140,590 central government grants in 1954 and this increased to \$1,943,174 in 1956 when the new Grant Code became fully operative.<sup>70</sup> In that year, public funding through recurrent grants for the students in aided schools was \$19.43 for each Chinese pupil, \$4.02 for each Malay pupil, and \$1.80 each for all other indigenous pupils.<sup>71</sup> In the struggle to counter CCO influence in the Chinese education system, public funding of school running costs effectively transferred the bulk of public funding for education from the indigenous people, the least developed education system, to the best developed system, Chinese aided schools.<sup>72</sup> Capital grant anomalies were taken up by David McLellan, the Adviser on Education to the Commissioner-General for South-East Asia, in his 1960 report on education in Sarawak.<sup>73</sup> Based on his report, the colonial government approved further grants and loans for expansion of indigenous primary schools and accepted that grants and loans for other aided schools would be on a lower scale.<sup>74</sup> In 1960, central government funding of all aided schools was altered by replacing the outright grant to meet running costs with a grant of \$1 for every \$1 collected by education rates.<sup>75</sup> Introduced to 'encourage Local Authorities to finance education by a rating system', this did much to restore some equity in education funding. By 1963, government grants for primary aided school pupils were \$97 for each Chinese school pupil, \$71 for each local authority Native school pupil, and \$78 for each mission school pupil.<sup>76</sup> However, comparatively few indigenous pupils completed a full primary school education to take advantage of the growing secondary education sector developed between 1946 and 1963.

Several major factors precluded universal primary education being achieved by 1963. These were the relatively short time span of the colonial period; the historical legacy of educational facilities limited largely to the Malays and Chinese; the disruptions of the Japanese occupation to education in Sarawak; logistical problems of a low rural population density; and limitations on resources. Although impressive advances were made, political decisions appear to have slowed down those advances considerably. The first was to devolve primary education to inexperienced local author-

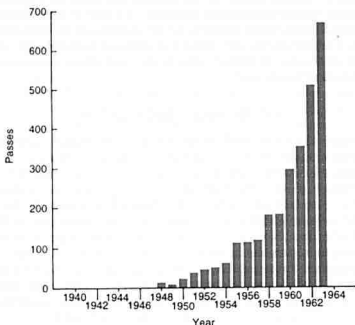
ities, not in the interests of education but to give those authorities experience in local government. The second was a grants system aimed at securing control of the Chinese education system in the struggle against communism, resulting in a flow of funds to that system and less funds available for the indigenous education system. Considering the difficulties that these political decisions created for indigenous primary education, it is perhaps surprising so much progress was made.

### *Secondary Education*

Between 1946 and 1963, Sarawak's English-medium secondary education followed the curricula and standards of the Cambridge Syndicate, the examining body for the Cambridge Junior School Certificate (CJSC), the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC), and the Cambridge Higher School Certificate (CHSC).<sup>77</sup> The Syndicate withdrew the CJSC examination at the end of 1953 and, after discussions with school principals, it was replaced with a local examination, the Sarawak Junior School Certificate (SJSC).<sup>78</sup> Taken after three years at secondary school, this enabled some Sarawak material to be introduced into the curriculum, while retention of the COSC and the CHSC ensured access to overseas education facilities for tertiary and specialized education.

In 1946, lower secondary education in the English medium was available only in Kuching at the five mission schools, St Thomas's, St Mary's, St Joseph's, St Teresa's, and the Seventh Day Adventists. Twenty-nine of their first post-war group of forty-eight CJSC candidates in 1948 were successful. The first COSC class in Sarawak was established in 1948 by the Education Department with teachers from the SPG and Roman Catholic Missions (RCMs), supported by education officers. In its first year, thirteen of its sixteen candidates passed the COSC (Figure 16.2). By 1950, four SPG and RC mission schools in Kuching were holding COSC classes. In 1952, CD & W grants of \$80,000 and \$150,000 met half the cost of establishing facilities for CJSC courses in domestic science in four aided schools for girls, and building and equipping science laboratories for CHSC science courses in three aided schools for boys. Also in 1952, the first five candidates took single subjects in the CHSC and three were successful. For the first time in Sarawak, in 1953 two students passed the CHSC examination and by 1954, seventeen mission schools had 1,861 secondary school students.<sup>79</sup>

FIGURE 16.2  
 Passes in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate Examination,  
 1940-1964



Sources: Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1956, 1958, and 1963.

Notes: The population of Sarawak in 1947 was 546,385 and in 1960, 744,529. Passes in the Senior Middle Examination peaked at 290 in 1958, declined to 159 in 1961, and rose to 207 in 1963.

The first government junior secondary school was established in 1949, sharing the premises of the BLTC. It provided upper primary and secondary school courses in English for Native boarders and day pupils selected by examination from vernacular schools with Primary 4 classes.<sup>80</sup> The school had a capacity of 100 pupils and about twenty were enrolled annually. To enable the BLTC to enrol more trainee teachers, the secondary school was transferred to Kanowit in 1957. The second government English-medium junior secondary school, the Maderasah Melayu, was developed from a vernacular primary school for Malays.<sup>81</sup> Pupils were selected from the Kuching area by entrance examination. These two government (District) junior secondary schools had a combined enrolment of 165 pupils in 1954, an insignificant number

compared with enrolments in the Chinese and missionary secondary schools, 3,194 and 1,881 respectively.<sup>82</sup>

Chinese secondary education was provided by three-year junior and three-year senior middle school courses in schools under management boards made up of influential local Chinese.<sup>83</sup> In 1948 there were two junior middle schools and junior middle courses in another eight combined schools where primary education was also given. Parity of standards throughout the Third Division was achieved when the Chinese Schools Common Examination Board (CSCEB) held its first Primary examination in 1950 and its first Junior Middle examination in 1951.<sup>84</sup> By the end of 1954, there were three junior middle schools, twelve combined schools providing junior middle courses and four schools offering a senior middle course. The Sarawak CSCEB had been formed by then to be the examining body for all Chinese middle schools, to raise their efficiency, and to improve their curricula, most of their examination papers being set and marked in Hong Kong. Of the 5,245 pupils in secondary classes in Sarawak in 1954, 60 per cent were being educated in Chinese schools and 421 students passed the Chinese-medium Junior Middle examination compared with 209 passes in the equivalent English-medium SJSC.<sup>85</sup> The Grant Code emanating from the 1954 Woodhead Report further strengthened the Chinese secondary school system by covering their running costs and half their approved capital expenditure in exchange for increased government control.

First mentioned in 1947, as a first step towards forming a national education system and to accept the growing number of pupils qualifying for secondary education, in 1956 the government decided to establish interracial and bilingual secondary schools throughout Sarawak.<sup>86</sup> Similar to the Batu Lintang School, these schools provided for boarders and day pupils and offered Muslims an alternative to the mission schools.<sup>87</sup> Chinese pupils who had completed six years primary school in Chinese-medium schools and wished to have an English-medium secondary education could also be admitted. Initially using temporary premises provided by Sarawak Shell Oilfields Limited (SSOL), the first of these schools, the Tanjong Lobang School in Miri, was opened in 1957 to serve the Fourth and Fifth Divisions. A year later a secondary school was opened at Kanowit for the Third Division in the premises vacated by the Kanowit adult education community scheme. The Dragon School at the 24th Mile on the Kuching to Serian Road, an area predominantly Chinese, was built in 1958 and enrolled both

boarding and day pupils, many of whom were Chinese.<sup>88</sup> Council Negri member, Yeo Cheng Hoe, said on 4 June 1959 that the Tanjong Lobang and Dragon School buildings were monuments of government extravagance and that the voluntary educational agencies could have built a number of secondary schools with the same funds.<sup>89</sup> In reply, the Director of Education said that one multiracial non-denominational government secondary school was equivalent to three voluntary agency schools, each serving only one religious or ethnic group, and that the schools were needed to inspire feelings of brotherhood and common citizenship.

The lack of prescribed entry standards for secondary schools had led to low pass rates and a large number of over-aged pupils.<sup>90</sup> To overcome these problems, common entrance examinations were introduced at the end of 1957. Based on examination results and age, entrants were classified as 'selected', which gave them priority in secondary school enrolment, and 'unselected', who could only enrol if any vacancies remained and who had to pay higher fees. The SJSC pass rate improved to 79 per cent in 1960 compared with a 30 per cent pass rate in the Junior Middle examination, which suggested a continued large intake of 'unselected' pupils in Chinese secondary schools. Limiting access to secondary education aroused so much controversy that David McLellan, the Adviser on Education to the Commissioner-General for South-East Asia, was asked to review Sarawak's secondary education facilities.<sup>91</sup>

By this time recurrent expenditure on education had risen to 14 per cent of the colony's total recurrent expenditure, yet there had been little advance towards the long-term goal of integrating all schools into a national system.<sup>92</sup> McLellan produced two documents, his secret 'Notes on Subversion in Sarawak Schools' on 5 November 1959 submitted to the Foreign Office and his public report in February 1960.<sup>93</sup> The latter supported selective entry for secondary education and, based on his report, the government issued Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1960 in June incorporating two main proposals:

1. Building six government secondary schools in the smaller towns, offering boarding, and a curriculum related to the rural life of Sarawak. With existing government and aided secondary schools, this would provide 30 per cent of primary school leavers with secondary education.
2. Unaided secondary schools conforming to Education Department requirements would be approved.

Sessional Paper No. 2 was approved in principle by the Council Negri in August—but only after a division—and an education programme for 1961–3 based on the McLellan Report was adopted. Registering unaided secondary schools enabled 'unselected' pupils to receive a secondary education in privately funded schools, and funding approval enabled the government secondary school building programme to proceed. New schools were opened at Simanggang and Mukah in 1961; Bau, Saratok, and Limbang in 1962; and Bintulu and Marudi in 1963. In 1961, an even more contentious issue was raised by Governor Sir Alexander Waddell.

In his speech to the Council Negri on 6 December 1960, the Governor cited the call in the UN's 1958 Report for common school systems 'open without distinction to children of all races' and invited all secondary schools to prepare programmes for converting to one common medium of instruction, English.<sup>94</sup> This was made a requirement under the Grant Code, together with those of opening every school to all races and the adoption of the SJSC and CHSC in lieu of the Chinese Junior Middle and Senior Middle examinations. Pre-empting concerns over loss of cultural heritage, the Governor said that there was adequate provision in the curricula for studying Chinese and other cultures.

All aided Chinese-medium secondary schools were asked by the Education Department to present their conversion plans by 15 April. The Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), the party representing most Chinese at that time, countered with a four-point programme that accepted a common syllabus, but with a choice in medium of instruction and withholding any decision on a national language until independence.<sup>95</sup> Following widespread opposition by the Chinese school boards, on 29 March the Council Negri called on all boards of management of Chinese middle schools to give conversion their most careful consideration.<sup>96</sup> Faced with loss of grants from 1 April 1962, many schools agreed to convert to instruction in English by the end of 1961. However, the issue was divisive as in September 1963 there were 2,513 pupils in nine unaided and 3,008 pupils in nine aided Chinese secondary schools.<sup>97</sup>

During the colonial era, pupils in secondary education had increased from 1,050 in 1948 to 17,727 in 1963, rising from 3.2 per cent of the primary school enrolment to 16.7 per cent. In 1963, 1,595 out of 3,216 candidates passed the SJSC and Junior Middle examinations, and 399 COSC passes from 666 entrants were recorded. Also, 266 of the 491 entrants in the CHSC and

Senior Middle examinations were successful. The first two CHSC passes were recorded in 1952, increasing to fifty-nine in 1963, although that represented only 1 in 400 of the school-age population. However, a national secondary education system was far from being achieved. For every five pupils in the aided secondary school system in 1963 that provided a common teaching medium, a common syllabus, and common examinations, there were four pupils in unaided schools operating outside these conditions.<sup>98</sup>

Ethnic disparity was also still pronounced in 1963, although there had been material progress, from one indigenous person with a COSC in 1947 to 52 passes out of 100 indigenous entrants in 1962.<sup>99</sup> Of the school-age population, 16.3 per cent of the Chinese were in secondary school compared with 3.8 per cent of the Malays and 1.8 per cent of the Dayaks and other Natives.<sup>100</sup> As the 1962 *Sarawak Annual Report* recorded, candidates who qualified for scholarships to overseas universities and colleges were still predominantly Chinese. This seriously inhibited indigenous people from opportunities in the civil service and in the professions.

### *Gender and the Education System*

Apart from an ethnic imbalance in education, the colonial government inherited a gender imbalance, with girls making up less than one in three school pupils even by 1948. Mission schools for girls in Kuching and Sibu were predominantly Chinese since non-Christians did not feel comfortable in these schools.<sup>101</sup> Chinese schools were coeducational, offering another source of education for Chinese girls. Local authority rural schools were coeducational, but few indigenous girls attended and many were over-aged since parents were reluctant to allow them to travel far to school or live away from home when young. The gender imbalance was also reflected in the BLTC teacher training programme, the first three female student teachers graduating in 1951 at the same time as thirty male students.<sup>102</sup> Seeking to improve and expand the education of women and girls, the Education Department appointed a 'Lady Education Officer' (*sic*) in 1949 and a central domestic science centre was opened for fifty senior girls in early 1950. As already noted, in 1953 four domestic science centres were opened in secondary schools for girls.

By the end of 1953, the ratio of girls to boys had improved: 1 to 2 in primary schools and 1 to 2.6 in secondary schools.<sup>103</sup>

Variations among the agencies in the female to male ratios in primary education reflected differing parental perceptions of the relevance of education for their daughters. In 1955, enrolments varied between 1 girl to 1.6 boys in Chinese primary schools, 1 to 2.2 in the mission schools, and 1 to 3.6 in local authority primary schools.<sup>104</sup> The small number of girls who continued to attend school beyond Form 3, the minimum for entry into business and government employment, was also cause for concern.<sup>105</sup>

Apart from the provision of boarding at the BLTC for female student-teachers in 1955, there is no evidence of efforts to redress the gender imbalance in the schools, although there was an overall improvement in girl to boy ratios of 1 to 1.5 in primary schools and 1 to 1.6 in secondary schools by 1963.<sup>106</sup> The most significant gain, an improvement in the female to male pupil ratio from 1 to 3.6 in 1953 to 1 to 1.9 in 1963, was in local authority primary schools catering for indigenous children.<sup>107</sup> Although this indicated that a growing number of indigenous parents were recognizing the importance of education for their daughters, the imbalance in female education among ethnic groups was only beginning to be redressed.

According to the 1960 Census, 60 per cent of all Chinese girls between five and sixteen years old were attending primary schools, compared with 25 per cent of Malay and Bidayuh girls and 17 per cent of Iban and Melanau girls. Differences were more pronounced in the secondary education sector, where 1 in 5 Chinese girls between thirteen and eighteen years of age attended secondary schools compared with 1 in 69 Malay girls, 1 in 195 Bidayuh girls, 1 in 269 Melanau girls, and 1 in 298 Iban girls.<sup>108</sup> The teaching profession itself was male dominated throughout the colonial period, and the female to male teacher ratio actually declined from 1 to 2.3 in 1954 to 1 to 2.7 in 1963. General female under-representation in schools, particularly in rural areas, persisted throughout the colonial era, reducing women's opportunities for tertiary education scholarships and the benefits offered by higher education.

### *Post-Secondary School Education*

Sarawak relied entirely on overseas facilities for post-secondary school education for which scholarships were awarded, although during the early colonial period there were more scholarships than qualified applicants.<sup>109</sup> By the end of 1949, the government had



appointed a scholarship allocation committee and twenty-six scholarships had been awarded. In addition to the government, sources providing scholarships for overseas study included Australia, the British Council, Canada, the CD & W fund, New Zealand, the Sino-British Fellowship Trust, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Colombo Plan. The last became the major source for overseas scholarships under the Technical Co-operation Scheme.<sup>110</sup> Few parents could afford to send their children to study overseas. Scholarship funding was tripled to \$1.3 million in the Revised Development Plan for 1955-60 and Australia provided increased training facilities as its Technical Co-operation contribution to the Colombo Plan. Student numbers overseas then built up rapidly and by the end of 1956 there were ninety-three students studying in Australia, Malaya, New Zealand, the UK, and Singapore.<sup>111</sup> Funding for overseas scholarships was further increased in the 1959-63 Development Plan to \$1,831,843 and by 1963 there were 134 students overseas reading for degrees, 53 studying for diplomas, 46 on certificate courses, and 125 undergoing practical training.<sup>112</sup> By then, the Colombo Plan was providing 116 of the 134 degree scholarships, 38 of the 53 diploma scholarships, 22 of the 26 certificate scholarships, and 241 of the 358 practical training scholarships. With only eleven exceptions, the remainder were provided by the Sarawak government.

The effect of the ethnic imbalance in the primary and secondary schools was very evident in tertiary education. The 1960 Census records that 205 Chinese had completed a degree or diploma course, compared with only seven Malays, one Bidayuh, one Melanau, and not even one Iban, the state's largest indigenous group.<sup>113</sup> This underlined the long-term effects of pre-war *laissez-faire* educational policies, the disruption of the Japanese occupation, the time taken to establish rural schools after cession, and the low rate of Native participation in the education system, both pre-war and post-war. Although a determined attempt was made, the seventeen-year colonial era proved to be too short to develop more than a token number of Natives educated to tertiary level—far short of the number warranted for their role in government, commerce, and industry as 507,252 of the state's 744,529 population.

*Adult Education*

In 1947, 65,306 of the 408,011 persons over 5 years of age in Sarawak were literate, that is, able to read and write a simple letter in any language.<sup>114</sup> Ethnic literacy rates were: Chinese, 34 per cent; Malay, 15 per cent; Melanau, 9 per cent; Bidayuh, 7 per cent; and Iban, 2 per cent; indicating that only a minority had attended school. A few adult literacy projects were tried in rural areas where there appeared to be an interest. The first was among the Ibans in the upper Paku River in the Second Division, but few managed to become literate. Later schemes at Stumbin on the Batang Lupar for Ibans, and Muara Tuang and Semera for Malays, had mixed success.<sup>115</sup> From this, the Department of Education concluded that adult literacy campaigns would be successful only if related to a 'much-desired practical improvement in way of living' as in community development schemes.<sup>116</sup>

A different method was adopted at the Kanowit Rural Improvement School (RIS) opened in May 1948, which was established on 81 hectares and operated under a CD & W grant of \$275,194.<sup>117</sup> This sought to train selected Ibans from the interior as leaders of development in their own communities. The school provided a two-year course for married couples who were taught literacy in their own language, simple arithmetic, practical knowledge of improved methods of agriculture, animal husbandry, cooking, elementary hygiene, and infant welfare.<sup>118</sup> Based on the premise that for mixed farming a hamlet surrounded by small farmsteads was ideal, experimental designs of detached and semi-detached farm dwellings were erected and the community building was a specially built redesigned longhouse.<sup>119</sup> Although literate pupils were preferred since the school's role was seen as helping to make good farmers, generally only uneducated couples were available. By May 1952, when the operating costs for the school reverted to the government, thirty-eight couples had completed the two-year course and, in a change of policy, twenty single males were accepted for the course in 1952-4. A trained midwife was appointed in 1954 and a home crafts course for girls developed as part of a future pre-marriage domestic course. Extensive visits to former pupils earned for many 'favourable comments on their work and on their influence upon their neighbours'.<sup>120</sup> However, the school was closed in April 1957, 'chiefly because of persistent staffing difficulties', and agricultural training was transferred to Tarat, the Department of Agriculture's station at the 34th Mile on the Kuching to Serian

Road.<sup>121</sup> The experimental adult education scheme at Kanowit was not repeated, indicating that the results did not meet expectations.<sup>122</sup>

In the immediate post-war period, night classes in literacy for adults were established at a few government, mission, and Chinese schools. In Kuching, the Education Department conducted classes for prospective government servants whose education did not meet prescribed civil service requirements. Classes were well supported and in 1948, forty-six students passed Form 3, the minimum standard for permanent government appointments. The Adult Education Council was formed in 1954 and, aided by government grants, provided evening classes in Kuching for young people who sought to improve their education and proficiency in languages. The venture was successful and was extended to Sibu in 1955.<sup>123</sup> By 1957, there were 1,500 adult students, but few of the smaller towns benefited due to problems in organizing classes.<sup>124</sup> The Council continued to operate classes in the main towns and a few smaller towns throughout the colonial era.

As shown in the June 1960 Census, literacy rates in the over 24-year age group were: Chinese, 33 per cent; Malay, 16.3 per cent; Melanau, 12.3 per cent; Bidayuh, 3.4 per cent; and Iban, 2.5 per cent. These were very similar to the literacy rates of those over 10 years of age in 1947 and it is evident that there was little improvement in adult literacy during the colonial era, especially in the rural areas. Reasons for this were perceptions of the limited relevance of literacy in subsistence farming and fishing communities, the low population density in the rural areas, and lack of both government and local resources to undertake mass adult rural education programmes. The results do not appear commensurate with the resources and effort put into adult education, especially when the rate of literacy was so low.

### *School Broadcasting*

The opening of Radio Sarawak on 7 June 1954 provided the Education Department with another educational medium and broadcasting gradually became an important factor in rural primary education, especially in teaching English. Initially, school 'quiz' contests were broadcast, followed by evening programmes related to the English secondary school curriculum.<sup>125</sup> After successful transmission trials to primary schools in 1958, school broadcasting became a regular service.<sup>126</sup> The Asia Foundation supplied

receivers which were issued to trained teachers by the broadcasting officer, who was seconded by the New Zealand government under the Colombo Plan.<sup>127</sup> Trial broadcasts for Chinese primary schools in 1961 were successful and from 1962, when teaching in English with no prior instruction in the vernacular had begun, broadcasting plans included Chinese schools. By the end of 1962, 778 schools were taking part in the scheme and broadcasting was extended to secondary schools in 1963. Radio Sarawak proved to be a very useful education facility, particularly in the Iban medium, providing support and assistance to teachers in small rural schools scattered throughout the interior.<sup>128</sup>

### *Political Control of the Education System*

Education was transformed from a predominantly privately funded system into a predominantly public funded system during the colonial era. In 1946, the Chinese community met most of the cost of Chinese-medium education, the missions provided most of the funding for English-medium education, and the government funded district schools for Malays. The Chinese community spent about \$935,000 on education in 1947, compared with \$135,000 by the missions and \$333,000 from public funds.<sup>129</sup> The last represented 2.75 per cent of the state's ordinary revenue of \$12,132,690, compared with total funding by education agencies which was equivalent to about 11 per cent of state revenue. Although local authorities became responsible for primary education, initially the change from private to public funding was a gradual process. In 1954, 3.75 per cent of the state's ordinary revenue was spent on education whereas the total expenditure of all educational agencies was equivalent to 12.7 per cent of state revenue.<sup>130</sup>

The major change was under the 1956 Grant Code. Government then became responsible for approved recurrent costs and half the approved capital expenditure of schools that accepted Department of Education control over their teachers. For the Chinese schools, it also meant review of their curricula, syllabuses, and textbooks. Central government expenditure on recurrent education costs immediately increased to \$5,748,864, 11.5 per cent of central government revenue.<sup>131</sup> In effect, the government diverted substantial costs from the private to the public sector in return for increased government control in schools to combat what was seen as the very serious threat of communist subversion in the Chinese education system.<sup>132</sup> By 1963, direct public funding of recurrent

education costs was \$13,643,000, more than 18 per cent of the state government's ordinary revenue. This reflected the cost not only of government control over the education system, but also the start in providing a national education system through new secondary education facilities and a common medium of instruction. Also in 1963, indirect public funding of recurrent education costs by local authorities amounted to \$1,619,000 and the voluntary agencies provided private funding of \$2,755,000.<sup>133</sup> The imbalance during the latter half of the 1950s in the allocation of recurrent cost funding among the various ethnic groups has already been outlined.<sup>134</sup> In addition to recurrent costs, there were the costs of capital works and projects under the Development Plans.

