



MALAYA IN 1920

THE POLITICS OF DECENTRALIZATION

Colonial Controversy in Malaya
1920–1929

YEO KIM WAH

KUALA LUMPUR
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
OXFORD NEW YORK MELBOURNE
1982

352424

Oxford University Press
Oxford London Glasgow
New York Toronto Melbourne Auckland
Kuala Lumpur Singapore Hong Kong Tokyo
Delhi Bombay Calcutta Madras Karachi
Nairobi Dar es Salaam Cape Town

and associates in

Beirut Berlin Ibadan Mexico City Nicosia

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ISBN 0 19 582524 1

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320.939503 2
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*Printed in Singapore by Koon Wah Printing (Pte) Ltd.,
Published by Oxford University Press, 3, Jalan 13/3,
Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia*

325454

23 NOV 1984

Perpustakaan Negara
Malaysia

*To
Chui King, Kian Min,
and Kian Weng*

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Acknowledgements

THE bulk of the research for this book was undertaken between 1967 and 1970 when I was a Research Scholar at the Australian National University in Canberra; additional information was collected in subsequent trips to Malaysia in 1972 and 1979, and to Malaysia and England in 1975. The first draft of this work was written during my sabbatical from June 1978 to June 1979, and the final manuscript was completed in October 1980.

In the preparation of this book I have received assistance from many institutions and individuals. I wish to express my gratitude to the Australian National University for the award of a Research Scholarship which enabled me to write a Ph.D. dissertation upon part of which the present work is based; the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, and the Ford Foundation, Asia, for a joint grant that funded my research trip to Malaysia and England in 1975; the National University of Singapore for allowing me to go on sabbatical to write the present book; and the Malaysian Government for permits to conduct research in Malaysia. I should state that without the assistance and support of the above organizations, especially the Australian National University, this book could not have been written.

For the facilities, courteous service, and help offered me during my research, I wish to record my thanks to the staff of the Australian National Library, Australian National University libraries, National Library of Singapore, Singapore

National Archives and Records Centre, National University of Singapore Library, Straits Times (Singapore) Library, University of Malaya Library, Arkib Negara Malaysia, Public Record Office, London, University of London Library, Rhodes House Library, Oxford, and the Bodleian Library, Oxford. In particular, I would like to thank Miss M. Namazie of the National University of Singapore Library for her prompt action in securing documents I requested from time to time, and for other forms of assistance.

For permission to use the photographs in this book, I wish to thank the Singapore National Archives and Records Centre, the New Straits Times Library (Malaysia), and especially the Arkib Negara Malaysia. My thanks also go to Tan Sri Dato Mubin Sheppard who very kindly helped me to obtain copies of most of the photographs reproduced in this book.

I am indebted to the late Professor Jim W. Davidson, Dr Peter Burns, Professor Kernial Singh Sandhu, Dr Christine Dobbin, Professor Norman Parmer, Mr Edwin Lee, Professor Eunice Thio, Mr Zain Mahmud, and Professor Sharom Ahmat for their encouragement and assistance. I also wish to thank Dr Tan Chin Kwang who helped to prepare the Glossary; Dr Jack Humphrey who helped to choose the map of Malaya; Mr Yong Sock Ming who drew the above map; Mr Charlie Ng who made copies of the photographs; and Miss Peggy Lee who typed the manuscript.

While writing this book I have benefited substantially from the advice of several scholars. In particular, I am grateful to Dr Anthony Reid of the Department of Pacific History, Australian National University, for his patient guidance and encouragement without which my Ph.D. dissertation, upon part of which this work is based, would not have been completed. For helpful criticisms and comments on the draft of this manuscript, I am grateful to Professor Khoo Kay Kim of the History Department, University of Malaya, and Professor Wong Lin Ken, Raffles Professor of History, National University of Singapore; in addition, Professor Wong generously offered me assistance in various forms that facilitated

my research. I must single out for special mention Dr R. Suntharalingam of the Pusat Pengajian Kemanusiaan, Universiti Sains Malaysia, who, whether as teacher, colleague, or friend, has been ever ready and willing to offer me unstinting advice and assistance in my work. His invaluable comments on every chapter of my manuscript are here most gratefully acknowledged. Needless to say, I am solely responsible for the contents of this book.

Finally, I wish to thank my wife, Chui King, for giving me much needed encouragement to persist in and complete this book.

National University of Singapore
Singapore
October 1980

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Plates

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Abbreviations

CCC	Chinese Chamber of Commerce
CO	Colonial Office
DADO	Deputy Assistant District Officer
FMS	Federated Malay States
HCO	High Commissioner's Office File
<i>JMBRAS</i>	Journal of the Malayan (Malaysian) Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
<i>JSBRAS</i>	Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
<i>JSEAH</i>	Journal of Southeast Asian History
<i>JSEAS</i>	Journal of Southeast Asian Studies
MAS	Malay Administrative Service
MCS	Malayan Civil Service
MBPI	Malayan Bureau of Political Intelligence
<i>NSF</i>	Negri Sembilan State Secretariat File
<i>PFC</i>	Proceedings of the Federal Council
<i>PSF</i>	Pahang State Secretariat File
SS	Straits Settlements
<i>SSF</i>	Selangor State Secretariat File
UMS	Unfederated Malay States

PART ONE
INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

THE MALAY STATES BEFORE BRITISH INTERVENTION

THE indigenous Malays are believed to have migrated to Malaya from Yunnan some 3,000 years ago and driven the aborigines to the hills. In recent times successive groups of Bugis, Minangkabau, Mandeling, Javanese, and other immigrants from the Archipelago settled in Malaya, where they rapidly assimilated into the local Malay community and made the Malay population a very mixed one. During pre-British days, the Malays were scattered in villages along the banks of the major rivers and their tributaries. This riverine pattern of settlement was due to the existence of swamps and impenetrable forests over a large part of the country and to the fact that the rivers were a convenient means of communication and trade as well as a focus of political control. Except for a small body of Bugis and Sumatran traders, the Malays eked out a livelihood mainly from rice-cultivation and fishing. The Malay village economy was not completely self-sufficient but was linked to the outside world through the export of tin and jungle produce in exchange for the import of cloth, foodstuffs, and other necessities.

Upon these village settlements were built a number of autonomous political structures, but no Malay empire emerged until Malacca was founded around 1400 A.D., which was to leave behind a political system subsequently adopted by other

Malay states.¹ The Malacca government was a centralized one as it rested on its port and was sustained by its extensive foreign trade. At the apex of the Malacca political system was the Ruler who provided general direction and supervision to an administration carried on by non-royal, aristocratic ministers given such titles as Bendahara (Prime Minister), Temenggong (Commander of Troops and Police), Penghulu Bendahari (Treasurer), Mentri (Minister), Shahbandar (Harbour Master and Collector of Customs) and so on. After Malacca was captured by the Portuguese in 1511, the Ruler and his aristocrats established themselves at Johor from where they attempted to continue 'ruling' other Malay states in the Peninsula. The decline of Johor in the eighteenth century, owing to Bugis attacks, was accompanied by the emergence of independent Malay states such as Perak, Selangor, Pahang, and Negri Sembilan. Founded early in the sixth century, Perak was under a ruling dynasty which traced its genealogy to the Malacca Sultanate and fully adopted the Malacca political system. The ruling house of Selangor was established later in the mid-eighteenth century by Bugis invaders led by one Raja Lumu, son of Daing Chelak.² The minor states forming Negri Sembilan were dependencies of Malacca and under chiefs who adopted the matrilineal social system of Minangkabau immigrants who came in large numbers in the sixteenth century and assimilated with the local Malays. At some time in the eighteenth century these chiefs invited a prince from Minangkabau to become the Yang di-Pertuan Besar, thereby starting a royal dynasty based on patrilineal descent. All this time Pahang was ruled by a line of bendaharas who owed allegiance to Johor. In 1857 Wan Ahmad revolted against his brother, Tun Mutahir, seized the bendaharaship in 1863, and ruled Pahang till 1882 when he proclaimed himself Sultan.

Each of the above states was, in essence, an agglomeration of river settlements. Governmental power was necessarily decentralized by the growth and dispersal of Malay settlements and the spread of tin-mining in the state. This was so

even in Pahang where Sultan Ahmad, because of military skills and ruthless leadership, wielded more power than his counterparts in the other three states and where tin-mining was insignificant. In general, the Malay state was fragmented into districts, each consisting of a cluster of villages and occupying a stretch of the main river or tributary. At the mouth or focal point of the river resided the territorial chief who exercised direct personal control over revenue collection, local administration, enforcement of law and order, and the mobilization of manpower for war or communal projects in the district. He was assisted by the *penghulu* (headmen) who, in most cases, belonged to founding families of the villages to which they were appointed. As a rule, the territorial chief was the real ruler of the district subject to paying periodic obeisance and annual tribute to the sultan. Residing in the capital located at the point where the main river ran into the sea, the sultan was the hereditary monarch of the state which comprised several districts. He symbolized the unity of the state, was the defender and arbiter of the Islamic faith, and took charge of external relations and defence. Since the sultan was rarely more than an effective ruler of the royal district, his importance lay mainly in his ritual and symbolic roles.³ It was in the interests of the chiefs to preserve the sultanate as a basis for their position *vis-à-vis* one another and for the larger territorial unit with its advantages for trade and defence.

A confederation of nine states, Negri Sembilan, differed from the above in having a matrilineal socio-political system based on kinship ties at the bottom and territory at the top. At the lowest level was the *perut* consisting of local Malays and Minangkabau immigrant settlers related by common descent who elected a *buapak* as the head of their social unit. A number of *perut* formed a *suku* (clan) led by a *lembaga* elected by the *buapak*. Above the twelve *suku* in Negri Sembilan were the *luak* (districts) headed by the *Datuk Penghulu* elected by the *lembaga*. Heading Sungei Ujong, Rembau, Johol, and Jelebu, four of the *Datu Penghulu*, known as the *Undang* and

chosen from among members of the original settlers called *Waris Negeri* (heirs of the district), in turn, elected the Yang di-Pertuan Besar, the ruler of the *alam* (the state). Although each of the four *Undang* was in effect a sovereign in his own state, he was under the overlordship of the Yang di-Pertuan Besar. The Negri Sembilan system resembled those of Perak, Selangor, and Pahang in that power was widely decentralized; in fact, from the outset, the Yang di-Pertuan Besar was a ceremonial and ritual head 'without regalia, people or territory'.⁴

During the third quarter of the nineteenth century Perak, Selangor, and Negri Sembilan were convulsed by succession disputes and civil wars. Since the 1830s Chinese immigrants had ventured into these states in search of tin and their clashes over mining rights soon transformed them into a major disruptive force. By enriching the chiefs of mining districts, the tin industry also undermined the already tenuous central control the sultan exercised over his state,⁵ a situation compounded by succession disputes in all three states. In Perak disputes broke out among the three claimants to the throne namely, Raja Yusof, Raja Abdullah (leader of the chiefs of Lower Perak), and Raja Ismail (leader of the chiefs of Upper Perak). When Sultan Ali died in 1871, Raja Ismail was enthroned by his supporters in Upper Perak—a move strongly opposed by Raja Abdullah and Raja Yusof. In Selangor, while Sultan Abdul Samad led a relatively isolated existence in Langat, civil wars had erupted over control of Klang, the richest tin district in the state, between Raja Mahdi who was supported by the Selangor aristocracy and Tunku Kudin, Samad's son-in-law, who was allied to Yap Ah Loy, the Hai San secret society chief in Kuala Lumpur. Finally, in Negri Sembilan the Yang di-Pertuan Besar and the major chiefs lived in an intermittent state of warfare with one another,⁶ while in Sungei Ujong (the richest tin district in Negri Sembilan) the Dato Klana was challenged by the Dato Bandar. In short, central government, however nominal, had completely disappeared in the three western Malay states.

RESIDENT RULE IN THE MALAY STATES

The above highly volatile and politically explosive situation became a major source of concern to the British already established in the Straits Settlements (SS) of Penang (including Province Wellesley), Malacca, and Singapore. These British territories were administered by the East India Company till 1858 when the company was abolished and control over them came under the India Office. In 1867 control over the settlements was again transferred, this time to the Colonial Office, in order to meet the demands of the Straits commercial interests.⁷ From then on, the Straits Settlements developed as a typical British Crown Colony. It was headed by a Governor appointed by the Secretary of State and assisted by an Executive Council which tendered advice on most official matters and a Legislative Council which enacted laws and passed the annual estimates. Control over these bodies was secured through retaining an official majority in both and by vesting the Governor or the Secretary of State with power to overrule their decisions. The Governor likewise headed the administration, but the day-to-day affairs were transacted under the charge of the Colonial Secretary through whose office, the Colonial Secretariat, all official business must pass. Below them were the Resident Councillors, the local administrative heads of Penang and Malacca.

Under this system of direct rule, power was held in the hands of the senior British officials appointed by London, who consulted influential members of the European and the Asian (especially Chinese) communities whenever the need arose.⁸ Unlike the Malay states which eventually came to depend on agricultural and mining activities, the Straits Settlements survived chiefly through trade and shipping; in fact, Singapore (the leading settlement) prospered as the entrepôt of the surrounding regions and, in particular, of the Malayan hinterland. As trading centres, the Straits Settlements attracted a vast number of non-Malay immigrants who eventually determined their basic demographic appearances: in 1920,

the Chinese constituted about 56 per cent of the population, the Malays 29 per cent and the Indians 12 per cent.⁹ It is pertinent to bear the above characteristics in mind in later discussions on the Colony's relations with the Malay states.

Towards the Malay states the British adopted a policy of non-intervention until 1874. Imposed on the local authorities by Whitehall, this policy aimed to protect the China-India trade route through the Straits of Malacca without acquiring territorial responsibilities in the Malay Peninsula which might prove uneconomic or even provoke the intervention of a Third Power.¹⁰ Despite this policy, British paramountcy over the Malay Peninsula had been firmly established by the mid-nineteenth century. By the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824, Malaya became a British sphere of influence, and by the Burney Treaty two years later, Siamese influence was restricted to the states north of Perak and Pahang. The political chaos in Selangor, Perak, and Negri Sembilan now brought to the fore the need for British control as a precondition for the growth of local commerce in these states. A forward policy was therefore initiated by the Straits authorities for economic reasons, though Whitehall agreed to it in 1874 mainly to preclude intervention by other European Powers.¹¹ The result, contracted by the Governor, Andrew Clarke, Abdullah (the British-appointed sultan), and some of the Perak chiefs, was the Pangkor Engagement of 1874 under which the ruler agreed to accept a British Resident 'whose advice must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay Religion and Custom'.

Soon afterwards, Residents were similarly imposed on Selangor and Sungei Ujong in 1874, but not on Negri Sembilan and Pahang until 1887 and 1888 respectively. And heedless of the murder of J. W. W. Birch, the first Resident of Perak, in 1875, and of repeated warnings from Whitehall, pioneering Residents like Hugh Low and Frank Swettenham were bent, from the outset, on ruling the Malay states because the prevailing chaotic conditions and the absence of a viable Malay administration threatened to frustrate efforts to open

up the state for economic development. On his own initiative, and with the Governor standing behind him as the ultimate bulwark of authority, the Resident proceeded to establish a centralized European administration which excluded the ruler from executive authority. As the real ruler of the state, the Resident was under fairly tight control and supervision of the Governor in Singapore but retained the initiative in the state administration.¹² He formulated policy with or without consulting the ruler and directly implemented it in his state after receiving the Governor's approval. Subject to the supervision of the Governor, the Resident had full control of state finance, including the drafting of the state estimates,¹³ and initiated, drafted, and personally steered legislation through the state council. In this way the Resident centralized legislative, financial, and policy-making powers in the state in his own hands.¹⁴

The Resident was the chief *executive* officer in the state whose power derived from innumerable enactments. As President of the Resident's Court, he exercised a judicial function and, as chief executive, he provided general supervision to the entire judicial machinery, including the administration of religious law left under treaty to the Malays. He issued *executive* orders to the District Officers and departmental heads responsible directly to him, had virtually complete control over the subordinate state officers, and was empowered to make rules, by-laws, and regulations on state matters.¹⁵ As we shall see, the exercise of executive functions constituted the vital difference between the Residents in Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang, and the British Advisers in the other Malay states.

The Resident directed an European-style administration using English as the official language. He was in charge of a staff of European district and departmental officers who likewise performed executive functions. The District Officer took over the executive duties of the Malay chiefs, performed judicial duties as a magistrate, and generally supervised the work of departmental officers. The state departments—Public

Works, Survey, Treasury, Audit, Land, Police, Chinese Affairs, Mines—were run by European specialist officers under the Resident's control. In fact the administration from the districts upward was manned by aliens—Europeans at the top level and predominantly Eurasians, Chinese, and Tamils at the subordinate level;¹⁶ only the village administration was staffed by the *penghulu* who, however, were supervised and controlled by the British.

The British endeavoured to legitimize their rule by associating the Malay élite with the new administration whenever convenient. In the early days of Resident rule the Ruler and Malay chiefs enjoyed a vicarious sense of participation in the government since they were frequently consulted by the Resident. In actual administration, Malay chiefs were most active in judicial matters, sitting as magistrates beside European officers mainly to advise on Malay affairs.¹⁷ A minor attempt was also made to groom the Malay élite for administration, resulting in two sons of ex-Sultan Abdullah, Raja Mansur and Raja Chulan, being sent to study at the Malacca High School and eventually joining the Perak Civil Service.¹⁸

Perhaps the most significant instrument through which the Ruler and the Malay élite were brought into intimate association with the new order was the State Council. Though presided over by the Ruler, the State Council was dominated by the Resident who nominated its members, decided its agenda, and sanctioned its decisions. In the early stages it helped the Resident to frame state policies, gave both Malay members and the few Chinese representatives a real sense of participation in government, and provided the constitutional basis for Resident rule. As the sole legislative organ, the State Council enacted all the laws made and tabled by the Resident. It also exercised executive functions, ratifying death sentences, deciding tariff matters, selecting *penghulu* and *kathi*, approving political pensions and allied issues. But the State Council did not have financial authority or any say over the non-Malay establishment. By the 1890s, however, the increasing complexity of administration and the fact that the main

lines of British policy had been determined had begun to reduce the State Council to a registering body for legislation and decisions taken in the state secretariat.¹⁹

FEDERATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRALIZATION

It was clear by the 1890s that Resident rule had passed its formative stage, and key local officials like Frank Swettenham, Resident of Perak, and the Governor, Cecil Clementi Smith, started to push the idea of a unification of the four protected states under a Resident-General. The proposal was partly intended to relieve the Governor of his onerous duties concerning the protected states, and chiefly to speed up economic development through greater administrative uniformity, economy, and efficiency in a larger political unit. The immediate cause, however, was British desire to use the handsome surpluses of Perak and Selangor to support Pahang which had suffered persistent financial crises since it came under British rule.²⁰ By 1894 the Federation idea had been virtually accepted by Whitehall. The counter-proposal by the Colonial Secretary, William Maxwell, for a confederation of the Protected Malay States and the Colony under the direct charge of the Governor, which enjoyed the support of many Straits officials, therefore, stood no chance of acceptance when it was propounded in the same year. It is pertinent to note that Swettenham and his colleagues in the Malay states, who were chafing under the inquisitorial eyes of Maxwell, would have opposed this scheme had it been officially advanced, because it would have resulted in centralization in Singapore, thereby allegedly threatening the special position of the Malay states.²¹

In 1895 the Colonial Office allowed the local authorities to proceed with the federation scheme provided it received the blessing of the Malay Rulers and did not impair the Governor's authority in the states. With remarkable rapidity, Swettenham secured the Rulers' signatures to the Treaty of

Federation in July of the same year.²² The Rulers were assured that the scheme would neither diminish their powers nor encroach on the autonomy of their states, and were told by Swettenham that the Resident-General would be the best watchdog of Federated Malay States' interests in the event of disputes with the authorities at Singapore.²³ In July 1896 the Federated Malay States (FMS) was inaugurated with Swettenham as the first Resident-General.

'A man of tremendous ebullience and energy', Frank Swettenham was noted for his political realism, searing ambition, and intense egotism.²⁴ As he advanced the federation idea partly to free himself from the control of Singapore, he strove to become a quasi-independent head of the FMS and fought the Governor, Sir Charles Mitchell, his official superior, tenaciously over large questions such as land alienation and railway concessions. He succeeded to a great extent and tried to give the latter 'as little to do as possible'.²⁵ Within the Federation, Swettenham pursued a policy of developing the states on unitary lines and started to gather administrative, financial, and legislative powers into his hands. But administrative centralization had not yet become irksome and obtrusive although in 1896 Sultan Idris of Perak protested against the newly-appointed Judicial Commissioner taking over the Resident's judicial power and the appellate power of the Ruler-in-Council except in cases of death sentences.²⁶

Swettenham was tactful in his dealings with the FMS Rulers. Out of deference to Sultan Idris's view he refrained from creating a common purse in 1898. He also maintained the nominal autonomy of each state by not creating a central legislature; consequently, the State Councils remained as legislative organs but continued to have no say over public finance. But the importance of the State Councils declined further under Federation as the strict adherence to uniformity in legislation reduced them to mere rubber stamps. Finally the Federal Heads appointed in Swettenham's time had not encroached on state autonomy to any great extent. While the Judicial Commissioner exercised judicial power out of neces-

sity, only the Legal Adviser, Commandant of Malay States Guides, and Secretary for Chinese Affairs had executive authority in the states. The Commissioner of Lands and Mines, Inspectors of Education and of Prisons, Auditor-Accountant, and Commissioner of Police were advisory officers whose task was chiefly to offer advice on technical issues, while leaving state departments in the direct charge of state officers responsible to the Residents.²⁷

When Swettenham became Governor/High Commissioner (1901-4), his secretary in Perak, W. H. Treacher, acted as, and then became, Resident-General (1901-5). As High Commissioner, Swettenham shifted central control over FMS affairs to Singapore,²⁸ a development made possible by the vagueness in his relationship with the Resident-General and by Treacher's comparatively weaker personality. Within the constraints imposed by Swettenham, however, Treacher was able to spearhead the building of a more tight-knit federal administration. Between 1902 and 1904 he paved the way for the creation of federal departments under heads vested with executive power and directly responsible to the Resident-General. The aim was to meet the complaints of departmental heads, echoed by the English newspapers, that their lack of executive power was inimical to efficiency and economy. The Auditor-Accountant encountered serious impediments in updating the accounts and audit of the state treasuries because of the huge current public works projects; the lack of central direction had resulted in expensive duplication of services in the states; the procedure whereby correspondence between the federal and the state departmental heads had to go through the Residents had engendered confusion and irritation.²⁹ During Treacher's time several federal departments were constituted—Railway, Police, Forests, Malay States Guides, Chinese Affairs, and Treasury (whose head, the Auditor-Accountant, was replaced by the Financial Commissioner). As one writer puts it, the above reform set the course for the future development of the federal administration that was to 'cut deeply into the Residents' authority' and lead to 'the

centralisation of control in the hands of the Resident-General and his [federal] officers'.³⁰

Understandably, there were louder murmurs of protest against centralized control from certain Residents and Sultan Idris of Perak, the unofficial spokesman for the other Rulers. In 1903, J. Rodger, Resident of Perak, charged that the Railways Enactment, which vested executive power on the General Manager of Railway, had violated state rights allegedly guaranteed under treaty. During a Conference of Rulers in the same year, Sultan Idris criticized administrative amalgamation and demanded that 'the affairs of each state may be managed by its own officers so that the Governments may be separate entities'.³¹ But, on the whole, the Residents still found the degree of centralization tolerable as Treacher continued to delegate to them wide powers over specific aspects of state administration³² and their more frequent discussions with the Resident-General in the Residents Conference enabled them vitally to help shape policy and legislation. Aghast at the excessive degree of centralization in the FMS in the 1920s, E. W. Birch thus recalled his own experiences as Resident of Negri Sembilan and Perak:

[During Swettenham's and Treacher's time the Rulers had] a voice in the administration of their own States through the British Residents, the Resident-General intervening and when necessary controlling. The British Resident ran his own administration, prepared estimates which showed the whole revenue and expenditure of his own state and generally carried on without his orders and actions being controlled by Federal Heads of departments.