The Development Plans of 1951-7, 1955-60, and 1959-63 allocated \$5 million to government secondary schools, \$4.5 million in capital grants to educational agencies, \$2.5 million to the BLTC, and \$3.6 million for overseas scholarships. In the early post-war years, CD & W funds met a large part of the two major projects, the BLTC and the Kanowit RIS, and at the end of 1951, central government capital expenditure on education projects in the Development Plan was \$67,200 compared with CD & W funding of \$727,170.<sup>135</sup> By 1963, central government was financing most of the capital expenditure on education projects and was committed to \$4.8 million expenditure in that year, representing over 10 per cent of the state's capital budget. Also in 1963, capital expenditure by local authorities amounted to \$750,000 and that of voluntary agencies, \$458,000.<sup>136</sup> Thus, as in the case of recurrent expenditure, capital expenditure on education was moved from the private sector to public funding, the effect of the 1956 Grant Code and the 1959 McLellan Report.

### *General Overview*

The general picture that emerges during the colonial era is of the government moving away from an initial position of relative *laissez-faire* towards the voluntary agencies, the main providers of education under the Brookes, and gradually establishing control over the education system. The first major step of delegating responsibility for primary education to local authorities was taken for both pragmatic and political reasons. Pragmatically, the voluntary agencies did not have the resources to provide education in the rural areas. Politically, there was the declared objective of forming one cohesive

unit from Sarawak's diverse society and making local authorities responsible for their own affairs and funding, rather than relying on government officers and allocations. The next major structural alteration in the education system, the 1956 Grant Code, fulfilled both educational and political objectives. It attracted public support to overcome the serious under-funding of the rural schools and increased government control over all schools accepting government aid as part of the campaign to counter communist indoctrination in the Chinese-medium education system. Later decisions to further expand the government-run secondary school system also had both educational and political objectives by providing more places for students yet offering Chinese-medium students an alternative to the Chinese middle schools where communist indoctrination was prevalent. The decision in 1961 to continue aid only to those schools which accepted common curricula, common teaching material, common examinations, and English as the medium of instruction was both educational and political. It was educational in meeting UN calls to provide a national education system so that all ethnic groups had equal opportunities. It was political as it sought to counter communist influence in the Chinese-medium education system by breaking down its linguistic and cultural isolation. The struggle for political control of the education system continued with the enactment of the Education Ordinance in 1961 to strengthen the powers of the Director of Education against CCO indoctrination.<sup>137</sup>

In furthering educational objectives during the colonial era, notable achievements were accomplished.<sup>138</sup> The number of primary school pupils was tripled to 105,885; the number of secondary school pupils was increased from about 1,000 in 1948 to 17,727; and the comparative number of female students in the education system was improved, for which much of the credit belonged to the local authorities, the Chinese community, and the missionaries.<sup>139</sup> The most notable result was achieved by the local authorities in establishing 591 rural primary schools with 44,476 pupils catering for the indigenous peoples, although even these achievements were not sufficient to remove the imbalance in the education system among the various ethnic groups of school age. In 1963, 78 per cent of the Chinese school-age youth attended school compared with 45 per cent of the Malay youth and 33 per cent of the Dayak and other indigenous youth. Cultural, economic, geographical, and historical factors and the relevance of education all contributed to this outcome. The end result was that universal primary education

continued to prove elusive for the indigenous peoples who remained under-represented at all levels of attainment in the education system. Apart from those factors outside the control of the colonial administration, initial aims to make rural education self-supporting on an inadequate revenue base, delay in providing the scale of funding eventually found necessary, diversion (caused by communist subversion) of a major part of educational funding to sectors of the educational system that had been largely self-supporting, and a limited programme of teacher training pre-determined continuing comparative disadvantage.

Significant progress was made towards the political objective of providing a uniform educational system as a step towards welding the diverse society of Sarawak into a cohesive entity. Government pledges of non-interference with cultures and customs protected the diverse elements of the education system from change by direct legislation. Instead, the administration turned to the quid pro quo of financial aid in return for control over school management and teachers, based on the Woodhead and McLellan studies. As there were only 1,441 pupils in unaided primary schools in September 1963 compared with 104,444 pupils in aided schools, this policy was reasonably successful at the primary school level. In the secondary education sector where control was sought over curricula, teaching material, examinations, and the teaching medium, the policy was less successful. By September 1963, thirty-one of the sixty-seven secondary schools catering for 45 per cent of all secondary school pupils were no longer drawing government grants and were operating as independent schools.<sup>140</sup>

The second political objective of controlling communist subversion in Chinese schools through increased powers of control in exchange for government funding at considerable expense had some, albeit limited, success as in the case of the Methodist School in Sibü.<sup>141</sup> As late as August 1963, a government review of education pointed to evidence that 'in some Chinese schools managers and teachers have been abusing their positions to further secret communist plans'.<sup>142</sup> The clandestine exodus of a large number of Chinese youth to Indonesia in 1963 for military training with the ultimate aim of establishing a communist state showed the short-term ineffectiveness of increased controls over Chinese schools in suppressing communist indoctrination.

The relatively short period of colonial rule, lack of an existing structure for rural education, opposition to cession, CCO penetration of the Chinese education system, and finite resources precluded the administration from providing universal primary education, although significant advances were made to that end. Virulent opposition to change and government pledges to uphold customs prevented the full implementation of a national system of education, but the process was under way by the time Malaysia was formed. Progress in the spread of education in Sarawak during the colonial era owed much to the Chinese community, the missions, the Colombo Plan, CD & W funding, and the governments of Commonwealth countries as well as the local authorities in Sarawak. However, despite sharp increases in government funding and significant advances, the low participation and retention rate of the indigenous people in the education system were far from resolved. This denied all but a very few indigenous students access to higher education, scholarships for overseas study, appointments in the civil service, and career employment in commerce and industry.

1. Literacy rates in 1946 were: Chinese—34 per cent; Malay—15 per cent, Melanau—9 per cent; Bidayuh—7 per cent; Iban—2 per cent (J. L. Noakes, *Sarawak and Brunei (The Colony of Sarawak and the British Protected State of Brunei): A Report on the 1947 Population Census*, 1950, p. 59).

2. Charles Arden Clarke, 'Note on Development of Local Government in Sarawak', July 1947, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 223M, RHL.

3. Murray J. Dickson, 'The Training Centre and School, Batu Lintang, Sarawak', *Oversea Education*, 20, 2 (January 1949): 819.

4. Hugh Low, *Sarawak: Its Inhabitants and Productions; Being Notes during a Residence in That Country with HH The Rajah Brooke*, London: Frank Cass & Co., 1848, p. 138; James Wong Hoy Kee and Gwee Yee Hean, *Perspectives: The Development of Education in Malaysia and Singapore*, Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia), 1972, p. 7.

5. *Sarawak Gazette*, 2 July 1883, in Ooi Keat Gin, 'Sarawak Malay Attitudes towards Education during the Period of Brooke Rule, 1841–1941', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 21, 2 (September 1990): 350–1; Margaret A. L. Brooke, *My Life in Sarawak*, London: Methuen & Co., 1913, pp. 162–3.

6. N. Cornwall, *Borneo, Past, Present and Future*, London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Westminster, 1953, pp. 31–5; Max Saint, *A Flourish for the Bishop and Brooke's Friend Grant: Two Studies in Sarawak History, 1848–1868*, Brautnton: Merlin Books, 1985, pp. 7, 19, 49, 164, and 167.

7. J. M. Seymour, 'Education in Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841–1941', Part III, *Sarawak Gazette*, 1350 (31 August 1970): 158; R. W. Hammond, 'Report on Education in Sarawak', Unpublished typescript, 22 June 1937, p. 5 and Appendix 11; Sarawak Education Department, 'Outline of the History of



Education in Sarawak', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society* (Sarawak Branch), 5 (June 1980): 12.

8. Rajah's speech, *Sarawak Gazette* (1 July 1910), in C. A. Lockard, *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970*, Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1987, pp. 120-1; Charles Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, London: Tinsley Brothers, 1866, Vol. II, p. 326; R. Pringle, 'The Brookes of Sarawak: Reformers in Spite of Themselves', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 19, 38-9 (July-December 1971): 72.

9. The second Rajah allocated the Second Division to the SPG and the Third Division to the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) (Letter from Charles Brooke to Archdeacon Small, 18 September 1915, in Robert Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: The Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941*, London: Macmillan, 1970, p. 140, note 4).

10. Hammond, 'Report on Education in Sarawak'. Signs of reform began with C. D. Le Gros Clark's *The Blue Report*, Kuching: 1935, Sarawak Museum Archives, recommending employment of Dayaks in the SCS.

11. *Sarawak Gazette* (1 August 1940), and C. D. Le Gros Clark memorandum, 6 October 1941, in Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 342.

12. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1954*, Table IX.

13. Sarawak Education Department, *Triennial Survey, 1955-1957*, p. 2.

14. John Chin, 'Reminiscences of the Japanese Occupation', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society* (Sarawak Branch), 3 (December 1976): 16; Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, p. 152.

15. Brian Taylor and Pamela Milward Heyward, *The Kuching Anglican Schools, 1848-1973*, Kuching: Lee Ming Press, c.1973, pp. 23 and 73; Sarawak Education Department, *Triennial Survey, 1955-1957*, p. 2.

16. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1954*, p. 1.

17. R. A. Bewsher, Agricultural Education Officer to the Acting Director of Education, 'Report on visits to schools in 4th and 5th Divisions, March-June 1947', No. 51 in D.A. 22/7/3, 6 June 1947, MSS Pac. s. 59, RHL.

18. The estimate of only 1 in 4 children of primary school age (6-11 years old) in 1941 is deduced from the 1939 population of 490,585; a total of 22,344 primary school pupils in 1941; and the primary school age children being approximately 17.5 per cent of the total population, the ratio given in the 1960 census.

19. Adelheid Munan-Oettli, *They Came to the Land of the Headhunters*, Kuching: St. Teresa's School, 1987, p. 52. The Sarawak Malay Teachers College closed down in early 1947 after 87 anti-cessionist teachers resigned (Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 52).

20. Murray J. Dickson became the Director of Education in 1955. He was born in 1911 and educated at Rugby School and New College, Oxford. During World War II, he served in Force 136, spending a substantial period in the Japanese-occupied Andaman and Nicobar islands.

21. Dickson, 'The Training Centre and School, Batu Lintang, Sarawak', *Oversea Education*, 20, 2 (January 1949): 819.

22. British Information Services, 'Educational Development in Sarawak', DS 54225/1, 4(c), *Commonwealth Survey: A Record of United Kingdom and Commonwealth Affairs*, London: HMSO, 1950, p. 27.

23. Patricia Choo, 'The History of Batu Lintang College', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society* (Sarawak Branch), 1983: 47.

24. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1954*, Table VI.

25. This excludes training of members of the staff of the BLTC, five of whom

completed their training as grade IIA teachers in 1951, followed by four more in 1952.

26. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1954, Table VI; 1956, p. 5.

27. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1956, p. 77.

28. Choo, 'The History of Batu Lintang College', p. 36.

29. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1963, Table IIB.

30. There were 1 trained to 1.4 untrained grade II teachers in 1963 and 1 to 2.4 amongst grade III teachers (Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1954, Table X; 1963, Tables IA and IIB).

31. See Appendix 2 for extracts from Arden Clarke's 'Note on Development of Local Government'.

32. Arden Clarke, 'Note on Development of Local Government in Sarawak', Clauses 2 and 3.

33. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 35.

34. Ian Morrison, 'Local Self-government in Sarawak', *Pacific Affairs*, 22, 2 (June 1949): 182.

35. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 60; *Sarawak Tribune*, 31 July 1951, p. 2.

36. Sarawak Information Service (SIS), *The Danger Within: A History of the Clandestine Communist Organisation in Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1963, p. 2.

37. Colonial Secretary Lennox-Boyd to the OAG, R. G. Aikman, Saving No. 625, 21 December 1954, File SEA 121/367/01, CO 1030/267, PRO.

38. The headmaster was removed from office (Personal letter from Kenneth Robinson, 7 March 1993).

39. See Table 16.2; Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1954, Tables IX and X.

40. Parental apathy to education was manifest (Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966*, p. 68).

41. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1954, p. 4.

42. The missionaries have been described as the best eyes and ears for the administration officers in the outstations (Conversation with A. J. N Richards, 3 April 1992).

43. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, p. 163.

44. See Table 16.2; Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1954, Tables IX and X.

45. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, p. 88.

46. Sanib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966*, p. 69.

47. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year*, 1948, p. 34; 1952, p. 73.

48. R. A. Bewsher, Education Officer, 4th and 5th Divisions to Resident, Confidential observations on memorandum 'Educational Opportunities for Sea Dayaks', Ref. G/16. 7 August 1954 (MSS Pac. s. 59, RHL).

49. *Hansard*, Vol. 500, col. 1435, 14 May 1952.

50. The figures are collated from Sarawak Government, *Annual Report*, and Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary* and *Triennial Survey*, various years.

51. 'His Excellency the Governor's Address to Council Negri, Tuesday, 24 August 1954', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1158 (31 August 1954): 160.

52. *Hansard*, Vol. 535, col. 43, 8 December 1954, Written Answers.

53. *Sarawak Gazette*, 1170 (31 August 1955): 186.
54. Governor Anthony Abell to the Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox Boyd, Saving No. 606, 22 October 1954, CO 1030/267, PRO.
55. Of the 242 Chinese schools in Sarawak in 1954, 107 were receiving government grants.
56. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1954, Table I; 1956, p. 4 and Table I.
57. Sarawak Education Department, *Triennial Survey, 1958-1960*, p. 56.
58. Personal letter, 2 March 1993, from Kenneth Robinson, then with the Education Department.
59. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 68.
60. J. A. Young, 'Final Report on the Group Headmaster Scheme', June 1960, pp. 1-2 and 81, MSS Pac. s. 70, RHL. The Sarawak Development Fund financed the scheme.
61. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 69.
62. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 91.
63. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1955*, p. 19; 1961, p. 15.
64. L. W. Jones, *Report on the Census of Population Taken on 15th June 1960*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1961, Ch. VI.
65. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1963*, Table VA.
66. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1963*, Table IB.
67. Sarawak Education Department, *Triennial Survey, 1958-1960*, pp. 13-14.
68. R. A. Bewsher to Resident, Confidential observations on 'Educational Opportunities for Sea Dayaks', MSS Pac. s. 59, RHL.
69. Young, 'Final Report on the Group Headmaster Scheme', pp. 79-80.
70. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1954*, p. 9; 1956, Table VA.
71. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1956*, p. 7.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
73. The McLellan report is covered in the section on secondary education, which was his main mandate.
74. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, p. 99.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
76. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1963*, Table VB.
77. See Table 16.3.
78. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1954*, p. 11.
79. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1954*, p. 11.
80. Dickson, 'The Training Centre and School, Batu Lintang, Sarawak', pp. 819 and 821.
81. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1954*, p. 99.
82. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1954*, Table VIII.
83. See Table 16.3.
84. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 60.
85. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1954*, Table VIII.
86. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1956*, pp. 2-3.
87. Sarawak Education Department, *Triennial Survey, 1955-1957*, pp. 12-13.
88. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1957*, p. 2.
89. CO 1030/422, PRO.
90. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1956*, p. 2.

91. Colonial Office to Foreign Office, 19 June 1959, and Foreign Office to Commissioner-General, CR2067/1, 9 July 1949, File 23/7/02, CO 1030/422, PRO.
92. A. M. MacKintosh, Deputy Commissioner-General, South-East Asia to R. H. K. Marett of the Foreign Office, 19 June 1959, and W. I. J. Wallace, Colonial Office, to R. H. K. Marett, Foreign Office, 29 June 1959, Fed. 23/7/02, CO 1030/422, PRO.
93. Colonial Office file PR1014/49, CO 1030/422, PRO.
94. Sarawak Government, 'National Secondary Education', Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1961, Appendix B.
95. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 17 January 1961, p. 9.
96. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 28 January 1961, p. 5; 28 March 1961, p. 9.
97. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1963, Table 1A.
98. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1956, Table 1; 1963, Table 1A.
99. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 150. Of the 393 Chinese and other non-native COSC candidates, 186 were successful. For the CHSC, six of the fifty-nine candidates were indigenous.
100. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1963, Table 1B; Jones, *Report on the Census of Population Taken on 15th June 1960*, Appendix K.
101. Munan-Oetli, *They Came to the Land of the Headhunters*, pp. 74-5.
102. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 58.
103. Sarawak Education Department *Annual Summary*, 1954, Table VI.
104. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1955, Appendix C.
105. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1953, p. 83.
106. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1963, Table VII.
107. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1963, Tables 1A and 1B.
108. Jones, *Report of the Census of Population Taken on 15th June 1960*, Table 4 and Appendix K.
109. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 54.
110. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 66.
111. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1956, Table X.
112. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1963, Table IX.
113. Jones, *Report on the Census of Population Taken on 15th June 1960*, Table 12.
114. Noakes, *A Report on the 1947 Population Census*, p. 59.
115. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year*, 1950, p. 60; 1951, p. 69; *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, pp. 104-5.
116. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, p. 105.
117. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 39.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
119. R. A. Bewsher, 'The Rural Improvement School of Sarawak: An Experiment in Rural Adult Education', *Oversea Education*, 21, 4 (July 1950): 1096-7; Bewsher to Chief Secretary, Memo 30 in RIS 7, 3 September 1948, MSS Pac. s. 59, RHL.
120. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, p. 104.
121. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1957, p. 71.
122. The RIS could not be judged a success (Personal letter 15 June 1994 from J. Pike).
123. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1955, p. 75.

124. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1957*, p. 72.
125. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1954*, p. 7; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1955*, p. 75.
126. By the end of 1960, 467 schools were taking part in school broadcasting and 850 teachers had been taught in the use of the receivers (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 93; 1960, p. 99; 1962, p. 149).
127. John K. Wilson, the initiator of the Budu community development scheme, was given a grant by the Nuffield Foundation to buy fifty radio receivers (John K. Wilson, *Budu or Twenty Years in Sarawak*, North Berwick: Tantallion Press, 1969, pp. 162-3).
128. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 149.
129. These indicative figures have been interpolated from Chinese (\$1,020,000 with 19,522 pupils) and mission (\$169,000 with 5,087 pupils) school expenditure in 1948, related to 1947 on a cost per pupil basis (18,222 and 4,068 pupils respectively in 1947). Government expenditure was \$235,163 in direct costs and estimated grants of \$70,000 to Chinese schools and \$28,000 to mission schools.
130. In 1954, state government expenditure on education was \$1,547,677, local authorities spent \$505,253, Chinese expenditure was \$2,462,000, and mission school costs were \$1,137,100 (Sarawak Education Department, *Triennial Survey, 1955-1957*, p. 23; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1954*, pp. 95-101).
131. State government ordinary revenue in 1956 was \$49,827,724.
132. See Chapter 5 and SIS, *The Danger Within*.
133. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1963*, Table VA.
134. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1956*, p. 7; 1963, Table VB.
135. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, pp. 191-2. Any projects started and completed before 31 December 1950 are not included.
136. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1963*, Table VA.
137. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 116.
138. See Figures 16.1 and 16.2.
139. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary, 1963*, Tables 1A and VII.
140. *Ibid.*, Table 1A.
141. Personal communication from Kenneth Robinson, 20 September 1994.
142. *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 August 1963, p. 3.

## 17

### Social Services

THE British government was obligated to develop and improve Sarawak's social services by the second Cardinal Principle of the 1941 Constitution—'that social and educational services shall be developed and improved and the standard of living of the people of Sarawak shall steadily be raised'. Article 73 of the UN Charter also obliged colonial governments 'to ensure, with due respect for the cultures of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social, and educational advancement'.<sup>1</sup> Social services provided by the post-war welfare state in Britain were based on the Beveridge Report of 1942 and encompassed a wide range of government intervention, including amongst others, social welfare, community development, youth activities, and public health. Unlike Britain, Sarawak was not an industrialized state, its mineral resources were depleted, and most of its people were subsistence farmers living in small and widely scattered communities. Sarawak's small taxation base and limited resources were obvious obstacles to the fulfilment of the British mandate. However, the British Colonial Development and Welfare (CD & W) Act of 1940 provided for a positive programme of colonial development and allowed Britain to provide financial aid for education and social purposes.<sup>2</sup> Labour, health, education, social welfare, and social services in all colonial territories were the direct responsibility of the Social Service Department in the Colonial Office.<sup>3</sup>

In pre-cession Sarawak, social services reflected the limited resources of a non-industrialized and largely subsistence economy. During Brooke times, the Dayak subsistence farmer was said to have 'all he wants' as 'he is well-off, contented and happy'.<sup>4</sup> The Malays had employment opportunities in the government services or were self-sufficient subsistence farmers or fishermen. Chinese immigrants took up cultivation of cash crops, mining, and trading, and through their clan and dialect associations were able to give some support to their own needy. Although these generalizations suggest that social welfare services were not necessary, living standards for many were very low. There was some destitution

amongst Chinese labourers, seventy being recorded as homeless and living by begging in Kuching in 1924.<sup>5</sup>

### *Social Welfare*

The Brookes relied on voluntary agencies for direct social welfare and provided them with some support. Early examples of social welfare were James Brooke's efforts in 1842 to see that 'the poor may purchase food cheaply', the orphanage set up by the Borneo Church Mission in the late 1840s, and the first Rajah's provision of rice for children he placed in the mission's care.<sup>6</sup> From the late 1860s, the second Rajah issued a series of regulations curbing established customs of slavery or bonded dependency, culminating in Order S-2 Slavery, 1928 which officially, if not actually, abolished slavery in 1928.<sup>7</sup> However, under the second Rajah 'much of the labour legislation was designed as much to prevent absconding and to guarantee contracts as to protect workers from exploitation'.<sup>8</sup> The Brookes established a pauper camp for Chinese males outside Kuching and in the 1930s the Secretaries for Native Affairs and Chinese Affairs, the latter also the Protector of Labour, had an active welfare role. However, the true state of affairs in 1937 was perhaps expressed by R. W. Hammond, a government adviser, who reported that the Rajah's continued rule could only be justified by a 'steady increase in the efforts to make the native life higher, less brutish and longer'.<sup>9</sup> He recommended greatly increased expenditure on education, health, and agricultural services.