When I was British Resident in Negri Sembilan, I used to attend with the Resident-General when the Governor went through the Estimates. I had a full say in conversation (which is definitely better than writing) when any alteration was contemplated. I had a say in the selection of officers sent to serve in my state. I was consulted in important appointments before the selection was made. . . .

My estimates showed every dollar collected in Negri Sembilan and Perak and every dollar expended. I used to explain my estimates to Sultan Idris and always consulted him as to new roads and new works and the

progress of mining and agriculture. I took the State Council into my confidence and Federal legislation was fully explained to them.

This was, I submit, the ideal system and Federation did not interfere with it until Taylor came.³³

The expansion of the federal bureaucracy was speeded up by Swettenham's successor, Sir John Anderson (1904-11), and by W. H. Taylor, Resident-General (1905-11). It was buttressed by the spreading network of railways, roads, and telecommunication which lubricated official business and economic growth. The rapid rise of the rubber industry and the further growth of the tin industry also exerted incessant pressure on the government to centralize the administration.³⁴ Having no experience of the Malay states, Taylor had no qualms in trying to administer the FMS in the fashion of a Crown Colony like Ceylon from where he came. During his time the Residents found the federal administration generally rigid and inclined to be unresponsive to ideas from below. Besides federal departments controlled by executive heads continued to mushroom between 1905 and 1911—Posts and Telegraphs, Printing, Medical, Labour, Agriculture, Survey; by then, in fact, nearly every important service had come under the centralized control of a single head.³⁵ But the federal administration had begun to lose touch with Malay society, as District Officers tended to be tied to the office stool doing paper work—a sight that was to become common in the 1920s.

In 1909 Anderson established a Federal Council to secure greater uniformity in legislation and entered directly into the FMS administration by becoming its president and most importantly, to accord the expanding mining and rubber interests a say in public affairs.³⁶ In the Council the High Commissioner and Resident-General took precedence over the Rulers who became ordinary members without veto power; the presence of an official majority made it even clearer that the legislature was under indisputable British control. The Rulers agreed to this measure on the condition that the

Federal Council would not diminish the State Councils' 'present power and privileges' and presumably in the belief that it would increase the influence of the state legislatures.³⁷ But the Federal Council was, in both intention and effect, a principal vehicle for tightening central control. It rapidly came to pass nearly all laws in the FMS. In 1910, acting on the suggestion of the unofficial members, the government initiated the first Supply Enactment which entrusted control of FMS finance to the Council and allotted all expenditure of the Federation and the states. By now, surplus revenue had also come to be pooled in the federal treasury and utilized for the benefit of the federation as a whole, although the four state treasuries remained to 'throw a veil of mystery over our finance' because the Rulers were still apprehensive of the creation of a common purse. But the above developments meant that, in effect, a common purse had come into existence.³⁸

During Anderson's time the Resident lost a large degree of his powers to the centre. It is little wonder that Residents and Rulers protested more frequently and vehemently against federal encroachment on state rights. The most outspoken critic was E. W. Birch, Resident of Perak (1904-11) and leader of a group of younger 'pro-Malay' officers like R. Wilkinson, A. S. Haynes, C. W. C. Parr, R. O. Windstedt, and C. W. Harrison. Depicting the Malays as the natural heirs to the country, these officers sought not only to promote Malay interests within the new order but to preserve state rights as well.³⁹ Understandably, Birch complained of Taylor's curtailment of the Residents' power 'as is now being done every day in many ways that delay administration and cause a feeling of irritation'.⁴⁰ Birch was strongly supported by a disenchanted Sultan Idris who practically accused Anderson in 1905, and again in 1910, of having violated the Treaty of Federation and who made it a habit every year to threaten to write to the King and the Secretary of State concerning British bad faith. But they protested in vain. Believing that Birch was 'inciting the Sultan of Perak to kick against the

authority of the High Commissioner',⁴¹ the Colonial Office, acting on Anderson's advice, even reprimanded Birch in 1908.

Anderson was chiefly responsible for planning the future of Malaya as the Colonial Office at this time pursued 'a hand to mouth' policy.⁴² Desiring to strengthen the nexus existing between the Colony and the FMS, he formed three joint departments—Forests, Education, Labour—with jurisdiction over both areas. However, Anderson's proposal of an Administrative Council chaired by the High Commissioner and consisting of the Residents and Rulers, allegedly to enable him to become the chief executive officer of the FMS, was rejected by Whitehall; instead, he acquired the right to preside over the Residents Conference and therefore, have a direct hand in framing policies in the FMS. This, along with the presidency of the Federal Council, became Anderson's entrée into the administration of the Federation.

Anderson was 'a man of clear vision and large views', forceful and autocratic.⁴³ His ultimate aim was a united Malaya consisting of the Malay states and the Colony. His determination to exercise real control over both the Colony and the FMS soon brought him into conflict with Taylor, an equally assertive and determined personality. Confronted with a series of deficits in the Colony between 1906 and 1910, Anderson was compelled to use the handsome surpluses of the FMS to finance British expansion into Borneo and the northern Malay states. As this was a novel practice since FMS funds had hitherto been spent solely in the Federation, it was vehemently resisted by Taylor who felt duty-bound to protect FMS interests from being sacrificed for non-Federation ends.⁴⁴ But 'Sir John was autocratic, and could not tolerate that the Resident-General should be able to say him "nay", when the Colonial Secretary in the Crown Colony had no such powers'.⁴⁵ Since Taylor was able to maintain a substantial degree of independence, Anderson decided to undermine his position. He was supported by the Residents and the Rulers seemingly in the belief that the change would check further encroachment on state autonomy. Accordingly in 1911 the

title of Resident-General was changed to that of Chief Secretary so as to leave no room for doubt that this official was the High Commissioner's 'principal adviser and mouthpiece in the FMS and not a quasi-independent head of a separate administration'. This change was opposed by all the Unofficials of the Federal Council who feared that FMS interests, believed to differ from the Colony's, would be adversely affected and that the High Commissioner would be dipping his hand freely into the 'overflowing exchequer' of the Federation.⁴⁶ Soon after the change, Anderson left Malaya in 1911 and no further steps were taken materially to affect the position of the Chief Secretary.

ADVISORY RULE IN THE UNFEDERATED MALAY STATES (UMS)

Though this study is confined to the FMS, it is pertinent to discuss briefly developments in Johor and the northern states of Kelantan, Kedah, Trengganu, and Perlis. During the 1880s and 1890s local ambition to bring the northern states under British rule was blocked by the imperial government for fear that this might goad France into absorbing Siam, thus advancing French colonial power in the Indo-China Peninsula to the frontier of British Burma. However, a series of treaties with France and Siam between 1896 and 1899 not only guaranteed the integrity of Siam proper (the Menam Valley) but also ensured that no third power would be permitted to secure a foothold in the northern Malay states with Siam's consent. The way was therefore paved for bringing the northern states under British rule in order to promote British commerce and avert foreign intervention, especially from Germany then challenging British global trade and naval supremacy.⁴⁷ The result was the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1902 under which Siam had to appoint British officers from its own service as Advisers in Kelantan and Trengganu, whose advisory power was similar to that of an FMS Resident. Though the latter state refused to accept an Adviser, this treaty was a prelude to the

Anglo-Siamese Agreement of 1909 which introduced British Advisers with the same power in Perlis, Kedah, and Kelantan and a British Agent with consular functions in Trengganu. Meanwhile the desire to curb Sultan Ibrahim of Johor's aspiration to full independence in internal matters, as well as British ambition for control, resulted in a treaty five years later which imposed on Johor a General Adviser with the advisory power of an FMS Resident. As we shall see, no such Adviser was appointed in Trengganu till 1919. The above states came to be known collectively as the Unfederated Malay States (UMS).

In order better to understand later British efforts to bring Resident rule in the FMS nearer to Advisory rule in the UMS, it is essential to outline the latter system in the early 1920s.⁴⁸ Under the treaty, the British Adviser occupied a juristic position identical to that of an FMS Resident. As the UMS were not federated, and were subject only to the general supervision of the High Commissioner who played no executive role therein, the British Adviser and the state government enjoyed a large degree of local autonomy. The Adviser had only to follow the general policies laid down by the High Commissioner and had a limited correspondence with Singapore, usually over formal matters such as legislation.⁴⁹ But indisputably the Adviser and his small coterie of British officers, who occupied control posts, were the ones who initiated and framed policies and provided the motive power behind the state administration. Policies, legislation, administrative schemes, and departments were usually modelled after those of the FMS or the Straits Settlements. The High Commissioner, who co-ordinated affairs, consciously endeavoured to bring about greater uniformity and closer co-operation between the UMS and the other states; the British officers did the same as they were familiar with the policies and practices of either the FMS or the Colony from where they were seconded. In short British control was as effectively, albeit more subtly, maintained in the UMS as in the FMS.

The British Adviser in an unfederated state was, in practice,

truly an advisory officer without executive power. Initially, George Maxwell, the first Adviser in Kedah (1909-14), conducted himself as a Resident, issuing executive instructions to departmental and other officers, refusing to be outvoted in the State Council, and ignoring the council in the day-to-day administration of the state. Strong Malay resistance involving mass resignation from the legislature and a boycott of the administration soon created a crisis that necessitated Anderson's intervention in 1910.⁵⁰ After the crisis Maxwell cooperated so well with the Malay elite in setting up Advisory rule in Kedah that Tengku Mahmud, the exceptionally influential *Mentri Besar* (Chief Minister) of the state, described him twenty years later as 'my old enemy and my old friend'.⁵¹ In other words, the UMS Adviser failed to acquire executive power because of Malay opposition to a Resident-type Adviser, the existence of a viable administration especially in Kedah and Johor at the time of British intervention, the sympathy of seconded British officers for Malay aspirations, and the absence of pressure, except in Johor, from any great array of alien economic interests. Under Advisory rule, statutory authority was not vested in the Adviser whose name did not appear in General Orders, Gazettes, Notifications, and other state documents. He had no elaborate state secretariat; in fact, he had only a rudiment of a secretariat in Trengganu as late as 1936.⁵² He had no power to issue executive orders to departmental and other state officers.⁵³ And although he prepared the state estimates, the Adviser did so only after careful and close consultations with the Rulers and the key Malay officers.

Generally, the state administration was actually carried on by Malays supervised and controlled by the British Adviser and other British functionaries. The executive role and the statutory powers of the FMS Resident were partly assumed by the Malay Secretary who directed a Malay Secretariat through which all business of state must pass. Under normal circumstances, the Malay Secretary jointly resolved all minor and routine matters with the Assistant Adviser, and important issues with the Adviser before they were submitted to

the Ruler in their weekly meeting. At this point the Adviser, having all the positional papers before him, was able to advise whether important questions should be approved, amended, or laid in the State Council for a decision;⁵⁴ but once a final decision had been taken, executive orders for implementation would be issued by the Malay Secretariat. Thus, the Rulers and the Malay élite played an *active* role in the detailed administration of the state.

The Ruler-in-Council constituted a crucial component of the official machine in an unfederated state. In Kelantan, Perlis, and Kedah the State Council, whose members were appointed by its chairman, the Sultan/Regent, was the source of legislative, financial, and executive powers. It was the sole legislative body passing enactments and making rules, regulations and notifications. As an executive organ, the State Council reviewed, changed, and approved decisions arrived at by the British Adviser, the Ruler/Regent, the Mentri Besar, and the Malay Secretary concerning such wide-ranging subjects as land, mining, agriculture, health, government appointments, service schemes, and the like. Finally, the State Council passed the state estimates and generally controlled the utilization of state funds. In Johor and Trengganu (whose constitution was modelled after Johor's) powers were divided between two councils. The State Council whose members were appointed by the Sultan but which was chaired by the Mentri Besar, held legislative and financial powers and generally acted as an advisory body on state affairs. Executive authority lay in the Executive Council in Johor and the Council of Ministers in Trengganu, each presided over by the Sultan. Through presiding over the Executive Council, for instance, Sultan Ibrahim of Johor, who took a more active interest in state affairs than any other Ruler,⁵⁵ played a direct part in clearing routine state matters, 'initiating' all legislation and important government proposals, scrutinizing all applications for agricultural and mining land, as well as contracts and tenders for public works.⁵⁶ In all the UMS the Ruler's consent was indispensable before enactments and

other state documents could have the force of law. Although decisions in the UMS were generally taken through consultations outside the council, the Ruler-in-[State or Executive] Council was a really active body and wielded far more powers than its counterpart in the FMS. It is only natural that the Ruler and the Malay élite stood jealous guard over the autonomy of their state.⁵⁷

Because of financial stringencies and political expediency, British policy since 1909 aimed to leave the administration in the UMS in Malay hands as far as possible.⁵⁸ Consequently, the administration reflected the Malay character of the state. Malay was the medium in the administration and the courts in Perlis, Kedah, Trengganu, and Kelantan; in Johor both Malay and English were officially used. In all the states British officers formed a minority, the seconded Malayan Civil Service (MCS) officers playing the role of British Adviser, Assistant Adviser, Legal Adviser, and Adviser Land, the specialist officers becoming Commissioners of Police and Survey, Principal Medical Officer, Director of Public Works, and so on. On the whole, the administration was staffed chiefly by Malays. The Malay élite filled key posts as *Mentri Besar*, Malay Secretary, Malay Judge, and State Treasurer or worked as assistants to British officers seconded to the state departments. All the District Offices in Kedah, Perlis, and Trengganu were filled by Malays; in Kelantan and especially Johor they were shared between Malay and British officers. Except in Johor where there was a fair sprinkling of Chinese, Tamils, and Eurasians, the subordinate services were virtually monopolized by Malays. Finally Malays occupied all the units in the judiciary system except for the Court of Appeal, Supreme Court, High Court, and (in Johor) the Magistrate's Court where they sat jointly with British judges. Although less efficient than the FMS administration, the Advisory system was preferred by the Malay élite and their British advisers because it was competent and more economical, and offered Malays a sense of satisfaction that the state was genuinely run on their behalf.⁵⁹

BRITISH POLICY, 1911-1920

In view of the above position, the Malay Rulers and élite were determined to maintain the UMS as separate and distinct entities. As early as August 1909 Anderson wrote to Whitehall, 'It will be a long time before we can bring Kedah into the Federated Malay States'⁶⁰ because the Malay élite feared that they would consequently be stripped of their powers like their FMS counterparts. It was possible that Anderson accordingly decided in 1910 to decentralize the FMS administration with a view eventually to inducing the UMS to join a larger Malayan unit,⁶¹ but no step was taken towards that end after his departure from Malaya. Probably because of the First World War, the government did not even formulate a pan-Malayan policy clearly stating the British goal to be a Malayan federation of all the Malay states. The only attempt at this was made by George Maxwell in 1915 in a policy outline that was later elaborated and submitted to the Colonial Office in October 1920 as discussed in chapter three.⁶² Maxwell's memorandum failed to interest Edward Brockman (Chief Secretary, 1911-20) or Arthur Young (High Commissioner, 1911-19). Had it become official policy, it would certainly have made no headway in the UMS. As recently as September 1920, Johor had made its opposition clear to any entry into the FMS when the Malayan Council of Judges proposed, for the sake of uniformity, that the Judge in the state should be redesignated Judicial Commissioner as in the Federation. The General Adviser warned, '[The Ruler-in-Council] agreed to the Judgeship and will look upon the proposed change as an attempt to draw Johor into the FMS with a wedge'.⁶³ Naturally, the proposal was unanimously thrown out by the Ruler-in-Council.

Meanwhile, Arthur Young strengthened his juristic position in the FMS *vis-à-vis* the Chief Secretary. Through a bill in 1912, he gained the right to sign international treaties on behalf of the FMS, and through another in 1914, he acquired extensive powers to tackle emergencies during the war. The

latter bill was renewed in 1917 and revised two years later whereby the High Commissioner was authorized to delegate his powers to the Chief Secretary. Despite the above development, the relationship between Brockman and Young was smooth and cordial. Not an assertive man eager to wield real power and control in the FMS, a fact symbolized by his return to the Chief Secretary of Carcosa, which Anderson had seized for the High Commissioner, Young did nothing to challenge Brockman's assumption of the powers of the former Resident-General. Under Brockman, the FMS administration was further centralized. Presumably both Brockman and Young were too preoccupied with the vast increase in work during the war years and felt that it was not a time to introduce controversial issues such as decentralization in Malaya. Till 1916 the buoyant economy and thereafter, the shortage of manpower arising from the despatch of many British officials to the European war front, exerted insistent pressure to push decision-making to the centre.⁶⁴ In short, Brockman was practically a quasi-independent head of the FMS. During his time it was generally recognized that the Chief Secretary was *de facto* senior to the Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlements, even though Anderson had intended that the two officers should be equal in status. The Chief Secretary enjoyed a higher salary and wore the second-class Civil Service uniform as against the third-class uniform of the Colonial Secretary.

Meantime, the British Agent in Trengganu exercised little power in the administration. Sultan Zainal Abidin and his chief adviser, Haji Ngah (Mentri Besar after 1917), were determined to exclude the British from state affairs as far as possible and entrench the power of the traditional Malay élite. This was largely achieved through a Trengganu constitution drafted by Haji Ngah in 1911⁶⁵ and modelled after that of Johor. Consequently the British Agent failed to interest the Malays in reforms such as the abolition of debt-slavery and a proper land tenure that would facilitate economic development. When the war was nearing its end in 1918,

Young decided to put things on a better footing in Trengganu before he retired. Accordingly he convened a Commission of Enquiry to investigate charges of maladministration in Kemaman, scandals in the police and the prison, and over-generous concessions granted to Rajas and Chiefs. Based on the recommendation of the commission which claimed that the charges were true, a British Adviser was imposed on Trengganu in May 1919. When Sultan Mohamed (Zainal Abidin's successor) continued to resist British control on the ground that the presence of the British Adviser violated the Trengganu constitution, he was forced to abdicate in the same year and was replaced by Sultan Suleiman. The position in 1920 was therefore, that the British had acquired complete effective control and direction of every state and settlement in Malaya.

1. J. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, London, Reprint, 1969, p. 7.
2. Khoo Kay Kim, *The Western Malay States, 1850-1873*, Kuala Lumpur, 1972, p. 13.
3. J. Gullick, pp. 44-9.
4. Khoo Kay Kim, p. 17; E. Sadka, *The Protected Malay States, 1874-95*, Singapore, 1968, p. 9.
5. For discussion, see Khoo Kay Kim, chs. 5-7; for a major study on the tin industry see Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, Tucson, 1965.
6. J. Gullick, pp. 11-17.
7. For detailed studies of the history of the Straits Settlements up to 1867, see L. A. Mills, 'A History of British Malaya', *JMBRAS* (reprint), Vol. XXXIII, Part 3, 1960; M. Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements, 1826-67*, London, 1972.
8. For discussion, see R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, Kuala Lumpur, Reprint, 1964, chs. II and VI.
9. J. E. Nathan, *The Census of British Malaya 1921*, London, 1922, pp. 148-9.
10. N. Tarling, 'British Policy in the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago, 1824-71', *JMBRAS*, Vol. XXX, Part 3, 1957, pp. 9, 17.

11. For detailed studies of British intervention in the Malay States see C. D. Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control*, London, 1961; C. N. Parkinson, *British Intervention in Malaya, 1867-77*, Singapore, 1960; E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1910*, Kuala Lumpur, 1969; W. D. McIntyre, 'British Policy in West Africa, the Malay Peninsula and South Pacific during the Colonial Secretaryships of Lord Kimberley and Lord Carnarvon, 1870-76', Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1959.

12. E. Sadka, pp. 139, 155.

13. E. Sadka, 'The State Councils of Perak and Selangor, 1877-1895', K. G. Tregonning (ed.), *Papers on Malayan History*, Singapore, 1961, pp. 105-6.

14. For an excellent discussion of Resident rule in the protected Malay states, see E. Sadka.

15. For example: rules on land alienation and forest reserves, by-laws prohibiting lorries from using certain roads, and regulations on drainage rates and survey fees; the Residents also had powers to appoint Magistrates or members of Sanitary and other Boards, create or revoke forest reserves and acquire land for public purposes. For discussion, see George Maxwell, 'The Executive Powers of the British Residents', *British Malaya*, Vol. VII, no. 5, September 1932, p. 114; George Maxwell, 'Your Highnesses' Resident Advisers', encl. to Maxwell to Philip Cunliffe-Lister 6.2.1932, CO 717/88/92300 Part I/1932.

16. E. Sadka, p. 236.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 171-2.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

19. For discussion, see K. G. Tregonning (ed.), p. 118.

20. For discussion, see E. Thio, chs. V-VII; Khoo Kay Kim, 'The Origin of the Federation', *Peninjau Sejarah*, Vol. I, no. 2, December 1966; E. Sadka, ch. XI; P. Burns, 'The Constitutional History of Malaya with special Reference to the Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, 1874-1914', Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1965; E. Chew, 'Sir Frank Swettenham's Malayan Career Up to 1896', M.A. Thesis, University of Singapore, 1966.

21. E. Thio, p. 155.

22. For an account of this, see Notes on a Policy in respect of the Unfederated Malay States 15.10.1920 by George Maxwell, Eastern no. 135 confidential, CO 717/10/1920.

23. F. Swettenham, *British Malaya*, London, revised edition, 1948, pp. 273-4.

24. E. Sadka, p. 209; E. Thio, pp. XVI, 157, 182.

25. E. Thio, p. 173.
26. E. Sadka, pp. 259-60.
27. P. Burns, pp. 252-9.
28. E. Thio, pp. 182-3.
29. P. Burns, pp. 260-3.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
31. Notes on a Policy in respect of the Unfederated Malay States 15.10.1920 by George Maxwell, Eastern no. 135 Confidential, CO 717/10/1920.
32. P. Burns, p. 265.
33. E. Birch to Association of British Malaya 7.10.1925, CO 717/46.
34. L. N. Guillemard to J. Thomas 21.10.1924, CO 717/34/1924.
35. Observations upon the Constitution of the FMS, with particular reference to the Policy of Decentralisation and the Appointment of the Chief Secretary to Government by George Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45/1925. (Henceforth cited as Observations on Decentralisation.)
36. E. Thio, pp. 194-5.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 196; P. Burns, p. 335.
38. Report of the Committee appointed to examine the Financial Aspect of the Devolution Policy outlined in Federal Council Paper no. 39 of 1925, Confidential 9.4.1926, SSF 572/1933.
39. E. Birch to Resident-General 11.10.1910 and 'The Malay Race in the FMS', by E. Birch 28.5.1906, The Personal Papers of E. Birch, Rhodes House, Oxford.
40. E. Thio, p. 212.
41. P. Burns, pp. 306-7.
42. For discussion on Anderson as Governor-High Commissioner, see E. Thio, ch. VIII.
43. L. Guillemard to Duke of Devonshire 19.3.1923, CO 717/27/1923.
44. E. Thio, pp. 205-6.
45. Cited in R. Emerson, p. 146.
46. E. Thio, p. 214.
47. For discussion, see E. Thio, 'British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1909', Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1956; also Chandran Jeshurun, *The Contest for Siam 1889-1902: A Study in Diplomatic Rivalry*, Kuala Lumpur, 1977.
48. The following account of Advisory rule in the UMS is partly based on the following sources: R. Emerson, chs. V, VII; C. S. Kessler,

Islam and Politics in a Malay State: Kelantan 1838-1969, Ithaca, 1978, chs. I-II; A. M. Mackeen, 'An Islamic Constitutional Document in Malaysia', S. T. Alisjahbana, Xavier S. Thani Nayagam, and Wang Gungwu (ed.) *The Cultural Problems of Malaysia in the Context of Southeast Asia*, Kuala Lumpur, 1965; M. C. Sheppard, 'A Short History of Trengganu', *JMBRAS*, Vol. XXII, Part 3, June 1949; Chan Su Ming, 'Kelantan and Trengganu 1909-1939', *JMBRAS*, Vol. XXXVIII, Part I, July 1965; L. Roberts, 'Kelantan 1890-1939: Government in Transition', M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, 1973; Sharom Ahmat, 'The Economic and Political History of Kedah', Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1969; J. de V. Allen, 'The Elephant and the Mousedeer - A New Version: Anglo-Kedah Relations 1905-1909', and 'The Ancien Regime in Trengganu 1909-1919', *JMBRAS*, Vol. XLI, Part I, July 1968; W. Roff (ed.), *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, Kuala Lumpur, 1974; Zaimiah binte Mohamed Adam, 'Sultan Ibrahim of Johore, 1873-1959', Academic Exercise, University of Malaya in Singapore, 1961; George Maxwell, 'Malaya's Constitutional Problems', *British Malaya*, Vol. VII, no. 8, December 1932. These sources will not be cited in the discussion in the following pages unless it is essential to do so.

49. Memo on the Working of the Advisory System in the Protected Unfederated Malay State of Kedah 21.8.1932 by A. C. Baker, CO 717/88/92300 Part II/1932.

50. For discussion, see Sharom Ahmat, pp. 257-65.

51. Memo on the Working of the Advisory System in the Protected Unfederated Malay State of Kedah 21.8.1932 by A. C. Baker, CO 717/88/92300 Part II/1932.

52. See British Adviser, Trengganu's Informal Diary (Monthly) to High Commissioner 1935-6, J. E. Kempe, Rhodes House, Oxford.

53. George Maxwell, 'Your Highnesses' Resident Advisers', encl. to Maxwell to Cunliffe-Lister 6.2.1932, CO 717/88/92300 Part I/1932.

54. *Ibid.* Memo on the Working of the Advisory System in the Protected Unfederated State of Kedah 21.8.1932 by A. C. Baker, *ibid.*, Part II; Memo on the Advisory System in Trengganu 30.10.1932 by C. C. Brown, *ibid.*

55. H. Clifford to L. A. Amery 24.1.1929, CO 717/63/1928.

56. W. E. Pepys, General Adviser Johor to Secretary to High Commissioner 13.6.1937, HCO 707/1937.

57. Even the indecisive and relatively weak Sultan Suleiman of Trengganu used to annoy one British Adviser, G. A. de Moubray, by frequently reminding the latter that many matters he dealt with should have been handled by the State Council. See 'Trengganu under the

British', May 1970 by G. A. de Moubray, Rhodes House, Oxford.

58. H. Clifford to L. Amery 24.1.1929, CO 717/63/1928.

59. Memo on the Working of the Advisory system in the Protected Unfederated Malay State of Kedah 21.8.1932 by A. C. Baker, CO 717/88/92300 Part II/1932.

60. Cited in Sharom Ahmat, p. 255.

61. E. Thio, pp. 218-19.

62. Maxwell to Guillemard 24.6.1920, encl. to Guillemard to Amery 6.5.1926, CO 717/51/1926.

63. J. F. Owen to Secretary to High Commissioner 27.8.1920, HCO 1498/1920.

64. R. Emerson, pp. 152-3.

65. 'Trengganu under the British', May 1970 by G. A. de Moubray, Rhodes House, Oxford.

The Setting

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

THE Federated Malay States (FMS) covered an area of around 27,648 square miles in the middle of the Malay Peninsula. In terms of economic development Perak (7,875 square miles) was the premier state, followed by Selangor (3,195 square miles) and Negri Sembilan (2,572 square miles). Pahang, the most backward state and the only one on the east coast of the Peninsula, embraced 14,006 square miles, an area larger than that of the other three states put together.¹ Although more than 80 per cent of the land remained undeveloped, mostly under virgin forests, the FMS by the present century had become *the* centre of mining and agricultural activities in British Malaya; in fact, its tin and rubber industries were the mainstay of the Malayan economy, the leading producer of these two products in the world. Understandably, most of the estimated European Malayan investment of £100 million and Chinese investment of between £30 and £40 million was located in the FMS. This highly developed area was linked internally by a complex network of bridle paths, roads, and rails, and externally to the other Malayan states by roads and a railway system that stretched from Singapore in the south to Prai in the north and Kota Bahru in the north-east.

The data provided by the 1921 Malayan Population Census on male employment reflected the existence of a plural economy in the FMS.

Table 1
Employment by Race in the FMS

	<i>(Per 1,000 males)</i>				
	<i>Europeans</i>	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Malays</i>	<i>Indians</i>	<i>Eurasians</i>
Fishing	—	14	20	—	} 25
Agriculture	395	295	511	528	
Commerce	87	116	14	45	
Professions	82	6	7	8	
Government	126	16	21	77	116
Army and Navy	2	—	—	—	—
Engineering and work in steel or wood	78	53	7	15	57
Transport	—	34	19	34	—
Mining	59	169	—	15	—
Personal service	—	43	7	43	—
Shipping	2	—	—	—	—
Other occupations	16	102	23	95	57
None or Not Returned	153	114	266	120	314

Source: J. E. Nathan, *The Census of British Malaya 1921*, London, 1922, pp. 113–23.

The table shows that the overwhelming majority of the Malays were agriculturalists. Many of those living near the towns or the mines had taken to cash crops like fruits, vegetables, yams, and coconuts to meet the demand of the immigrant labourers;² others had become rubber smallholders, and of the 470,051 acres of rubber smallholdings in the FMS in 1921 nearly half were owned by Malays.³ Most Malays, however, combined cash cropping with their traditional wet-padi cultivation which remained the backbone of the Malay economy. Rice, in fact, remained a Malay preserve, and Malays, unlike the non-Malays who relied on imported rice, were self-sufficient in this crop. The table lists as agriculturalists all Indians, forming a preponderance of the Indian population, who worked in rubber

estates as wage labourers. The export economy, resting on the twin pillars of rubber and tin, was dominated by Europeans and Chinese. The tin industry was a Sino-European enterprise: in 1920 the Europeans produced 36 per cent and the Chinese 64 per cent of the tin output; but the proportion was reversed ten years later.⁴ The European dominance in the rubber industry was even more evident as, of the 765,000 acres of rubber estates in 1921, around 90 per cent were European-owned. The Chinese, however, had a significant share in the industry, chiefly in the form of middle-size estates and small-holdings; in addition, they controlled the country's secondary industries (such as pineapple and timber factories), wholesale and retail trade, and market-gardening. In other words the capital injected into the export-oriented economy, and concomitantly the lion's share of the country's wealth generated by economic growth under colonial rule, was owned and controlled by a small group of Chinese tycoons and especially European (chiefly British) businessmen, while labour was predominantly contributed by Indians in public works projects and the rubber industry and by Chinese in the tin industry and elsewhere.

This remarkable economic growth, depending as it did on massive immigration from China and India, transformed the social landscape of the country as indicated in the table below:

Table 2
Population by Race in the FMS

<i>Race</i>	<i>1921</i>
Europeans	5,686
Malays	510,821
Chinese	494,548
Indians	305,219
Eurasians	3,204
Others	5,412

Source: J. E. Nathan, *The Census of British Malaya 1921*, London, 1922, p. 29.

At the apex of the FMS multi-racial community was the small class of European (predominantly British) officials, miners, planters, professionals, and businessmen who limited their role to 'ruling, owning and managing'. Below them lay the subject races—Malays, Chinese, Indians—held together by British colonial policy and each holding on to its own culture and language, social institutions, economic functions and way of life. Leading the top group were the British administrators belonging to the Malayan Civil Service (MCS) who generally considered themselves superior to the European mercantile community partly because of their non-profit-making function and chiefly because of their educational background which was higher than that of the majority of other Europeans. All Europeans, however, had a vested interest in maintaining the *status quo*, coalescing into a single interest-group against any challenge to their position from the Asians. At all times the European commercial interests, owing to their economic leverage, exercised a powerful political influence on the colonial government.

The Malays, who constituted a majority only in Pahang, consisted chiefly of local Malays (80.2 per cent in 1921) and Minangkabau, Bugis, Mandeling, Javanese, and other immigrants from the Malay Archipelago. Their society was divided into two rigid classes: an upper class of rulers, aristocrats, and *syed* (who were regarded as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) and a subject class of predominantly Malay peasants.⁵ The politically-conscious among them, usually Malays with a modern education, had become acutely conscious of Malay backwardness and had begun to organize haphazardly to overcome this. The most important groups they formed were social-uplift bodies and the Kaum Muda, the latter a reformist religious movement offering a progressive Muslim education to enable Malays to understand the true doctrines of Islam and compete effectively in the modern world.⁶ But during the 1920s there was no organized Malay dissent or Malay interest in the political unification of the various states and a self-governing Malaya. The bulk of the Malays, kept on the land as

basically rice-cultivators partly by colonial policy, were shielded from the socio-economic forces transforming the rest of the country. They continued to live in largely self-supporting villages in which the tenor of life was substantially similar to that of early times, and to hold on to their deep-rooted and habitual attitude of obedience to the Rulers and the traditional élite.

At this time the Chinese—the most important immigrant group—dominated the urban areas, and the big towns in the FMS were in many ways 'Chinese worlds'. However, the majority of the Chinese were rural-based (65.1 per cent in 1921), scattered in isolated tin mines, rubber smallholdings and estates, and in mixed farms near the towns. The Malayan Chinese were divided into various groups by regional, dialect, and occupational differences as manifested in the multitude of trade guilds, provincial associations, clan (surname) organizations, commercial bodies, and so on. At the apex of these organizations was the Chinese Chamber of Commerce (CCC) dominated by Chinese tycoons who had generally risen from rags to riches and who sought to promote the unity of overseas Chinese and the growth of Chinese commerce.⁷

On the basis of their wealth, the CCC tycoons, usually China-born and Chinese-speaking, were the leaders of Chinese society. Generally, Malayan Chinese showed little interest in local politics, although a great many of them had been involved in the politics of China under the influence of the Kuomintang (KMT), the most important Chinese political party in the FMS. However, by the 1920s there had burgeoned a significant body of permanently-settled Chinese led by Straits Chinese interested in political rights in their adopted country. Understandably, Straits Chinese leaders had begun to demand a larger say in the FMS administration than they had hitherto enjoyed, thus championing a trend that was increasingly to challenge the political status of the Malays in the country. But the government refused either to introduce a common citizenship granting non-Malays political rights, or to admit them into the MCS on the ground that they were aliens in a Malay country.

During the 1920s more than 95 per cent of the Malayan Indians were Tamils of the lowest caste from South India. The majority of them were rural-based (75.3 per cent in 1921), mostly living in labour lines of European rubber estates. The Tamil labouring class had little in common with the non-labouring group who chiefly consisted of various North Indian communities. Political, economic, and social influence within the Indian society was monopolized by a coterie of merchants, financiers, chettiers, lawyers, and doctors belonging to the small commercial and professional class.⁸ But this upper class splintered into numerous mutually antagonistic factions so that the Indian community was characterized by a lack of leadership and a high degree of factionalism.

There was no Indian problem in the FMS as the Indian masses remained unorganized politically or in labour unions. Politics was restricted to the commercial, professional, and clerical classes who evinced strong sympathies with nationalism in India; understandably, Malayan Indian politics was primarily India-oriented and mirrored events in India. Nonetheless through the various annual conferences of Indian Associations, Indian leaders did try to champion the cause of Malayan Indian labourers involving better wages and improved conditions governing Indian immigration to the FMS.⁹ During the 1920s Malayan Indian opinion was not organized and was generally ignored by the FMS government and the planting interest.

THE IMPERIAL CONNECTION

As a British protectorate, the polyglot multi-racial FMS depicted above came under the control of the Colonial Office in London. Politically, the Colonial Office was led by the Secretary of State for the Colonies who was responsible to the British cabinet and ultimately accountable to the British parliament for the administration of the FMS. He was assisted by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, a political appointee and adviser, and the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, his chief official

adviser. As head of the permanent establishment, the Permanent Under-Secretary led a team of two Deputy and eight Assistant Under-Secretaries and a number of junior administrators. Thus run, the Colonial Office laid down general policies for the FMS, which were based on information provided by the High Commissioner and occasionally by senior Malayan officials, and which were guided by the ideas and beliefs of the Secretary of State and his cohort. Whitehall also exercised a general supervision over the financial and other aspects of the FMS government according to General Orders, 'the bible' of colonial administration.¹⁰ Although improved communication and increased knowledge tended to tighten Colonial Office control over the FMS, the local government still enjoyed a vast degree of local autonomy. In decentralization we find an example of a policy approved by the Colonial Office but left virtually completely to the men on the spot for execution.

The political personalities who towered over the Colonial Office during the period under study were A. Milner, L. S. Amery, and W. G. Ormsby-Gore. Winston Churchill (1921-2), the Duke of Devonshire (1922-3), and J. H. Thomas (January-October, 1924) did not stay as Secretary of State long enough to leave any personal imprint on FMS policy. 'A tall commanding figure' with a 'massive head and lofty brow', Milner reluctantly accepted the Prime Minister, Lloyd George's, offer of the Colonial Secretaryship in 1919 on the condition that Amery became his Parliamentary Under-Secretary.¹¹ He was already a tried administrator, a 'forward-looking' aristocrat with an eye for spotting and training young talent, and above all, an imperialist crusader.¹² As Secretary of State, he entrusted Amery with an unusually large degree of power; in fact, decisions arrived at between Amery and George Fiddes, the Permanent Under-Secretary and another of his disciples, were generally endorsed by him.¹³ Although his tenure was short as he resigned early in February 1921, Milner spelled out the ideas that prevailed in the Colonial Office during the 1920s and even beyond. These ideas were fully shared and translated

into policies by Amery, the most ardent of Milner's disciples, who himself admitted that Milner was 'the leader in whose footsteps he followed and in whose spirit he tried to work'.¹⁴ Amery (1924-9), the longest-serving Secretary of State for the Colonies before the Second World War, was undoubtedly the most important political head of Whitehall during the period under review. A more practical politician than Milner, and a crusading imperialist with imagination, drive, and indefatigable energy, he is even considered by one writer as 'the second great Colonial Secretary of this century'¹⁵ next to Joseph Chamberlain, 1895-1903. Amery felt lucky to have 'so able and enthusiastic a co-adjutor' as 'Billy' Ormsby-Gore who occupied the Parliamentary Under-Secretaryship from 1921 to 1929 except for a break of ten months in 1924 when J. H. Thomas was the head of the Colonial Office. His long service in this post, the large degree of power Amery entrusted him with, especially over affairs of the dependencies, and the fact that he had seen more of the 'Dependent Empire' than anyone else in Whitehall,¹⁶ enabled him to exercise a strong influence over colonial policy.

The gist of Milner's ideas was that post-war reconstruction should aim at building a stronger and more united British Empire. The Dominions, whose right to equality with Britain had been recognized, should be drawn increasingly into co-operation and participation in empire policy-making. But it was to the colonial dependencies and protectorates, potentially very rich but as yet not fit for self-government and equality with Britain, that Milner devoted special attention. The role of Britain here was to inject the much-needed capital and to draw up plans for an accelerated socio-economic development of these territories in the fields of communication, health, agriculture, education, a better colonial service, and the like.¹⁷ But this was not to be a policy of naked exploitation by British capitalist interests. Inspired by Britain's civilizing mission, Milner stressed that development should benefit both the British and the inhabitants of the colonial territories. The aim was to preserve the best of the indigenous culture and to bring to

bear the latest fruits of scientific research on the development of wealth. This theme, which increasingly influenced colonial thinking in both London and Malaya, came later to be more widely propounded by Lord Lugard, the architect of British indirect rule in Nigeria, who stressed that it was the duty of civilized administration to fulfil this dual mandate.¹⁸ The administrative system through which this dual mandate was to be realized was the system of indirect rule. Knowing that the First World War had stirred political awakening in the dependent empire, Milner thus explained acceptance of the trusteeship idea:

In every part of the dependent Empire, even the most backward, there is some stirring of the waters. Our business is to guide and direct the natural desire of human beings to be their own masters, not to run counter to it. We may even to some extent have to sacrifice efficiency of administration in order to promote contentment, though we cannot, as honest trustees, afford to sacrifice it too much. It is a matter of delicate judgement in every case to know how far we can go in that direction. But, speaking generally, I should say that where native self-government institutions exist, however primitive in form, we should be very slow to interfere with them. Where no such institutions exist, we shall try gradually and carefully to create them.¹⁹

As Milner rightly perceived, the dual mandate concept did not provide a clear-cut guidance to British Malayan officials. While a vigorous policy of socio-economic development would be facilitated by a larger and more efficient European-style administration, the trusteeship idea might well pull the FMS in the opposite direction. In any case Milner impressed on Laurence Guillemard, the new Governor-High Commissioner (1920-7), on the eve of the latter's departure for Malaya late in 1919, that British policy had been over-zealous in pandering to the interests of capitalists, and negligent in the promotion of Malay welfare.²⁰ In other words, like many senior Malayan officials, Milner was conscious that in the scramble for rapid economic development the Malays had been left far behind and had not been trained to play an active part in the administration of the FMS. Partly to rectify this, the Colonial

Office approved a decentralization policy which aimed, among other things, at enhancing indirect rule in the FMS. Whitehall officials were also convinced that the strengthening of the sultanates was politically advantageous to British rule; as Ormsby-Gore put it, the Malay Rulers were 'a real and essential asset' without whom 'the Malays would have become a mob'.²¹ But Milner's, Amery's, and Ormsby-Gore's desire to enhance indirect rule in the FMS raised a problem thus explained by one Colonial Office man in 1928:

Politically our policy of late has been directed towards the ideal of improving the position and dignity of the Rulers, which, it has been felt, have been insufficiently considered since the Federation, and encouraging them and their subjects to take a greater part in the administration of their states. . . . It is an ideal difficult to attain because it conflicts with efficiency in administration.²²

From our subsequent discussion on decentralization, it is clear that in the event of serious conflicts, official policy would gravitate in the direction of British interests as against the ideal of promoting indigenous welfare.

In their desire to strengthen indirect rule British policy makers were also forced to grapple with another problem arising from the presence of the dynamic and economically aggressive non-Malay community in the FMS. Here British indirect rule had to play the mediatory role of reconciling the legitimate interests of foreign capital and the non-Malay community with British treaty obligations to the Malays. Furthermore, indirect rule was considered helpful in training the Malays to compete more effectively with the non-Malays in the economic and political spheres. Having taken for granted the long-term character of colonial rule in Malaya, the British did not regard indirect rule as a fit vehicle by which they could lead the Malays to self-government but only as the strongest safeguard to preclude their submersion by the majority non-Malay community. It is important to note that what chiefly underlined British policy here was the desire, itself a backlash of the First World War, to strengthen and stabilize Malay sup-

port for the colonial government. The British cloaked their self-serving interest in highly altruistic rhetoric voiced by Amery and most categorically reiterated by the High Commissioner, Hugh Clifford (1927-9), in his famous 'Malay Monarchies' speech in the Federal Council in 1927. Clifford declared:

These states were, when the British Government was invited by their Rulers and Chiefs to set their troubled houses in order, Mohammadan Monarchies; such they are today, and such they must continue to be. No mandate has ever been extended to us by Rajas, Chiefs or People to vary the system of government . . . and I feel it incumbent upon me to emphasise . . . the utter inapplicability of any form of democratic or popular government to the circumstances of these states. The adoption of any kind of government by majority would forthwith entail the complete submergence of the indigenous population, who would find themselves hopelessly outnumbered by folks of other races; and this would amount to a betrayal of the trust which the Malay [has reposed] in His Majesty's Government.²³

The above ideas underpinned Whitehall's policy towards the FMS during the period under study. But severely handicapped by the sheer volume of work covering a far-flung empire, many parts of which were more turbulent than the FMS, and by lack of local knowledge, the political leaders left virtually completely the detailed evaluation and decisions on Malayan policies, including decentralization, to the permanent officials in Whitehall. Of the three Permanent Under-Secretaries of State, J. E. Masterton-Smith (1921-4), was almost completely guided by his junior officials as he was a Home Service man with little knowledge of Malayan affairs. His predecessor, George Fiddes (1916-21), an 'able but cautious, critical and somewhat prickly' man²⁴ familiar with Malayan affairs, played a far more direct role in determining FMS policies. It was he who persuaded Milner to accept in 1920 recommendations for a decentralization policy in the FMS and the appointment of George Maxwell as Chief Secretary (1920-6) to carry out this policy. Even more important was Samuel Wilson (1925-33), the longest-serving Permanent Under-Secretary through-

out the inter-war years, who was hand-picked by Amery from the governorship of Trinidad and Tobago and entrusted with the task of fostering a closer relationship between the Colonial Office and the dependent empire. A tactful, understanding, and highly capable man with very balanced views, Wilson lacked Malayan knowledge initially but had deep sympathy for indirect rule and decentralization in the FMS. Although he did not have a hand in the formulation and approval of Guille-mard's decentralization policy in 1924, he not only gave the High Commissioner his full support but was also directly involved in many decisions on aspects of the policy implementation between 1925 and 1927; he was later to play a key role in another decentralization programme directed by Cecil Clementi, Governor-High Commissioner of Malaya, in the early 1930s.²⁵

Generally, the detailed evaluation and decisions on Malayan questions were largely determined by two relatively junior administrators whose connection with Malaya dated back to the 1890s, namely, A. E. Collins, head of the Far Eastern Department till he retired early in 1926, and G. Grindle, Assistant Principal Under-Secretary, 1916-25, and then Assistant Permanent Under-Secretary, 1925-31. Their intimate knowledge of the FMS and extensive contacts with Malayan officials constituted their *forte* in tackling Malayan problems. Collins' position as head of the Far Eastern Department further buttressed his views since the FMS came under the jurisdiction of this department. His was usually the key minute on the files dealing with Malayan affairs. Generally, no one in the Colonial Office, except Fiddes and Grindle, had sufficient knowledge to challenge his advice on FMS policy; but Grindle and Collins most rarely disagreed, and their remarkable consensus of views reinforced their respective stands on FMS policies. Both also sympathized with the trusteeship concept and were generally adroit in adapting it to FMS policies. To Grindle and especially to Collins must be credited Whitehall's endorsement of a decentralization policy in the FMS in the 1920s. To sum up, there was no dissent within the political leadership or the per-

manent establishment, or between these two groups in Whitehall, on decentralization in the FMS. The only jarring note came from Walter Ellis who succeeded Collins as head of the Far Eastern Department in 1926 and held views on the Malay Rulers diametrically opposed to those prevailing in the Colonial Office; but Ellis arrived at the tail-end of the decentralization movement in the 1920s and did not seriously affect it. The remarkable unanimity of views on decentralization placed the Colonial Office in a strong position to withstand and counter the barrage of criticisms issuing from capitalist interests and former British Malayan officials opposed to the policy who operated through their organization, the Association of British Malaya, in London.