No department for administering social welfare was established during the colonial era, thus avoiding the cost of a bureaucracy to administer government social welfare allocations.<sup>10</sup> In the early years after World War II, government emergency relief was distributed both directly and through voluntary welfare agencies. Administrative officers had government charity votes to help those in need. The Protector of Labour was the custodian of the welfare of women and girls of all communities and, in his other role as Secretary for Chinese Affairs, took a leading part in distributing relief to the Chinese.<sup>11</sup> Muslims were provided with charitable relief from a trust fund assisted by the government. In the nineteenth century, there was said to be 'little or no' destitution among the rural people who looked after their own needy although relief was made available when *padi* harvests failed.<sup>12</sup> The government pauper settlement near Kuching, later renamed Home of the Aged, catered mainly for aged, destitute Chinese males, and the

Chinese associations provided relief to their communities with government assistance. The missions in turn cared for orphans on a limited scale and were active in trying to improve social conditions.

To review this *ad hoc* system, the government set up a Social Welfare Advisory Committee in 1947. On its recommendation, the Sarawak Social Welfare Council (SSWC) was established in 1949 and gradually assumed responsibility for dispensing all government assistance.<sup>13</sup> The SSWC was a voluntary body on which all welfare interests in the state were represented. Local district relief committees were formed under the SSWC's general guidance and at the end of 1953 the government claimed that there was 'nowhere in the country where people must suffer for want of charitable relief'.<sup>14</sup> By 1957 centralized control over government welfare funds had been established and the SSWC introduced annual budgets for all grant recipients. Methods of funding were also developed to supplement the government grants. In 1952, tax revenues from lotteries were added to government grants. A year later, one combined national lottery replaced those held by the Red Cross, the Anti-Tuberculosis Society, and the SSWC, with the SSWC being granted a share of the profits.<sup>15</sup> By 1958, the Sarawak Turf Club sweepstake was a major contributor to SSWC revenue. This led to the withdrawal of the national annual lottery in 1961, and on 1 October the Turf Club agreed to pay the SSWC 10 per cent of the total pool of all its future sweepstakes and half of all unclaimed prizes.<sup>16</sup> Before control was centralized, the actual income of the SSWC was difficult to assess, although in 1954 it was reported as being \$120,000. This had risen to about \$332,000 in 1962, which included a \$195,000 government grant.

SSWC funds, although amounting to less than 0.5 per cent of the government's ordinary revenue in 1962, were not devoted entirely to strictly welfare functions until 1961. Before that, the Sarawak Youth Council, youth clubs, and the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Associations all received SSWC grants. Voluntary social welfare agencies given supportive grants by the SSWC included both international and local organizations. The former included the British Red Cross that ran a transit hostel for rural people needing medical treatment in Kuching; the missions that took in orphans and helped the destitute and needy; the Rotary Club that arranged visits to those in institutions and prisons; the Salvation Army that operated a home for elderly women in ill health, unmarried mothers, girls, children, and babies; and the Sarawak Society



for the Blind, an affiliate of the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind.

International agencies provided a wide range of services; the Catholic Relief Agency supplying 200 tonnes of food in 1962 to forty rural schools and eighteen welfare institutions catering for the aged and infirm in the second year of its food programme for Sarawak.<sup>17</sup> Local voluntary organizations included the Anti-Tuberculosis Association of Sarawak (ATAS) that ran longhouses at Bintulu and Marudi as accommodation for patients; the Corona Society; the Chambers of Commerce; the Prisoners Aid Society; the Sibü Benevolent Society that operated a nursing home for the indigent, a home for old people, and a blood transfusion service in Sibü; and various Chinese, Dayak, and Malay organizations. Thus a complex structure of local and international social welfare agencies was developed with the government disbursing grants through a council of delegates from all parts of the state. The colonial government upheld the Brooke philosophy that voluntary organizations should provide social relief with some government support. Although that philosophy did not accord with that of the welfare state of post-war Britain, it reflected the limited resources of a predominantly subsistence economy and provided a low-cost form of safety net for those in dire need.<sup>18</sup>

### *Youth Organizations*

In the early post-World War II era, one government sponsored activity was providing homes for delinquent and homeless youth. In early 1948, a boys' home was opened near Kuching and juvenile offenders were moved from the prison system to the home under the Education Department. In the home, which was devoid of any suggestion that it was a place of detention, tuition was provided in reading, writing, and arithmetic.<sup>19</sup> Eighteen months later a boys' club and hostel was opened in Padungan, then a poor suburb of Kuching. The club provided indoor and outdoor recreational activities in the afternoons and evenings, and the hostel provided temporary accommodation for homeless youths between 14 and 20 years old. Supported by a monthly grant from the SSWC, the Salvation Army took over management of the hostel in 1958 and it was relocated in premises provided by the government in Ban Hock Road.<sup>20</sup> The boys' club was placed under the aegis of the Kuching Youth Club. Responding to a government request and

helped by a monthly SSWC grant, the Salvation Army opened a girls' home in late 1950 as a place of protection for females under 19 years of age.<sup>21</sup> This was replaced on 21 February 1959 by a \$260,000 new home in Ridgeway on the outskirts of Kuching which was funded by the government. The new home had accommodation for up to 100 persons and catered for 'babies, children of tuberculosis, leprosy, and mental patients, orphans, cripples or neglected children, unmanageable girls, and juvenile prostitutes'.<sup>22</sup>

In his report on education in 1937, Hammond expressed surprise that there were no boy scouts and girl guides in Sarawak, although in fact there had been Chinese boy scout troops as early as 1915.<sup>23</sup> After 1945, the Boy Scouts Association was a multi-ethnic organization based on school troops with multiethnic leaders and began publishing its own periodical in 1951.<sup>24</sup> The Girl Guides Association was formed in 1947. Both the Girl Guides and the Boy Scouts Associations were reported to 'exercise a healthy influence beyond their own circles',<sup>25</sup> and both expanded rapidly, with 800 boy scouts and 120 girl guides by the end of 1952.<sup>26</sup> In 1957, Sarawak boy scouts attended the Jubilee Jamboree at Sutton Coldfield in England and in 1959 five Sarawak girl guides attended the world camp in Manila. An Organizing Commissioner of Scouts to look after the scout movements in Brunei, North Borneo, and Sarawak was appointed in 1957 and the girl guides had a District Commissioner by 1960. Both Associations began planning to build national headquarters in the early 1960s, but neither was built before Malaysia was formed. As organizations dedicated to character building, fostering a team spirit, and community service, the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides Associations received active support from the government and the Education Department.

The government also promoted other youth activities. With the Governor as its patron, an Amateur Athletics Association was formed in Kuching in 1953 and held its first public meeting in 1954.<sup>27</sup> A \$250,000 government grants system was provided so that local communities and organizations could provide playing fields and other recreational facilities. By the end of 1959, \$231,978 had been spent on the scheme and a further \$287,500 was included in the Development Plan for further work.<sup>28</sup> This enabled swimming pools and playing fields to be built in several population centres. To give some perspective to the funds allocated, government expenditure on development at the end of 1959 was \$113,687,121.<sup>29</sup> By 1961, there were six national sports bodies covering athletics,

badminton, basketball, cricket, hockey, and table tennis. The Borneo Games were held in Kuching in 1962 and for the first time, some Sarawak athletes won field and track events.

Youth clubs were also encouraged. In 1953, the Sibu Boys' Club and Youth Centre was opened in temporary premises and moved into permanent premises in 1955, receiving a grant of \$50,000 from the SSWC.<sup>30</sup> Also in 1955, the Kuching Youth Club began activities with 400 members. To co-ordinate the activities of the growing number of youth organizations and represent their needs and interests to the public and the government, the Sarawak Youth Council was formed in 1955.<sup>31</sup> In 1956, Council delegates attended their first international conference in Europe, followed by Lebanon in 1957, New Delhi in 1958, and Ghana and Saigon in 1960. Reflecting growing ties with Malaya, delegates took part in the 1961 Seminar on the Role of Youth in Rural and Community Development in Kuala Lumpur.<sup>32</sup>

Yet even youth and sports organizations presented some problems for the administration. In 1958 the Governor, Sir Anthony Abell, advised the Colonial Secretary that touring basketball teams were used by the alumni of certain Chinese schools to disseminate communist propaganda in widely separated schools.<sup>33</sup> The network of communist cadres, centred at one time in the Sarawak Advanced Youths' Association, was said to be operating through a number of shifting front-groups, including sports and recreation associations.<sup>34</sup> Control over the youth and sports associations was therefore essential to curb Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) subversion, and government sponsorship of acceptable youth and sports organizations thus served both political and social objectives.

### *Co-operative Societies*

Co-operative societies existed in Sarawak before World War II. Examples were a Malay Savings and Co-operative Society in which a few 'Kuching Dayaks invested in 1940' and the Dayaks Co-operative Society first registered in 1941.<sup>35</sup> To enable a Co-operative Department to be established and replace existing out-of-date legislation, the Co-operative Societies Ordinance was enacted in 1948. Set up on 2 April 1949, the Department's primary aim was to relieve 'the indebtedness of the peasant which was rife among Malays in all parts of the colony and among Land Dayaks [Bidayuh] and Melanaus in certain areas'.<sup>36</sup> By the end of

1950, the Department had recorded expenditure of \$98,489 in the first two years of its five-year plan and sixty-three societies had been registered. Progress was inhibited initially by a shortage of trained personnel that restricted the Department's areas of operation to Kuching, the Saribas, and the Mukah districts, but by 1963, the Department had offices in many of Sarawak's population centres.<sup>37</sup> Policy on co-operatives altered with experience. Initially, all co-operatives were single purpose only, such as marketing, processing, or savings and loans. The Department intended to form multi-purpose co-operatives when the 'educational level of the would-be co-operators has risen so that full advantage may be taken of the Department's training facilities'.<sup>38</sup> As this policy left the co-operatives vulnerable to harvest and market fluctuations, in 1962 the Department started to promote multi-purpose co-operatives. Co-operatives with less than ten members were deregistered at this time as they were not considered viable.

There was a major advance on 5 October 1953 when the Co-operative Central Bank was registered. The general aims of the Department and the Bank were 'mainly an attack on agricultural indebtedness, the formation of a large number of Rural Credit Societies, [and] the provision of short-term agricultural credit'.<sup>39</sup> Specific duties of the Bank were to receive and invest funds from members, make loans to members, and act as an agent in supplying 'various essentials to member societies'.<sup>40</sup> However, there were few sound local investment opportunities at reasonable interest rates, and the first local investment was not made until 1958 when the Bank purchased \$200,000 of government debenture bonds.<sup>41</sup> The government supported the Bank with an interest-free loan of \$250,000 for rural credit purposes under the 1955-60 Development Plan, but the original purpose of the Bank, to provide short-term credit to rural co-operatives, was not achieved until 1962. The Department received material assistance from the UN International Labour Organization (ILO) in the person of their industrial co-operative expert, Peter Goullart, who spent over two years in Sarawak promoting co-operatives amongst the Chinese.<sup>42</sup>

There was an impressive range of co-operative activities. These encompassed the marketing of cash crops such as rubber, pepper, and sago, processing (including *padi* milling), co-operative stores, and savings and loans societies. In the early 1950s, the Kuching Henghua Fishermen's Co-operative Village and Better Living Society played a significant role in establishing a new village for its members off Pending Road, Kuching, the government providing

its infrastructure under the Development Plan.<sup>43</sup> Hoping that the government would help them to obtain more land, in 1953 a group of forty-nine Chinese vegetable gardeners in Sibu asked the Department to form a Vegetable Marketing Society, after being told to first co-operate in marketing their produce and then search for more land. Signalling a significant change in the attitudes of Kuching society, a women's Savings and Loans Society was formed in 1958. School thrift societies also began to appear at this time and even a cattle breeding society. Another interesting venture was the Kuching Wharf and Harbour Workers Co-operative Society, formed in 1960 with the objective of finding work for its members and entering into contracts on their behalf.<sup>44</sup> To keep this diversity of co-operatives informed, the Department started to issue a monthly magazine, *Co-operation in Sarawak*, in Iban and a quarterly issue in Mandarin. By 1955, the magazine was being issued in Chinese, English, Iban, and Malay.

Examples are recorded of the power of the co-operatives in the market place in addition to the direct benefits accruing to members of financial gain, co-operation, thrift, and availability of loans in time of need at reasonable interest rates. In 1951, the Kuching Co-operative Stores Society Limited was credited with dampening wild fluctuations in the retail prices of essential commodities in Kuching and there was widespread acceptance of the Society's prices for goods whether in short supply or not.<sup>45</sup> When buyers in Saratok attempted to control the purchase price of rubber, the Budu Co-operative countered by selling direct to buyers in Kuching, but later reverted to selling their rubber in Saratok since it was more convenient.<sup>46</sup> However, even by 1963, rubber and pepper marketed by the co-operatives only amounted to about 1.25 per cent and 3.75 per cent respectively of the total value of exports of these commodities, suggesting that the co-operatives had little real influence in the market place.<sup>47</sup> By then, the Department was employing fifty-eight people and was responsible for 198 registered societies with 12,445 members and assets of \$3,288,544 (Tables 17.1 and 17.2).<sup>48</sup> Contrary to earlier concerns, all the major ethnic groups were involved in the societies. However, the number of members was relatively few and the average society was small, indicating that 'the co-operative movement never really caught on' in Sarawak.<sup>49</sup> The Department's comment in 1951 that members were 'only a minute proportion of the rural population of Sarawak, and therefore, Co-operation has not yet conferred much benefit upon the people as a whole', still applied in 1963.<sup>50</sup>

TABLE 17.1  
Co-operatives, 1963

<i>Group</i>	<i>Number of Societies</i>	<i>Number of Members</i>
Bidayuh	23	870
Chinese	22	2,711
Iban	95	3,523
Kayan	9	450
Kelabit	2	229
Kenyah	9	260
Malay	27	1,062
Mixed	9	3,211
Murut	1	113
Other Indigenous	1	16
Total	198	12,445

Source: Sarawak Co-operative Department, *Annual Report on Co-operative Development for the Year Ending 31st December 1963*.

TABLE 17.2  
Growth of Co-operatives, 1949-1963

<i>Subject</i>	<i>1949</i>	<i>1954</i>	<i>1958</i>	<i>1963</i>
Registered Societies	24	137	168	198
Total Membership	1,481	9,330	11,566	12,445
Total Assets	\$39,533	\$870,637	\$2,076,421	\$3,288,544
Total Liabilities	\$39,553	\$866,279	\$2,114,037	\$3,463,862
Reserves	\$739	\$44,013	\$105,038	\$234,364
Share Capital	\$30,825	\$286,735	\$406,739	\$569,580

Source: Sarawak Co-operative Department, *Annual Report on Co-operative Development for the Year Ending 31st December 1963*.

### *Community Development*

In Sarawak, social welfare was 'divided into two parts, community development ... and social welfare'.<sup>51</sup> Community development was defined in 1956 as 'a movement to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation and, if possible,

on the initiative of the community'.<sup>52</sup> Specific schemes aimed to teach improved standards of agriculture, health care and child care; the financial advantages of cultivating cash crops; co-operative trading; domestic arts; and using local resources.<sup>53</sup> All were empirical experiments in rural areas where particular needs were identified, but where access by government services was difficult. The first official step was taken in 1951 by the setting up of the Community Development Committee under the Deputy Chief Secretary to examine, report on, and assume direct responsibility for all community development projects.

The first experiment, the Rural Improvement School (RIS) at Kanowit, already covered in Chapter 16, had started three years earlier, but did not prove effective and was terminated in 1957. Another early experimental scheme was at Muara Tuang in the First Division, carried out by the Departments of Agriculture, Co-operative Development, Education, and Medical Services.<sup>54</sup> Considered necessary by the SSWC to try to 'arrest the decline of the Malays' in the area, the scheme started in March 1953.<sup>55</sup> When the scheme ended in 1956, a co-operative society had been set up, a boat-yard had been installed with government support, providing welcome local employment, and some success in adult education was reported.<sup>56</sup> However, the roads and drains were in disrepair and the community hall was rarely used. Official reports indicate that the Muara Tuang communal development and the Kanowit RIS schemes were unlikely to have had 'much lasting effect or value', which was attributed to both schemes having been initiated and directed by the government rather than having arisen from spontaneous community enthusiasm.<sup>57</sup>

Other schemes met with varying degrees of success. One of the more successful was the Budu scheme among the Ibans of the upper Krian River in the Second Division.<sup>58</sup> The enthusiasm of its originator, J. K. Wilson, and his team was taken up by the local community and a Progress Society was formed at Budu in 1953 with a set of by-laws designed to protect the interests of its members.<sup>59</sup> A Committee of Progress consisting of two members from each longhouse that joined the scheme was elected as the executive authority. Starting with a primary school, the scheme developed into a full community development project with nine main centres providing community development for about 20,000 Ibans. Phase one for each main centre was the opening of a school for adults and children, a clinic, a co-operative shop, and agricultural extension work with gardens. Twenty-six primary schools were established

over the following eight years, together with co-operative marketing of cash crops and purchase of manufactured goods. A river transport system for goods and a simple radio-telephone and broadcasting communication system were set up. Tuition was given in agriculture, animal husbandry, hygiene, and sanitation. Selection of future local executive officers was started and a number of promising pupils were sent overseas during 1957.<sup>60</sup> The centre at Budu was duplicated at Ng Entaih on the Entabai River in the upper Kanowit district of the Third Division in 1957 and parish councils of elected members from each centre were set up to cover both areas.<sup>61</sup>

By 1962 the Budu scheme had been handed over to trainees who had returned from overseas and government assistance had generally been withdrawn. Total expenditures of \$277,693 on the Budu project and \$52,830 on the Entabai project are recorded in the 1955-60 Development Plan, but the number of appeals for support in one form or another recorded by Wilson suggest that funding had been consistently inadequate. The scheme made basic medical attention and education available to some 20,000 Ibans living in a remote area of Sarawak, thus overcoming some of the harsher aspects of rural life in a subsistence economy. If, as indicated by Wilson, the scheme transformed Budu into a 'centre of thought and Dyak culture' and provided 'a new virility, a new hope in the future of themselves and their children', this was a welcome but modest step towards overcoming the wide disparity among ethnic groups in Sarawak.<sup>62</sup> Based on the Budu experience, the Iban Team Project was conceived in 1959 to achieve wider community development coverage by low-cost training of community development assistants.<sup>63</sup> This enabled community centres to be developed quickly, but their long-term success was doubtful as the trained assistants were not equipped to provide adult education programmes and funding was discontinued in 1965.<sup>64</sup> There were no further schemes on the pattern of Budu and Entaih during the colonial era, but there were other experimental community development schemes.

The Padawan scheme in the district of the upper Sarawak River was set up in 1956 with the Anglican Mission for an economically depressed area of fifteen Bidayuh villages. The scheme, promoted a 'cash crop economy as a necessary prerequisite of the means to better living' through improved agriculture.<sup>65</sup> Many landholdings were reallocated for the planting of rubber and other crops. Excellent progress was reported in the transformation of the 'way of life



of a particularly backward community'<sup>66</sup> and the scheme, which cost \$164,000, was placed under Bidayuh leadership in 1961. However, the long-term success of the scheme was acknowledged as being dependent on a road link to Padawan, still to be completed at the end of the colonial period.

The Long Lama scheme in the upper Baram River area of the Fourth Division, which was established with the aid of the Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM), had rather different objectives. Started in 1957, this was a farm and craft training centre, under the Revd Hudson Southwell, which offered a two-year residential course to twenty-five post-primary 4 Kayan, Kelabit, and Kenyah boys. The scheme was not trouble free. In early 1958, the Governor commented that the scheme seemed to be a failure, indicating faults in planning, execution, and policy when coupled with the collapse of the Kanowit RIS scheme.<sup>67</sup> The course was reduced to one year and limited adult education was introduced in conjunction with elementary agricultural extension techniques. The area from which students were drawn was enlarged to include the Third and Fifth Divisions, and plans were made to convert the school to a farm institute after Malaysia was formed.<sup>68</sup>

As a counterpoint to the community development schemes created and run by the government and the problems those schemes encountered, the Community Development Centre at Barat on the Sibuti River in the Fourth Division attracted an enthusiastic report at the end of 1956.<sup>69</sup> Based on this success, which was attributed to an acknowledged local leader with ideas and vision, Bewsher recommended that in future the role of government officers should be confined to sowing ideas and stimulating vision. He suggested seeking the people's ideas, not volunteering advice, giving material help only when essential, and allowing the community to choose its own leaders for the schemes. The near failure of the Long Lama scheme and the collapse of the Kanowit RIS led to a review of community development in 1958. A modern agricultural extension service was deemed more beneficial than a community development department, and community development was placed under the Secretariat's local government branch at the beginning of 1960.<sup>70</sup> By the end of 1962, local government authorities and orthodox departmental development programmes had full responsibility for community needs.<sup>71</sup> The Lemanak Centre set up in 1961 'to serve an economically depressed Iban community in the Second Division' reflected the agricultural extension concept by concentrating on cultivation of cash crops. However, the early

promising signs after soils suitable for rubber planting were located were not realized.<sup>72</sup>

Encouraged by the Colonial Office, the colonial government spent about \$1.5 million on community development schemes between 1946 and 1963. The result was a number of scattered, isolated experimental schemes administered and funded by government in a way that was contrary to the fundamental concept of community self-help. Yet without government intervention, few, if any, of the schemes would have materialized. The underlying objective of all the schemes—to improve the standard of living by moving away from impoverished subsistence agriculture to mixed subsistence and cash crop farming—does not appear to have been clearly defined until the colonial era was drawing to a close. This inhibited progress by dissipating energy and funds from the primary goal. With the advent of local relief councils and local government, relief and social services became local responsibilities aided by the SSWC and the relevant departments. Whether a policy of 'empirical experiment in limited areas' could make any impact in raising rural standards of living is questionable, but it was a low-cost, if unsuccessful, method of investigating the means to achieve this.<sup>73</sup>

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Limited by resources that dictated the level of social welfare, the British authorities continued to rely on voluntary agencies in contrast to the welfare state ideals of post-World War II Britain. Taking into account the fundamental differences between the two societies, this was arguably the only realistic solution. Encouraging social activities amongst Sarawak's youth met with some success, but largely benefited urban youth. Imposed experiments to find a way to improve the standard of living and hence the welfare of the rural farmer through co-operative and community development schemes had little impact. The experiments showed that change was difficult to impose. The rural dweller had to be interested in and enthusiastic for change, and be given the responsibility for carrying it out. Further, changes had to be seen as providing a direct benefit, as in the case of the rubber planting and replanting schemes. In contrast, health services required state-wide control to be effective.