THE FEDERAL ADMINISTRATION

The Colonial Office supervised the FMS administration officially headed by the High Commissioner in Singapore but, in practice, run by the Chief Secretary in Kuala Lumpur. With keen insight, the *Malaya Tribune*, a major English newspaper, thus pinpointed a vital aspect of the relationship between the High Commissioner and the Chief Secretary:

A Chief Secretary can be regarded in several different ways. Evidently most High Commissioners like to look upon him as a branch rather than as a separate shrub; as a digit in a system, rather than a controlling force of digits. Successive Chief Secretaries have shown, very plainly, that they do not intend to be thus considered and public opinion is, to a large extent, entirely with them.²⁶

This situation stemmed from the fact that the various treaties and the FMS Administrative Scheme of 1896 failed to define clearly the powers of the two officials; consequently, their relations, in practice, depended vitally on their respective personalities. A strong, forceful and persevering Chief Secretary would be able to elbow the High Commissioner out of large areas of the FMS administration because of the vagueness of the Administrative Scheme and because of the prevailing belief, first voiced by Frank Swettenham, that the Chief Secre-

tary was an essential counterpoise to safeguard FMS interests against Singapore authorities set on promoting the differing interests of the Colony. On the other hand, a determined High Commissioner, being the channel of communication between the Colonial Office and the FMS, would be in a strong position to neutralize any reform programme favoured by the Chief Secretary. As we shall see in our discussion on decentralization, Guillemard capitalized on this and presented the Maxwell experiment in as bad a light as possible, thereby helping to convince Whitehall that a new decentralization policy was expedient. The above were important considerations behind the most strident, bitter, and extensive conflict that ever occurred between the incumbents of the two posts namely, Guillemard and Maxwell.

The Governor-High Commissioner exercised a unity of control over the whole of British Malaya. Under the Administrative Scheme, he decided all important questions referred to him by the Chief Secretary and approved all annual reports, draft legislation, state and federal budgets, and the appointment and dismissal of certain categories of officers.²⁷ Though the Colonial Office recruited all senior officers in London, the High Commissioner had a significant say over the transfer of such officers from elsewhere to Malaya and almost a decisive voice in promotion within the Malayan services. Besides, the High Commissioner had now entered directly into the FMS administration. He presided over the Federal Council, fixed the date of its meeting, decided its agenda, and nominated its members;²⁸ as president, he directed the business of the Council, and defended and explained government policy in the FMS. The High Commissioner was also the chairman of the Conference of Residents, thus having a hand, if he wished, in resolving controversial FMS policies. Finally, through issuing executive orders to Singapore-based heads of joint SS-FMS departments, he could 'meddle' in FMS affairs. Over general policies in the FMS therefore, the High Commissioner had a vital control and was able to bring them into line with those in the Straits Settlements and the UMS.

In practice however, the High Commissioner found his control over FMS affairs checked by the Chief Secretary, the dynamo that produced the necessary vigour in the administration. Under the scheme the Chief Secretary was expected to travel extensively, keep in touch with the Rulers, Residents and all matters of administration, initiate and co-ordinate policies. Over the years he had accumulated, through laws, General Orders, circulars and administrative rulings, vast executive, financial and legislative powers in his own hands—a situation, in itself, a severe constraint on the High Commissioner 'meddling' in FMS affairs. The Chief Secretary had full power to issue executive orders to the Residents, or the Heads of federal departments without consulting the Residents. His financial power was formidable. William Peel, Maxwell's successor (1926-9), claimed that in many respects this was even greater than a colonial governor's.²⁹ He played a decisive role in scrutinizing and provisionally approving the annual estimates submitted by the Residents and Federal Heads; after these estimates had been passed by the Federal Council, his authorization was required before the FMS Treasurer could fulfil the commitments under the Annual Supply Bill. Assisted by the Legal Adviser, the Chief Secretary likewise controlled the initiation, drafting, and content of all legislation. Although the High Commissioner retained the ultimate say over finance and legislation, the Chief Secretary was, to all intents and purposes, the final authority in the FMS. Generally, it was difficult for the High Commissioner to challenge the advice of the man on the spot controlling the day-to-day running of the federal administration, especially when the former was a newcomer to the Malayan scene as Guillemard was or when the Chief Secretary was a determined and forceful personality like Maxwell. Finally, the Chief Secretary controlled the distribution and movement of the MCS and other senior officers in the FMS. In wielding authority over all this the Chief Secretary was hampered neither by a division of powers between the centre and the state authorities nor by any executive council in the FMS.

However, the Chief Secretary had to adapt his mode of control to the presence of the Federal Council which, under the Federal Agreement of 1909, had come to pass nearly all laws in the FMS. All approved state and federal estimates had also to go before the Finance Committee of the Federal Council for scrutiny and approval before their submission to the legislature for sanction. Consisting of the FMS Treasurer³⁰ and the Unofficials, the committee likewise sanctioned all supplementary expenditure between \$10,000 and \$50,000; any item exceeding \$50,000, however, came under the jurisdiction of the Council itself. To the extent that executive authority over finance and law required legislative sanction, the Chief Secretary's power had been curbed by the 1909 Agreement. To sum up, the Federal Council centralized ultimate financial and legislative powers through working closely with the Federal Treasury and the Legal Adviser Department under the general oversight of the Chief Secretary. The State Councils were left with local matters concerning Malay custom and religion, mosques, political pensions, *penghulu* and *kathi*, death sentences, and conversion of agricultural and mining lands.

The Chief Secretary stood at the apex of an elaborate federal administration at Kuala Lumpur. Most of the departments were federal ones—Railway, Forests, Labour, Chinese Affairs, Fisheries, Treasury, Posts and Telegraphs, Printing, Medical, Agriculture, Survey, Legal Adviser, Auditor-General, Geology, Police, and Town Planning—under Heads who were *executive* officers in full control over their departments and directly responsible to the Chief Secretary. The Federal Head drafted the annual departmental estimates without necessarily consulting the Residents and submitted it to the Chief Secretary, controlled the distribution and movement of staffs, and generally directed departmental affairs.³¹ He issued executive orders direct to his officers in each state, but in the event of a dispute with the Resident, he had to follow the Resident's ruling till the Chief Secretary resolved the dispute. In 1920, six departments—Land, Prisons, Education, Mines, Public

Works, and Museums—were quasi-federal, whose Heads did not exercise executive control over the state departments; the seventh—Customs—was a state department but became fully federal in 1921 as did Museums two years later. In the main the Heads of these departments were advisers to the Residents who drafted and/or submitted the departmental estimates to the Chief Secretary. The federal departments vitally sapped the power of the state administrations as their Heads, working in unison with and acting under orders from the Chief Secretary, rendered central control more immediate and effective.³²

The federal administration, headed by the Chief Secretary, was an efficient but expensive and over-centralized one. An unceasing stream of references from below made the Federal Secretariat (the Chief Secretary's office) the most hard-worked department in the FMS. As Guillemard explained to the Colonial Office in 1923:

Anyone familiar with the machinery of the FMS Government is aware of the immense volume of work which passes through this office [Federal Secretariat] making it necessary for all the European Secretaries and all the clerks to work overtime in order to keep up to date.³³

References came from the Residents and the Federal Heads as required under the laws, General Orders, and administrative rulings, or when they desired the Chief Secretary's advice or approval, or in the form of appeals against their decisions from below. Over the years, however, certain forces were at work to aggravate the problem. Inflation, for instance, had significantly reduced the financial powers of the Residents and Federal Heads, thus necessitating increased references to the Federal Secretariat. The craze for uniformity had also compelled these officials to secure the Federal Secretariat's approval for matters where uniformity was not essential such as the fixing of quit rent, or even for minor routine matters like statutory notifications in the *Government Gazette*. In certain matters over-centralization had indeed been carried to a ridiculous extreme, as the following submissions to the Retrenchment Commission in 1922 attest:

Hampshire: I am under the impression that far too many small matters are or have to be referred to the Federal Secretariat. . . . I believe I am correct in stating that any stores in any department that deteriorate or are broken cannot be written off without the sanction of the Chief Secretary. [For example, a lamp chimney costing five pence.]
Cubitt (Conservator of Forests): Recently I had to ask Government for permission to write off a measuring tape which was accidentally lost and which was valued at less than [two dollars].³⁴

THE STATE ADMINISTRATION

Below the federal bureaucracy was the administration of the four states. The heart of each state administration was the Resident, who like the Chief Secretary, was a member of the MCS on the last lap of his Malayan career. During the period under study, a new breed of Residents had stepped onto the Malayan scene. None of them equalled in force of personality and stature a Swettenham or a Clifford, and few excelled in scholarship like a William Maxwell. For one thing they wielded decidedly less authority than their pioneering predecessors and were generally tied to their headquarters, the State Secretariat, through which all official business must pass. For another, the frontier conditions of the last century no longer existed, and a heap of precedents, rules, and regulations directed their energy and work along established administrative channels. While the nineteenth century Residents hailed from a wide variety of social backgrounds, their successors were now drawn from the narrow middle-class of British society. With a common public school and university background, the Residents shared a high degree of uniformity in values and outlook and represented the more efficient members of a colonial service which no longer enjoyed easy, intimate, and informal relations with the Asian communities in the FMS.

The Resident remained the chief executive officer directly responsible for the administration of the state. Broadly speaking, he continued to maintain peace and order, supervise the collection of revenue and remit it to the Federal Treasury,

direct the district administration, and encourage the general development of the state. But by 1920 so much of his executive power had been absorbed by the Chief Secretary that he was increasingly subject to directives from above; and even in purely state matters his decisions might be reversed by the Federal Secretariat.³⁵ The Resident still retained the power to draft the annual state estimates, control the appointment, promotion or dismissal of certain subordinate officers, and to incur supplementary expenditure up to \$500. Most of his financial and legislative power, however, had shifted to the Federal Secretariat and the Federal Council so that his state estimates could be amended or even overruled by the Chief Secretary, while only occasionally did the State Council pass laws of a purely local nature. Finally, the Resident lost virtually complete control over the purely federal departments. In fact, the Federal Heads, as if to add salt to a wound, even tended to ignore the Resident's existence when they went on tours inspecting state departments, especially in Selangor, the home of the great federal departments, where the Resident, in a fit of resentment, was forced in 1929 to get 'one Federal Head called to account for repeated disregard of the General Orders'.³⁶ Deploring the loss of the Resident's power, McClelland, the Acting Resident of Pahang, wrote in 1922:

There can be no disguising the fact that the Residents of the various States have been progressively shorn of their powers since, not the date of Federation but the date of the establishment of Federal *departments*. . . . Their functions have gradually atrophied and their position is now comparable to that of the class of surface dwellers . . . imagined by the ingenious Mr. H. G. Wells in his *Time Machine*.³⁷

While the truth of the above statement cannot be denied there is certainly an element of exaggeration. All important matters affecting the FMS were invariably circulated by the Under-Secretary to the Residents (and perhaps one or more Federal Heads) whose comments usually helped to shape the decision finally arrived at by the Chief Secretary, or by the High Commissioner when the matters needed reference to

Singapore. In this way the Residents continued to play an active role in the decision-making process, although they were stripped of the power to make the decision themselves. Furthermore, the Chief Secretary frequently resolved delicate and controversial policy questions in the Conference of Residents, sometimes with the High Commissioner presiding, but usually with himself as chairman. This conference was a theatre where the Residents, acting in concert with the Chief Secretary, had a decisive voice over federal matters. In other words the Resident not only continued to be the key digit in the state administration but also had a substantial fund of influence within the federal administration.

As control over the state administration was from the Chief Secretary downwards, and following past practice, the Resident centralized control over the district administration. Most references to the State Secretariat from below were required by laws, General Orders, and administrative rulings and motivated by District Officers in search of advice. That statutory requirements alone had resulted in substantial centralization may be illustrated by the General Orders under which the Resident's approval was needed before a District Officer could hire a car, grant a loan to a subordinate to purchase a bicycle, initiate minor alterations in building contracts above \$100, transfer officers within the district, allot accommodation in Rest Houses, grant leave to subordinate officers, and so on. Pointing out that nine out of every ten references upwards required only the formal approval of the Resident, Meadows Frost, District Officer of Kinta, stressed to the Retrenchment Commission in 1922:

Our present system is elaborate and too much complicated. The only way to give us time to go round is to reduce the correspondence. The District Officers should be given more powers to deal with matters themselves without referring them to the Resident. The District Officers are at present allowed to carry on without reference to the Resident only *within very narrow limits. Our recommendations are generally approved* (emphasis added).³⁸

Based on the submissions of Frost and other British officials,

the Retrenchment Commission Report charged that 'the Residents must be held largely responsible' for District Officers deviating from the sound practice of pre-Federation days (as discussed later).³⁹ To a significant extent, this assessment is valid.

THE ROLE OF THE RULER

British rule in the FMS was officially regarded as a system of indirect rule under which the sultanates were preserved and their ceremonial role greatly enhanced. Deprived of nearly all authority and administrative functions, the Rulers were used, at the federal level, to grace the imperial scheme of things at occasional durbars, Federal Council meetings and other public events, and at the state level, to help sustain the myth that the Residents were advisers to rulers of independent Malay states. Towards enhancing the outward trappings of sovereignty through pomp and ceremony, the apparatus of the traditional court hierarchies was not only preserved but also extended through the revival of many court posts, long fallen into disuse, in Perak, Selangor, and Pahang.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the Rulers were most generously provided for, primarily to help them to keep up their pre-eminent position through ostentatious competition with the more wealthy non-Malay commercial classes. In this way the Ruler remained the ceremonial head and the nominal centre of power in the state. As the Ruler still wielded profound influence among the Malay *rakyat*, this helped to contain potential anti-colonial hostility, thus strengthening British rule in the FMS.

In both the federal and state administrations, however, the Ruler played practically no active part at all; in fact, the secretariat records show that he was generally not even consulted except in cases pertaining to Malay custom, Islam, and issues of special Malay interest. Much to his resentment, he was treated, in many matters such as the granting of land concessions, in the same manner as any ordinary resident in the state. The truth of the matter was that centralization had shifted

power to a chief executive at Kuala Lumpur who was in less frequent and intimate touch with the Rulers and who directed an administration geared to advancing interests to which they were either indifferent or were not competent to influence. As the powers of the Resident and the State Council diminished, the Ruler's influence on public affairs correspondingly declined. Understandably, the Rulers desired to loosen the federal administration as opposed to the British policy of centralization.

As expected, the Ruler played a larger role in the state administration as a friendly and, at times, sagacious adviser of the Resident. His intimate knowledge of Malay society and his underground access to information not available to the British were particularly valuable. The Ruler still presided over the State Council; exercised a vital say in the recruitment of *penghulu* and *kathi*; validated certain state documents, first sanctioned by the Resident, like the *surat kuasa* of *penghulu* and *kathi*; signed laws enacted by the state and federal legislatures putting them into force; often endorsed and tried to popularize government policies among the Malay *rakyat*; and performed other minor duties under British persuasion. Taken overall, however, the Ruler exercised much less influence on the state administration than during the pre-Federation days.

THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Local government in the FMS was placed in the charge of the district administration introduced in the 1870s and probably modelled after the system in India.⁴¹ The FMS was divided into twenty-four districts of varying sizes and importance each under a District Officer. As in pre-Federation days, the District Officer maintained peace and order in the district, performed judicial duties of a First-class Magistrate, took charge of land administration and revenue collection, and supervised the *penghulu* administration. He was the leader of social life in the district. Often a guest at Chinese and Malay celebrations, he reciprocated in style; a District Officer in Selangor explained

that when stationed in Upper Perak he had to 'entertain the District at *Hari Raya* [*Puasa*] (the-end-of-Ramadhan feast) and more especially at Christmas which cost me three months' pay in three days. It was the custom!'⁴² Above all, the District Officer was the political officer representing the government in the district. The success of British rule in each district depended on him, the backbone of the whole administration in the FMS.

As a class, the District Officers had earned high esteem from Lord Lugard who credited them with having 'made and maintained the Empire'. Their public school—Oxbridge training, he enthused, had made them 'English gentlemen with an almost passionate conception of fair play, of protection of the weak, and of "playing the game"'.⁴³ As members of the MCS, the District Officers in the FMS no doubt cherished this high tradition and believed they were carrying it on. As a political officer, a good District Officer was expected to be in direct and intimate touch with the people, appear ubiquitous and omnipotent, and hold all the political strings in his hand. It was essential, therefore, for the District Officer to be incessantly on the move, mixing, talking, and listening to the people in his district. Under Resident rule, the District Officer spent at least half his time visiting roadworks, mines, and villages, but he found it increasingly difficult to perform this duty in the period under review; instead, there was now the tendency to regard him as being at work only when he was writing at his desk.⁴⁴ Consequently, District Officers had far weaker grass-root rapport with the people, especially Malays, than their predecessors; many, in fact, had lost touch with Malays altogether.

A major cause of this development was the immense increase in the volume of work which buried the District Officer in a mass of papers in his office. This stemmed partly from the phenomenal expansion of the rubber and tin industries and more importantly from the centralization of both the federal and state administrations. The District Officer was now forced to refer numerous matters, formerly within his power to de-

cide, to the State Secretariat; where he was young, inexperienced and lacking in confidence, upward reference would also result primarily because of the search for advice and guidance from senior officers. In addition, rapid transport and communication qualitatively affected the work of the District Officer and seriously impeded his ability to build intimate grass-root contacts. Maxwell explained:

In the days when we all walked, or rode on pony, we only covered short distances, say fourteen to twenty miles a day, and we stayed the night at the Penghulu's house, where we heard all the news of the place, the newest grievance and the latest rumour. It was only natural, when the Penghulu himself came to headquarters, that after a talk in office about official matters, we should invite him round to the house in the evening to talk over the many things that we had no time to discuss in office. Now in a motor car, we flash past penghulus' houses, one after the other, without changing speed; and when the Penghulu comes to office, as before, we haven't got the same interest in local grievance or gossip. It cannot be helped: we cover ever so much more ground than we did: and there is much more work to be done in the district than there was. The district which took one three to four days to traverse, has now so contracted (although it is much more populated) that it can be covered from end to end in perhaps two or three hours.⁴⁵

Another vital factor was the unpopularity of the out-station districts among MCS officers. This was partly because improved transport had enabled most MCS officers to have their wives and children with them in Malaya who understandably found life in the *ulu* (remote hinterland) with its absence of western social amenities and European companionship uncongenial and taxing. The shortage of British cadets, arising from difficulties in recruitment at the imperial end, meant that a newly-arrived officer from England usually managed to get himself stationed near the town.⁴⁶ Furthermore, there had emerged a strong desire among ambitious officers to get out of the district as soon as possible for a post in the secretariats or the federal departments in the belief, which was valid to a very significant extent, that careers were made in these centres, and that 'to be sent to an isolated responsible post

was to be labelled a dud'.⁴⁷ This was mainly responsible for the large number of unnecessary transfers of District Officers, which formed a subject of persistent criticisms by the Rulers and which significantly undermined British contacts with the ground.

At this time the government took several half-hearted and ineffectual measures—cutting down transfers of District Officers, upgrading one or two District Office posts, recruiting only bachelors for the MCS—in the hope of strengthening British contacts in the *kampong*. But it was Hugh Clifford who was most concerned about British officers losing touch with the Malays. As early as 1896 he had warned of a situation in which a European could spend weeks in the country 'without coming into contact with any Asiatics save those who wait at table, clean his shirts and drive his cab' and years 'without acquiring any very profound knowledge of the natives of the country or (their) language'.⁴⁸ Returning to Malaya after twenty-seven years spent in other parts of the Empire, he was forcefully struck by the race barriers that had emerged between Europeans and Asians and deplored the practice of stationing a young officer near the town which prevented him from acquiring 'the intimate knowledge of the people which is essential for a Civil Servant in British Malaya'.⁴⁹ On Clifford's recommendation, the Colonial Office started in 1928 to send MCS recruits for a course of study in the Malay language at the School of Oriental Languages in London University. On their arrival in Malaya, the new officers were immediately posted to the *ulu* for at least a year to work among Malays and acquire, at first-hand, an intimate knowledge of Malay customs and character. Though it was believed 'that in his short time here Clifford got more out of [the MCS Officers] than anyone else for years',⁵⁰ the problem in fact was beyond solution.

The nub of the matter was that much of the time of the District Officer was now spent within the sizeable European community that had emerged by the second decade of the twentieth century. He was usually the president of the Euro-

pean club in the district and participated fully in the racially-exclusive and snobbish social life of a transplanted English society in the towns. The MCS officers (as well as other Europeans) lived 'a soft life in good houses with every amenity'; every household had a minimum of three servants, most had more.⁵¹ As Clifford commented critically, the standards of life in the town were 'undesirably extravagant' and sports and amusement occupied a 'very disproportionately large' part of the officers' time. Even for those stationed in outlying districts, it was in the towns that they sought to spend their leisure.

Ease and rapidity of communications have increased so greatly throughout the Peninsula of recent years that men are apt to take casual leave with a frequency that was unknown even a quarter of a century ago, and naturally enough such leave is usually spent in the centres where most Europeans are gathered together, and completely out of touch with Malays and with their environment.⁵²

By the 1910s, therefore, the rural informality of the District Officer's life of the early days had been replaced by a relationship with the Asians which was marked by race prejudices, snobbishness, and class barriers. This inward-looking, all-white society was intent on preserving white prestige as one senior British officer unashamedly admitted:

It is almost impossible for people in England to realise that one cannot economise here below a certain margin. One must either live like a European, which means certain inevitable expenses, or 'go native' and lose all the status of a European. The latter alternative is one no self-respecting man should contemplate for a moment; better be a stone-breaker on the roads in England than sink below the European level in the East: he could retain his character and pride of race in the one case but not in the other.⁵³

The rise of this racial oligarchy was the single most important factor behind the rift between British officials and the Malay (as well as other Asian) community in the FMS.

Directed and controlled by British officials, the district administration was part of an European administration but the

Malay elite did play a significant role in it. After 1920, District Officers, acting on federal instruction, tended to consult more frequently Malay chiefs each of whom 'keeps a finger on the pulse of Malay life in the district'. More importantly, a decade earlier the British started to recruit Malay aristocrats educated at the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar into a Malay Administrative Service (MAS) as discussed later. As Malay Officers, Assistant District Officers or District Officers, these Malays were held in high esteem by the Malay *rakyat* as native sons who had made good. It was British policy to station most of them in districts with a large Malay population and consequently, the majority of the Malay MCS members up to 1941 had spent a substantial portion of their career in the ten districts with a Malay majority.⁵⁴ At the district level therefore, the British did to an important extent govern the Malays through traditional leaders who, however, operated within the framework of a European colonial administration. To a significant degree these Malay bureaucrats did fill the vacuum left by those British officials who were unable to keep in touch with *kampong* Malays. But by making it less necessary to post MCS cadets to the *ulu* or for their British superiors to deal intimately with Malays, the MAS officers tended to accentuate the rift between British officials and the indigenous community.

Below the district level was the *mukim* administration which conformed closely to a system of indirect rule in the FMS. Here the *mukim*, each consisting of several villages, were placed in the charge of the *penghulu* supervised by the District Officer. The *penghulu* system, a traditional institution in Perak, Selangor, and Pahang, was incorporated into the British set-up late in the nineteenth century, and was gradually transplanted to Negri Sembilan between 1884 and 1929.⁵⁵ It is not necessary here to discuss the *mukim* administration,⁵⁶ as it had hardly any bearing on decentralization, save to note that the *penghulu* system was an effective instrument of local government.

To sum up, the British policy of developing the FMS along

unitary lines before the First World War had resulted in the erection of an over-centralized administration over the head of the individual states. This administration had no organic relations with Malay society, being directed and controlled by Europeans, paid for by non-Malay taxation, and intended to further alien economic interests. After the war, the unitary policy became discredited and was superseded by a policy of decentralization which sought to loosen the federal administration and pave the way for the formation of a Malayan federation of all the Malay states.

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2. Lim Teck Ghee, 'Land and Agriculture Policy in Perak, 1874-1897', M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, 1968, pp. 290-300.

3. J. C. Jackson, *Planters and Speculators: Chinese and European Agricultural Enterprise in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, 1968, p. 265; *Census of Areas under Rubber Cultivation in the FMS, 1921*, CO 717/29/1923.

4. Yip Yat Hoong, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry*, Singapore, 1969, pp. 63-4; V. Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, London, 1948, p. 237.

5. For discussion see J. M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, London, 1969.

6. For a detailed discussion of Malay nationalism before the Second World War, see W. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur, 1967; for an earlier study of the Kaum Muda, see S. H. Tan, 'The Life and Times of Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi', Academic Exercise, University of Malaya in Singapore, 1961; Radin Soenarno, 'Malay Nationalism, 1900-1945', *JSEAH*, Vol. 1, no. 1, March 1960.

7. For discussion, see C. Gamba, 'Chinese Associations in Singapore', *JMBRAS*, Vol. XXXIX, Part 2, 1966; M. Freedman, 'Chinese Kinship and Marriage in Singapore', *JSEAH*, Vol. III, no. 2, 1962; Yong Ching Fatt, 'A Preliminary Study of Chinese Leadership in Singapore, 1900-41', *JSEAH*, Vol. IX, no. 2, 1968.

8. K. S. Sandhu, *Indians in Malaya*, London, 1969, p. 117.

9. S. Arasaratnam, *Indians in Malaysia and Singapore*, Kuala Lumpur, 1970, p. 97.

10. C. Jeffries, *The Colonial Office*, London, 1956, pp. 106–7.
11. L. S. Amery, *My Political Life, 1914–29*, Vol. II, London, 1953, p. 176.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 211–13; V. Halperin, *Lord Milner and the Empire: The Evolution of British Imperialism*, London, 1952, p. 178.
13. L. S. Amery, p. 177.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 213; V. Halperin, pp. 19–20.
15. Robert Heussler, *Yesterday's Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service*, New York, 1963, p. 28.
16. A. C. Parkinson, *The Colonial Office from Within, 1900–1945*, London, 1946, p. 47.
17. V. Halperin, pp. 186–8.
18. C. Jeffries, p. 109; K. Robinson, *The Dilemmas of Trusteeship*, London, 1965, p. 62.
19. Cited in K. K. Ghosh, 'Twentieth Century Malaysia: Politics of Decentralization of Power 1920–29', Calcutta, 1977, p. 61.
20. Guillemard to Collins 13.12.1925, CO 717/48.
21. Minute by Ormsby-Gore 14.8.1928, CO 717/61; see also Hume to Wilson 19.6.1930, CO 273/565.
22. Minute by Beckett 13.8.1928, CO 717/61.
23. *PFC FMS*, 1927, p. B113.
24. L. S. Amery, p. 176.
25. For a discussion of Clementi's decentralization policy, see Yeo Kim Wah, 'British Policy towards the Malays in the Federated Malay States, 1920–40', Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, 1972; also R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study of Direct and Indirect Rule*, Kuala Lumpur, Reprint, 1964.
26. *Malaya Tribune* editorial on 'The Federal Question: Vague and Shadowy Proposals', in a file entitled 'Federal Changes: Cuttings from the *Times of Malaya*', SSF 1926 unnumbered.
27. The High Commissioner approved appointment and promotion of officers earning a salary above \$1,800 per annum and dismissal of officers enjoying a salary above \$600 per annum. See Clause (8) Scheme for the Administration of the Protected Malay States, Yeo Kim Wah, pp. 94–100.
28. R. Braddell, *The Legal Status of the Malay States*, Singapore, 1931, p. 17.
29. Notes written by Sir William Peel, Governor of Hong Kong, 1930–5, concerning his Colonial Service from 1897–1935, Rhodes House, Oxford.

30. Originally the Finance Committee was chaired by the Chief Secretary who, however, made way for the FMS Treasurer, presumably during Brockman's time.

31. *FMS General Orders 1921*, Kuala Lumpur, same date, pp. 284-313.

32. Peter Burns, 'The Constitutional History of Malaya with Special Reference to the Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, 1874-1914', Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1965, p. 265.

33. Guillemard to Devonshire no. 431, 2.8.1923 (National Library of Singapore Collection).

34. *The Final Report of the Retrenchment Commission*, Kuala Lumpur, 1923, pp. 15, 33.

35. Notes on a Policy in respect of the UMS by George Maxwell 15.10.1920, Eastern no. 135 Confidential, CO 717/10.

36. Minute by William Peel 8.1.1929, SSF 2308/1929.

37. Minute by McClelland 15.8.1922, SSF 3371/1922.

38. *The Final Report of the Retrenchment Commission*, Kuala Lumpur, 1923, p. 29.

39. *ibid*, p. 8.

40. For instance, in Pahang the government refurbished in 1930 the complete hierarchies of the *Orang² Besar Yang Ber Empat* (The Four Great Chiefs), the *Orang² Besar Yang Delapan* (The Eight Major Chiefs) and the *Orang² Besar Yang Beranambelas* (The Sixteen Minor Chiefs), many of these posts having been left unfilled since the late nineteenth century. Clementi to Passfield 4.7.1930, CO 717/74.

41. E. Sadka, *The Protected Malay States, 1874-1895*, Singapore, 1968, p. 214.

42. Memo by District Officer, Ulu Selangor, 20.4.1920, SSF 2213/1920.

43. F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, London, 1923, p. 132.

44. Memo by A. S. Haynes to the Public Service Salaries Commission 1919, HCO 1181/1920.

45. Circular Letter from the Chief Secretary to all British Officials in the FMS 18.9.1922, Personal Papers of George Maxwell, Rhodes House, Oxford.

46. Clifford to Amery 28.3.1928 and enclosure, CO 273/545.

47. Minute by W. Pepys, Acting Under-Secretary FMS, 7.2.1923, and Memo by Maxwell 13.12.1922, SSF 446/1923.

48. In *East Coast Etching* cited in J. de V. Allen, 'Two Imperialists:

A Study of Sir Frank Swettenham and Sir Hugh Clifford', *JMBRAS*, Vol. XXXVIII, Part I, 1964, p. 64.

49. Clifford to Amery 28.3.1928 and enclosure, CO 273/545.

50. Diary of Sir Shenton Thomas, High Commissioner's Inaugural Tour of West Coast States 3/1-11/2 1935, CO 717/111.

51. *Ibid.*, C. W. Harrison, *Some Notes on the Government Services in British Malaya*, London, 1929, pp. 14-18, 23-4.

52. Clifford to Amery 28.3.1928, CO 273/545.

53. Cited in Maxwell to Fiddes 13.5.1921, CO 717/19; for discussion on European attitude of superiority and Asian-European relations, see J. Butcher, *The British in Malaya, 1880-1941*, Kuala Lumpur, 1979.

54. This may be established by examining the careers of the Malay MCS members in the Malayan Civil Service lists. The ten districts were Krian (Malays-51,623: non-Malays-34,318), Kuala Kangsar (Malays-45,573: non-Malays-31,170), Upper Perak (Malays-12,795: non-Malays-6,411), Kuala Pilah (Malays-32,686: non-Malays-15,317), Tampin (Malays-19,417: non-Malays-12,730), Kuala Lipis (Malays-27,239: non-Malays-9,046), Kuantan (Malays-13,551: non-Malays-9,728), Pekan (Malays-23,517: non-Malays-2,140), Raub (Malays-9,152: non-Malays-7,773), and Temerloh (Malays-25,496: non-Malays-5,837). J. E. Nathan, p. 156.

55. For discussion, see Yeo Kim Wah, pp. 82-3.

56. See *ibid.*, pp. 81-7.

PART TWO

THE MAXWELL EXPERIMENT

The Origins of Decentralization

IN 1919 Lord Milner offered the post of Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner of the Malay States to his close friend, Sir Laurence Nunns Guillemard. After some hesitation, partly because of financial reasons,¹ Guillemard accepted his first colonial appointment. 'A first-class in classical tripos' from Cambridge University, Guillemard sat and emerged second in the Home Service Examination; dissatisfied, he repeated his effort and topped the examination in 1886.² He then joined the Home Civil Service where he served for thirty-four years before he capped his career with the Malayan appointment. Except for a short spell in the Home Office, his distinguished career had been confined to the Treasury. He was Private Secretary to Harcourt, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1892-1902; Deputy Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, 1902-8; and Chairman of Customs and Excise, 1908-19. His appointment, understandably, was not warmly received by the Malayan service which preferred someone with colonial experience, and his Customs position earned the derogatory remark from several journalists that Malaya was to be governed by the 'Jug and Bottle Department'.³ Guillemard, however, regarded his long Treasury service as 'an invaluable asset' which compensated for his lack of colonial experience; above all, he stressed that 'his greatest asset' was his 'close friendship of many years with Milner'.⁴

J. H. M. Robson, the senior Unofficial of the FMS Federal

Council, recorded in his memoirs that Guillemard arrived in Malaya 'with a freshness of outlook and an enthusiasm comparatively rare in the Colonial Service'⁵ – an opinion amply substantiated by the latter's optimistic Malayan reports to Milner in 1920. In fact, Guillemard tended to look on the rosier side of life and 'enjoyed entertaining'. Assisted by his charming wife, he was to entertain his guests in style, in stark contrast to his frugal, unostentatious predecessor, Sir Arthur Young, and, in fact, to be unsurpassed by his successors. Guillemard had a keen sense of humour spiced with gentle irony and wit, wrote his despatches in a captivating style, and was most approachable and 'ready to listen to suggestions'.⁶ All this was to facilitate his success in cultivating the friendship of the Malay Rulers with whom he was to get on excellently. Yet, behind this appearance of congeniality, he was one of Milner's 'most go-ahead Governors'⁷ and was to prove so intractable to the Colonial Office that by 1921, Whitehall officials had come to look forward eagerly to his retirement in around three years' time.

GUILLEMARD'S CONCERN WITH LOCAL DISSATISFACTION

Guillemard arrived in Malaya in February 1920 with only Milner's ideas to guide him in his new role of Governor-High Commissioner. Among these was the idea that the British Empire was undergoing a period of change and that the government in Malaya should promote contentment among the ruled, even at the expense of some sacrifices of efficiency, and should preserve 'native self-government institutions' whenever they existed, or even help to create them. In the Malay States he was advised to pay more attention to Malay interests as against the prevailing idea that the government's first duty was the promotion of European and Chinese capitalist interests.⁸ Guillemard therefore, was influenced by Milner's view that indirect rule should be strengthened in the FMS.

This frame of mind rendered Guillemard receptive to the

moods of the time. Leading men in London and Malaya were then seriously questioning the existing policy of amalgamating the federated states, which was believed to have partly caused the Malays to be left far behind in the political and economic spheres. In Malaya there was dissatisfaction within European commercial interests over the dearth of government-funded development projects and the government failure to consult their representatives over financial questions.⁹ Several British officials, on the other hand, found over-centralization sufficiently unpalatable to complain about it to the Public Service Salaries Commission of 1919 and to press for a measure of decentralization from the Federal Secretariat to the Residents and the District Officers. Although convened to examine the question of civil service salaries, the Commission, as an aside, endorsed the views of the discontented officials. Soon after his arrival, Guillemard became aware that some Residents had begun to chafe under the restraints of over-centralization in Kuala Lumpur and desired more power within their states.¹⁰ Like his chief advisers, Guillemard seems to have been misled by previous policy pronouncements aimed at leading the Malay Rulers and élite to believe that neither centralization nor amalgamation was intended by the founders of the FMS. Hence, the government felt that it had violated the spirit of the Federation Treaty and that the states had lost more of their individuality than the Rulers had bargained for.

This feeling was reinforced by the discontent of the Rulers and the Malay élite in the FMS. In fact, disillusionment had begun to dawn on the Malays as early as 1903 when Sultan Idris of Perak criticized administrative over-centralization during a Conference of Rulers, but his dissatisfaction, although evidently shared by the other Rulers, went unheeded. By the second decade of the present century, dissent had, at times, changed into open protest. In 1916, for example, disenchanted Rulers and chiefs bemoaned that 'they have less voice in the administration and legislation of their country; the dignity of their appointment has decreased and the financial recognition of their service has kept pace neither with the prosperity of

their time nor the increase in remuneration given to officers administering the government'.¹¹ Such sentiment was magnified by their awareness that their counterparts in the UMS continued to wield a far greater measure of real authority. As one Malay writer bitterly charged in the *Utusan Melayu* in September 1919, the FMS Rulers had 'suffered loss of status along with their subjects' and, unlike the Malays in Johor and Kedah who were 'treated by Europeans with respect', those in the Federation were 'treated like dirt (*habu kasut*)'.¹² Guillemard was himself forcefully impressed with the Rulers' discontent soon after his arrival in the country early in February 1920.

By the 1920s administrative over-centralization had undermined British grassroot contacts with *kampong* Malays.¹³ Brockman and all the Residents unanimously agreed that the problem was a serious one, and drew Guillemard's attention to it late in February 1920. The Resident of Negri Sembilan, W. J. P. Hume, pointed out that the government had committed numerous blunders 'owing to want of knowledge of the most important part of our population'.¹⁴ George Maxwell, then Resident of Perak, went a step further and warned that the same situation had brought storms of political unrest in the Netherlands East Indies. To buttress his contention, Maxwell later cited the views of a pro-British Arab to the effect that the older British officials 'walked with feet upon solid ground' whereas the present officials, having lost touch with Malays, were 'walking with feet upon the clouds' and were in danger of 'falling far'.¹⁵ In other words the position was considered potentially dangerous to British rule in the FMS.¹⁶

It should be stressed that Malay discontent stemmed not only from administrative over-centralization, but also from British failure to effect any truly pro-Malay policy aimed at helping the Malays, now more sharply conscious of their relative backwardness, to acquire a greater share of the power and wealth of Malaya. Owing to the latter consideration, discontent was not confined to the Malay Rulers and élite. During the rubber slump of the early 1920s Malays had confident-

ly expected the government to protect them from large-scale foreclosures of their smallholdings by the chettiers from whom they borrowed, and were disappointed. After examining several Malay petitions on the issue, Maxwell decided that the government was in no position to intervene in private transactions between moneylenders and borrowers; nor could it advance enormous sums to borrowers to discharge their debts.¹⁷ In Perak this hardened the view of Malay secret societies, which had revived after the war, that no help could be expected from the British and that the Malays' relative economic backwardness would never be alleviated so long as the Rulers remained politically impotent.

This sentiment was likewise reflected in the unfriendly criticisms of British rule that had begun to be openly ventilated in Malay newspapers and among *kampong* Malays in the FMS and elsewhere. Those officials in close touch with their districts were aware of the widespread belief that Malays were only permitted to acquire as much education as would fit them for subordinate posts,¹⁸ and of Malay grouches over the relatively low positions and salaries of Malay administrators. A section of the Malay public even tended to believe that Malay interests were put aside in favour of those of the non-Malays who had the 'ear' of the federal administration in Kuala Lumpur.¹⁹ In other words, politically-conscious Malays had come to realize that their community had benefited little from the administrative and economic development in the FMS. To help reverse this, they felt that the Malay Rulers should be vested with more power and that the administration should be decentralized.

To complicate the issue, British officials also felt that there was a danger of the Malays becoming lax in religious observances—a problem, the Sultan of Perak impressed upon Guille-mard in March 1920, that threatened to affect Perak Malays.²⁰ Should this occur, the sultans, who were heads of the state religion, would have a weaker hold over the Malays and would be less able to prevent them from coming under the influence of 'seditious' propaganda that portrayed the British govern-

ment as the enemy of Islam. Until recently Malays from certain districts in Pahang such as Pekan and Temerloh, frequently embarked on pilgrimage to see the famous Ungku Saiyid of Trengganu who managed to infuse them with anti-British discontent. This particular 'disturbance' had greatly diminished since the death of the 'Saint', but Parr, the Resident of Pahang, still feared that such antagonism 'might spread among the ignorant and credulous peasant population' of these districts.²¹ And although Britain's war against Turkey did not whip up any significant pro-Turkish sentiments among the Malays, the situation in Trengganu was different. There, a strong pro-Turkish group did emerge, round whom rallied powerful religious leaders who schemed to undermine the rule of the 'British infidels' and restore ex-Sultan Mohamed to the Trengganu throne.²²

British anxiety over these developments was aggravated by the conviction that Malaya could not remain immune to nationalist movements in the surrounding countries.²³ Attention was focused on the nationalist awakening in the Netherlands East Indies partly because of the proximity of the Dutch colony to Malaya. The nationalist movement there was regarded as 'a fringe of the Pan-Islamic army and of the anti-white movement . . . the brunt of which must be borne by the British Empire' in Asia.²⁴ The government feared that the new mood of the Malays as well as the cultural and religious bonds they shared with Indonesians might render them responsive to the overtures of the nationalist movement in the Netherlands East Indies. The known intentions of Indonesian nationalists to set up branches of the Sarekat Islam in Malaya²⁵ and of pro-Turkish Arabs in Indonesia to disseminate anti-British propaganda among Malays only convinced the British that every effort should be made to isolate and insulate the Malays from subversive influence from the Dutch colony.

It should be noted that the Malays posed no threat to British rule in Malaya and, in certain respects, British fears were unwarranted. Until the late 1920s nationalist agitation in Indonesia hardly affected the Malays in Malaya who, in any case,

were not involved in any organized political movement except the quasi-political Kaum Muda which did not really trouble the British mind. The root cause of British concern was a bout of nervous anxiety arising largely from the First World War, with its anti-imperialist outcries and strong advocacy of democracy and national self-determination, which shook British Malayan officials as well as colonialists elsewhere.²⁶ After the war, the British position was rocked by a spate of political unrest in the Middle East: a revolt against the British protectorate in Egypt in March 1919; the ousting of the British-supported Feisal from Syria by the French in July 1920; the outburst of riots and violence in Palestine in 1920-1 because of Arab opposition to the British policy of creating a Jewish national home therein; and another anti-British rebellion in Iraq early in 1920. Elsewhere, the British failed to extort a Persian undertaking to accept British advisers for military and financial affairs in Persia, and suffered a loss of face when a Greek force they supported was routed by Mustafa Kemal of Turkey in 1922.²⁷ In particular, the war had undermined an axiom of British policy that the British were an Islamic power in the East and that they must be seen as protectors of Muslim interests. The war with Turkey since October 1914 and the subsequent disintegration of the Turkish Empire had brought about powerful and far-reaching Muslim agitation against British rule in India under the aegis of the Khilafat movement;²⁸ hence the understandable British nervousness about a general Islamic conflagration, even though pro-Turkish sentiments were generally non-existent in Malaya.