1. H. G. Nicholas, *The United Nations as a Political Institution*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 228.
2. J. M. Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967, p. 14; R. A. Frost, 'Reflections on British Colonial Policy', *Pacific Affairs*, 18, 4 (December 1945): 312-3.
3. HMSO, *The Colonial Office List, 1946*, London, pp. 3 and 5.
4. S. Baring-Gould and C. A. Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak under Its Two White Rajahs, 1839-1908*, London: Henry Sotheran & Co., 1909, p. 440.
5. *Sarawak Gazette* (1 November 1879), and (1 June 1895); *Sarawak Government Gazette*, 7 November 1924, in C. A. Lockard, *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970*, Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1987, pp. 41 and 90.
6. Conrad P. Cotter, 'Some Aspects of the Administrative Development of Sarawak', MPA thesis, Cornell University, 1955, pp. 40-2; Brian Taylor and Pamela Mildway Heyward, *The Kuching Anglican Schools, 1848-1973*, Kuching: Leeming Press, c. 1973, pp. 2-3.
7. Some serfdom persisted even in the colonial era (C. H. Southwell, 'The Kayans and the Kenyahs', in T. Harrison (ed.), *The Peoples of Sarawak*, Kuching: Government Printing Office, 1959, p. 47).
8. *Sarawak Gazette* (16 November 1911), in Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, p. 71.
9. R. W. Hammond, 'Report on Education in Sarawak', Unpublished typescript, 22 June 1937, p. 130.
10. R. A. Bewsher, Social Welfare Conference, Singapore, 18-23 August 1947, MSS Pac. s. 59, RHL; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1954*, p. 114.
11. Bewsher, Social Welfare Conference, Singapore, 18-23 August 1947.
12. However, the elderly 'tended to be pushed to one side or even hidden away' when the medical teams from the Budu community development scheme visited longhouses (John K. Wilson, *Budu or Twenty Years in Sarawak*, North Berwick: Tantallion Press, 1969, p. 78).
13. Sarawak Social Welfare Council (SSWC), *Annual Report, 1963*, p. 3.
14. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953*, p. 106; SSWC, *Annual Report 1963*, p. 5.
15. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1952*, p. 92; 1953, p. 105.
16. SSWC, *Annual Report, 1963*, p. 6.
17. SSWC, *Annual Report, 1962*, p. 36. A supplementary school feeding scheme adding protein to the diet had 'an astonishing effect' on Native children. Those who had been to school were six to eight inches taller than their parents (Information from Kenneth Robinson, 20 September 1994).
18. A street mendicant was rare in the towns of Sarawak and was usually a mentally disturbed person who chose to live on the streets rather than in a home or institution.
19. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 54.
20. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 79; SSWC, *Annual Report, 1963*, pp. 9-12.
21. The home accepted *mui tiais* (girls bought as servants by Chinese families), girls without guardians, girls in moral danger, and pending acquisition of a separate home, aged destitute women.
22. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1963*, p. 104.
23. Hammond, 'Report on Education in Sarawak', p. 121; *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 October 1946, p. 2.

24. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, p. 183.
25. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 72; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1216 (30 June 1959): 137-8.
26. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year, 1951*, pp. 70-1; 1952, p. 84; 1953, pp. 99-100.
27. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1953, p. 98; 1954, p. 105.
28. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1959, p. 227.
29. Swimming pools and playing fields were planned for Kuching, Simanggang, Sibu, and Miri. Costs were met from a CD & W grant, a Sarawak government grant, and 'matching contribution against contribution from local authorities and public subscriptions' (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 186).
30. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1955, p. 82.
31. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1955, p. 76; 1961, p. 108.
32. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1961, p. 108.
33. Governor to Colonial Secretary, Message No. 633, 10 November 1958, Ref. 98/CSO/3502/56, CO 1030/422, PRO.
34. J. M. van der Kroef, 'Chinese Minority Aspirations and Problems in Sarawak', *Pacific Affairs*, 39, 1 and 2 (Spring-Summer 1966): 68.
35. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, pp. 142 and 147.
36. British Information Services, 'Co-operation in Sarawak', in *Commonwealth Survey: A Record of United Kingdom and Commonwealth Affairs*, 2g (4), London: HMSO, 1952; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1125 (28 December 1951): 234-9.
37. Sarawak Co-operative Department, *Annual Report on Co-operative Development for the Year Ending 31st December 1963*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, p. 2.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
39. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1953, p. 77.
40. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, p. 81.
41. The idea of John Pike, the debentures were designed to appeal to Chinese gambling instincts. After twelve months from the date of purchase, one tenth of all unredeemed \$10 debentures were drawn at random annually and repurchased by the government at \$14 each.
42. An ILO co-operative marketing expert, Professor Jacen T. Hsieh, also spent a year in Sarawak.
43. The scheme cost \$152,190 at 31 December 1956 (Sarawak Development Board, *Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1955-1960*, p. 13).
44. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1960, p. 91.
45. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 97.
46. Wilson, *Budu*, pp. 180-1.
47. Sarawak Co-operative Department, *Annual Report on Co-operative Development for the Year Ending 31st December 1963*, p. 4.
48. Tables 17.1 and 17.2 provide statistics on the co-operatives.
49. Alastair Morrison, 'Development in Sarawak in the Colonial Period: A Personal Memoir', in R. A. Cramb and R. H. W. Reece (eds.), *Development in Sarawak*, Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1988, p. 37.
50. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1951*, p. 100.
51. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, p. 114. The term 'community development' was adopted after the Cambridge Conference for Colonial Service Officers in 1948 to show the 'wider scope which colonial governments

were expected to show in encouraging peasants to look after themselves' (Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government*, pp. 79, 135, and 166).

52. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1956, p. 80.

53. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1958, p. 80. The first community development scheme had been in existence since 1953 so by this time the objectives were clear.

54. Total expenditure was about \$30,000 (Sarawak Development Board, *Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1955-1960*, p. 13).

55. R. A. Bewsher, 'Report on visit to Muara Tuang/Bundong 27 September to 8 October 1955', MSS Pac. s. 59, RHL.

56. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1956, p. 80. The report guardedly referred to results of the scheme.

57. R. A. Bewsher, 'Report on visit to Muara Tuang/Bundong 27 September to 8 October 1955', MSS Pac. s. 59, RHL; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report* 1962, p. 180.

58. Alastair Morrison, *Fair Land Sarawak: Some Recollections of an Expatriate Official*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 108-111.

59. Wilson, *Budu*, pp. 94-5.

60. One Budu pupil, Jawie Masing, was awarded a degree in medicine in 1967 by Aberdeen University.

61. Wilson, *Budu*, pp. 97-8.

62. Wilson, *Budu*, p. 2. Wilson and his team appear to have been highly respected by the Ibans in the area, and his influence may have been a major factor in his banishment in May 1968.

63. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1960, p. 112.

64. Wilson, *Budu*, pp. 39-40.

65. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1957, p. 71.

66. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1958, p. 80.

67. At this stage, Bewsher accused the government of 'playing at' community development at a cost of \$1.2 million and suggested a change of name (Governor to the Chief Secretary, Minute, 19 March 1958, MSS Pac. s. 59, RHL).

68. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 181.

69. R. A. Bewsher, 'Dayak Community Development in the Sibuti River', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1186 (31 December 1956): 320-2. There were about 7,300 Chinese, Iban, Kedayan, and Malay people in the district.

70. Community Development Policy Paper CSO.3001, 12 May 1958, prepared in response to a minute from the Chief Secretary, MSS Pac. s. 59, RHL.

71. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 179.

72. Identification of soils suitable for rubber planting led to the siting of Rubber Planting Scheme B at Bukit Batu in 1964. This was one of the first large-scale rubber schemes taken over by the Sarawak Development Board, but was soon abandoned.

73. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 178.

## 18

### Public Health

PUBLIC health is the underlying concern of all social services. During the Brooke and British regimes, medical services and public health in Sarawak were the direct responsibility of the Medical Department. The various communities had their traditional forms of medical treatment. Chinese physicians used their herbal medicines, Ibans consulted their *manang*, and the Malays turned to their *bomoh*. Acceptance of Western medicine was a slow ongoing process due to the influence of traditional methods.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Health Services before Cession*

The first Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak, Francis T. McDougall, was a qualified physician and practised in Sarawak as early as 1851.<sup>2</sup> The first government nurse was appointed in 1870.<sup>3</sup> By 1900, although there was only one doctor in Sarawak, a hospital and a dispensary had been established in Kuching and rudimentary dispensaries run by government cadets had been set up in the outstations.<sup>4</sup> Large-scale methods of vaccination against smallpox were developed, although there were doubts about actual coverage in the field.<sup>5</sup> Cholera epidemics broke out from time to time, usually due to a lack of hygiene.<sup>6</sup> One of the worst outbreaks occurred in the 'Cholera Expedition' of 1902 when over a thousand deaths were recorded.<sup>7</sup> In 1913, Sibu, the centre of Foochow immigration, was provided with a hospital and a medical officer was stationed there. This was described as a converted shack and was replaced in 1931 by the Lau King Hau hospital, named after its benefactor.<sup>8</sup> Sarawak Shell Oilfields Limited (SSOL) provided Miri with hospital services from the early 1910s as an adjunct to the medical services provided for its own employees. An element of social reform was evident in the opening of an asylum in Kuching in 1908 for the mentally disturbed, previously held in the prison system.<sup>9</sup> Although by the 1930s trained hospital dressers (paramedical workers) accompanied District Officers when travelling,

lack of rural medical services and the unhygienic state of many bazaars and parts of Kuching were severely criticized by R. W. Hammond, a government adviser, in 1937.<sup>10</sup> He recommended teaching hygiene in schools, official initiatives to improve public hygiene, regular medical inspection of school children, appointment of a school dental officer, and a travelling medical service for the rural areas. By 1940, the Sarawak Civil Service (SCS) included a Principal Medical Officer and Chief Health Officer, a pathologist, a medical officer, a matron for the General Hospital, and a nursing sister, in addition to local staff.

The Japanese occupation resulted in a dramatic decline in medical services as medical supplies became increasingly scarce and medical facilities and equipment fell into disrepair.<sup>11</sup> In the interior, there was 'a marked increase in such diseases as malaria, tropical ulcers, scabies, beri-beri, and in some cases yaws'.<sup>12</sup> Rough and ready treatment was provided by Australian and British guerrilla officers in the remote interior even before the Japanese surrender. Light battle casualties during reoccupation enabled many units of the Australian Army Medical Services to turn their attention to civilian medical services. In Miri, the Australian 2/8th Field Ambulance was instrumental in opening a Native hospital.<sup>13</sup> Both the Kuching and Sibu hospitals remained substantially intact during the occupation. On 7 September 1945 when the first two Allied army medical officers were flown to Kuching, the Kuching General Hospital was being run by two Australian medical officers and a 30-bed camp hospital was being run by an ex-POW Australian Army doctor.<sup>14</sup> In the early months after reoccupation, the civil administration's medical department was dependent on the Australian military forces.<sup>15</sup>

### *Medical Department Policies*

By 1954, the Medical Department was able to look beyond restoring pre-war services to trying to achieve a proper balance between urban and rural medical services and overcoming the incongruity of specialist urban medical services and a lack of doctors in the rural areas.<sup>16</sup> Attention was turned to a series of state-wide disease eradication campaigns dealing with malaria, tuberculosis, yaws, and endemic goitre, with a campaign to improve environmental sanitation in 1957.<sup>17</sup> By 1959, the Department was moving towards 'preventative rather than the curative aspects of medicine', with free inoculations against diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough, and vaccinations against smallpox and cholera.<sup>18</sup> The

expanding role of the department was reflected in both expenditure and staff numbers. Between 1947 and 1962, departmental expenditure rose from 7.5 per cent (\$970,583) to 9 per cent (\$7,199,176) of the state's gross revenue.<sup>19</sup> The acute post-war shortage of trained personnel, particularly nursing sisters, had not been completely resolved even by 1959. To staff the Kuching and Sibu hospitals and the twenty-one out-patient dispensaries in 1947, there was an approved establishment of 204 personnel. By the end of 1962, the Department had 1,036 personnel with a further 501 on non-establishment terms and 374 on the malaria and tuberculosis projects. This rapid expansion created a continuing need for recruitment and training.

### *Public Health Facilities*

In 1948, the Kuching General Hospital, the largest in Sarawak, had 367 beds, including 100 for mental patients, and the only X-ray facilities in the state. The mental section was not satisfactory in terms of siting, standard of accommodation, and availability of trained staff.<sup>20</sup> A 20-bed tuberculosis ward for women was added in 1949 and the nurses' home was extended by the addition of a second wing. A further block was added in 1957 comprising a mid-wifery unit and a children's isolation ward. Completion of the new mental hospital in 1958 released 100 extra beds for general use. With Colombo Plan funding, planning for a new 500-600 bed hospital began in 1960 and detailed construction plans were completed in 1963.<sup>21</sup> The out-patient department of the General Hospital, the Central Dispensary in the town centre, was provided with a larger pharmacy and a small clinical laboratory after re-occupation. In 1954, this Dispensary was replaced by a new health centre, with separate sections for female, male, prenatal, and dental patients, which dealt with 500 out-patients daily. To supplement Kuching's health services, in 1957 a maternity and child health clinic was built at Sekama Road, serving as a model for future clinics elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> In Sibu, the Lau King Hau hospital servicing the Third Division expanded even more rapidly. From fifty general beds at the end of 1947, it had 280 beds by the end of 1962.<sup>23</sup> With new maternity, children's, and tuberculosis wards, a new operating theatre, and X-ray equipment, it became the most modern hospital in Sarawak.

In Miri, the administrative centre of the Fourth Division, SSOL owned and ran a 124-bed hospital, primarily for its own employees. Its facilities were available to the general public, SSOL



being reimbursed by the government for costs incurred.<sup>24</sup> In 1950, a 42-bed tuberculosis hospital was built, funded by SSOL and the government. It was run by SSOL, with the government paying SSOL an agreed sum annually for this service.<sup>25</sup> Both hospitals were taken over by the government in 1960, adding 148 hospital beds to the public hospital system, but not without public fears in the Fourth Division that the high standards maintained by SSOL would not be sustained.<sup>26</sup> Hospital services in the Fifth Division were by referral from the dispensary at Limbang, which was visited by the Brunei State Medical Officer every month. A new dispensary with sixteen beds which was built at Limbang in 1958 was converted to a cottage hospital with X-ray and operating theatre facilities in 1961.<sup>27</sup> Sarawak's largest dispensary in the immediate post-war period was at Simanggang, the administrative centre for the Second Division. First converted to a 20-bed hospital after a medical officer was stationed there in 1949, it was replaced by a 100-bed hospital with all the latest amenities in 1958.<sup>28</sup> Having equipped each Division with hospital facilities, the Department turned its attention to other population centres. The dispensary at Sarikei was replaced by a 40-bed hospital in early 1962 and a cottage hospital was planned for Lundu in 1963.<sup>29</sup> During the colonial era, public hospital beds were increased from 305 in 1947 to 954 by the end of 1962 and there was at least one hospital in every Division.

The missions were also encouraged to provide medical and hospital services. Aided by a government subsidy, the Roman Catholic Mission opened a maternity home at Long San on the Baram River in 1957, thus providing a service in the remoter areas of the Fourth Division.<sup>30</sup> A 40-bed hospital was established by the Methodist Mission at Kapit on the Rajang River in the late 1950s, servicing much of the interior of the Third Division.<sup>31</sup> Opened officially on 24 September 1960 and normally staffed by two doctors, two nursing sisters, and local personnel, it was the only sizeable mission hospital in Sarawak. Its drugs and dressing needs were supplied from the government medical stores free of charge. Altogether, the missions provided 129 hospital beds, accounting for 12 per cent of all hospital beds in Sarawak.<sup>32</sup>

The Brookes had established small dispensaries attached to rural administrative offices, where dressers trained at the Kuching General Hospital provided simple medication and treatment. To extend these services to the more remote areas, more dispensaries were built by the British administration and, by the end of 1962,

there were thirty such dispensaries compared with twenty-one in 1947.<sup>33</sup> The older dispensaries ranged from clinics dispensing medicine and giving simple treatment to units with up to sixteen rest beds for the more common diseases. A standard plan adopted for the rebuilding programme allowed for future conversion to 24-bed hospitals, as at Limbang.

There was also an innovative scheme of floating dispensaries that had first been mooted in 1939.<sup>34</sup> Sarawak's rural population generally lived within easy reach of rivers, the main means of travel. The post-war scheme was for up to sixteen *perahu* (local boats) with outboard motors to ply the major rivers on fixed schedules, providing out-patient medical services and treatment at settlements *en route*. With initial Colonial Development and Welfare (CD & W) funding of \$160,000, two covered *perahu* started operating in 1948, one from Kuching along the Sarawak River basin and the other from Sibu in the Rajang River system. Manned by a hospital assistant, an attendant, and a driver, each had a built-in dispensary and carried two stretchers with seating for other patients. Judged a success, the scheme was extended to cover the major river systems of Sarawak, and by 1 March 1950 sixteen *perahu* were covering areas which were previously not serviced.<sup>35</sup> Although attendances at these floating dispensaries fell after initial curiosity, 112,380 attendances were recorded in 1951. By the end of 1952 when CD & W funding ceased, CD & W had met \$635,870 in costs, and by the end of 1956 the scheme had cost the government \$790,932.<sup>36</sup> A base was built in Belaga in 1956 for plying the extensive river systems of the upper Rajang, but gradually the *perahu* were replaced by more economic static dispensaries. By the end of the colonial period, only ten were still in operation.<sup>37</sup>

### *Departmental Training*

Recruiting local staff for the hospitals proved difficult and the in-house training programme for nurses did not avert temporary closure of a Kuching hospital ward with its twenty-three beds in 1950.<sup>38</sup> To redress the shortage of nurses, from 1951 assistant nurses with lower educational qualifications were engaged for routine duties. Also, the Kuching nurses' training school was supplemented by a school at Sibu in 1954, with eighty-four pupils. Training standards in Sarawak were finally recognized by the General Nursing Council in London in 1961, when the Council agreed that local training could replace the first year of overseas

training. At the end of the colonial period, there were 229 trained nurses and hospital attendants and forty-six student nurses.

As the in-house training programme for dressers to work in the outstations suffered from a limited number of qualified applicants, the Ulu Drisa scheme of recruiting less educated youths for training as medical auxiliaries was adopted.<sup>39</sup> Between 1955 and 1958, fifty-five auxiliaries were trained, but one year's training was obviously inadequate and the scheme was terminated in 1957.<sup>40</sup> In 1961, training began of voluntary workers, known as 'home helps', to deal with minor ailments in remote longhouses and villages. Over two years, 265 home helps were trained.<sup>41</sup> The Department ceased recruiting male nurses in 1960. Those in the service were given special courses in diagnosing and treating common diseases to enable them to function as hospital assistants in charge of the static and travelling dispensaries.<sup>42</sup>

To raise the standards of midwifery in the rural areas, in 1952 training programmes were started at Kuching, Simanggang, and Sibul.<sup>43</sup> The scheme was judged an unqualified success and enabled the Midwives Ordinance, 1955, to be enacted.<sup>44</sup> This prohibited unqualified persons from practising midwifery, but allowed women with limited training to work in the remoter rural areas as an interim measure until fully trained midwives became available. By the end of 1962 there were 440 registered midwives, with 168 in government service and 103 in local authority employment. Other in-house training programmes for junior staff included those for laboratory technicians, assistant health visitors, and dispensers, but overseas training was necessary for some posts. These included dental mechanics, dentists, doctors, pharmacists, and sanitary inspectors. Overseas training also included engineering and radiography in public health and higher degrees in medicine.<sup>45</sup> Higher professional and specialization training overseas became increasingly reliant on Colombo Plan scholarships. Numbers increased from six Colombo Plan and eleven government-sponsored medical students in 1956 to forty Colombo Plan and seven other students by 1962.<sup>46</sup> Although Sarawak was dependent on overseas facilities for all tertiary courses, the Department had generally managed to train its own lower-level professional and junior personnel, even though not all its programmes were successful.

*Specialist Services*

Maternal and child health services were expanded rapidly during the colonial era, reflecting the increasing number of women being trained as midwives. In 1947 there were maternity sections in the Kuching and Sibuh hospitals. Any antenatal work was carried out by the Kuching out-patient department. Arrival of a health visitor in 1949 served to establish antenatal and child health firmly in Kuching.<sup>47</sup> A sub-clinic was set up for the Kuching Malay villages and another was established in a Bidayuh settlement fifty kilometres from Kuching. By 1955, there were seven clinics in Kuching, five in Sibuh, and others throughout the country. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) donated equipment for five of the clinics and provided skimmed milk and diet supplements to mothers and school children.<sup>48</sup> More clinics were built, mainly for operation by local authorities, and attendances increased from 1,886 in 1949 to 115,322 in 1961. Free inoculation against diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough was available in all maternal and child health clinics, and free vaccination against smallpox was available at all government medical centres.<sup>49</sup> Free vaccination was also available against cholera at times of outbreak. No separate medical service for schools was established in the colonial era, although nutritional studies were carried out from 1961 by the World Health Organization (WHO).<sup>50</sup>

Another specialist area, dental services, was initially provided by some 160 registered but not formally qualified dentists.<sup>51</sup> Due to natural attrition, by 1956 the remaining dentists could not meet public needs and there was still only one qualified dentist in private practice. Registers were therefore reopened to admit a limited number of unqualified dentists, subject to safeguards and a practical examination.<sup>52</sup> From 1949, the government dental clinic attached to the Kuching General Hospital provided a limited dental service for government officers and their families, school children, hospital in-patients and out-patients, and maternity and child welfare referrals. This service was extended to the larger outstations by periodic visits of government dental officers over the following two years. By 1957, the Department had four qualified dentists servicing the clinics in Kuching and Sibuh. School dental clinics

were established in Kuching (1959) and Sibü (1960) and a government dental clinic was opened in Miri (1960). Moving towards preventative rather than curative medicine, to counter the high incidence of caries in school children, a committee was formed in 1961 to consider fluoridation of public water supplies. The committee drew up a fluoridation programme for all new and all fully treated water supplies, and by the end of 1962 the Serian, Simanggang, Sarikei, Binatang and Marudi water supplies were all being treated. This was the most important step in dental health taken between 1946 and 1963, although it did not benefit most of the rural people as they lived outside the areas of public water supplies.