The above developments led the British to adopt a policy of conciliating moderate Arab nationalists in the Middle East and meeting the latter's demands half-way after 1921. Accordingly, Egypt was granted 'independence' subject to British control over defence, foreign policy, and the rights of its foreign residents; Iraq, ruled by the British-installed King Feisal, was placed under the League of Nation's Mandate system until 1930 when it attained independence; both the major rulers of Arabia, Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein, and local po-

tentates in Aden received generous British financial subsidies. At the same time the British pursued a more conciliatory policy towards Turkey and Persia on account of the Government of India's plea that it would help to overcome the Khilafat agitation in India.²⁹ Likewise in Malaya, whether British nervousness was justified or not, the troubled British psyche sharpened government's sensitivity to any sign of Malay disaffection, and signs there were in many facets of Malay life during the early post-war years. British officials, therefore, felt that concrete measures were expedient to tackle the 'Malay problem'. By mid-1920 several of them had come out in support of the appointment of a Secretary for Malay Affairs to collate and study information concerning the Malays and to advise the government accordingly.³⁰ In November 1920 Guillemard tried unsuccessfully to persuade Whitehall to appoint such an officer to act as his personal adviser on Malay affairs and watch how 'Muhammedan world politics' affected Malays in Malaya.³¹ Mainly for the latter reason, the government established a Malayan Bureau of Political Intelligence in 1921 'to keep the Government informed of all political agitation and movements in Malaya [and] of all such exterior politics as may affect [the country]'.³²

The overall impact of these internal and external forces on Malay attitudes towards the government was succinctly described by the Malayan Bureau of Political Intelligence in 1922:

It is difficult to resist the impression that the Malays, at any rate in the FMS, no longer feel that affection for the British that they undoubtedly felt some years ago. What has been called 'the rising tide of colour' may be responsible but, in Malaya, the development of administration and the perhaps inevitable centralisation has lessened the old personal touch, and the Malays can hardly be expected to accept with equanimity the continued diminution of the powers of the Sultans and the Feudal Chiefs which has been a feature of the past few years. Whether a restoration of the power is now practicable is not for this Bureau to say, but some steps in that direction would certainly be heartily welcomed by the Malays and many others, and would go far to prevent what is now a feeling of indifference developing into actual hostility.³³

To this must be added the fact that educated Malays were now more knowledgeable about world affairs, more sophisticated, and more ambitious. It was felt in official circles and by some representatives of the European commercial interests that the educated Malays, especially those trained in England, would sooner or later demand a larger say in the actual administration of the FMS, and that political expediency justified some concessions to Malays before they started to howl and shout. This political factor loomed large in official thinking when measures were taken to strengthen the Malay base of British indirect rule in the FMS in order to prevent the rise of 'another Indian state of affairs in Malaya'.³⁴

GUILLEMARD'S DESIRE FOR REAL CONTROL

From the outset, Guillemard desired to wield real control and personally direct affairs in both the Straits Settlements and the Malay States, a predisposition most natural to any 'go-ahead' and assertive Governor-High Commissioner. Before he left London, he met Sir Charles Crewe, a member of the British parliament, who had suggested, after a local tour, that representative institutions be introduced in Malaya. Towards this end, Guillemard was entrusted with the mission of modifying the Crown Colony System of government in the Straits Settlements in order to make it work more smoothly.³⁵ A couple of months after his arrival in Malaya, he advised Milner that Crewe's proposal was premature as there was no foreseeable electorate in the country. To him the Colony and the FMS had a similar system of administration and his task was 'to modify the Crown Colony System into something suitable' for both.³⁶ For one who had never worked in a colonial dependency previously and knew little about Malaya, this inadequate appreciation of the subtle differences between the administrative and political set-ups in the two areas is understandable; it was a handicap harder to surmount in view of the fact that the FMS administration had borrowed heavily from the Crown Colony System of the Straits Settle-

ments. Guillemard's perception of an assertive role for the Governor-High Commissioner became evident a week or two after his arrival in Malaya when he was 'horrified' by the limits of his power to sanction supplementary expenditure in the FMS and 'proposed to get this altered at once'.³⁷ By April 1920 he was criticizing 'the regime of Young and Brockman' in a personal letter to Milner. Sir Arthur Young, the Governor wrote, 'never had the brains to run the show . . . and that the longer he stayed here the more his powers failed'; consequently, the FMS was 'inadequately controlled in matters of policy by a High Commissioner whose powers are gradually failing'.³⁸

Guillemard's determination to change all this soon made itself felt over the construction of the Penang Hill Railway which the Colony had undertaken for some years but had abandoned when experts advised that it would not be financially viable. Early in 1920 the Colony wished to revive the project and sought FMS support. Brockman ruled that 'the Railway should not be built with FMS funds' and proposed that the Straits Government should provide 'the capital expenditure and accept responsibility for loss on work'. Taking the larger view that development works in the Colony and the Malay states should be treated as one deserving of financial support from any source, and believing Brockman's decision to have been motivated by narrow FMS jealousy of the Straits Settlements, Guillemard, in a fit of impatience, overruled the Chief Secretary and ordered him to secure the necessary funds in the Federal Council for the project.³⁹

Indeed, Brockman found Guillemard's control irksome. For many years he had been accustomed to conduct himself as a semi-independent head of the FMS government, a condition behind his decent and cordial relations with Sir Arthur Young. Besides, he soon realized that Guillemard would welcome his retirement when he reached fifty-five on 29 June 1920. As Brockman stated:

It was not very long [after our first interview on 4 February 1920] before I came to the conclusion that [Guillemard] would be glad if I would

take my pension and he informed me that it was his intention to put James in to succeed me. I felt sure that he thought that he would not find in me a very complacent supporter of his policy and I told Lord Milner so when I had the interview with him in October 1920 at the Colonial Office.⁴⁰

When Brockman consulted Guillemard about his future, he was told that he would suffer a reduction in pension if he stayed beyond 29 June. That this was not the case is evident from Milner's telegram dated 2 June already in the Governor's possession when the above advice was given. But whether Guillemard misunderstood the telegram, as he claimed,⁴¹ or deliberately misled Brockman is not clear. In any case Brockman accordingly decided to retire late in June, and an unpleasant misunderstanding soon developed when he discovered that he had been wrongly advised by the Governor. Milner had to intervene and settle the problem by offering Brockman the post of the Malayan Information Agent in London.⁴² Guillemard therefore, started his Malayan career with the retirement of a Chief Secretary under a cloud of misunderstanding and, as we shall see, ended it with nearly the forced retirement of another, namely George Maxwell in 1925.

In June 1920 Guillemard appointed his Colonial Secretary, Sir Frederick James, as acting Chief Secretary of the FMS. Hailing from Nigeria, James had performed very well as Food Controller of Malaya during the war and as acting Governor-High Commissioner before Guillemard's arrival. A lanky six-footer with a forceful personality, he was an able administrator with 'plenty of drive and commonsense'. But James inclined to be tactless and 'official'; for example, in Council meetings he not infrequently dismissed unofficial criticisms in a very peremptory fashion, thereby causing offence and earning for himself unpopularity.⁴³ As acting Chief Secretary, James embarked on two courses of action as Guillemard instructed. The first aimed at bringing about a closer co-operation between the Colony and the FMS through the removal of the jealousy and estrangement existing between them. To achieve this, James worked closely with the acting Colonial Secretary, W.

Murison, coming to an agreement on all points before submitting the issues involved to the High Commissioner for final sanction.⁴⁴ While leaving the Chief Secretary a larger load of routine chores to clear, this approach subjected important FMS affairs to closer Singapore's supervision and control. It reflected Guillemard's perception of the Governor-High Commissioner as the *effective* head of Malaya, assisted by a right-hand man, the Colonial Secretary, in Singapore and another, the Chief Secretary, in Kuala Lumpur, both enjoying equal status and power.

The second course of action James took was the initiation of a policy of decentralization in the FMS. By early 1920, the idea of administrative decentralization, first raised by the Public Service Salaries Commission in 1919 and then shelved had come to be discussed among key British officials with some avidity. This was motivated partly by Malay dissatisfaction and restlessness among British officials over administrative over-centralization in the FMS. In a circular dated 1 July 1920, James invited views from his colleagues on how to amend General Orders and the law so as to devolve some powers from the federal to the state authorities.⁴⁵ The latter responded with several cautious and tentative proposals recommending more power for the Chief Secretary and Residents to incur supplementary expenditure not sanctioned by the Annual Supply Bill; for federal departmental heads to appoint and promote certain categories of subordinate officers earning below \$3,500 per year; for federal departmental heads and District Officers to grant loans for the purchase of means of transport; and for federal departmental heads to sanction payment of salaries to subordinate officers whose appointment and promotion were placed under their control.⁴⁶ The most striking feature of all this is that in terms of power transfer the proposals were of little consequence and yet, illuminatingly, British officials claimed that a substantial volume of work involving the Federal Secretariat and the other units of the FMS administration would thereby be expunged. This clearly indicated, and subsequent British response to the

Maxwell and Guillemard policies confirmed, that British administrators were not contemplating any drastic decentralization but only a re-adjustment of a top-heavy, over-centralized federal administration so that it could function more efficiently. Another point worthy of comment is that James and the Residents were feeling their way around in dealing with a very complicated question. In fact, around the same time, James and Guillemard supported a highly centralized scheme for the reorganization of the Public Works Department in the FMS,⁴⁷ thus suggesting that they did not have very clear ideas on how to proceed with decentralization. In any case James did not remain as Chief Secretary to take concrete measures, and the proposed reorganization of the PWD was blocked by Maxwell in April 1921.

It should be noted that by mid-1920, as pressures for decentralization began to be felt, the need for a further expansion of central authority through the formation of a wider Malayan federation paradoxically came to the fore. The administrative and economic advantages of such a unit soon became evident to Guillemard as they were realized as early as 1909 by Sir John Anderson after the latter brought the UMS under British rule.⁴⁸ But then, as later, the UMS Rulers strongly opposed entry into the Federation because it would entail the loss of the greater degree of autonomy and power they currently enjoyed. Guillemard was also aware that in this matter the UMS had the sympathy, if not the support, of some 'parochial-minded' British Advisers⁴⁹ who were happy with the fewer restraints on their advisory role and disappointed with the neglect of Malay interests in the FMS.

Around mid-1920 Guillemard consulted Brockman who, however, was unable to proffer any definite advice on a pan-Malayan policy except that Anderson had hoped to extend the Federation to the UMS. As rumours were then rife that the government was scheming to sweep the UMS into the FMS fold,⁵⁰ Guillemard sought Whitehall's views on 22 June 1920, indicating at the same time that he hoped to convene a meeting soon to discuss the issue with the Residents and the UMS

Advisers. Two days later came a letter from Maxwell outlining a pan-Malayan policy—subsequently elaborated for Whitehall in October 1920 as discussed later—that recommended decentralization in the FMS as a precondition for the eventual formation of a larger Malayan federation. By then Guillemard's discussions with Brockman and other senior colleagues had left him with a deep impression that the government should press fast for such a federation. In fact, this was implicitly presented as a reason for the proposed appointment of a Secretary for Malay Affairs mentioned earlier. Early in October 1920 Guillemard explained:

The history of recent years in the Peninsula shows that the policy of Federation has experienced a setback. I am told that Sir John Anderson expected that it would rapidly advance, but so far from this being the case, there has been rather a centrifugal tendency on the Rulers. It is, I think, clear that if Federation is to be encouraged, every care must be taken to avoid running counter to the susceptibility of the Malay Rulers and Chiefs and that the only way to win their confidence and consent is to consider those susceptibilities so far as is consonant with imperial policy.⁵¹

It seems clear, therefore, that James' decentralization policy was partly influenced by the consideration of a pan-Malayan federation whose formation had hitherto been obstructed by over-centralization in the FMS.

In June 1920 Guillemard recommended James for the Chief Secretaryship so that the latter could engineer a decentralization of the FMS and bring about closer FMS-Colony co-operation. After some hesitation, Guillemard then pressed Milner to appoint Maxwell to succeed James as Colonial Secretary in order to meet local wishes and because 'Maxwell could make an excellent Colonial Secretary'.⁵² Meanwhile, Maxwell made a bid for the Chief Secretaryship as he was by far the strongest candidate in the FMS for the post. The question now came to be jointly considered with Guillemard's despatch of the same month seeking advice on a pan-Malayan policy. It is obvious that the Colonial Office at this juncture

had neither a full understanding of the UMS nor any clear idea of a pan-Malayan policy. Collins, head of the Far Eastern Department, minuted that 'we have been waiting for things to ripen for further Federation' and that he expected only Johor to resist joining a wider political grouping. On being consulted, Sir Arthur Young rightly opined that the UMS would never now voluntarily join 'the Federation' mainly because a UMS Ruler 'has more voice' in the administration of his state than a FMS Ruler. Young stressed that 'it required very strong reasons before taking the step to force the Unfederated States to join the Federation and certainly Johore and Kedah will never join without compulsion'.⁵³ At this point the Colonial Office consulted Maxwell, then on leave in London, who seized the opportunity to outline a pan-Malayan policy and discuss practical steps to bring about its realization. This so impressed Whitehall officials that they reversed their acceptance of Guillemard's recommendation of James for the Chief Secretaryship. To strengthen further his application for the post, Maxwell meanwhile obtained the support of Young and Frank Swettenham, both of whom advised the Colonial Office, with an air of authority, that James was disqualified because he could not speak Malay. In October 1920 Collins secured Maxwell's appointment as Chief Secretary so that the latter could carry out his pan-Malayan policy.

THE MAXWELL PLAN

Through twenty-nine years of Malayan service, George Maxwell had acquired an intimate knowledge of the UMS administration and had the opportunity of watching at close quarters how power fell increasingly into British hands in the FMS: a fortuitous combination of experiences that helped him to formulate a policy of solving the related problems of decentralizing the federal administration and extending central control over the Peninsula. The object of this policy was a wider political unit which all parties involved—the Colonial Office, Guillemard, Maxwell, A. H. Lemon (the newly-retired

Resident of Selangor)—concurred should be a federation of all the Malay states. The complex question of combining the Straits Settlements (a Crown Colony) and the nine sovereign Malay states did not come under British purview until the time of Sir Cecil Clementi, Governor-High Commissioner of Malaya, 1930–4. In the 1920s the British vision embraced a wider federation of the Malay states and a separate Colony, both following uniform policies and under the direction and control of a Governor-High Commissioner stationed in Singapore.

In his 'Notes on a Policy in respect of the Unfederated Malay States' Maxwell discussed the origin of the FMS and traced the development therein of administrative over-centralization with the attendant discontent of the Malay Rulers. He agreed with Young that over-centralization was the bar to the formation of a larger political unit and that Kedah and Johor would not join the FMS of their own volition. He pointed out, however, that the present relations between the UMS and the FMS were 'most friendly', and urged that British policy should aim at fostering the growth of 'these friendly feelings' into 'a true federal feeling' in the hope that this would ultimately blossom into a loose-knit Malayan federation wherein each state would preserve its separate individuality while combining with all other states in matters of common concern.

With considerable foresight, Maxwell stressed that in 'federation-making' it was not practicable or even desirable to frame a 'cut-and-dried scheme'; nor was it 'a matter in which the Government can look for early results'. All that the government could do was to take preparatory steps towards attaining a long-term goal. To avoid the pitfall of stirring suspicion among the UMS governments, the British should pursue its pan-Malayan policy in secret and quash current rumours that schemes were afoot for merging the Malay states. Maxwell urged the government to make, on an appropriate occasion, a bold public declaration that British policy did not aim at creating a pan-Malayan federation but only intended to promote 'a friendly combination and co-operation' among the

various units in matters of common concern on the understanding that each party would retain full freedom to act on local affairs.⁵⁴

Having thus hopefully set the mind of the UMS at rest, the government, Maxwell advised, should take two courses of action. The first should aim at enticing the UMS into increasing participation in pan-Malayan activities for which agencies that could promote the growth of 'a true federal feeling' should be fostered. Among these were the European services whose members were seconded to the UMS, the FMS Railway that covered the whole of Malaya, and the Federal Court of Appeal for the Straits Settlements, FMS, Johor, and Kedah. Maxwell urged that the existing tendency of the UMS to follow FMS policies and administrative methods should be converted into a general practice. Accordingly, the UMS Advisers should be directed, unless they could show cause to the contrary, to advise their governments to adopt the general policy of the FMS. Whenever possible, the UMS should also be drawn into participating in pan-Malayan schemes in which they would be accorded full representation and would not be made to feel they were acting under pressure.⁵⁵ There is hardly any doubt that these proposals would go down well with British officials, and pursued with adroitness, tact, and without haste, at least the first two measures had a very strong chance of success.

In this connection Maxwell advocated that UMS departments dealing with non-contentious, technical matters should eventually follow the general policy decided by their FMS/SS counterparts. Implicitly he would welcome that such departments be reorganized into pan-Malayan departments whose heads, based in Kuala Lumpur, should have jurisdiction in the UMS.⁵⁶ For a start, Maxwell only urged that the above be implemented for the Agriculture, Forest, and Fisheries Departments. The problem encountered here, whether pan-Malayan departments were in fact formed, was how to meet UMS opposition to unmitigated control of their departments by the federal heads and how to preserve state individuality. Maxwell's distinct contribution here lies in his definition of

the status and role of the federal heads. He only mentioned this in his 1920 memorandum,⁵⁷ but early in 1923 described such a federal head as an expert adviser of the UMS who could correspond with, but would not have the power to issue executive orders to, state departmental officers. The expert's advice should be transmitted direct to the UMS Adviser and, when accepted, conveyed as executive instructions by the state secretariat to the officers concerned who would, in this way, avoid serving 'two masters'. Once a year, the federal head should pay an official visit to inspect the departments and advise accordingly, and should comment on annual departmental reports and draft estimates submitted by the UMS.⁵⁸ It may be noted in passing that in 1923 Maxwell tried to impose more or less such a status on certain FMS heads, and that his ideas set in train subsequent government attempts to form pan-Malayan departments during the inter-war years.

Maxwell felt that his suggestions outlined above should apply to the Medical and Education Departments. But as these departments tended to deal with contentious issues, he urged that committees on which would sit representatives from all the Malay states and the Colony, should be formed to work out policies for the whole of Malaya. Again it may be noted that the above strategy came to be effected by both Whitehall and the local government in the 1930s.⁵⁹ While British pan-Malayan policy during the inter-war years rested essentially on Maxwell's ideas, the Chief Secretary had an inadequate appreciation of the fact that the UMS Rulers and élite were hostile to any semblance of external control or interference in their affairs and that they could reap the benefits of FMS policies and practices through safer and less obtrusive channels. For this reason, British pan-Malayan policy failed to make any significant progress in the inter-war years.

The second course of action to help realize a Malayan federation was explained by Maxwell as follows:

In the Federated Malay States power should be restored not only to the Residents, but also to the Rulers and the State Councils in order to give the Rulers more share and interest in the administration of their coun-

tries, and at the same time to reduce the difference, which is now very marked, between the Rulers of the Federated and the Unfederated States.⁶⁰

This was intended to diminish the strong aversion of the UMS to joining a larger political unit. The idea behind this policy was not original, and Maxwell himself attributed it to Anderson. Already late in June 1920 he impressed upon Guillemard that a Malayan union could only be realized through the policy spelled out in his 1920 memorandum because of the UMS Rulers' 'hatred' of the existing FMS system in which 'the Rulers and their Residents were mere marionettes worked on wires pulled by an under-secretary in Kuala Lumpur'.⁶¹ In his 1920 memorandum Maxwell discussed administrative over-centralization and its damaging effects on the FMS Rulers at some length and recommended the above policy as a solution. He did not chalk out any specific decentralization measures in his memorandum or indicate the desirable degree of power transfer from the centre downwards; nor was mention made of any intention to create a genuine federation with rigid and clear-cut division of powers between the centre and the states even though Collins did minute that they 'ought to aim at a truly Federal Federation'. His chief concern was to persuade Whitehall to endorse his policy, leaving practical recipes to be worked out locally during the course of policy implementation.

Nonetheless, a certain degree of ambiguity exists in the Colonial Office documents on decentralization. Admittedly, Maxwell envisaged the continued existence of the FMS within the larger Malayan federation of the future, but Whitehall's views on this are not stated. Collins did, however, minute that the Chief Secretary should become eventually the co-ordinator for all the Malay states and the channel of communication between the High Commissioner and the Residents/Advisers.⁶² Presumably Whitehall officials were only interested, after detailed discussions with Maxwell and A. H. Lemon, that Maxwell had come out with the right policy towards attaining the goal of a loose-knit Malayan federation.

In his memorandum Maxwell mentioned the decentralization measure suggested by the Public Service Salaries Commission and now being tackled by James as discussed earlier. He went a step further by calling for the restoration of power to the Rulers and the State Councils in the FMS. Maxwell contrasted the respective positions of the FMS and UMS Rulers as follows:

The Residents [in the FMS] really administer the States, and the Sultans stand by and watch them do it. In the unfederated States, it is very different. There the Adviser states an opinion or makes a recommendation, and the Sultan (or his delegate) concurs or approves. The Adviser is most circumspect in avoiding all semblance of giving any executive order.... Putting it bluntly, therefore, one may correctly state that the difference between the Ruler of an Unfederated State and the Ruler of one of the Federated States is that one rules his country and the other does not.⁶³

As he believed that the passive role of the sultans under Resident rule was responsible for Johor's and Kedah's adamant refusal to join the FMS, and as he wished to narrow the wide gap existing between the positions of the two sets of rulers as a move towards a larger federation, Maxwell implied that Resident rule in the FMS should, to a significant extent, be converted into the Advisory rule of the UMS. This was nowhere explicitly stated in his 1920 memorandum. It was only implicitly borne out by a minute of Collins written on 2 November 1920 after long discussions with Maxwell:

The bonds of the present Federation should be loosened so that when the time comes for the new 'Union of Malaya' to be arranged the component States of the Federation will be in much the same position as the UMS as regards the *position* of the Sultans, the *powers* of the State Councils [and the authority of the Residents (as compared with the Advisers)] [Emphasis added].⁶⁴

It is quite safe to assume that the head of the Far Eastern Department, who had been personally involved in Kedah's political crises in 1909 and 1914, understood the nature of indirect

rule in the UMS, and that like Maxwell, he implicitly desired some form of Advisory rule established in the FMS in order to inveigle the UMS to join a larger political grouping.

Taking the decentralization policy as a whole, it may however, be pointed out that neither Collins nor Maxwell adequately grasped, or weighed all the implications of, the fact that the FMS were no longer traditional Malay polities as were the UMS (except Johor), but were multi-racial states carrying a massive array of commercial and industrial interests that desired a centralized administration conducive to efficiency and economic development. And in terms of Advisory rule, they had erroneously assumed that FMS British officials would tamely hand over part of their executive power to the Rulers and Malay administrators who were few in number and generally considered unfit to shoulder a high level of responsibility. Nonetheless, it is in the light of his 1920 memorandum that one may better appreciate Maxwell's attempts in 1924 to bring the Rulers and the State Councils into the administrative machine of the FMS.

In his memorandum Maxwell left a complete blank on the future position of the Chief Secretary of the FMS. It is clear, however, that he never envisaged the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship, and subsequent events revealed that he regarded the post as an integral and pivotal part of the FMS system. It is interesting to note that it required 'an outsider'—Collins himself—to propose a drastic reorganization of the FMS system. After enthusiastically endorsing Maxwell's pan-Malayan and decentralization policy, Collins suggested that the Chief Secretaryship should be altered into one approximating the Secretaryship to the High Commissioner, who would continue to control federal issues but would function as an adviser and co-ordinator of state matters.⁶⁵ The above, in effect, was tantamount to the removal of the Chief Secretaryship as then constituted. Collins' proposal was not accepted by the Colonial Office. It is most unlikely that the idea was ever conveyed to Guillemard or any other British Malayan official. In any case Guillemard gave no hint at all that he had thought of the

idea before October 1924 when he advised London to abolish the Chief Secretaryship.

Because of his assertiveness and inexperience, Guillemard seems to have been prepared by October 1920 to push a pan-Malayan policy hard and fast. Had this happened, it would only have triggered off an implacable UMS reaction against the idea of a larger political grouping. But early in 1921 Whitehall, enclosing a copy of Maxwell's memorandum for guidance, advised Guillemard to 'go slow' in carrying out the pan-Malayan policy and to wait for a time to see how Maxwell decentralized the FMS administration. In so doing Whitehall officials paid inadequate attention to Malay discontent and British restlessness concerning over-centralization in the FMS but were overwhelmed by the objective of a Malayan union. To the Colonial Office, therefore, decentralization was primarily a means to an end, a strategy towards an eventual Malayan federation.

In July 1921 Guillemard informed Winston Churchill, Milner's successor, that he was in general agreement with Maxwell's policy. 'Many of his suggestions', the Governor wrote, 'had already taken shape in my own mind as desirable, and it is satisfactory to me to find them confirmed by his long experience'.⁶⁶ It should be noted that Guillemard presented no proposals or ideas of his own concerning decentralization and a pan-Malayan policy. Soon after this, he authorized the issue of circulars to the UMS instructing the Advisers to persuade their states to adopt the general policy of the Federation whenever desirable, and to the FMS advising them that the government intended to restore powers to the Residents, Rulers, and State Councils. Late in August, after discussion with the new Chief Secretary, he obtained Whitehall's sanction to modify Maxwell's proposed public declaration on British policy towards the UMS. Accordingly, in December 1921, the High Commissioner declared in the Federal Council a British policy of friendly co-operation among the several Malayan administrations. The government had no intention, he continued, of forcing any state to join the FMS but would welcome a request by any of the UMS to enter the Federa-

tion.⁶⁷ Thus in a rather low-key fashion had begun a decentralization policy, linked to the ultimate goal of a larger Malayan federation, that was to dominate the FMS administrative scene for the next two decades.

1. L. N. Guillemard to H. Thornton 22.6.1920, Personal Papers of Alfred Lord Milner (hereafter cited as The Milner Papers), Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

2. Notes written by Sir William Peel, Governor of Hong Kong, 1930-5, concerning his Colonial Service from 1897-1935, Rhodes House, Oxford.

3. A. F. Staples, 'Reminiscences of a Scribbler', *British Malaya*, Vol. VI, no. 10, February 1932, p. 278.

4. L. N. Guillemard, *Trivial Fond Records*, London, 1937, p. 79.

5. J. H. Robson, *Records and Recollections, 1889-1934*, Kuala Lumpur, 1934 p. 152.

6. See *British Malaya*, Vol. II, no. 2, June 1927, p. 59; Vol. II, no. 1, May 1927, p. 6; Vol. XIII, no. 7, November 1937, p. 164; Vol. XV, no. 8, September 1940, p. 124; Vol. I, no. 2, February 1952, p. 41.

7. Milner to Guillemard 29.1.1921. The Milner Papers.

8. Guillemard to Collins 13.12.1925, CO 717/48.

9. Owing to the First World War, the government practically suspended all major public projects like roads, docks, hospitals, and so on. Frequently the government incurred substantial sums of expenditure and merely referred the items to the Finance Committee of the Federal Council for approval. The Unofficials of the Council complained that they were not consulted in advance, and were unhappy to be used as a rubber stamp for *fait accompli* committed by British officials. The European commercial interests were also dissatisfied with restrictive business regulations imposed by Whitehall that tended to hamper the revival of the tin and rubber industries. For a discussion of these and other issues, see K. K. Ghosh, *Twentieth-Century Malaysia: Politics of Decentralization of Power, 1920-1929*, Calcutta, 1977, ch. 2.

10. Submissions to the Public Service Salaries Commission, 1919, HCO 1181/1920; Memo by F. A. S. McClelland, Acting Resident of Pahang, 15.8.1922, SSF 3371/1922; Some Notes on the Problem of the future Administration of the Malayan Territories under the Control,

direct or indirect, of the Colonial Office, by E. S. Hose, Resident of Negri Sembilan, 28.12.1924, CO 717/40.

11. Encl. to Clifford to Ormsby-Gore confidential no. 33, 8.2.1927 (National Library of Singapore Collection); also Maxwell to Guillemard 24.6.1920, encl. to Guillemard to Wilson 6.5.1926, CO 717/51.

12. *Utusan Melayu* 26.9.1919. Commenting on this, R. O. Windstedt, then Assistant Director of Education, said, 'It is typical of letters which appear from day to day in the vernacular press. . . . The bitter tone of this article is an expression of a wide-spread feeling of discontent which is not wholly baseless.' Windstedt to H. W. Firmstone, Director of Education, 2.10.1919, PSF 1667/1919.

13. Guillemard to Milner 8.11.1920, CO 717/5.

14. Minute by Hume 19.5.1920, NSF Confidential 27/1920.

15. Circular letter from George Maxwell, Chief Secretary, to all British officials in the FMS 18.9.1922, Personal Papers of George Maxwell, Rhodes House, Oxford (hereafter cited as *The Maxwell Papers*).

16. See Minutes by British Residents, NSF Confidential 17/1920.

17. MBPI Bulletin, no. 9, 30.11.1921, CO 273/518/1922; Oliver Marks, Acting Resident of Selangor, to Maxwell 6.5.1921 and Maxwell's Minute 12.5.1921, SSF 2073/1921.

18. Minute by Under-Secretary FMS 26.4.1920, NSF Confidential 27/1920.

19. Memo by Edward Long 17.4.1925, CO 717/45; Peel to Collins 17.9.1925, CO 717/47.

20. Notes of an interview between Guillemard and the Sultan of Perak 25.3.1920, NSF Confidential 33/1920; Circular letter from Maxwell to all British Officials in the FMS 18.9.1922, *The Maxwell Papers*.

21. Minute by Parr, Resident of Pahang, 8.3.1920, NSF Confidential 17/1920.

22. Noor Bee binte Kassim, 'The Trengganu Rebellion, 1928', Academic Exercise, University of Singapore, 1973, p. 14; see also CO 717/61/52432/1928.

23. Guillemard to Churchill secret no. 244, 18.10.1921 (National Library of Singapore Collection).

24. Memo on Unrest in the Netherlands East Indies 1920, encl. to Milner to Guillemard, no. 157, 13.7.1920; also Maxwell to Collins 21.12.1920, encl. to Milner to Guillemard secret no. 15, 15.1.1921 (National Library of Singapore Collection).

25. In 1921, for instance, Haji Agoes Salim, a major leader of the Sarikat Islam, showed interest in the idea of setting up a branch of his party in Malaya. Khoo Kay Kim, 'The Beginnings of Political Extremism

in Malaya, 1915-1935', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Malaya, 1973, pp. 113-14.

26. R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, Kuala Lumpur, Reprint, 1964, p. 8; A. P. Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies*, London, 1963, ch. V; M. R. D. Foot (ed.), *War and Society*, London, 1973, chs. VI and VIII; see also Milner's views cited in ch. II.

27. For discussion of the above, see Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in The Middle East*, London, 1963, chs. I-III; Pierre Rondot, *The Changing Patterns of the Middle East*, London, 1961, Part III; Elie Kedourie, *England and The Middle East*, London, 1956, and *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle Eastern Studies*, London, 1970.

28. For discussion, see Judith Brown, 'War and the Colonial Relationship: Britain, India and the War of 1914-18', M. R. D. Foot (ed.), pp. 85-106; A. C. Niemeijer, *The Khilafat Movement in India, 1919-1924*, The Hague, 1972.

29. For discussion, see sources cited in footnote (27); also, R. J. Gavin, *Aden under British Rule, 1839-1967*, London, 1975, chs. IX-X.

30. Minute by Hume 19.5.1920, NSF 27/1920; also Minute by District Officer, Kuala Selangor, 11.10.1920, SSF 4794/1920.

31. Guillemard to Milner 8.11.1920, CO 717/5.

32. Guillemard to Churchill, secret no. 244, 18.10.1924 (National Library of Singapore Collection).

33. MBPI Bulletin, no. 8, 1.10.1922, CO 273/518.

34. Peel to Collins 17.9.1925, CO 717/47.

35. Extract from Crewe's letter, encl. to Walter to Milner 6.11.1919, The Milner Papers; Guillemard to Collins 17.6.1920, CO 717/9.

36. Guillemard to Milner (Private) 6.5.1921, The Milner Papers.

37. Minute by Guillemard 9.3.1920, HCO 612/1920.

38. Guillemard to Milner (Private) 6.5.1921, The Milner Papers; Guillemard to Grindle 26.11.1921, CO 717/14; Guillemard to Masterton-Smith 8.12.1921 (Private), *ibid.*

39. Extract from Brockman's letter to the Colonial Office undated, encl. to Guillemard to Devonshire 8.5.1923, CO 717/27.

40. Brockman to Collins 20.1.1922, CO 717/25.

41. Guillemard to Milner 7.1.1921, CO 717/12. Commenting on Guillemard's claim that the Secretary of State's telegram of 2 June 1920 was not clear, Collins minuted, 'This difficulty in comprehension

would locally be comic, if it were not so tragic', Minute 14.12.1920, CO 717/5.

42. Minute by Grindle 30.9.1922, CO 717/25.

43. *British Malaya*, Vol. VIII, no. 1, March 1934; Vol. XVI, no. 12, April 1942, p. 151; Vol. VI, no. 11, March 1932, p. 300; Vol. XII, no. 7, November 1937; Langley to Milner 25.9.1921, The Milner Papers.

44. James to Collins 21.11.1920, CO 717/10.

45. Circular from Under-Secretary, FMS, 1.7.1920, SSF 3573/1920.

46. The first proposal aimed at giving federal departmental heads authority to incur supplementary expenditure up to \$500 and at increasing the Resident's power in the same matter from \$500 to \$1,000, the Chief Secretary's from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and the High Commissioner's from \$10,000 to \$20,000. Memo. by A. S. Jelf 18.2.1921, SSF 534/1926. The second proposal intended to empower all federal departmental heads to grant loans for the purchase of 'means of conveyance' such as motor cars and motor cycles, and district officers to offer loans for the purchase of bicycles. Memo. by Captain Coe 6.7.1922, SSF 3371/1922. The third proposal sought to empower six federal departmental heads (Mines, Agriculture, Education, Audit, Printing, and Malay States Volunteer Reserves) to appoint and promote subordinate officers earning a salary below \$3,500 per year. If implemented, the move would have placed the heads of Agriculture, Printing, and Malay States Volunteer Reserves Departments in full control over nearly all their Asian officers; empowered the Director of Education to appoint various non-European teachers, the Auditor-General to engage Assistant Checkers of Stores, and the Senior Warden of Mines to appoint certain non-Clerical subordinates such as Chinese Interpreters and store-keepers. In the same file, another proposal aimed at authorizing federal departmental heads to sanction the payment of salary to subordinate officers earning below \$3,500 per year whose appointment and promotion were entrusted to them. Under the existing arrangement the officers concerned would not receive their salaries until the Chief Secretary instructed the FMS Treasurer to act. *ibid.* See also SSF 3573/1920 and NSF 2118/1920.

47. Memo on Reorganisation of the PWD, FMS, 13.5.1920, SSF 3296/1920; Secretary to Resident, Perak, to Under-Secretary, FMS, 16.12.1920, SSF 408/1921; Minute by Maxwell 23.4.1921, *ibid.*

48. E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1910*, Kuala Lumpur, 1969, p. 219.

49. Guillemard to Fiddes 22.6.1920, CO 717/2.

50. 'It behoves the Federationists', warned the *Malaya Tribune*

(31.3.1920), 'to move cautiously and ponder deeply before they persist in their schemings.'

51. Guillemard to Milner 8.11.1920, CO 717/5.

52. Guillemard to Milner 24.6.1920, The Milner Papers.

53. Young to Dixon 11.8.1920, CO 717/2.

54. Notes on a Policy in respect of the Unfederated Malay States 15.10.1920 by George Maxwell, Eastern no. 135 Confidential, CO 717/10/1920. (Cited hereafter as Notes, Eastern no. 135 Confidential).

55. *ibid.*

56. In his memorandum Maxwell was not explicit on this point. The departments in the UMS could be made to adopt the general policy decided by the federal heads in Kuala Lumpur or Singapore even if they remained separate entities. However, in view of Maxwell's preference for pan-Malayan to joint FMS-SS departments, he probably had Malaya-wide departments in mind.

57. Notes, Eastern no. 135 Confidential, CO 717/10/1920.

58. Memo by Maxwell 3.2.1923, NSF 2180/1922; also Under-Secretary, FMS, to Secretary to High Commissioner 22.12.1921 HCO 1043/1921.

59. For discussion, see Yeo Kim Wah, 'British Policy towards the Malays in the Federated Malay States, 1920-40', Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, 1972.

60. Notes, Eastern no. 135 Confidential, CO 717/10/1920.

61. Maxwell to Guillemard 24.6.1920, encl. to Guillemard to Ormsby-Gore 6.5.1926, CO 717/51.

62. Minute by Collins 2.11.1920, CO 717/10.

63. Notes, Eastern no. 135 Confidential, *ibid.*

64. Minute by Collins 2.11.1920, *ibid.*

65. *Ibid.*

66. Guillemard to Churchill 5.7.1921, CO 717/15.

67. *PFC FMS*, 1921, p. B65.

Slump, Power Struggle, and Decentralization

BACK from London, George Maxwell assumed duty as the Chief Secretary of the FMS on 5 March 1921. His was already a big name in Malaya. His grandfather, Sir Peter Benson Maxwell, distinguished himself as Chief Justice in Singapore in the years 1867-71, while his father, Sir William Edward Maxwell, was a brilliant pioneer Resident in Selangor before he became Governor of the Gold Coast in 1895, where he died in harness. George Maxwell himself had already had 'a most successful career' by the time he became Chief Secretary. He joined the Perak Civil Service in 1891 and became the first FMS civil servant to be called to the Bar in 1904.¹ When the UMS came under British protection in 1909, Maxwell was appointed British Adviser to Kedah where he played a vital role in establishing Advisory rule in that state. During the First World War, he acted as Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements, and was Secretary to the High Commissioner. In the former capacity, he was despatched as the personal envoy of the Governor, Arthur Young, to carry out an on-the-spot investigation into the Kelantan uprising in mid-1915² and advise the government accordingly. As Secretary to the High Commissioner, he produced a scheme for creating a wider Malayan federation, to which the Chief Secretary, Brockman, paid scant attention and then ignored. The last stage of his career before he became Chief Secretary witnessed rapid promotions—as

General Adviser to Johor in 1918, acting Colonial Secretary early in 1919, and then Resident of Perak at the end of the same year. As acting Colonial Secretary, Maxwell became the chief author of the Singapore Housing Commission Report one of whose recommendations materialized in an Improvement Trust Department set up in the Singapore Municipality in May 1920 to solve the island's housing problem. As Resident of Perak, he initiated the 'Yaws Campaign' in Malaya and created Mosquito Destruction Boards in every district in his state.³

On nearly all accounts, Maxwell was recognized as 'a man of singular ability'.⁴ He was renowned for his enormous grasp of detail, 'extraordinary driving force', untiring energy and capacity for hard work, and wide knowledge of the country he had served for thirty years.⁵ As a former colleague wrote, 'He seemed to know everything and to be always right'.⁶ He was clearly a man of action, who made quick incisive decisions and possessed remarkable perseverance towards attaining his goals. But Maxwell was also a man of many faults. As he cleared his voluminous work-load with rapidity, he tended to be careless and, at times, impetuous. With a 'faith in himself [that] amounts to inspiration', Maxwell was egoistic to the point of arrogance,⁷ frequently lacked patience with his subordinates, and was a hard task-master. He was a difficult head to work with⁸ and was consequently not popular among many officials; but a large number became his admirers who found difficulty in finding 'clay in the feet of [their] idol'.⁹ Even more impressive was his unrivalled influence among European journalists and within the European commercial community with whom he 'never put a foot wrong' and from whom he earned *éclat* as 'the Napoleon of the Malay states' and as the administrator who 'looms superbly as the biggest personality of three Malayan decades'.¹⁰ As Chief Secretary, Maxwell was to manifest the temperament of a centralizer in the habit of taking quick decisions without consulting his advisers, including the Residents. He was not an ideal man for the highly complex task of decentralizing the FMS administration.

SLUMP AND POWER STRUGGLE

Before Maxwell could take up his decentralization policy he found himself thrown into the throes of a grim power struggle with Guillemard and into the full blast of a trade depression that began at the end of 1920. The root cause of the conflict was that 'the two men in earnest' had different conceptions of the role of the Chief Secretary, and were split over the degree of control the High Commissioner should exercise over the FMS. As a pushful High Commissioner treating the Colony and the FMS alike and deploring the relationship established by Young and Brockman, Guillemard was determined to have a direct hand over important policies in the FMS. As he explained, 'I regard the Chief Secretary as occupying *exactly the same position* under me (as High Commissioner) as the Colonial Secretary in the Colony occupies under me (as Governor) and that both "should work as equals".'¹¹ Maxwell, however, demurred. From the outset, the egoistic and somewhat pugnacious Chief Secretary expected to head, like Brockman, a quasi-independent administration in the FMS. As an outward sign of this, he successfully moved in 1922 to terminate the existing arrangement under which the Chief Secretary's correspondence with the High Commissioner had to pass through the Secretary to the High Commissioner in Singapore.¹² Seeing himself as the real head of the FMS under treaty, Maxwell replied that the Chief Secretary and the Colonial Secretary 'are not and cannot be equals'.¹³

Bad blood was first created by a decision on the relative seniority of the Chief Secretary and the Colonial Secretary. Before the appointment of Maxwell, the Chief Secretary ranked higher than the Colonial Secretary, enjoying a higher salary and wearing the Civil Service Class Two uniform commonly used by lieutenant-governors. In November 1920 James protested vehemently against the appointment of Maxwell as Chief Secretary. Pointing out that he was senior in service to Maxwell, and that the whole of Malaya expected him to follow the footsteps of his three predecessors by succeeding Brock-

man, James argued that his misfortune would undermine his prestige and role in the government, and that to overcome this, the status of the Colonial Secretary should be elevated to that of the Chief Secretary. James also contended that it was politically undesirable that under the existing arrangement, the Colonial Secretary should suddenly become senior to the Chief Secretary when he acted for the Governor-High Commissioner.¹⁴ Collins endorsed James' proposal as 'the true solution of the difficulty'. He then rationalized that another advantage was that the change 'would tend to reduce the somewhat excessive prominence of the Chief Secretary . . . which has had much to do with tying up the FMS into too tight a knot'.¹⁵ Consequently James' salary was increased from \$1,750 to \$2,200 per month (the salary of the Chief Secretary) and both he and Maxwell were now only entitled to wear the Civil Service Class Three uniform. Although this change was largely a piece of face-saving for James, it aroused the ire of Maxwell.

Another source of conflict was that under Guillemard's direction, Maxwell and James were required to co-operate closely, consult frequently, and virtually come to a decision before submitting official matters to the High Commissioner as was the practice when James was the acting Chief Secretary in 1920. Unfortunately, the appointment of Maxwell as Chief Secretary had produced so much resentment in James that intense feuds soon developed between them, which the Colonial Office described as 'nothing short of a scandal'.¹⁶ The procedure laid down by Guillemard could not but aggravate the situation. Besides, Maxwell was irritated by the belief that Guillemard generally sided with James; as J. D. Hall, the High Commissioner's private secretary, later recorded, Maxwell, at times, became 'hysterical' when he believed he had failed to carry his points across to Guillemard as effectively as James.¹⁷ The Chief Secretary soon reacted to this by tending to become increasingly insubordinate to the High Commissioner, an attitude of disrespect the latter considered offensive and obstructive. Although the above procedure had practically

broken down by 1922, Guillemard's policy, while leaving a larger volume of routine matters to be independently decided by Kuala Lumpur, sought to subject the Chief Secretary to more stringent supervision and control in important questions by the High Commissioner. This was not what Maxwell had bargained for.

The undercurrent of antagonism between Maxwell and Guillemard first surfaced in November 1920 over a proposal for the appointment of a Secretary for Malay Affairs based in Singapore to provide the High Commissioner with 'expert advice' on matters 'affecting Malays, their interests and their relations with the British Government' in Malaya. In this matter Guillemard was also interested in cultivating the goodwill of the Malay Rulers in support of British pan-Malayan policy and in continuing Anderson's policy of developing the Straits Settlements and the FMS along close, uniform lines. Collins was keen on the proposal, suggesting at the same time that Maxwell should also become the Secretary for Malay Affairs so that the latter would secure a *locus standi* in the UMS and be in a better position to carry out his pan-Malayan policy. Maxwell, however, opposed the idea partly because the Malay Secretary might come between the Rulers and their British Advisers and chiefly because the new officer might enable the High Commissioner to centralize control over Malay matters and consequently, to meddle more effectively in FMS affairs.¹⁸ Apparently owing to his opposition, the proposal which was already provided for in the budget was abandoned in 1921.

Meanwhile, the Malayan economy had taken a sharp downward turn. The economic prospects only a year earlier were rosy when Guillemard accepted the Malayan appointment, and was told by Milner that 'there was lots of work to be done and plenty of money to do it with'.¹⁹ On arrival he found that most development works in Malaya had been put off by the war, and his discussions with James and Brockman failed to give him a clear picture of the financial situation. Not foreseeing a trade depression, James and Brockman informed him

of the need for a FMS loan but did not stress its urgency; no one urged him to curtail expenditure in the FMS. In fact, as acting Governor-High Commissioner, James had approved a vastly increased budget of more than \$100 million for the FMS for 1920. Buoyed up by his own optimism, Guillemard did not even bother to ascertain how much of the FMS reserves of \$110 million could be realized at short notice. In April 1920 he informed Milner that Malaya 'is a country of wonderful promise and enormous possible development, suffering under what I may call a "Government Blight". It is a country of arrears, full of things waiting to be done which have been hung up by the War'. Three months later, stressing that 'the main need is to plan ahead on big lines', Guillemard obtained Milner's approval for a plethora of development schemes covering health, public works, irrigation and drainage, big salaries for civil servants, and the like.²⁰ To carry it out, he approved a budget of more than \$114 million for the FMS for 1921.

Unfortunately, at the close of 1920, a trade recession began and deepened into an acute financial crisis for more than two years. The prices of Malaya's two key products—tin and rubber—slumped, and for the first time in its history, the FMS suffered a deficit—around \$28.2 million in 1920, \$59.9 million in 1921, and \$13.1 million in 1922.²¹ The FMS government's reserves, amounting to around \$110 million, were tied up in assets, such as loans to Siam and Home Government stocks, that could not be converted at short notice into liquid cash to offset these deficits. Businessmen felt that the government should prop up 'the [rubber] industry which has made Malaya what it is', and 'hard words are being exchanged and tempers are rising on the subject of Government aid, and [rubber] restriction'.²² The urgent task for Maxwell was therefore, not only to grapple with the controversial question of direct intervention in support of the rubber and tin industries²³ but also to try to keep the FMS financial boat on an even keel.