Mental disorders, a specialist area, were treated in three wards close to the Kuching General Hospital in 1946. Each ward accommodated up to thirty patients and there was a block of single cells for violent cases. The problems were overcrowding, an unsatisfactory site, poor accommodation, outdated facilities, and a lack of trained mental care personnel.<sup>53</sup> Agreement was reached in 1949, when closer union and common services for the Borneo states was government policy, to build a mental hospital for Brunei, North Borneo, and Sarawak. A site was selected in Brunei and plans were approved by all parties. As an interim measure, the Kuching wards were refurbished and a mental ward was added to the Lau King Hau Hospital in Sibü. However, the mental hospital plan for the Borneo territories was abandoned in 1953 and the Sarawak government then decided to build a 200-patient mental hospital eighteen kilometres from Kuching. Built with the aid of a \$1.5 million CD & W grant, the new hospital was opened in June 1958.<sup>54</sup> A 'specialist alienist' was appointed, to provide more accurate diagnosis and treatment and reduce the time that patients amenable to treatment had to spend in hospital.<sup>55</sup> Out-patient clinics set up in Kuching, Sibü, and Sarikei recorded 3,227 attendances in 1961. During the colonial era, treatment and care of the mentally ill had improved dramatically, although political obstacles to building a centralized mental hospital in Brunei delayed the improvements by five years.<sup>56</sup>

### *Environmental Health Matters*

Apart from a few newer residences with septic tanks, in the major towns nightsoil was collected by the double bucket system and discharged, either directly or after sewage tank treatment, into the

rivers on an ebbing tide. River or pit latrines were used in the smaller settlements. In the longhouses, human waste was passed directly to the ground below where domestic pigs scavenged, the Medical Department reporting in 1948 that this primitive sanitation in Iban and Kayan longhouses made them vulnerable to epidemic infection.<sup>57</sup> Usually the older bazaar shophouses were inadequately ventilated, helping to spread tuberculosis.<sup>58</sup> The Department thought that in a democracy the people should demand healthy sanitation but in Sarawak therapeutic services had to be provided first, followed by efforts to persuade the community that improved sanitary practices would reduce disease.<sup>59</sup> After a health education officer arrived in December 1952, medical personnel were trained in health education and public health work, articles were published in the press, and talks were given on Radio Sarawak and in schools. Even so, health education services were still in their infancy in Sarawak in 1960. Unsatisfactory sanitation practices were not amenable to rapid change and health education had limited impact on traditional habits and customs during the colonial era. The priorities of the Medical Department were therapeutic services and mass campaigns to control disease.

The main towns and some small towns had piped water supplies from catchment areas, all initially untreated, apart from Sibu where the public water supply drawn from the heavily polluted Rajang River was chlorinated.<sup>60</sup> Under the 1951-7 Revised Development Plan, existing supplies were developed and new water supply systems were installed in other population centres. By the end of 1956, \$5,573,324 had been spent on existing water supply schemes and developing new schemes at Simunjan, Bau, 7th Mile Bazaar near Kuching, Simanggang, Sarikei, Binatang, Miri, Limbang, and Lawas. Statutory water boards were established in Kuching and Sibu, with SSOL supplying water to Miri. When the 1959-63 Development Plan was issued, \$18,950,654 had been allocated for water supplies and over \$10 million of this was for loans to water boards and local authorities.<sup>61</sup> By 1963, water supplies at Simanggang, Sarikei, and Binatang had either been, or were being fluoridated. In the rural areas, the position was very different. Water was drawn directly from rivers, wells or rain water storage which were susceptible to contamination. Five-centimetre bore wells were sunk on trial, but proved unsatisfactory due to mechanical failures and inadequate or unsuitable underground water.<sup>62</sup> Thus, during the colonial era few rural people were provided with water that was not susceptible to contamination.

*Diseases Subject to Mass Eradication Campaigns  
or Mass Action*

Malaria was rated the most pressing public health problem in Sarawak in 1946 and the most likely cause of 'the chronic ill-health, infertility and even poverty of most of the rural people'.<sup>63</sup> In 1947, 18,182 cases were diagnosed and 104 deaths were attributed to malaria, followed by 13,176 cases and 118 deaths in 1948. Although there was an epidemic in Miri during the 1946-7 *landas* season, the towns were relatively free from malaria whereas in many rural areas malaria was always present. Until the WHO malariologist, Dr Julian de Zulueta, made a survey of Sarawak in 1952, the vectors (carriers) were uncertain. Two kinds of malaria were found in Sarawak. One was epidemic malaria on the coastal plains carried by the *Anopheles sundiacus* which could be controlled by residual spraying. The other was endemic malaria in the inland areas carried by the *Anopheles leucosphyrus* which was thought not to be amenable to control by residual spraying. Deciding that this was not correct from his observations on Penans who did not live in houses yet did not catch malaria in heavily malarious inland areas, Dr de Zulueta set up a pilot scheme of residual spraying on the Baram River in 1953. This proved that malaria in the inland areas propagated by the main vector, *Anopheles leucosphyrus*, could be controlled by residual spraying.<sup>64</sup> This was a major discovery and funds were provided to control malaria throughout Sarawak by residual spraying. Using mainly DDT, every known malarious area in Sarawak had been sprayed at least once by the end of 1959. At a cost of \$2,356,302, by then satisfactory control had been achieved.<sup>65</sup> With the help of WHO personnel, planning moved from control to a three-year state-wide surveillance and eradication programme. This was submitted to WHO in March 1961, with a request for aid from the Malaria Eradication Special Account (MESA). After revisions, in January 1962 WHO agreed to implement the plan, the first instalment of aid being received in late 1962.<sup>66</sup> The project continued to receive help from the WHO advisory team made up of a malariologist, an entomologist, and a sanitarian. Dr R. Lees, who was attached to the Budu and Entabai community development schemes in the Second Division, later wrote: 'We watched with delight the disappearance of malaria from the area'.<sup>67</sup> The principal in this achievement was no doubt WHO, but the assistance of the Medical Department was crucial to the operation.

Pulmonary tuberculosis was officially the second most pressing public health problem in Sarawak, although others rated it the greatest health hazard even before malaria was eradicated, causing both high morbidity and mortality.<sup>68</sup> In 1947, 1,090 cases were reported with 211 related deaths, compared with 18,182 reported cases of malaria and 104 related deaths. Initially the Medical Department concentrated on improving and increasing the facilities for treating patients at the Kuching General Hospital, the only centre offering treatment until 1953, although the Sibu Benevolent Society cared for up to fifty destitute and aged tuberculosis sufferers at the McCarthy Lodge.<sup>69</sup> The number of beds in Kuching was increased from thirty to fifty, but all were constantly occupied and, even in 1950, some patients were being treated in open wards.

However, 1950 was a turning point as a chest clinic was set up in Kuching to carry out tuberculin tests and *Bacillus Calmette-Guérin* (BCG) vaccinations, and WHO/UNICEF were asked to provide a BCG vaccination team for one year. Prior to the team's arrival, a limited tuberculin survey among the Muruts in the Fifth Division found that 83 per cent of all age groups were positive to tests, and arrangements were made to give BCG vaccinations to the uninfected.<sup>70</sup> The team arrived in 1952 and trained five local teams to continue work after its departure, so that with funds allocated in the 1951-7 Revised Development Plan, by April 1953 virtually the whole country had been covered.<sup>71</sup> Also in 1950, the SSWC sponsored the formation of a voluntary organization, the Anti-Tuberculosis Association of Sarawak (ATAS), to help combat the disease. Its first major contribution was to raise voluntary contributions and build the Wee Kheng Chiang Clinic in Kuching, which was opened in March 1953 and run by the Medical Department. At the end of that year, a 44-bed government hospital for tuberculosis patients was opened in Miri under SSOL medical personnel. In the late 1950s, ATAS built a convalescent home for thirty-six patients in Kuching, sixteen beds for tuberculosis patients were provided at the government hospital in Simanggang, twenty-four beds were provided in the Lau King Hau hospital in Sibu, and longhouse-type convalescent homes, partly funded by ATAS, were opened in Bintulu and Limbang.<sup>72</sup>

As soon as the anti-malaria campaign was drawing to a close, an unallocated sum of \$1 million was provided in the Sarawak Development Plan 1959-63 for diseases considered responsive to mass health measures such as tuberculosis, yaws, and trachoma. Expert advice was sought in 1959, under the Colombo Plan, on a



pilot anti-tuberculosis project.<sup>73</sup> With a nursing sister and a radiographer provided under the Colombo Plan to train local personnel and CD & W funding of 80 per cent of local costs, the mass tuberculin-testing programme began in 1961. The plan was to tuberculin-test all school children, give BCG vaccinations to those needing protection, and carry out mass miniature radiography on 'certain high risk adult groups' and all children with positive tuberculin.<sup>74</sup> When Malaysia was formed, the campaign had covered virtually all the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC) area and was under way in Sibü. Although planned, work in the semi-urban and rural areas had not begun, leaving much of Sarawak at that time still in the 'very acute, almost epidemic, phase—much as it was in Victorian England'.<sup>75</sup> Dr R. Lees, working with the Ibans on the Entiah community development scheme in the late 1950s and early 1960s, noted 'with sadness the ravages of the tubercle bacillus'.<sup>76</sup>

Another disease considered responsive to mass health measures, trachoma (an acute form of conjunctivitis), was the most prevalent eye disease in Sarawak. In 1952, the Medical Department 'found reason to suppose that certain children of school age are nearly all infected with trachoma'.<sup>77</sup> This led to a pilot project of treating 450 Ibans in a longhouse near Bintulu where even acute cases responded. A specialist ophthalmologist shared between Brunei, North Borneo, and Sarawak saw nearly 3,000 patients in 1955, performing 350 operations. During 1958, 6,689 patients were seen and it became apparent that infectious conditions of the eye caused most of the eye problems and blindness in Sarawak.<sup>78</sup> Due to lack of funds and staff, a mass anti-trachoma campaign was deferred until 'malaria has finally been conquered, and tuberculosis tackled', leaving the disease still not under control at the end of the colonial period.

Yaws was one of the more prevalent infections in the rural areas and was widespread after the war, probably emanating from general debilitation due to the Japanese occupation. In 1947, 15,136 cases were diagnosed and treated with arsenical drugs. Initially, the travelling dispensaries helped to provide regular treatment and incidence of the disease showed a decline. However, steps to eliminate the disease really began in 1954 when arsenicals were superseded entirely by penicillin and a mass injection campaign was carried out in a high incidence area along the Tinjar River.<sup>79</sup> Similar campaigns followed in other areas and in 1959 the Medical Department claimed the disease was 'no longer a problem'. How-

ever, forty-three cases were recorded at one small clinic five years after the colonial era, suggesting that the Medical Department may have been unduly optimistic.<sup>80</sup>

Iodine-deficiency goitre, enlargement of the thyroid gland, was endemic to much of the interior, especially in the Second and Third Divisions, due to the low iodine content in the cheap coarse salt imported from Red Sea ports and Spain.<sup>81</sup> In 1958, after 'many years of enquiry', the Medical Department opted for installing machinery to iodize imported salt, rather than imposing minimum iodine levels on imported salt.<sup>82</sup> The first iodizing plant was installed at Sibu in 1959 to treat all salt sent to the interior of the Third Division. This included the Rajang River and its tributaries, endemic foci of parenchymatous goitre. Following successful trials, in 1961 funds were allocated to install similar plant in Kuching and Marudi to supply the endemic areas in the interior of the Second Division and the Fourth Division. Although the iodizing plant in Kuching was about to be installed when Malaysia was formed, young people in the endemic foci of the Second and Fourth Divisions had remained unprotected against goitre throughout the colonial era.

Cholera had not been reported in Sarawak since 1902, when at least 1,000 Ibans on a punitive expedition in the Saribas died, but it remained a matter of serious concern due to the low hygiene and sanitation standards prevalent in Sarawak.<sup>83</sup> Concern was realized in July 1961 when cholera broke out in the Malay villages on the north side of the Sarawak River in Kuching.<sup>84</sup> This spread to all Divisions apart from the Fifth, and in a mass prophylactic immunization programme, using vaccine provided by the WHO, Malaya, and others, 450,000 people were vaccinated. Aided by voluntary societies and other government departments, the Medical Department had the outbreak under control in three months, although by then 301 cases had been reported with seventy deaths.<sup>85</sup> On 19 October 1961, the country was declared free of cholera. This outbreak was due to a virulent *El Tor* strain of the cholera vibrio, indicating poor environmental sanitation. A small outbreak in mid-November 1962 in the Upper Serian district was brought under control by 10 December 1962 by 15,000 vaccinations, with sixteen confirmed cases and three deaths. Thus at the end of the colonial era, there were still serious deficiencies in sanitation, providing an environment in which cholera outbreaks could occur at any time.

*Other Diseases*

Leprosy was a greatly feared disease and community pressures often led to self-isolation outside the longhouse or village.<sup>86</sup> The leper settlement, thirty-three kilometres from Kuching, had Chinese, Dayak, and Malay inmates from all over the country, but the area of highest incidence appeared to be the northern part of the Rajang delta. In 1948, the settlement had a concrete hospital and administrative block, two new wooden barracks, and a number of small local houses. Action on extensive rebuilding was postponed until it was clear that no central institution for Brunei, North Borneo, and Sarawak would be built. In 1954, plans to relieve overcrowding by erecting temporary buildings were superseded by a two-year programme of providing all patients with new, bright, and airy barrack-type housing. By the end of 1956, rebuilding was practically complete. Two important steps were taken to deal with the disease. The first was taken in 1948 by using sulphertrone on 100 of the 384 inmates. Some patients responded well to the treatment and were discharged two years later. By 1960, planning had moved from control to eradication using domiciliary treatment. To educate hospital assistants in the diagnosis and treatment of cases as out-patients, a new training centre and hostel was built with \$49,149 from the British Leprosy Association. Rehabilitation programmes were started to help patients reintegrate in the community, and for those who were disfigured, a small operating theatre was built for reconstructive surgery. This was supported by a further British Leprosy Association grant of \$17,140. The second important step was educating both the inmates and the public to realize that patients could be cured and should be accepted back into the home after discharge. A leaving ceremony akin to a college graduation was instituted and attended by distinguished community leaders with accompanying press and radio publicity. The Governor shook hands with each discharged patient and presented them with a 'beautiful Leaving Certificate'.<sup>87</sup> As part of the change of image from a settlement with inmates to a hospital treating patients, the name was changed to the Rajah Brooke Memorial Hospital in 1960. During the colonial era, modern drugs, changed perceptions, and the assistance of the British Leprosy Association revolutionized Sarawak's treatment of leprosy.

Enteric fever and dysentery, together with other intestinal diseases, were common in rural Sarawak and also stemmed from poor

or non-existent sanitary facilities and polluted water. Enteric fevers (typhoid and paratyphoid) appeared to be declining in the late 1940s, when 107 cases were diagnosed in 1949, compared with 153 cases in 1948 and 279 cases in 1947. Actually the position had remained static since 301 cases were reported in 1961. Dysentery was a recurring problem with 2,682 cases reported in 1961, emphasizing the need for improved hygiene. However, rural and much of urban hygiene remained a serious problem throughout the colonial era and was not resolved by local authorities, community development officers, or the Medical Department. In 1961, the Department proposed training rural health overseers and a rural sanitation pilot scheme in the First Division in 1962 indicated the types of wells and latrines best suited to various types of country and community. However, neither became operative before the end of the colonial era.

The incidence of venereal diseases throughout the country was not unduly high, 1,256 cases of gonorrhoea and 1,357 cases of syphilis in 1951, although women living in the vicinity of the Paku River had a high sterility rate due to venereal infection. Diphtheria had a high incidence in the past and caused fourteen deaths in 1947, followed by twenty-three deaths in 1948. As it was largely confined to Kuching and Sibu where immunization presented no undue logistic problems, control was quickly established. Acute poliomyelitis was first diagnosed some thirty-eight kilometres from Kuching in March 1949 and spread to the Second and Third Divisions with sporadic cases occurring in Miri and Limbang. No deaths were recorded and the epidemic petered out after eleven months.<sup>88</sup> There were further outbreaks in the Fifth Division and in Kuching in 1960 when twenty-two cases were reported with one fatality. In 1959 spread of an outbreak of smallpox from Singapore to Sarawak was pre-empted by vaccination of 200,000 people in a state-wide vaccination drive.<sup>89</sup> Undernourishment was not uncommon in infants due to deficient food supplies at certain times of the year, although gross malnutrition was rare. However, iron deficiency anaemia was widespread. Following a visit by the WHO Regional Adviser on Nutrition, UNICEF supplied dried milk to supplement the diet in some boarding schools. Also the Catholic Relief Services began supplying foods to supplement the diet in rural boarding schools and institutions looking after the aged and/or infirm.<sup>90</sup>

Unlike the Brookes, the British authorities had the valuable advantage of being able to call on the skills and resources of the Commonwealth and the United Nations to implement state-wide campaigns to eradicate the major prevalent diseases. Malaria, endemic goitre, and yaws were brought under control, a start was made on campaigns dealing with tuberculosis and trachoma, and outbreaks of cholera were confined. There was less success in dealing with the underlying cause of many of Sarawak's health problems—low standards of hygiene and sanitation coupled with a lack of potable water in the rural areas. As shown in Tables 18.1 and 18.2, even in 1963 readily preventable diseases were still major causes of deaths, although crude death rates in all communities had improved consistently and significantly.

TABLE 18.1  
Crude Death Rates, 1949-1963  
(per thousand of population)

Year	<i>Bidayuh</i>	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Iban</i>	<i>Malay</i>	<i>Melanau</i>	<i>Others*</i>
1949	7.9	5.8	3.4	10.3	9.9	9.5
1950	16.6	8.2	9.0	16.0	13.5	13.8
1951	13.8	6.9	6.4	13.7	12.9	10.7
1952	17.0	7.0	6.7	16.1	12.5	11.1
1953	13.9	6.4	6.0	14.2	15.0	7.4
1954	12.5	6.0	4.8	13.0	12.3	5.6
1955	12.2	6.4	4.2	11.4	9.7	5.0
1956	9.7	5.4	3.8	11.5	7.1	7.2
1957	10.9	5.6	4.0	11.2	6.3	6.5
1958	8.0	5.3	3.6	10.7	8.1	5.8
1959	9.9	5.1	3.7	10.4	7.4	5.3
1960	9.1	5.1	3.3	10.6	6.8	6.7
1961	7.2	4.5	3.1	8.9	7.8	4.7
1962	8.4	4.7	3.3	7.5	8.1	4.5
1963	8.6	4.6	3.4	9.4	7.7	3.4

Source: Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics*, 1964, Table 1.5.

\*Europeans, being only a small fraction of the population, are not included.

TABLE 18.2  
Deaths by Causes, 1963

<i>Causes</i>	<i>Number of Deaths</i>
Motor vehicle accidents	9
Anaemias	11
Bronchitis, acute	17
Bronchopneumonia	0
Diabetes, mellitus	2
Diphtheria	11
Dysentery	43
Gastritis & duodenitis	91
Hepatitis, infectious	—
Hypertension & heart diseases	10
Influenza	14
Leprosy	—
Lobar pneumonia	313
Malaria	2
Poliomyelitis, acute	0
Pulmonary tuberculosis	108
Other tuberculosis	30
Suicide	5
Tetanus	0
Typhoid fever	10
Ulcers, stomach, & duodenum	5
Other causes	3,743
Total deaths	4,424

Source: Sarawak Statistics Department, *Annual Bulletin of Statistics, 1964*, Table 8.8.

1. A. B. Ward and D. C. White (comps.), *Outlines of Sarawak History under the Brooke Rajahs, 1839-1946*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1957, p. 22.

2. Max Saint, *A Flourish for the Bishop and Brooke's Friend Grant: Two Studies in Sarawak History, 1848-1868*, Braunton: Merlin Books, 1985, p. 33.

3. S. Runciman, *The White Rajahs: A History of Sarawak from 1841 to 1946*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960, p. 215.

4. C. N. Crisswell, *Rajah Charles Brooke: Monarch of All He Surveyed*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 119.

5. D. J. S. Bailey, Second Division April report, *Sarawak Gazette*, 473, 1 June 1905, in Robert Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: The Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941*, London: Macmillan, 1970, pp. 165-6; A. B. Ward, *Rajah's Servant*,

Data Paper No. 61, South-East Asia Program, New York: Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1957, p. 96.

6. Ward, *Rajah's Servant*, p. 95; S. Baring-Gould and C. A. Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak under Its Two White Rajahs, 1839-1908*, London; Henry Sotheran & Co., 1909, p. 178.

7. 'The Expedition', *Sarawak Gazette*, 438 (1 June 1902) and *Singapore Free Press*, 3 July 1902, both in Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 226; Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak*, pp. 388-9.

8. V. Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar: Urbanization in Sarawak, East Malaysia*, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1980, p. 185.

9. D. A. Miller, 'Charles Brooke in Sarawak: The Victorian Gentleman as Rajah', MA thesis, Ohio University, 1972, p. 147.

10. R. W. Hammond, 'Report on Education in Sarawak', Unpublished typescript, 22 June 1937, Appendix IX.

11. Chong Ah Onn, '1943-1946, Fifth Division, Sarawak', *Sarawak Gazette*, 1137 (29 November 1952): 263-4.

12. F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-1946*, London: HMSO, 1956, pp. 189-90.

13. Gavin Long, *Australians in the War of 1939-1945, Series One: Army, Volume VII, The Final Campaigns*, Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1963, p. 497.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 563.

15. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-1946*, p. 190.

16. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1954*, p. 108.

17. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1955*, p. 78; 1956, p. 81; 1957, p. 76.

18. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 96; 1962, p. 166.

19. See Table 9.1 which shows departmental expenditure from 1947 to 1962.

20. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 45.

21. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 171.

22. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1957*, p. 74.

23. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 47; *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 170.

24. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 65.

25. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year, 1951*, p. 75; *Sarawak Annual Report, 1953*, p. 102.

26. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 22 March 1960, p. 2; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1960*, p. 108.

27. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 75; 1961, p. 95.

28. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1959*, p. 96.

29. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1961*, p. 95; 1962, p. 171.

30. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1957*, p. 74.

31. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1958*, p. 75; 1960, p. 110.

32. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 170.

33. There were dispensaries at Nonok (now Asajaya), Simunjan, and Tebakang (First Division); Engkilili, Lubok Antu, and Kabong (Second Division); Balingian, Belaga, Julau, and Song (Third Division); Bekenu and Long San (Fourth Division); and Ba Kelalan (Fifth Division).

34. Hedda Morrison, 'The Floating Dispensaries of Sarawak', *Straits Times* (Singapore), 19 August 1948, p. 8.

35. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1952*, p. 87.

36. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1953, pp. 103 and 18; 1955, p. 78; Sarawak Development Board (SDB), *Revised Development Plan of Sarawak, 1955-1960*, p. 11.
37. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 171.
38. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 62.
39. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1952*, p. 91.
40. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1956, p. 85; 1957, p. 74.
41. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 171.
42. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1961, p. 96.
43. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 167.
44. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1957, pp. 74-5.
45. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1956, p. 84; 1960, p. 104.
46. Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, 1962, Table IX.
47. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 69.
48. There were 30,000 recipients of free skimmed milk (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1955, pp. 79-80).
49. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 166.
50. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1961, p. 97; 1962, p. 167.
51. The first qualified local dental officer was appointed in 1949.
52. The Dental Registration Ordinance of 1939 only allowed registration of qualified dentists.
53. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 46.
54. The hospital with staff quarters cost some \$2.5 million (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1958, pp. 74-5).
55. The number of patients was reduced from 300 to 260 (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1959, p. 102).
56. Treatment included electro-convulsive therapy, widely used in mental institutions at that time.
57. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, pp. 61-2; John K. Wilson, *Budu or Twenty Years in Sarawak*, North Berwick: Tantallion Press, 1969, pp. 80-1.
58. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, p. 51; 'Health Inspector's Travelling Report to Kalaka District', 2 August 1957, Medical and Health L1/1, Box 27, Sarawak Museum Archives.
59. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1958, p. 73.
60. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, p. 65.
61. SDB, *Sarawak Development Plan, 1959-1963*, pp. 11 and 24.
62. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1959, p. 100.
63. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, p. 110; 1962, p. 160.
64. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, p. 110.
65. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1959, p. 222.
66. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 161.
67. Wilson, *Budu*, pp. 78-9.
68. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 162; Wilson, *Budu*, p. 80.
69. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1949*, p. 70.
70. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1953, p. 190.
71. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1952*, p. 89.
72. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1957, pp. 76-7; 1958, p. 72.
73. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1959, p. 99.



74. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 162.
75. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1958, p. 73.
76. Wilson, *Budu*, pp. 80-1.
77. This indicates how little was known about rural health even five years after cession.
78. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1958, p. 76.
79. Although mass injections were less scientific than individual examination and blood tests, it was more economical and effective in scattered rural communities (Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1954, p. 109).
80. Wilson, *Budu*, Table facing p. 92.
81. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1957, p. 78.
82. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1958, pp. 76-7.
83. Ward and White (comps.), *Outlines of Sarawak History 1839-1946*, p. 15; Hammond, 'Report on Education in Sarawak', Appendix IX; Wilson, *Budu*, pp. 80-1.
84. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1961, p. 93.
85. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1962, p. 163.
86. Sutlive, *From Longhouse to Pasar*, p. 184.
87. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1958, p. 77. However, re-acceptance in the community was a slow process.
88. Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, pp. 67-8.
89. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1959, p. 101.
90. Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, 1961, p. 97; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1268 (31 October 1963): 261.

## Conclusion

ACCEPTANCE of Article 73 of the United Nations Charter and the Nine Cardinal Principles of the 1941 Constitution of Sarawak imposed an obligation on the British government to give first priority to the interests of Sarawak's people after annexation. This obligation, apart from including protection of human rights, was further defined as political development leading to self-government and economic and social development with due respect to the people's diverse cultures.

### *Political Intervention*

As Sarawak was a constitutional monarchy at the time of annexation, with government firmly in the hands of a civil administration run by Europeans, local participants in government were confined to the traditional and hereditary leaders nominated by the government. Faced with the task of preparing the country for self-government, the Colonial Office recommended a policy of first building local government as its foundation. The colonial administration moved quickly to establish local authorities, although initially much of the local participation in the rural areas was token and local authority revenues rarely matched their needs. The government first introduced monoethnic local authorities to avoid ethnic tensions, but soon abandoned these in favour of multiethnic authorities to foster race relations. Although apathy and low levels of literacy created difficulties, by the end of 1956 there were local authorities covering virtually the entire state. These built on and extended earlier Brooke initiatives, serving to school both urban and rural traditional leaders, and later elected representatives, in managing their own local affairs in a cash economy. The new local government structure also provided electoral colleges for the executive and legislature, and enabled ballot-box elections to be introduced.

Another essential feature for self-government, changes to the Constitution, was also signalled for early action by the Colonial

Office. However, government fears of political unrest emanating from the opposition to cession and the assassination of the second Governor in December 1949 virtually proscribed any action on constitutional matters until April 1952. Even then, there was little public pressure for change, and indications of communist subversion suggested caution. As a result, constitutional reform was slow and conservative. The government entered into protracted consultations with the Colonial Office, the Council Negri, and the local authorities over the following four years, after which local participation in the legislature and the executive was increased. However, the changes did not give local representatives any real authority.

Following the constitutional changes of 1956, the government began to experience pressure for further reform from Chinese members of the Council Negri and their political party, the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), but then had to reconcile this with indigenous preferences for maintaining the *status quo*. This was reflected in the 1961 constitutional reforms. These introduced universal suffrage yet made only a tentative first step towards representative government. The 1963 reforms were driven largely by the need to have ministerial government in place before the advent of Malaysia, rather than by political pressures which were largely confined to the SUPP. By this time the SUPP had little credibility due to growing evidence of communist infiltration. Ministerial government was introduced only three weeks before the formation of Malaysia, leaving Sarawak with an inexperienced government politically ill-equipped to deal with Federal pressures.

Political development in the sense of promoting political parties, a necessary requirement for self-government under the Westminster system, met with some ambivalence from the British administration. Authoritarian action towards Malay anti-cession sentiments contributed to the assassination of Duncan Stewart in December 1949, which in turn resulted in the complete demise of Malay politics until the early 1960s. Evidence of communist infiltration of the first political party ever proposed in Sarawak in 1956 changed the government's initial reaction from encouragement to discouragement. This contributed to a delay of a further three years before any political party was formed. Registration of the first party in 1959, the left-wing SUPP, led to active government support for the formation of right-wing parties to counter its influence and encouragement of party members to resign from the SUPP at the time of the Brunei uprising. Initial British concepts of multiethnic parties were overshadowed by the intervention of

Malayan politicians and civil servants who envisaged a political structure similar to that of the peninsula: conservative ethnic-based parties loosely allied in a ruling coalition.

British commitments to human rights and freedom of speech became subservient to countering communism. Seeking to control communist subversion and influence amongst the Chinese of Sarawak, the colonial government introduced retrogressive legislation that contravened the fifth Cardinal Principle, freedom of expression, and infringed basic human rights by allowing detention without trial. The legislation was generally welcomed by the indigenous peoples and was officially justified as necessary to combat communism at the time, but it was a dangerous legacy if used for other purposes.

Whether Britain fulfilled its obligations on self-government or not is a function of what meaning is given to that term. For the SUPP, self-government meant establishing an independent sovereign state, but the colonial administration had already decided this was not viable, a viewpoint given substance by growing communist subversion and the later alliance of communist interests with Indonesian hegemony. From the late 1940s, Britain's Commissioner-General quietly fostered a federation of the three Borneo territories as the first stage of a wider federation of the Borneo states, Malaya, and Singapore. The Borneo federation concept failed, due to opposition from Brunei, but was quickly overtaken by Tunku Abdul Rahman's public proposal in 1961 for the wider Malaysian federation.

After some initial reservations, the British government embraced the concept with enthusiasm and the local administration embarked on an intensive campaign to persuade the people of Sarawak that Malaysia held out the best prospects for their future. However, Britain was not willing to hold a risky referendum to ascertain the wishes of the majority on this highly controversial subject and appointed the Cobbold Commission to sample the people's views. The Commission's pro-Malaysia verdict, reinforced by the findings of the UN inquiry team forced on Britain by Indonesian and Philippine pressure, legitimized Britain's part in the Malaysia Agreement. Thus Britain met its responsibilities, if self-government meant voluntarily joining a federation of states in which federal and state powers had been negotiated and were defined in a written constitution. On the other hand, if self-government is interpreted as an independent sovereign status, the British government did not fulfil its obligations to Sarawak.

### *Restructuring of the Administrative Arms of Government*

Annexation enabled the judiciary to attain an independence from the executive that had not been possible under the sole sovereign power of the Brookes. Initially this was not apparent, as in the trial of those involved in the Duncan Stewart assassination in 1950, but was very clear in the case of Fu Tze Man in 1960. Whereas the Brookes did not permit private lawyers to operate in Sarawak, the British authorities allowed independent legal representation. The Privy Council in London replaced the Rajah as the final court of appeal and powers of leniency were vested in the Governor. Much of the judicial work previously carried out by administrative officers under the Brookes was taken over by legally trained personnel, whose main preoccupation was building a British legal structure with codification and application of statute law. The growing dominance of the 'rule of law' in contrast to the more rudimentary justice of the Brooke regime caused some unease in the more traditional sections of the community and was the subject of an ongoing debate throughout the colonial era.

In its legislative programme, the colonial government introduced a wide range of bills intended to bring Sarawak's legislation more into line with that of a modern western-type democracy. The Brooke system of using both English statute and customary law was continued, although in 1954 the Attorney-General complained about rigid application of a rapidly growing body of statute law and a reluctance to recognize Native custom and thinking as equally proper and valid sources of law. This inherent conflict between statute and customary law was contained to some extent by the structure of the courts, the Native Courts being responsible for cases involving customary law, with avenues for appeal. Efforts were made to codify Dayak customary law, and Malay customary law was given a formal legal basis by the Majlis Islam (Incorporation) Ordinance in 1954. Chinese customary law was applied to Chinese inheritance and matrimonial matters where already embodied in a local ordinance. In general, customary law was upheld by the British authorities, but overlaid with a rapidly increasing body of statute law.

In protecting democratic ideals against communism, powers more appropriate to a totalitarian regime were introduced. The

British colonial authorities extended the role of the Sarawak Constabulary into the political arena by establishing a Special Branch following the assassination of Duncan Stewart. Fearing communist insurgency in 1952, the government quickly increased the size of the Constabulary and introduced emergency powers enabling it to supervise the public closely by means of road blocks and identity checks, thus reinforcing the Constabulary's quasi-military role. Problems of literacy and ethnic imbalance in the force remained largely unresolved throughout the colonial era, but crime levels remained low, indicating a generally peaceful community and a police force adequate for maintaining civil law and order.

There is no dispute that the British administration inherited a dedicated civil service accustomed to working with the people. Its numbers had been decimated by World War II and, immediately after the war, volunteers were recruited from the Australian armed forces. After cession, the Colonial Office became responsible for recruiting senior officers and an influx of expatriate personnel, mainly with experience in Africa, began. The character of the civil service then became divided between the traditional emphasis on close relations with the people and the more remote administrative style adopted in other British colonies. Whether by accident or design, Brooke traditions were generally upheld in the outstations which tended to be staffed by former Brooke officers or those adopting Brooke values, while those from other colonies tended to be stationed in Kuching, working in more specialized functions. During much of the colonial period, no local candidates met Colonial Office recruitment standards for Division I and II posts due to very limited local education facilities prior to World War II and the interruption to education, especially by the Christian missions, during the Japanese occupation. The colonial government introduced overseas scholarship schemes and local candidates were just beginning to appear by 1963. Although a small number of experienced local officers were promoted to the higher grades, most of the senior posts in the civil service were still held by British officers when Malaysia was formed. The period of colonial rule had proved too short to provide a significant number of local recruits with the necessary education, training, and experience to fill the senior posts. In this respect, the mandate of preparing Sarawak for self-government was far from complete when Sarawak joined the Federation of Malaysia.

*Economic Intervention*

British policy towards economic development was straightforward: to raise the standard of living by fostering exports, with particular reference to cash crops, and thus provide revenue to help fund development and earn foreign currency to pay for imports. In the latter part of the colonial era, processing of primary produce to add to its value for export was also promoted. The common theme throughout was self-sufficiency in the form of balanced budgets and ability to service debts. The British administration inherited an infrastructure suited to the existing mixed subsistence and non-perishable cash crop economy, with roads confined to the vicinity of towns, limited radio-telephony services, a few airfields suitable for military use, and all government services and facilities in a state of severe neglect after the Japanese occupation. The administration relied largely on British Colonial Development and Welfare (CD & W) funding for post-war reconstruction and Britain continued to be the major donor country for development throughout the colonial era. As the economy developed, a growing proportion of development expenditure was met from internal surpluses. Favourable balances of trade and surpluses of revenue in most years between 1946 and 1963 could not finance the increasingly ambitious development plans, and in the late 1950s the colonial government turned to loan funds. By the time Sarawak joined Malaysia in 1963, a public debt of \$24,885,623 had been incurred, compared with no public debt at the time of annexation in 1946, but about \$291 million had been spent on development during that period.

Following the widely held but debatable perception that Brooke policies had inhibited economic development, the local British administration initially undertook empirical research on soils, cash crop diversification, mechanical cultivation, fisheries, and mineral resources. Results were not encouraging nor very productive in any of these sectors. Fishery studies suggested that the yield may be increased by using larger vessels and European methods. Subsequent experiments did not prove successful and the traditional methods of the Henghua and Malay fishermen prevailed.

The Department of Agriculture aimed to make Sarawak self-supporting in rice production, but viewed the Dayak method of swidden hill cultivation of dry *padi* as inefficient and destructive to the forests and soils. A continuous campaign to replace swidden with settled swamp *padi* cultivation brought about a gradual increase in the acreage under wet *padi* cultivation, but had no

significant impact on the area under dry hill *padi* cultivation. The colonial government introduced regulations that prohibited occupation of any new land by the traditional methods of tree felling and customary land was limited to that already in regular use. This only served to stabilize the acreage under shifting cultivation. By 1957, the Department of Agriculture had concluded that there was more economic merit in concentrating on cash crops since the shortfall in *padi* production to meet Sarawak's own needs could be met in times of emergency by growing other starch crops. The Department then abandoned its post-war aim of becoming self-sufficient in rice.

On cash crops, the Department of Agriculture initially viewed the primary pre-war export crop of plantation rubber as a wasting asset due to the age and condition of the standing trees and competition from American synthetics. Until 1956, the Department pursued a policy of crop diversification, which absorbed much of its resources, but without achieving any significant results. In the mid-1950s, the Department revised its views and concluded that Sarawak's rural prosperity rested on its pre-war staple cash crops, predominantly rubber, pepper, and sago. Subsequently a growing part of development expenditure was dedicated to increasing production, improving quality, eradicating disease, and basic research on established, proven cash crops.

As a result, rubber development absorbed three-quarters of all agricultural development expenditure in the 1959-63 Development Plan. The identification of customary-held land, suitable for the large-scale development of smallholding rubber, and freeing it for allocation to the land-hungry and more efficient cash crop producers, the Chinese, pre-occupied the Departments of Agriculture and Land and Survey in the latter part of the colonial era. However, the customary land tenure systems were not responsive to amalgamation of smallholdings, and the peak rubber production of 1950 was not repeated during the colonial era. Pepper suffered from a serious outbreak of disease that decimated the crops in the early 1950s. This was ultimately overcome with the help of Colonial Office experts and thereafter a modest progressive increase in production was achieved. Sago proved to be a crop in decline since, by the end of the colonial period, sago growing could no longer support a family, although it made a significant contribution to export levels. Nevertheless, the major cash crops made up a significant proportion of Sarawak's exports throughout the colonial era, but it is debatable if this made many of the Dayaks much



better off since their rubber was of low quality, pepper was largely a Chinese crop, and the Melanaus dominated the sago industry. Indications are that the Department's policies between 1946 and 1956 diverted scarce funds from expanding the production of known, proven cash crops to an unsuccessful attempt at crop diversification. Although policies were changed in the mid-1950s, and extensive planting and replanting programmes of proven cash crops were initiated, time was too short for the schemes to have any material impact before Malaysia was formed.

Forestry policies were some of the more intrusive, albeit economically successful, initiatives pursued during the colonial era. Forest reserves were extended from 5 per cent of the total area of Sarawak in 1946 to nearly 24 per cent in 1963. This reservation of forests for posterity was welcomed by the Colonial Office and, by precluding any swidden agriculture within reserve boundaries, prevented any Dayaks from establishing customary rights over any part of those lands. Felling licences were granted to timber contractors for fifteen- and twenty-year periods over large areas on a rotational time-cycle basis, based on self-regeneration without reforestation. On the pragmatic grounds that only professionally organized companies with adequate capital could cull and market the timber efficiently, licences and the wealth they created generally accrued to the more entrepreneurial Chinese businessmen. The government fostered the export of Sarawak timber and, from negligible exports in 1946, an industry second only to plantation rubber in terms of export value was built up by 1963.

By 1963, the concept of reserving the forests for posterity was starting to be challenged by reducing felling cycles on economic grounds, and the more inaccessible areas were being opened up to logging as heavier plant became available for log removal and for bull-dozing access roads. Two of Sarawak's prestige hardwood timbers, *belian* and *ramin* with their long maturing times, were already becoming scarce and were non-renewable within the felling cycles. Industry gained little direct benefit since government attempts to foster wood-working and value-added timber enterprises were still in the early stages by 1963. For the Dayaks, reserving the forests extinguished their ability to assert their customary right of securing ownership of new tracts of forest through swidden agriculture, and removed large areas from their control and direct heritage. On the other hand, the timber industry provided a source of employment for their people and was a major source of funds for development during the colonial era.

Arable land, the foundation of the economy in a predominantly agricultural society, was an intransigent problem for the colonial administration. Three-quarters of all farming land was under shifting cultivation, and Native Customary Land together with Interior Area Land, much of which was also subject to Native customary rights, made up about 60 per cent of Sarawak's land mass. The thrust of British policies was to rezone sufficient Native Customary Land for occupation by landless Chinese for intensive farming of cash crops. However, the absence of formal Native land titles, which would have facilitated the purchase and payment of compensation, and Dayak reliance on large areas for the swidden fallow cycle, made this very difficult. Also, a long, slow process of persuasion and compensation was necessary since the policy encroached on Native rights, and compulsory acquisition of land was politically unacceptable. Towards the end of the colonial era, the demand for agricultural land was further increased by the subsidy schemes for planting rubber and copra. Although the authorities were aware that delays in land rezoning retarded social and economic progress in the rural areas, no quick solution was found to releasing large blocks of Native Customary Land for intensive agriculture.

The mineral studies initiated in 1946 were disappointing, showing that all the readily accessible minerals had been extracted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Apart from a short-lived bauxite venture and the location of sources of stone for road building, no new economically viable mineral and oil discoveries of note were found, although an expensive search was carried out for the latter by Sarawak Shell Oilfields Limited (SSOL), both on land and offshore. Working on very favourable terms until 1952, SSOL's direct contribution to the state's total revenue had fallen to about 1 per cent by 1960 due to exhaustion of the Miri oilfields. The major contribution of the oil industry to Sarawak's economy was as a major employer and earner of foreign currency by refining oil from the Brunei oilfield.

The policy in relation to infrastructure for development was to provide the basic facilities for private development. Apart from providing potable water, sanitation, and electricity supplies in the majority of population centres, roads and communications absorbed a major part of development funds. A start was made on providing a trans-Sarawak highway by the construction of a road from Kuching to Simanggang, also opening up land for agriculture. The policy on roads was changed in the 1959-63 Development

Plan from one of priority for connecting roads between population centres to that of opening up a maximum amount of arable land. Port facilities were built and extended to meet the developing import and export trade, which was largely in the hands of Chinese businessmen. The British administration viewed civil aviation facilities as priming development and a network of airfields was built. This was useful for business and administration in the population centres, but less so for the rural economy. Similarly, the telephone system was rebuilt, modernized, and expanded for efficient administration and business, but this also had little direct impact on the base of the economy, the subsistence and cash crop farmers in the rural areas. For these areas, the introduction of broadcasting was more significant as battery-powered sets were inexpensive and rural dwellers, most of whom were not literate, had immediate access to educational programmes, state news, and world affairs for the first time. Thus there were benefits from the development of communications for both the urban and rural areas, but to a much lesser extent for the latter.

In the later years of British rule, attention was turned to promoting industry by offering incentives such as waiving customs duty and income tax for a period and providing credit facilities. No heavy industry developed from these initiatives due to the lack of comparative advantages, such as location on major shipping routes, deep sea ports, raw materials, and a trained labour force. However, some light industry was beginning to develop in the major population centres by the end of 1963, but this had little impact on Sarawak's exports. These new industries, like those already existing, were generally owned and managed by Chinese entrepreneurs.

### *Social Intervention*

Promotion of trade unionism, which was an integral part of the social structure in Britain in 1946, was official British policy in Sarawak. Trade unionism had no part in pre-cession Sarawak. The British administration introduced Sarawak's first trade union legislation in 1948, with safeguards of compulsory registration and the reporting of the names of union officials to the police. Trade unions were quickly established. However, evidence of communist infiltration of the Chinese sector of the trade union movement led to the refusal to register a Sarawak Trade Union Congress and to legislation prohibiting trade union participation in politics and

activities other than those concerning the direct protection of workers' interests. The largest employers, the government and SSOL, developed consultative councils and set the standards for conditions of employment in Sarawak. Salaried employment in both was highly valued. Employment opportunities for the Chinese-medium educated were limited and low levels of education amongst the Malays and other indigenous people generally restricted their roles to artisan and labouring functions. Greatly improved conditions of employment were achieved during the colonial period although, at the level of the daily paid, wages still provided only a very bare subsistence.

The initial objectives of British education policy were to give every child a primary school education and to correct the ethnic imbalance in education by providing better educational opportunities for Malay and Dayak children. Later, as the educational system expanded, policy objectives were extended to provide an increasing number of secondary school places and to bring the different school systems into one English-medium national system. In 1946, the larger population centres were served by the mission schools teaching in English, the Chinese association schools teaching in Chinese, and a small number of Malay-medium schools. The Education Department funded the Malay-medium schools directly and the mission and Chinese association schools were given small grants towards their operating costs. During the Japanese occupation, the mission schools had ceased to operate and the Chinese schools had found it very difficult to function, so that many children of school age in the major population centres, the only places in which education was available, lost four years' schooling. The highest level of education then available in Sarawak was Form 2, and only a small percentage of the indigenous people had attended school. The Chinese had a much higher level of literacy as they took full advantage of the mission and clan schools; the Malays tended to avoid both mission and clan schools on religious and cultural grounds; and the rural Dayaks saw neither need for, nor had ready access to, education.

To implement the policy on primary education, a teacher training college was established for indigenous pupils of promise. After graduation, the trained teachers served in rural schools then being established by the local authorities. The result was three educational streams at the primary school level: the mission schools of the Brooke era catering largely for the Chinese who had elected to be taught in English; the clan schools of the Brooke era attended

by the Chinese who wished to be taught in Chinese; and the new local authority schools catering for the indigenous people. At first there was a shortage of teachers. This was gradually overcome by accepting Chinese-educated student teachers and opening up a second teacher training centre, although the educational standard of most of the teachers was just above that of their pupils.

The number of indigenous children attending primary school increased very rapidly, but rural school standards were generally low and most of the pupils dropped out before completing Primary 6. Thus, very little impression was made in correcting the ethnic imbalance in general educational levels during the colonial era, in spite of an impressive effort by the local authorities in conjunction with the Education Department. This continuing educational imbalance placed the Dayaks at a disadvantage in the political, economic, and social spheres *vis-à-vis* the Malays and Chinese, and the Malays were similarly disadvantaged when compared with the Chinese. The major reasons for this failure appear to have been the lack of compulsory education, the subsistence lifestyles of the rural dweller in which literacy had no immediate role, and lack of resources to provide educational facilities in thinly populated rural areas.

In the latter part of the 1950s, the government began to implement its policies of providing more secondary school places and integrating the various education systems into a national education system. For this, the government built a number of secondary schools run by the Education Department and introduced a common syllabus with English as the teaching medium in all the secondary schools. Attractive grants offset by increased Education Department control were offered to the mission and Chinese schools adopting the use of English and the common syllabus. The SUPP, speaking for many of the Chinese, objected strongly, saying this was an attack on Chinese culture and tradition. From the government's point of view, communism pervaded the Chinese education system and, to bring this under control, jurisdiction over its administration and teachers was essential. The offer of financial support to mission and Chinese schools eventually overcame the scruples of most schools on the loss of independence, and enabled the government to increase its control over Chinese-medium education.

Gaining political control of the education system also entailed grants to the primary school system and much of the overall financial burden of education, which in 1946 had been met primarily by

the missions and the Chinese associations, was transferred to the taxpayer through the government. In 1956, public funding to aided schools amounted to \$19.43 for each Chinese student, \$4.02 for every Malay student, and \$1.80 for every Dayak student, resulting in an anachronism where the best established education system and the racial group with the highest literacy received the most government aid. The cost of increased government control over schools to combat communism in the Chinese education system was significant, and diverted funds from overcoming the ethnic educational imbalance. Even so, communist influence in the Chinese schools was at a peak by the end of the colonial period, and only 1.8 per cent of the Dayak school-age population were in the secondary school system compared with 3.8 per cent of the Malay and 16.3 per cent of the Chinese. These distortions were reflected in the tertiary education provided by the Colombo Plan and the government in the form of overseas scholarships. Chinese students were by far the principal beneficiaries of the tertiary education scholarships and were thus well placed, on return from overseas, for appointments to professional posts both in the government and private sectors. In turn, the Malays were in a slightly better position than the other indigenous people to take advantage of the scholarships.

With a small minority of the population in commerce, industry, or paid employment and the low density of population throughout the rural areas, the government was in no position to try to emulate the welfare state envisaged for Britain after World War II. Social welfare was therefore left in the hands of voluntary agencies, including the missions, co-ordinated by a Social Welfare Council appointed by the government and assisted by government grants and lottery proceeds. To improve the standard of living in the rural areas, a series of experimental community development schemes were initiated by the government. These were empirical experiments and, apart from possibly the Budu/Entiah scheme, made little lasting impression. Government policies fostering co-operatives covered a wide range of activities, such as marketing cash crops, simple processing, co-operative stores, and savings and loans societies. However, apart from some early successes in the control of selling and purchasing prices, the influence of the co-operative movement in the market place was minimal and only a very small minority of the rural population were members.

Public health was a different matter. Policies of drawing on the skills of international agencies in state-wide campaigns to eradicate

major prevalent diseases and development of the medical system were adopted. Major campaigns were organized against the causes of malaria, tuberculosis, yaws, and endemic goitre and were very successful, although all the campaigns had not been completed by August 1963. Positive action was taken to control cholera by improving water supplies and sanitation and by encouraging hygiene, although in the rural areas and on the outskirts of the population centres conditions remained unsatisfactory and outbreaks of cholera could still occur at any time. The British administration did not manage to achieve a significant improvement in the level of hygiene in the rural areas, especially in the longhouses, in spite of continuous campaigns, as hygienic practices conflicted with the preferred traditional methods of waste disposal and keeping livestock. This seriously inhibited improvement in general health in the interior.

To cater for rural areas accessible by river, CD & W funded travelling dispensaries were introduced. These provided a rudimentary but welcome medical service to the interior. Permanent dispensaries gradually replaced most of the river dispensaries and 'front-line' hospitals were built in other population centres, both by the government and the missionaries, so that there was at least one modern hospital in each Division. Midwifery training programmes for service in the rural areas were also implemented. The low density and isolation of the rural population mitigated against providing satisfactory rural medical services and the standard of rural medical attention remained elementary with services often remote. Readily preventable common illnesses such as pneumonia, tuberculosis (the mass campaign against this having just started), gastritis, and dysentery were still major causes of death in 1963, although in decline.

### *The Effects of British Policies on the Major Ethnic Groups*

The ultimate test of how well the British colonial authorities met their obligations under the Nine Cardinal Principles was the comparative effects of their policies on the major ethnic groups. Taking the largest group first, the non-Muslim indigenous people, their customary way of life—shifting agriculture—was under continuous pressure during the British era. What was viewed as their wasteful use of land and destruction of the forest were countered by placing large areas of forest under reservation for the timber industry,

introducing rules to limit customary land to that already existing, and implementing schemes to release customary land to the Chinese for cash crop cultivation.

The non-Muslim indigenous peoples benefited immensely from the mass health campaigns, although regular rural health services proved difficult to establish. Past educational disparities between the non-Muslim indigenous rural dwellers and the urban population still remained at the end of the colonial era in spite of preferential award of scholarships and the spread of primary schools throughout the rural areas. Politically, the introduction of a western parliamentary system derived from an industrialized, urbanized society, replaced their customary local leaders. Relative local community autonomy was replaced by elected representation in a complex structure that was little understood by and remote from the rural people. When Malaysia was proclaimed, one faction of the non-Muslim indigenous people was politically dominant and assumed power, but as a group they remained comparatively disadvantaged throughout the colonial era, notwithstanding their continuous, unstinting support of the British administration.

It has also been seen that the second largest ethnic group, the Chinese, benefited most at the material level during the colonial era. Real attempts were made to provide land for Chinese smallholders and remove the uncertainties of unofficial occupation. As the only large ethnic group with skills and expertise in import and export, their traders were well placed to take advantage of the growing economy—especially the timber industry that had begun to finance an increasing proportion of development expenditure through export duties. Opening up the civil service to non-Natives enabled the urban Chinese, with their educational advantages, to assume leading roles in all branches of the public sector, excluding only the Constabulary, and the customs and museum departments. As town and town fringe dwellers, most were able to take advantage of the rapid urban improvements in social services, including health and education in the English medium.

On the other hand, their youth educated in the Chinese medium had limited opportunities and expressed their discontent in communist sympathies. The ensuing struggle to gain control over the Chinese education system absorbed a disproportionate share of the education budget. Communism, an ideology confined to the Chinese in Sarawak, was at best contained. However, politically the Chinese became a strong force, well capable of protecting their own interests. At the same time, evidence of communist



infiltration within the major Chinese political party, the SUPP, inhibited their power. Although a sector of the Chinese community actively opposed the British administration and a large sector entertained communist sympathies which they had absorbed from their mother country, it is nevertheless clear that the Chinese were the main material beneficiaries during the colonial era.

It is also evident that the third largest group, the Malays and the Muslim Melanaus, was educationally disadvantaged *vis-à-vis* the Chinese, due to religious inhibitions in attending mission schools. This disadvantage reinforced the limitation of their opportunities to the Constabulary, the customs and museum departments, clerical functions, and traditional occupations, such as fishing and production of copra. This in turn limited any substantial improvements in their economic status during the colonial era, although as fringe town dwellers they benefited from the improved social services. Their pre-cession dominance in the second level of government administration was forfeited largely as a result of their political resistance to cession, and their political power was very much diminished. However, the plan to form what was perceived to be a Malay-Muslim dominated Malaysia was the catalyst for a resurgence of Malay politics.

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From this study it is evident that five fundamental factors prevented the British colonial administration from fulfilling its commitments under the intent of the Nine Cardinal Principles, namely to remove comparative ethnic disadvantages and foster the economic, political, and social development of all. These factors were reluctance to override tradition and custom; communist subversion causing diversion of substantial funds and resources to counter its influence; limitations of funds and resources that prevented more rapid expansion of social services; inhibitions in introducing compulsory education; and inadequate time to transform a pluralistic pre-industrial society into one modelled on Western industrialized nations. Nevertheless, the colonial period saw the western cultural values of the mid-twentieth century added to the animistic, Hindu, Malay-Muslim, Confucian, Buddhist, Taoist, Christian, and English Victorian values previously absorbed by the indigenous peoples of Sarawak.

Malaysia came into effect on 16 September 1963 in the face of strident opposition after more than a decade of discussion, much

of which was not in the public arena. For the British government, it was a successful conclusion to its political policies on Sarawak, which were founded on the view that Sarawak was not viable as an independent, sovereign state, although whether the pledge of self-government had been met was a matter of interpretation. However, this successful conclusion for Britain left a legacy of serious problems for Sarawak. Communism still posed a threat to internal security, repressive legislation remained on the statute books, and there was an unresolved armed confrontation, with Indonesian forces supported by communist members and sympathizers from Sarawak along the Sarawak-Kalimantan border. Largely due to the speed of change, most of the responsible positions in the civil service were still occupied by British officers, the tensions between customary and statute law were still to be resolved, and a not entirely satisfactory three-tier election system was in use as a temporary expedient. It left the Malays with a political advantage through the Malay-dominated Federal political system, the indigenous peoples with virtually no political experience, and the political voice of the majority of the Chinese discredited. In the absence of any secession clause in the Malaysian Constitution, the special rights of Sarawak within the Federation of Malaysia were vulnerable to erosion through any future changes to the Constitution.

## Appendices

### APPENDIX 1

#### Trials Following the Assassination of Governor Duncan Stewart in 1949

ON 3 December 1949, nineteen days after his arrival in Sarawak, the new Governor, Mr Duncan Stewart, was walking past a welcoming line of school children in Sibu when a young, well-dressed Malay, Rosli Dhobie, plunged a knife in his stomach. Rosli Dhobie and Morshidi Sidek, who also made an attempt to stab the Governor but was prevented by the police guards, were arrested immediately. Duncan Stewart died from his wounds seven days later in Singapore following two operations.

On 17 December 1949, both Rosli and Morshidi were committed for trial on a charge of murder, to which Rosli entered a plea of 'guilty' and Morshidi a plea of 'not guilty'. The trial commenced on 6 January 1950 before Circuit Judge D. R. Lascelles and five assessors made up of three Malays, one Chinese, and one Dayak. The Attorney-General, A. J. Grattan-Bellew, was the prosecutor and the defence was conducted by the Assistant District Officer of Binatang, John Pike. In his defence of Rosli and Morshidi, Pike asked the Court to take into consideration that neither of the youths would have been in court had they not been exhorted to commit the crime by Awang Rambli. Pike described Rambli as a discredited government servant who lacked the courage to carry out the attack himself. After an absence of only eight minutes, the assessors found both defendants guilty and made no recommendation for mercy. They were sentenced to death and hanged on 2 March 1950.

Rosli and Morshidi were members of a secret anti-cession group, the Rukun Tiga-belas, which was led by Awang Rambli. The group originally planned to assassinate the previous Governor, Sir Charles Arden Clarke, as well as a number of other European officers and the pro-cessionist, Datu Abang Yan. After Arden Clarke left Sarawak the new Governor became the main target. Shortly after the assassination, the Rukun Tiga-belas was declared illegal. Ten of its members, including Awang Rambli, were committed for trial on 7 January 1950 on a charge of conspiracy to murder and were advised that they were entitled to legal assistance.

Their trial began on 7 February 1950 in the Second Circuit Court before Judge Lascelles and the five-member panel of assessors. As before, the prosecuting officer was Attorney-General Grattan-Bellew. Eight of the

accused were defended by the first private lawyer to practise in Sarawak, Mr T. G. Dunbar, and the other two were defended by A. R. Meikle, the District Officer of Mukah. One of the accused, a youth under seventeen years of age, was acquitted and the other nine were sentenced to death. Of these, Awang Rambli, the leader, and Bujang bin Sutong, who was described by the judge as the evil spirit behind the assassination, were hanged on the 23 March 1950. For the other seven defendants, the assessors made a plea for clemency and their death sentences were commuted to terms of imprisonment, the longest being for fifteen years.

Sources: *The Times* (London), December 1949 to March 1950; *Singapore Free Press*, December 1949 to February 1950; *Sarawak Tribune*, January 1950 to March 1950; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1103 (7 February 1950): 27-31; *JMBRAS*, 64, 1 (1191): 119-26; Sanid Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985; Alastair Morrison, *Fair Land Sarawak: Some Recollections of an Expatriate Official*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.

## APPENDIX 2

### Extracts from 'Note on Development of Local Government in Sarawak, 1947'

1. In Sarawak, we are dealing with a plural society, that is, a society comprising a variety of elements which ... live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unit.
2. Our objective is to weld these elements into a united body of Sarawak citizens capable of managing in co-operation with each other their own and their country's affairs.
3. The necessary educational and unifying process involves the use of a number of agencies, such as schools, mass education, public relations, development of a lingua franca, etc.
4. ... outside the few municipal areas, local government has not gone beyond the appointment by Government of village headmen, elected or nominated by the people of their village. ...
6. If development is based on the racial or cultural community, there is the risk that ... the development of a national or corporate spirit will be ... at least seriously retarded. On the other hand if the territorial or municipal unit is the basis of development, there is a risk that one racial group ... may gain a disproportionate or dominating influence. ...
7. ... training in the art of self-government can best be given (a) to a limited extent by introducing selected Sarawak citizens in greater number into the higher ranks of the Central Government Service but (b) mainly by development of local government institutions.
8. ... there are at present practically no Sarawak citizens with the requisite educational and/or technical qualifications to fill any of the higher

posts in the Government Service. The first step must be to produce local men with necessary qualifications and character ... by the award of scholarships ... to enable them to study overseas....

10. As local authorities, except in the case of municipalities, will perforce be constituted on a racial basis, it is important to provide at the same time a common meeting ground ... by the establishment of District and Divisional Advisory Councils ... representation should be proportionate to the various racial elements in each District or Division.
11. It is proposed to carry out a series of experiments on the development of local government [by setting up Native Authorities].
12. The Malays are at present distracted and divided amongst themselves.
16. The Chinese constitute a special problem....
26. ... The District Council will provide an electoral college for the election of members to the Divisional Council, which in turn will in due course provide an electoral college for the election of unofficial members to the central legislative body, the Council Negri.

Source: Arden Clarke, 'Notes on Development of Local Government in Sarawak', Kuching, 1947 (MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 223M, RHL).

### APPENDIX 3

#### Extracts from 'Notes on Subversion in Sarawak Schools', 5 November 1959

##### 1. General background

- (a) The news reaching Sarawak about the hardships suffered under the Communes has probably reduced the number of Chinese in the country who are actively or passively pro C.P.C. to below 80%. However, the S.B. is discovering more and more Communist cells and estimates that there are about 1500 active Communist sympathisers now in Sarawak.
- (b) Communist activities are aimed almost entirely at the Chinese schools and the Trade Unions, and are supported by the left wing press (and especially the *Sin Wen Pao*) and left wing bookshops in many towns.
- (c) Where until recently the unions and the schools kept their activities separate, there are now indications that they are co-operating in *Hsueh Hsih* and various so-called cultural activities.
- (d) The leaders in many trade union activities are ex-students who were involved in schools strikes in 1951 and 1955.
- (e) Notwithstanding the known growth of Communist activities, there is little or no evidence of direction from outside Sarawak. There is evidence, however of a clandestine organization of 50 or 60 hard core members in a loose network who have links with the Sarawak

Overseas Chinese Democratic Youth League set up in 1949. The group is exclusively Chinese and its present leaders Sarawak-born, so that they cannot be deported. There is evidence, too, of plans to establish a *Borneo* Communist Party but none that such an organization yet exists.

2. Communist activities in the primary schools are usually directed by teachers, in the middle schools by teachers or pupils. So called alumni associations (i.e. associations of former pupils of primary schools who are themselves pupils of middle schools) have also been active.
5. The usual social or cultural cover is provided for the Communist indoctrination of school children, e.g., picnics with Communist songs and *Hsueh Hsih* classes, concerts and plays, and even basket ball tours. Leading left wing Chinese in Sarawak and North Borneo hold key positions in Youth Associations. Student leaders at the Methodist School in Sibü have even used evening prayer meetings for subversive propaganda.
6. The Chinese Teachers' Association which started with a majority of right wing or moderate members is now dominated by the left wing.
8. ... for obvious reasons no Colonial Government could even consider general repressive measures against the Chinese community but a case might be made for direct action against their predominantly alien education system, similar to that taken in South Vietnam and leading to its integration into a national education system. ...

Source: D. McLellan, 'Notes on Subversion in Sarawak Schools', 5 November 1959 (CO 1030/422, PRO).

#### APPENDIX 4

##### A Fourth Division Resident's View on Malaysia, 27 January 1962

'I was delighted to get your letter and hear the news....

Malaysia. Thank you for your kind remarks which I only wish were true! I enclose the pamphlet in case you have not seen it and a letter which was sent to Sir John Martin. If we were living in a nice peaceful world, I would be solidly against Malaysia as we are contemplating selling everyone up the garden path. The point therefore is why do we contemplate such a course of action at all? The answer I think is just this—we are *not* living in a nice peaceful and friendly world. Everyone will agree—including Sir John Martin—that we want more time, lots of it, but Tuanku Abdul Rahman and Mr. Lee will not hear of it, as they maintain that the speed of the times (Communism) rules out more time. The British Government is now prepared to agree they are right. Malaya, especially Singapore, is frightened of Communism and they want to close the ranks and invite the Borneo territories to join them. There can be no doubt at all that we ourselves have got Communism also but there is no doubt in my mind that we

could very easily stamp ours out. Geographically we must not be confused with the Peninsular. There it is an easy matter to take to the jungle if you are a Communist Guerilla, because the only people you are likely to meet are a few blow pipe Sakais who will no doubt help you in any case, not knowing what it is all about. Here it is a vastly different matter as the Japanese found out to their cost in your Division. A Chinese Communist who takes to the jungle in this country with its comparatively large urban native pro British population, is dead. Malaysia therefore, from this point of view does not stand up in Sarawak. But there is one far greater menace to us I feel and that is Indonesia. If these . . . can lay claim to their "blood brothers" in Dutch New Guinea, they can certainly lay claim with absolute truth to the unification of Borneo, and moreover can lay claim to have it under their flag, if only on the grounds that they own more than two thirds of the Island anyway. "They" spend a lot of time and trouble being matey with us at the moment and declaring that they have no territorial ambitions in our direction, but for me, I would not be too sure. It is even possible that a Labour Government in London on certain political grounds of advantage to Britain, would agree to let the Indonesians get away with it. Nothing will ever shake my absolute belief that all politicians are entirely without souls, and morals of any sort and they are not to be trusted with so much as your baby's rattle. Indonesia—that is why I come down on the side of Greater Malaysia. I agree that we are contemplating a sacrifice but in the long run I believe that it is worth it, and indeed our only alternative. I do not pretend that the whole show has not been worrying my conscience for weeks, but this is the conclusion to which I have come. Please God that I am right. . . .

P.S. I failed to say here that the S.U.P.P. is entirely against Greater Malaysia. The whole party is being pushed from behind by their Communist members for obvious reasons. Their right wing members such as Yeo Cheng Ho are "for" the idea.'

*Source:* Confidential letter R/1/54/2 from J. C. B. Fisher, Resident, Fourth Division to A. F. R. Griffin, Resident, Third Division, 27 January 1962 (MSS Pac. s. 109, RHL.).

## APPENDIX 5

### Governor-Generals and Commissioner-Generals for South-East Asia, 1946–1963

#### **Malcolm MacDonald (1946–1955)**

Born in 1901, the son of the first British Labour Prime Minister, he was educated at the Queen's College, Oxford, and entered Parliament as Labour member for Bassetlaw. He lost his seat in 1935 but was elected to another in 1936, after which he served in the Cabinet and for a time as Secretary of State for the Colonies. After a period as Minister of Health in

Churchill's 1940 government, he served as High Commissioner, Canada from 1941 to 1946, and was then appointed to be the Governor-General, Malaya and Singapore. With the failure of the Malayan Union plan and the subsequent appointment of a High Commissioner for Malaya, he took over the role of co-ordinating diplomatic activity in South-East Asia with the title of Commissioner-General. In this role, he acted as the high level co-ordinator of political development in Brunei, Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak, and Singapore and was the political link between the British ambassadors in the area. He was a key figure in promoting and furthering the Malaysia concept, both before and after he became the High Commissioner in India in 1955.

#### **Robert (Heattie) Scott (1955-1959)**

Sir Robert was born in Scotland in 1905 and educated at Oxford before being called to the Bar, Gray's Inn, in 1927. He joined HM Consular Service in China in the same year and served in China, Hong Kong, and Singapore. After three years as Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign Office between 1950 and 1953, followed by two years in Washington as Minister in the British Embassy, he was appointed Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in South-East Asia from 1955 to 1959. His preoccupations were more with the rapid political changes in Malaya and Singapore during a tranquil period in Sarawak.

#### **George Nigel Douglas-Hamilton, Earl of Selkirk (1960-1963)**

Born in 1906, he took degrees at Oxford and Edinburgh and was admitted to the Faculty of Advocates in 1935. Prior to his war service from 1939 to 1945 in the RAF, he served in Scotland as a member of the Edinburgh Town Council, Commissioner of the General Board of Control, and Commissioner for Special Areas. After the war he was Lord-in-Waiting to King George and subsequently Queen Elizabeth, Paymaster-General, Chancellor to the Duchy of Lancaster and First Lord of the Admiralty. His first appointment overseas was to Singapore as UK Commissioner for Singapore and Commissioner-General for South-East Asia, a position he held when Malaysia was formed.

Sources: *The Times* (London), 12 January 1981; Adam and Charles Black, *Who's Who*, 1964, London, 1964, p. 2739; *Who's Who*, 1967, London, 1967, p. 2737.

## APPENDIX 6

### The Last Supreme Council of the British Era

Chief Secretary	F. D. Jakeway, CMG, OBE
Attorney-General	P. E. H. Pike, QC
Financial Secretary	B. A. St. J. Hepburn, CMG
Deputy Chief Secretary	A. R. Snelus, CMG



Nominated members	Abang Haji Mustapha, CBE (Malay)
	Chia Chin Shin (Chinese)
	Temenggong Jugah anak Barieng, OBE (Iban)
	Ling Beng Siew (Chinese)
	Pengarah Montegrai anak Tugang (Iban)
	Ong Kee Hui (Chinese)

*Sources:* Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 350; Sarawak Government, *Council Negri Centenary, 1867-1967: Sarawak, Malaysia*, p. 24; M. B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 82.

## APPENDIX 7

### The First Supreme Council of the Post-colonial Period, 22 July 1963

#### Chief Minister

Stephen Kalong Ningkan, SNAP, Second Division Iban

#### Elected members

Abdul Taib bin Mahmud, BARJASA, Third Division Melanau

Awang Hipni bin Pengiran Annu, BARJASA, Third Division Melanau

Dunstan Endawi anak Enchana, SNAP, Second Division Iban

Teo Kui Seng, SCA, First Division Chinese

James Wong Kim Ming, SCA, Fifth Division Chinese

#### *Ex officio* members

State Secretary G. A. T. Shaw

Financial Secretary B. A. St. J. Hepburn

Attorney-General P. E. H. Pike.

*Sources:* As for Appendix 6.

## APPENDIX 8

### Governors of Sarawak, 1946-1963

#### **Charles Noble Arden Clarke (29 October 1946-26 July 1949)**

He was born in 1898 and educated in the open class school of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He rose to the rank of captain during his military service from 1917 to 1920. Then he joined the Colonial Administrative Service (CAS) and served in Africa. His last post prior to his appointment to Sarawak was that of Resident Commissioner in Basutoland from 1942. He arrived in Sarawak on 28 October 1946 in what K. H. Digby described as a pugnacious frame of mind. However, he mellowed very quickly, but left behind unresolved political tensions when he left to become Governor of Ghana. He is generally credited with the development of local government in Sarawak.

**Duncan George Stewart (15 November 1949–3 December 1949)**

Born in 1904, he was educated at Oriel College, Cambridge where he obtained his BA. He joined the CAS in 1928 and served in Nigeria, the Bahamas, Palestine, and in Cyprus on Palestine affairs. He had only served in Sarawak as Governor for nineteen days when, in an impersonal political attack, he was stabbed by a member of a secret anti-cession movement on 3 December 1949. He died of his wounds seven days later. This signalled the collapse of the anti-cession movement.

**Anthony (Foster) Abell (18 January 1950–16 November 1959)**

Anthony Abell was born in 1906 and educated at Magdalen College, Oxford. He joined the CAS in 1929 and, prior to his appointment to Sarawak, served his entire career in Nigeria where his last post was Resident of the Oya Province. According to the *Straits Times*, his unsurpassed geniality masked his strength of purpose, no doubt referring to his actions against communism. Digby considered that he did not have the same faculty of handling men as Arden Clarke, whereas Alastair Morrison described him as having the right personality, gay, humane, and unconventional, for the time and place, and regarded his appointment by the Colonial Office as inspired. He presided over a period of political stability, progress, and economic development.

**Alexander Nichol Anton Waddell (23 February 1960–16 September 1963)**

Born in 1918 and educated at Edinburgh University, he joined the CAS in 1937 and served in the Solomon Islands until 1942 when he joined the Royal Navy. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) during the war, and in 1946 rejoined the CAS, serving in the Solomon Islands, North Borneo, Gambia, and in Sierra Leone where he became the Chief Secretary. His governorship (1960 to 1963) was during a difficult period in Sarawak: the Brunei uprising involving parts of northern Sarawak, growing pressure from Indonesia accompanied by border incidents, the accelerating tempo of political change to a ministerial system of government, and the transfer of power to an indirectly elected state government. Alastair Morrison wrote that he did his best to maintain the traditions established by his predecessors, but was unduly concerned with executive detail.

*Sources:* E. T. Williams and C. S. Nicholls, *The Dictionary of National Biography, 1961–1970*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 36–7; Adam and Charles Black, *Who Was Who*, 1941–1950, London, 1952, pp. 1103–4; Adam and Charles Black, *Who's Who*, 1965, London, 1965, pp. 5 and 3157.

## APPENDIX 9

## The Sarawak Court Structure Inherited by the British in 1946

THE 1922 Courts Order replaced the four courts of 1870 with a five court system, further refined by re-enactment on 1 August 1933.

1. The Supreme Court consisting of the Chief Justice with unlimited criminal and civil jurisdiction.
2. The Resident's Courts or Courts of Magistrates of the First Class with unlimited civil and criminal jurisdiction, subject only to confirmation of sentences of death and sentences of imprisonment over ten years and fines over \$3,000 in criminal cases.
3. District Courts or Courts of Magistrates of the Second Class with civil jurisdiction limited to matters not exceeding \$1,000 in value and criminal jurisdiction limited to imprisonment not exceeding two years, fines up to \$500, and whipping not exceeding twelve strokes.
4. Police Courts or Courts of Magistrates of the Third Class with criminal jurisdiction limited to six months imprisonment and fines of \$100. As Courts of Small Causes, their civil jurisdiction was limited to cases not exceeding \$200 in value.
5. Petty Courts or Courts of Magistrates of the Fourth Class with civil jurisdiction limited to cases up to \$50 and criminal jurisdiction limited to two months' imprisonment and fines of \$50.

All Magistrates' Courts consisted of a Magistrate of the required class advised by one or more *Datu* or Native Officers. Generally, all courts had full powers to revise the proceedings of the lower courts.

In addition to the five courts, the Courts Order, 1933, stipulated that 'there shall be Courts to administer Mohamedan law and native custom which shall be constituted from time to time'.

Under the State Order of March 22, 1893, the chief of a Malay village settled minor cases and, as local head of the Mohamedan Court, dealt with questions relating to marriage, breach of promise, divorce, etc. He reported any serious crime or important question of Mohamedan law which arose, and investigated and reported on any suspicious death.

Similarly there were Dayak Courts where disputes between Dayaks were settled by the *penghulu* at the area level and the *tuai rumah* at long-house level, although sometimes such cases were tried by European magistrates according to Dayak custom. The Resident of the Second Division compiled a list of offences and fines under Iban *adat* in 1915 and Iban customary law in the Third Division was standardized and codified in 1932 after consultation with the *penghulu*.

An Order was enacted on 15 June 1911, establishing a Chinese Court with jurisdiction over cases on marriage, property, partnerships, intended bankrupts and their accounts. Dissolved in 1920, it was replaced by a Secretariat for Chinese Affairs working through established clan leaders. Outside Kuching, the *Kapitan China*, heads of clans, and local Chambers of Commerce dealt with most cases involving Chinese customs.

Sources: T. Stirling Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', Unpublished typescript, c.1934, pp. 73 and 76-7; C. A. Lockard, *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970*, Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1987, pp. 106-7; A. J. N. Richards (comp.), *Dayak Adat Law in the Second Division*, Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, 1963, pp. 88-103; personal communication from K. H. Digby, 3 October 1993; personal communication from A. J. N. Richards, 26 June 1993.

## APPENDIX 10

### The Case of Sarawak-born Deportee, Fu Tze Man, 1960

FU Tze Man was a twenty-three year old, Sarawak-born Chinese. He became a British subject and a citizen of the United Kingdom and the Colonies under the British Nationality Act when Sarawak was ceded to the Crown in 1946. On 22 August 1960, he was served with an order of deportation without trial under the Undesirable Persons Ordinance, 1935, because of alleged subversive activities. Pending deportation, he was detained in custody. The Ordinance empowered the Governor, after the Colonial Secretary had given his sanction, to deport a non-Native whose removal was considered to be conducive to the communal good. The legal definition of a Native of Sarawak did not include those of Chinese descent, regardless of place of birth and domicile.

His lawyer, Stephen K. T. Yong, sought leave in the High Court to apply for a writ of habeas corpus to produce Fu in court. Yong argued that the Ordinance was unconstitutional and an infringement of the rights of a British subject acquired by birth. The Chief Justice, Sir John Ainley, dismissed the application, saying that although the Ordinance was repugnant to the general principles of English law, prohibition of expulsion of a national as contained in English law had not been extended by Act of Parliament to Sarawak.

Fu's next counsel, T. Thomas of Yong & Co., then applied for a declaration of court that the Governor was not competent to order the deportation of a British subject, since that prerogative was vested solely in the Westminster Parliament under established law. The supremacy of the rule of law was also argued, particularly in respect of equality before the law, which the Ordinance was said to deny by differentiating between Natives and non-Natives. Described by the Attorney-General as 'coming in the category of the frivolous and vexatious', the application was rejected by Justice M. R. F. Rogers and Fu was flown to Hong Kong in early October *en route* to China.

A successful appeal was made against this rejection. Granting the appeal, Justice L. D. Smith said he agreed with the Chief Justice that the competence of Sarawak's legislature to deport a British subject from the land of his birth should have been investigated in an action calling for a court declaration. The successful appeal reopened the question of the validity of deportation of any person born in Sarawak under the Undesirable Persons

Ordinance. On 3 February 1961 the Appeal Court turned down an application by the Attorney-General to appeal to the Privy Council against the decision of the Appeal Court.

The Chief Justice said that Fu was a man with an arguable grievance and now had the chance to litigate those grievances. Fu was then at liberty to ask for a declaration that the order for deportation was *ultra vires* the legislation of Sarawak. This was not done as Fu had been deported and, had he returned to Sarawak, he would have been interned under the Public Order (Special Powers of Detention) Ordinance, 1952, and tried under the Sedition Ordinance. The High Court made Fu's counsel, T. Thomas, personally responsible for the costs of the action, but his subsequent appeal against this decision was upheld.

*Sources:* *The Times* (London), 4 December 1961; *Straits Times* (Singapore), 24 September 1960, 5 October 1960, 5 January 1961, and 7 March 1961; *Sarawak Tribune*, 25 August 1960 and 8 September 1960; Undesirable Persons Ordinance, 1935.

## APPENDIX 11

### Funding Authorities and Assistance Agencies

APART from the missions, a number of agencies helped in Sarawak's development between 1946 and 1963. The 1962 *Sarawak Annual Report* acknowledged Sarawak's great debt to donor countries and foundations, on which brief background data is given below.

#### **The Asia Foundation**

Founded in 1951 by a group of prominent Americans, it made a grant to the Borneo Literature Bureau in 1959 to finance a publications fund for school and adult books and provided rural primary schools with radio receivers for listening to educational broadcasts.

#### **Colonial Development and Welfare Acts (CD & W Acts)**

The Colonial Development Act of 1929 and the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945 viewed Britain's colonies as undeveloped estates. From 1947 to 1964, CD & W funding provided \$54 million of Sarawak's \$291 million capital programme and in the early post-war years, most of Sarawak's development was CD & W funded.

#### **Colonial Development Corporation (CDC)**

Established in 1948, CDC was set up to increase the productive capacity and wealth of the colonies. In partnership with the North Borneo and Sarawak governments, CDC established the Borneo Development Corporation (BDC) in 1958 to promote industrial and commercial development, and had started to develop small industrial estates in Kuching and Sibü by the time Malaysia was formed. Similarly, the Borneo Housing Development Ltd. (BHD) was set up in 1959 and within four years, held

mortgages amounting to \$11.5 million with 413 new commitments in 1963. Major economic schemes involving CDC were a \$2.8 million office/commercial building in Kuching, \$3.6 million in loans to develop the state's electricity supplies, and trials on growing oil palm on estate lines in the Limbang River valley.

### The Colombo Plan

Inaugurated in 1951, the Plan aimed to promote political stability in South and South-East Asia by providing technical assistance under inter-governmental bilateral arrangements. Assistance provided to Sarawak is shown below.

<i>Capital and Technical Assistance Major Donor Countries 1 July 1950 to 30 June 1962</i>		<i>Technical Assistance only Donor Countries 1 July 1950 to 30 June 1963</i>	
Australia	£ 459,000	Australia	£375,557
Britain	£4,878,495*	Britain	-
New Zealand	£ 178,689	Burma	£ 15
		Canada	£262,091
		Malaya	£ 4,524
		India	£ 4,089
		Japan	£ 14,618
		New Zealand	£224,329
		Singapore	£ 7,319
		Total	* £892,542

\*This sum does not include £1,909,887 committed but outstanding at 30 June 1962.

Major beneficiaries were agriculture, forestry, communications, power, government buildings, and housing. Possibly the Plan's most important contribution was its sponsored scholarship scheme for higher education and training in donor countries. By the end of 1962, the Plan was sponsoring over 168 overseas students on degree, diploma, and certificate courses and in practical training. Donor countries also provided teachers and experts in such fields as agriculture, communications, education, engineering, forestry, health, and transport when required. In addition, the Plan played a major role in the tuberculosis control project, funded a state-wide hydroelectric survey, and designed a new hospital for Kuching.

### The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Established by the United Nations at the end of World War II, the FAO sponsored study of fishing methods overseas by a senior fisheries officer, and one of its advisers improved timber recovery in the sawmills by 10 per cent by introducing vertical bandmills.

### **The Nuffield Foundation**

Formed in 1943, the Nuffield Foundation granted \$96,000 to set up the library, offices, and book depot of the Borneo Literature Bureau, and provided fifty radios for the Budu community development scheme.

### **The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)**

This specialist UN agency equipped a small nursing school in Kuching in 1950, and its midwife tutor and paediatric sister set up a midwifery training scheme and a domiciliary midwifery service. It also supplied equipment for natal and child health clinics, and provided powdered skimmed milk and vitamin capsules to mothers and school children.

### **The United States Economic Co-operation Administration (ECA)**

The ECA was a vehicle for US economic aid that began as the Marshall Plan following World War II. Through aid given to Britain, US\$40,000 was granted from special reserve funds set aside in 1951, enabling tractors to be bought for Sarawak's road rehabilitation, reconstruction, and building programme.

### **The Voluntary Service Overseas Organization (VSO)**

This charity was set up in London in 1958. A small number of volunteers served in community development schemes fulfilling a variety of functions, including teaching. Later restrictions on their conditions of operation limited their usefulness in the interior.

### **The World Health Organization (WHO)**

Activities in Sarawak by this UN agency, set up in 1948, centred on bringing under control two major endemic diseases, tuberculosis and malaria. The anti-malaria programme cost some \$5.35 million.

*Sources:* British Information Services, *Commonwealth Survey: A Record of United Kingdom and Commonwealth Affairs*, London: HMSO, relevant years; Colonial Development Corporation, *Annual Report*, London: HMSO, relevant years; Sarawak Development Board, *Sarawak Development Plan*, relevant years; Hansard; W. R. Louis, *Imperialism at Bay, 1941-1945: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977; Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report*, relevant years; Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary*, relevant years; *Sarawak Tribune*; *Straits Times* (Singapore); *The Times* (London); John K. Wilson, *Budu or Twenty Years in Sarawak*, North Berwick: Tantallion Press, 1969.

## APPENDIX 12

## Forestry Department: General Statement of Policy in 1954

It is the policy of the government of Sarawak:

1. To reserve permanently, for the benefit of the present and future inhabitants of the country, forest land sufficient
  - (a) for the assurance of the sound climatic and physical condition of the country; the safeguarding of soil fertility, and of supplies of water for domestic and industrial use, irrigation, and general agricultural purposes; and the prevention of damage by flooding and erosion to rivers and agricultural land;
  - (b) for the supply in perpetuity and at moderate prices of all forms of forest produce that can be economically produced within the country, and that are required by the people for agricultural, domestic, and industrial purposes under a fully developed national economy.
2. To manage the productive forests of the Permanent Forest Estate with the objective of obtaining the highest possible revenue compatible with the principle of sustained yield and with the primary objective set out above.
3. To promote, as far as may be practicable, the thorough and economical utilization of forest products on land not included in the Permanent Forest Estate, prior to the alienation of such land.
4. To foster, as may be compatible with the prior claims of local demands, a profitable export trade in forest produce.

Source: Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department for the Year 1954*, p. 1.

## APPENDIX 13

Classes of Permanent Forest<sup>a</sup>

The Forest Law of Sarawak (Forests Ordinance, 1953), provides for three types of Permanent Forest. All types are classified as Reserved Land under the Land (Classification) Ordinance, 1948.

1. *Forest Reserves.* Permanent Forests are to be constituted as Forest Reserves wherever the strictest form of control is necessary for the realization of sections (1) and (2) of the general statement of policy. They will normally be productive forests, destined to be the principal permanent sources of the country's supply of timber and other forest produce, and forests that are rich in trees of particular value.
2. *Protected Forests.* In Protected Forests the Forest Law admits wide rights to the people of Sarawak to take forest produce for their own domestic use, to hunt and to fish, and to pasture cattle.



3. *Communal Forests.* A Communal Forest will be constituted only where it is clearly the desire of a settled community to set aside a convenient area of woodland to provide for its domestic needs of forest produce.

Source: As for Appendix 12.

\*Abbreviated text.

## APPENDIX 14

### Local and Botanical Names of Various Tree Species in Sarawak

<i>Local Name</i>	<i>Botanical Name</i>
Alan	<i>Shorea albida</i>
Belian	<i>Eusideroxylon zwageri</i>
Engkabang (Illipe)	<i>Shorea macrophylla</i> (syn. <i>S. gysbertsiana</i> ) and <i>S. splendida</i> (syn. <i>S. martiniana</i> ).
Geronggang	<i>Cratoxylon arborescens</i> and <i>Cratoxylon glaucum</i> .
Jelutong	<i>Dyera lowii</i> .
Jonkong	<i>Dactylocladus stenostachys</i> .
Kapur	<i>Dryobalanops</i> spp.
Keruing	<i>Dipterocarpus</i> spp.
Leban	<i>Vitex</i> spp.
Malagangai	<i>Eusideroxylon malagangai</i> .
Meranti	<i>Shorea</i> spp.
Ramin	<i>Gonystylus bancanus</i> .
Ru ronang	<i>Gymnostoma nobile</i> (syn. <i>Casuarina sumatrana</i> ).
Selangan batu	<i>Shorea</i> spp.
Sepetir	<i>Copaifera palustris</i> .

Source: Sarawak Government, *Annual Report on the Forest Department*, various years; Personal communication from B. E. Smythies, 5 August 1994.

## APPENDIX 15

### The Land Regulations of 1863

By Order of the Rajah's Council, this 11th day of June, 1863 the following regulations for the disposal of land throughout the state of Sarawak are published for general information.

1. All unoccupied and waste lands, the property of Government, required for agricultural purposes, with the exception of such tracts, as may be reserved or disposed of by public sale, shall be granted at the pleasure of the Government to applicants on lease of 900 years at the rate of 50 cents per acre, with an annual quit rent of 10 cents per acre exclusive of a survey fee of 25 cents per acre.

2. Persons taking land on lease for 900 years to have the option at the expiration of 3 years of purchasing the land in fee simple upon the payment of the additional sum of \$1 per acre.
3. All lands granted whether upon lease or in fee simple to be liable to resumption by the state in the event of one fourth not being cleared and brought under cultivation within 10 years of the period of possession.
4. All mortgages upon lands to render them legal, must be duly registered. Registration fee one per cent upon each mortgage.
5. Squatters to have no claim on the lands to be called upon for the payment of rent and taxes.
6. In case of land taken upon lease, rent to accrue from the first quarter day after possession be granted by a government permit.
7. The State reserves the property in all mineral underlying the lands granted, upon lease or in fee simple, together with the right of way & in such portion of the land as may be necessary for the working and conveyance of such minerals, upon the payment to the proprietors of a just remuneration to be fixed by arbitration.
8. A space of 60 feet measured from high water mark to be reserved along the sea coast of 20 feet upon each bank along the course of all rivers, creeks & canals & of 20 feet upon each side along the line of all existing roads.
9. The State further reserves the right of making roads or other modes of communication through the lands, whenever seemed necessary for the public benefits.

*Source:* Sarawak Government Orders, (1860-1991), Sarawak Museum Archives, Vol. SM/SGO/1, p. 3, in Porter, Land Administration in Sarawak, pp. 32-3.

*Note:* The above are set out as they appear in the Order Book.

## Glossary

<i>abang</i>	Malay aristocratic title
<i>adat</i>	custom/tradition
<i>adat lama</i>	established custom
<i>anak</i>	son/daughter
<i>atap</i>	palm thatching
<i>aum</i>	meeting of Dayak chiefs
<i>ateang-ateang</i>	high-status Malays
<i>ayer yasin</i>	oath-taking ceremony
<i>bakau</i>	mangrove
<i>bandar</i>	city/town
<i>barat</i>	west
<i>batang</i>	trunk/main
<i>batu</i>	stone; mile
<i>bejalai</i>	journey
<i>bilek</i>	room in longhouse
<i>bomoh</i>	Malay shaman
<i>bubu</i>	fish trap
<i>bujang</i>	bachelor
<i>bukit</i>	hill
<i>bumiputera</i>	native
<i>bunga</i>	flower
<i>dahan</i>	branch
<i>damar</i>	tree resin
<i>datu</i>	Malay chieftain
<i>dewan</i>	council
<i>engkabang</i>	illipe nut
<i>fēngshui</i>	occult influences on correctly siting a tomb or building
<i>gantang</i>	measure of capacity
<i>gatwai</i>	important Dayak festival
<i>gunong</i>	mountain
<i>haji</i>	person who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>hamba raja</i>	common people
<i>hsueh hsieh</i>	study
<i>ibu</i>	mother
<i>inche</i>	mister

<i>jajahan</i>	district
<i>jawi</i>	Arabic script
<i>jaya</i>	victorious
<i>jikeidan</i>	vigilante corps
<i>jikeidan cho</i>	vigilante corps commander
<i>kampung</i>	village
<i>kapitan</i>	headman
<i>kapitan China</i>	head of a local Chinese community
<i>kati</i>	measure of weight
<i>kaum</i>	community
<i>kaum ibu</i>	women's association
<i>kejiā</i>	a Chinese dialect group, Hakka
<i>kempeitai</i>	Japanese military police
<i>ken sanji</i>	prefectural councillor
<i>ken sanjikai</i>	prefectural advisory council
<i>kerajaan</i>	appanage of the sultan
<i>konfrontasi</i>	Indonesian challenge to Malaysia
<i>kongsi</i>	group
<i>Kuching Shi</i>	Kuching District
<i>kyodohei</i>	local militia
<i>landas</i>	monsoon season
<i>lobang</i>	hole
<i>maderasah</i>	religious school
<i>mahkota</i>	crown
<i>majlis</i>	assembly
<i>manang</i>	Dayak shaman
<i>menteri</i>	minister
<i>muara</i>	mouth of river
<i>muda</i>	young
<i>mui tsai</i>	slave girl
<i>nakhoda</i>	sea captain
<i>negara</i>	country
<i>negri</i>	state
<i>orang Bunsu</i>	nobility
<i>padi</i>	unhusked rice
<i>pahlawan</i>	champion
<i>pasar</i>	market
<i>pasir</i>	sand
<i>paya</i>	swamp
<i>penghulu</i>	Iban leader
<i>pengiran</i>	Brunei aristocrat
<i>perabangan</i>	aristocracy
<i>perahu</i>	boat
<i>perak</i>	silver
<i>pergerakan</i>	political movement
<i>perhimpunan</i>	society

<i>persatuan</i>	association
<i>petara</i>	Iban god
<i>pikul</i>	measure of weight
<i>prentah</i>	government
<i>puasa</i>	to fast
<i>pukul</i>	to beat
<i>ra'ayat/rakyat</i>	people
<i>rantau</i>	stretch of coast
<i>raya</i>	great
<i>ruai</i>	longhouse verandah
<i>rumah</i>	house/family; section of; longhouse
<i>sawah</i>	paddy field
<i>sekolah ra'ayat</i>	Malay primary school
<i>Sidang Pelajaran Melayu</i>	Malay Education Board
<i>siput</i>	snails
<i>sungei/sungai</i>	river
<i>tajau</i>	earthenware jar
<i>tajau lama</i>	very old earthenware jar, usually a treasured family heirloom
<i>tanah rumah</i>	land owned by a longhouse
<i>tanjong</i>	promontory
<i>temenggong</i>	Iban supreme leader
<i>tigabelas</i>	thirteen
<i>tua</i>	old
<i>tua kampung</i>	head of a Malay/Bidayuh village
<i>tuai</i>	head
<i>tuai rumah</i>	head of an Iban longhouse
<i>tuanku</i>	Malay title
<i>tusun tunggu</i>	list of fines
<i>umai</i>	paddy field
<i>undang-undang</i>	Malay law

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