At the same time influential personalities, both within and outside the Colonial Office, assailed the Malayan government,

pointing an accusing finger at Guillemard for alleged mismanagement, extravagance, and waste, a stricture excruciatingly painful to one who prided himself on his Treasury experience. This culminated in a frontal attack on Guillemard by the Association of British Malaya, an organization comprising former Malayan British officials and representatives of Malayan commercial interests, in January 1922. The Association, then headed by Sir Frank Swettenham who was reported early in 1921 to be fuming over Guillemard's extravagance,²⁴ attributed the FMS financial crisis to the 'great and needless extravagance' of recent years and 'schemes which, in a short time, have led to the dissipation of a great accumulated reserve and the borrowing of millions to enable the Federation to meet its commitments'.²⁵

In this parlous situation Guillemard reacted by shifting the opprobrium chiefly to Brockman and Young. To begin with, he accused Brockman of misadvising him on the FMS financial situation early in 1920 which, he claimed, was responsible for much of the heavy expenditure incurred that year and in 1921. His schemes and the slump, he contended, only contributed to the existing difficulties in the FMS whose primary cause was the FMS financial policy between 1912 and 1919 under which the government used up all surplus revenue to fund large development projects. Had these surpluses been saved in a sinking fund and the works financed by loans in these years, the FMS could now have afforded to laugh at the current adversity. Brockman, understandably, denied Guillemard's accusation; both he and Young defended past policy. They stressed that before the slump the government could never have won support in Malaya or even in Whitehall for the course of action advocated by Guillemard. People in Malaya might have complied, provided the export tax on rubber and tin was drastically reduced—a move, they argued, that would have caused most of the earnings of the two industries to flow out of Malaya, and prevented the existing railway system and other development projects built from the proceeds of the export tax from being constructed.²⁶ In closing this acrimonious dis-

pute, Collins presented a more objective picture. He explained:

As I told Sir Laurence Guillemard it is largely a question of crying over spilt milk. No one anticipated the disastrous slump or even contemplated its possibility. Sir Edward Brockman was altogether overconfident in a continuation of the wonderful prosperity which had lasted for years, and Sir Laurence Guillemard was extravagant through ignorance of the true position. We cannot decide as to who was really responsible for his ignorance, though I cannot help thinking that it was himself.²⁷

The slump and the controversy had the effect of pushing Guillemard into adopting the role of a prudent and hard-headed financier. To Whitehall he alleged that Young was 'especially weak on finance', Brockman 'had ruined the country' through his financial policy, and 'finance is Maxwell's weakest point': only he could save the FMS and bring it back to solvency. In Guillemard's own words, 'For some years to come the FMS, even if they had a financially-minded Chief Secretary, needs a High Commissioner with real control.'²⁸

The slump compelled the FMS to raise a Straits \$20 million local loan in 1920 and a £10 million London loan a year later in order to implement the large development programmes chalked out by Guillemard. Guillemard managed to persuade the Colony's legislature to help the hard-pressed FMS over the first loan, but the second ran into a mess of complications. While the Straits unofficial councillors felt they had done enough for their Malayan hinterland, the FMS counterparts were unhappy that the Federation, being a protectorate of sovereign Malay states, was unable to float the £10 million loan as a trustee security in the London market. To surmount the difficulties, Guillemard urged the Colonial Office in June and again in September 1921 to persuade the British Treasury to amend the Colonial Stocks Act so that the FMS could offer the £10 million loan as trustee investment. Winston Churchill, Milner's successor, personally took up the question with the Treasury, urging a concession on the plea that the FMS had contributed significantly to the defence of the British Empire during the last war.²⁹ The effort, however, proved fruitless.

To cut down British financial obligations, the Treasury had decided not to extend the area of investment open to trustee stocks and felt that any concession to the FMS would undermine this policy.³⁰ Consequently the Straits Settlements were ordered to raise the £10 million loan as a trustee investment on behalf of the FMS.

The London loan created an opening for the Colonial Office to put a brake on the 'go-ahead' Governor-High Commissioner who had hitherto usually succeeded in obtaining approval for his many big projects in Malaya—at times, over the head of the Far Eastern Department—through exploiting his close friendship with Milner. Now that Milner had retired early in February 1921, Whitehall officials decided to act, especially since Guillemard's extravagance was chiefly blamed for the current financial plight of the FMS.³¹ Although his programmes were extravagant in the light of the economic gloom and did create the need for the loans, the primary cause of the financial crisis was the falling prices of rubber and tin. In any case, the Colonial Office ruled that the London loan should be strictly expended on development projects under a separate account called 'Public Works Special Services' and that every item of expenditure must secure the express approval of the Secretary of State.³² Thus London tightened its grip on the FMS, a consequence of its resolve eventually to supervise FMS finance as closely as that of the Colony. At the same time the London loan interlocked the finances of the Colony and the FMS as the latter's revenue, as a precondition of the agreement, was now pledged to the Straits Settlements for repayment purposes. All this served only to excite Guillemard's appetite for control over FMS finance.

Understandably Maxwell resolved to take stringent steps to prevent any 'loosening of the purse-strings' chiefly so as better to overcome economic exigencies and partly to deny Guillemard any excuse for meddling unduly in FMS affairs. In 1921, supported by Guillemard, he launched an austerity drive to prune government expenditure drastically. He suspended all new public projects, curtailed government recruit-

ment and pruned general expenditure. To all departmental heads, Maxwell sent a circular dated 25 November 1921 which exhorted:

The Chief Secretary to Government wishes to impress upon all Heads of Departments the absolute necessity for the continuance of the strictest possible economy in every way.

Because a sum of money has been voted in the Estimates, there is no reason on that account why its expenditure should be necessary. The Chief Secretary fears, however, that when, in the concluding weeks of a financial year, officers find there is an unexpended balance of their votes, there is a tendency to spend it.

The Chief Secretary looks to Heads of Departments for their co-operation in saving money wherever possible, in amounts however small.³³

Three days later, to help 'satisfy a very uneasy feeling in the public mind', Maxwell convened a Retrenchment Commission to ascertain whether the administration was overstaffed, salaries and allowances too high for the government to bear, and departments organized on a scale 'too big' to meet public needs. Early in February 1922 the above Commission began its task in the FMS.

The Unofficials of the Federal Council were likewise goaded to action. The British Treasury's refusal to allow the London loan to become a trustee security sent a wave of anger through them because they regarded it as derogatory to the importance, wealth, and status of the FMS. They felt humiliated that while the FMS was undergoing a crisis, the Colony's finance was sound and comparatively buoyant. The humiliation was all the more acute as it was FMS funds siphoned off, against their wishes, by the governors since Anderson's time, that had contributed to development outside the FMS and, at times, even outside Malaya itself. And now the FMS, for the first time, had become a debtor to the Colony. The Unofficials of the Colony's legislature, on the other hand, felt that the £10 million loan had undermined the credit standing of the Straits Settlements in the London market. In other words, the loan exacerbated the long-standing jealousy between the

FMS and the Colony and deepened mutual suspicion that each was guilty of 'parasitism on itself'.³⁴

The *de facto* downgrading of the Chief Secretary's status, the interlocking of FMS and Colony finances, Guillemard's onslaught on past FMS financial policy (which was regarded as an unchivalrous attack on personalities not on the spot to defend themselves), his general assertiveness, the British Treasury's immovability, all this generated hostility in influential quarters in the FMS. FMS unofficial councillors began not only to decry the overly-powerful position of the Chief Secretary but also what they perceived to be overcentralization in the hands of the High Commissioner in Singapore. As Guillemard himself admitted to Masterton-Smith, Permanent Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office, on 8 December 1921, 'I don't believe the Unofficials are worrying about the constitutional position [of the Chief Secretary] They are out against overcentralisation [in Singapore], and I have remedied that.'³⁵ To the unofficial councillors, however, the remedy was nowhere to be seen. They feared, quite understandably but wrongly, that the Colony schemed to annex the FMS through financial and other manipulations. As Guillemard explained the situation:

The FMS are always inclined to be suspicious that the Colony has sinister schemes encroaching on their independence and gradually swallowing them. The suspicion has boiled up in connection with the fathering by the Colony of a loan for the FMS.³⁶

The above possibility conjured up before the eyes of the unofficial councillors a vision of a High Commissioner dipping his hands, at will, into the FMS till to secure funds for development outside the FMS. Consequently, they desired to see the FMS led by a resident head more powerful than the Chief Secretary, and free and able to resist effectively the High Commissioner's 'pillage' of FMS funds.

In September 1921 the Unofficials of the Federal Council sent Guillemard a petition, composed by J. H. M. Robson, requesting a restoration of the title of Resident-General for

the FMS chief executive officer. The petition argued that the existing title of Chief Secretary was unconstitutional under the Treaty of Federation, inappropriate and insufficiently dignified, and had resulted in 'overcentralisation and possibly procrastination and inefficiency'. The change of title would rectify the anomalies and restore the FMS to its constitutionally correct position.³⁷ In the main the petition was a calculated move to secure re-affirmation that the chief executive officer in the FMS was the real head of the administration, thereby obviating any centralized control from Singapore.

Rapidly following the petition were two events that hardened resistance to Guillemard's policy. The first, of which the councillors were presumably aware before they petitioned the Colonial Office, stemmed from the fact that the financial crisis was partly blamed on the weakness of the FMS treasury machine. The councillors were aggrieved that they were rarely consulted before supplementary expenditure was incurred; Guillemard attacked the inadequacy and misleading character of the treasury records and accounts; the FMS Treasurer was widely criticized as no more than 'a Chief Accountant' with hardly any say over financial policy or the preparation of the estimates of expenditure.³⁸ While all this substantially forced Maxwell on the defensive, Guillemard saw an opening to make a move. Accordingly, in October 1921, acting on the initiative of the Colony's Unofficials, Guillemard successfully proposed to Whitehall the appointment of a joint Financial Adviser for the FMS and the Straits Settlements in return for the Colony floating the £10 million loan on FMS behalf.³⁹ A. M. Pountney, the Colony's Treasurer, was appointed to the post on 27 October 1921. The second event (known later to the FMS Unofficials) arose from Guillemard's policy to weaken further the status of the Chief Secretary. He now ruled that James, by virtue of his longer service, was senior to Maxwell and in November 1921 submitted his decision to Whitehall for confirmation. It was only to be expected that Maxwell and the Unofficials of the Federal Council opposed both developments, one further interlocking FMS and Colony financial

matters, the other lowering the status of the FMS executive head.

A first-class in mathematics from Oxford University, Pountney joined the MCS in 1896 and ascended rapidly along the treasury side of the service, becoming the Straits Settlements Treasurer in 1913. He was 'a prodigious worker' with a flair for finance and figures and, over the years, had earned a reputation in the Colony as a financial 'wizard'.⁴⁰ He was regarded by Collins as a first-rate financial officer but was later, perhaps unfairly, branded as 'a perfect stick'⁴¹ by Walter Ellis, Collins' successor in Whitehall. Pountney's appointment considerably strengthened Guillemard's hand, and the High Commissioner was to use him as an effective handle to tighten control over FMS finance. Under the FMS system, the Chief Secretary was the only officer with the power and sufficient intimate knowledge to deal in detail with all financial proposals emanating from the Residents, departmental heads, and the Federal Secretariat. Handicapped by the lack of such knowledge, the High Commissioner was chary about questioning financial proposals provisionally sanctioned or rejected by the Chief Secretary.⁴² As Guillemard's personal adviser, Pountney now enabled the High Commissioner to overcome this deficiency and effectively challenge the views of the Chief Secretary on financial matters.

In particular, through Pountney, Guillemard tightened his hold on the Finance Committee of the Federal Council. Pountney replaced the FMS Treasurer as chairman of this committee, thereby securing a vital say over FMS finance. Under the existing system the federal and state estimates as well as all supplementary expenditure needed the approval of this committee before they could be tabled in the Federal Council for legislative sanction. It should be noted that, owing to widespread criticisms that the Finance Committee was frequently treated as a rubber stamp for endorsing supplementary expenditure incurred and presented as a *fait accompli*, the committee was given more teeth late in 1921. Guillemard directed that as far as practicable, the Finance Committee's view be

obtained before the government incurred supplementary expenditure. Again through Pountney, Guillemard secured a decisive voice on the detailed utilization of the £10 million loan. Pountney was entrusted with the task of closely supervising and controlling the allocation of loan funds to development projects under the 'Public Works Special Services' account.

Thus it was that when the petition for the restoration of the title of Resident-General was referred to Maxwell who was hitherto apparently not involved, he unequivocally endorsed it on 5 December 1921. He contended that 'the Resident-General was the real head of the FMS Government; and the fact that the Chief Secretary is still the real head of the Federal Government has been obscured by the change in his title':⁴³ hence, a need existed for the removal of the ambiguity in the present position. Meanwhile, news of the petition leaked out to the Association of British Malaya in London. On 9 February 1922 the Association urged the Secretary of State to approve the petition so as to increase administrative efficiency and re-establish the close 'friendship and communion' between the Malay Rulers and their British Advisers of the early years of the Federation.⁴⁴

In a riposte Guillemard advised Whitehall that it was essential for him to maintain a unity of control over the Colony and the FMS in order to continue Anderson's policy of developing the two territories on similar lines in friendly co-operation. He contended that the restoration of the Resident-General title would stultify this policy and lead ultimately to a separate FMS under a separate High Commissioner. Alleging that 'finance is Maxwell's weakest point', Guillemard warned the Colonial Office that the FMS would not be able to fight its way back to solvency if he lost real control over it. He explained the heart of the matter:

The object aimed at by the Chief Secretary is perfectly clear. He wishes to reduce the responsibility of the High Commissioner for the administration of the Federated Malay States and increase the responsibility of the Chief Secretary. He claims that the Chief Secretary ought to be the

Head of the Government and that the High Commissioner ought to occupy much the same position in the Federated Malay States as in the Unfederated States, [that is] a position outside the Government with vague and loosely defined authority over its administration.⁴⁵

Endorsing Guillemard's stand, the Secretary of State rejected the petition in February 1922.

The agitation, however, persisted. It was intensified by the arrangements made for the Prince of Wales' visit to Malaya early in 1922, during which the FMS Rulers, owing to Guillemard's insistence, took formal precedence over the Chief Secretary.⁴⁶ What infuriated the Unofficials and Maxwell most was that as a result the latter was assigned a relatively obscure position throughout the visit. During the ceremonial presentation of welcome speeches, the Sultan of Selangor and Guillemard, with aides-de-camp in attendance, sat on a raised dais whereas Maxwell was relegated downwards to sit with the Unofficials and the judges behind the dais.⁴⁷ Guillemard also personally escorted and entertained the Prince during the three-day visit in the FMS, and was regarded as having 'hogged up' the whole show.⁴⁸ To the Unofficials, this event was another attempt to erode the Chief Secretary's status as well as a visible index to the High Commissioner's inclination personally to run the FMS administration. According to Robson, the 'lowly' position assigned to Maxwell 'fanned the flame of a simmering official antagonism between that officer and the High Commissioner'.⁴⁹ In June 1922, while Guillemard was on leave in London, the Unofficials launched a personal attack on him in the Federal Council, charging that his programme for the Prince's visit was 'belittling the status of the Chief Secretary and the Native Rulers'.⁵⁰ Simultaneously they revived the question of the restoration of the title of Resident-General and published it in the newspapers late in 1922, thus carrying their agitation into the open.

By now relations between Guillemard and Maxwell had sharply deteriorated. Not surprisingly Guillemard tried to use the Lucas case against the Chief Secretary. In this case Maxwell, at the close of 1921, instructed the Mines Department

rigorously to suppress tin-stealers who had been silting up rivers with soil tailings, but G. D. Lucas, the sickly Senior Warden of Mines, opined that action should, under the law, be carried out by the police. This drew forth an unwarranted stricture, which was made worse by not being sent under confidential cover, in which Maxwell lambasted the Mines Department for its failure 'to stop tin-stealing in the past [which] has brought the department into contempt'.⁵¹ Although Lucas promptly undertook to submit a report on tin-stealing after consultation with the Residents, Maxwell insisted that he send direct monthly reports from the Inspectors and Wardens of Mines, thereby by-passing the Residents. This instruction was the final straw for Lucas. Believing that the Chief Secretary did not trust his own report, Lucas lost all sense of self-respect and honour. Late in January 1922 he shot himself.

During the inquest, C. W. Cochrane, the acting FMS Under-Secretary, attempted a cover-up by preventing the differences between Maxwell and Lucas from emerging into public. Hence, based on incomplete evidence, the magistrate's report ascribed Lucas' suicide solely to 'unsound mind'. Dissatisfied with this verdict, Guillemard convened an independent inquiry by two judges in March 1922 who, while confirming that mental illness was the primary cause of death, felt that the strained relations between Maxwell and Lucas did contribute to the suicide.⁵² The High Commissioner then acted. First, he had published the judges' report in which Maxwell was chided for not laying the full facts before the inquest magistrate. Second, while under attack by the Unofficials in the Federal Council in June 1922 over the Prince's visit to Malaya, Guillemard tried hard to press Churchill to remove Maxwell from the FMS. This failed because Churchill agreed with the judges as to the chief cause behind the tragedy.⁵³ The Lucas incident reflected a power struggle between the High Commissioner and the Chief Secretary, exposed Guillemard's hostility towards Maxwell, and had a vital bearing on Guillemard's recommendation in October 1924, as discussed later, for the sacking of the Chief Secretary.

Guillemard returned to Malaya in October 1922 to witness the movement for the restoration of the title of Resident-General reach a crescendo. Maxwell had manoeuvred the Residents and the four Malay Rulers behind him. The Residents argued that the title was appropriate and more dignified and would signify British sincerity in wanting to return to the decentralized administration of the early days of the Federation. Their main motive however, appeared to be a desire to prevent further erosion of the Chief Secretary's status and obstruct Guillemard from meddling unduly in FMS affairs. Whitehall's confirmation of James' seniority over Maxwell, it seemed to them, was a downgrading of the administration to which they belonged and would presage further encroachment by Singapore on FMS 'autonomy'. The Rulers' support for the petition was skilfully obtained on the day the Home Decentralisation Committee held its inaugural session on 23 November 1922. They were given to understand that the restoration of the title would facilitate decentralization and expedite official business. Quite likely, they were also infected by the prevailing fear of the fusion between the Colony and their states and were influenced by the Residents' attitude. In December 1922 the unofficial councillors re-petitioned for the restoration of the title on the ground that it enjoyed unanimous support in the FMS.

In supporting the petition, Maxwell emphasized that the present arrangement was a breeding ground of conflicts because of the ambiguous relationship existing between the Chief Secretary and the High Commissioner and because of the dichotomy of interests between the two regions. To stabilize the situation, he suggested the introduction of an Administrative and Executive Order under which any difference in opinion between the High Commissioner and the Chief Secretary should, if the latter so desired, be referred to the Secretary of State.⁵⁴ In effect, the High Commissioner would thus become only an equal to the Chief Secretary unable, on his own, to enforce any order on the latter.

After the receipt of the petition, Guillemard set out to

woo the Rulers and, like Maxwell, to use them as pawns in the struggle. In March 1923 he informed the Colonial Office that the Rulers, having realized they had been misled in the matter, were now willing to support him. To substantiate this he cited a letter he received from the Sultan of Perak which stated that '*if there is no distinction between the titles of Chief Secretary and Resident-General, it would be desirable to restore the latter title, in order to avoid public criticism, but that he left the matter to the considerations of the High Commissioner*'.⁵⁵ Guillemard then alleged that the perspective of the present generation of Residents 'is confined to the limits of the FMS and does not extend to British Malaya as a whole'. Urging the Colonial Office to reject the petition, he accused Maxwell of being responsible for 'the whole agitation and that when [the latter] retires in two years at the latest no more will be heard of it'.⁵⁶

Whitehall officials renewed their support for Guillemard on the ground that 'on big issues Malaya is one country and ought to be developed under one general control'. On 17 May 1923 Devonshire, who succeeded Churchill as Secretary of State, rejected the petition:

If the object of the request advanced is merely a change of title and dignity . . . it is clear that the change would only serve to reintroduce the misapprehension as to a division of authority which led to the old title of Resident-General being abolished. If on the other hand, the effect . . . is likely to be an increase in the independent authority of the Chief Secretary in relation to the High Commissioner, I cannot differ from the Marquess of Crewe and Mr. Churchill in holding that the unity of responsibility and control in the hands of the High Commissioner is of the first importance for the well-being and development of Malaya as a whole, and I agree also with my predecessor that the requirements of the present time for very close co-operation in matters both economic and financial between the FMS and the Colony render any change most inopportune and undesirable for some years to come.⁵⁷

Masterton-Smith also personally instructed Maxwell, on leave in London in 1923, to accept the Secretary of State's decision.⁵⁸

IMPLICATIONS FOR DECENTRALIZATION

The slump and the power struggle did not define the perimeters of the Maxwell decentralization experiment at the time it started in mid-1922, about a year ahead of the final outcome of the controversy over the title of Resident-General. At that time Maxwell and his senior colleagues, being inherently conservative and engrossed with the recession and administrative efficiency, did not envisage a large degree of decentralization as attested by official response to James' 1920 circular and subsequently to the Maxwell scheme. Understandably, Maxwell recommended a very moderate degree of decentralization, implicitly as the first instalment of a long-term power transfer. His programme could have been implemented regardless of whether the FMS was headed by a Resident-General or a Chief Secretary. However, in the long run, especially after the war of words over the Resident-General's title had been settled, the power struggle inevitably pushed Maxwell into gathering more and more power into his own hands,⁵⁹ thus dealing a blow to the cause of decentralization.

In the early stages the power struggle, in fact, spurred Maxwell into taking decentralization measures in mid-1922. It was Guillemard's view that the Pan-Malayan policy and as a corollary, decentralization as a step towards a larger Malayan federation, should be directed by the Governor-High Commissioner as the overall head of British Malaya. Maxwell, on the other hand, felt that as the objective was to enlarge the existing Federation to embrace the UMS, the initiative in both questions should lie in the hands of the executive head of the FMS. Although the Colonial Office had entrusted decentralization to Maxwell, he still felt it judicious to act as early as possible in order to avert any possible interference from Guillemard. Both he and the Residents adroitly linked the Resident-General question to decentralization by seeking the Rulers' endorsement for the former matter during the inaugural meeting of the Hose Decentralisation Committee. Thus, decentralization was utilized to support a manoeuvre aimed at curtail-

ing Guillemard's authority in the FMS. Even more obviously, Maxwell and the Residents successfully blocked the creation of a joint FMS-SS Inspector of Prisons based in Singapore in 1922 on the contention that the move would be incompatible with decentralization;⁶⁰ they were to use the same argument effectively two years later to stop Guillemard from appointing a joint FMS-SS Director of Medical Services with locale again in Singapore. Although the establishment of joint departments with Singapore-based heads would impede decentralization to a slight extent,⁶¹ their real reservation was that such departments tended to offer more opportunities to the High Commissioner to interfere in FMS affairs.

The slump had contradictory effects on the decentralization movement. On the one hand, the movement became more keenly and widely felt, won public support, and tended to speed up; on the other, it was retarded by the obstacles strewn along its path by the recession. The economic crisis, buttressed by the irksome distractions of the power struggle, so preoccupied Maxwell that he had perforce to postpone serious action on decentralization. Consequently the decentralization proposals that stemmed from James' circular of 1920 were shelved in 1921 because of the austerity campaign launched by Maxwell and generally supported by the Residents, the Financial Adviser, and other key British officials.⁶² All these proposals⁶³ were considered commendable in terms of decentralization, but inappropriate for immediate implementation because they might loosen the purse-strings.⁶⁴ Typical of the official attitude was Pountney's attitude towards the proposal advocating more power for six departmental heads to appoint and promote subordinate officers earning less than \$3,500 per annum. Pountney commented:

At the present time, the great thing is to avoid filling up appointments merely because there is provision for them on the Estimates, and any change that tended towards such an occurrence would be resisted to the utmost by me . . . I deprecate delegating powers to Heads of Departments which might tend in [that] direction.⁶⁵

In short the slump delayed action on decentralization for nearly a year.

Even more important, the power struggle and especially the slump catapulted Pountney, a man with little sympathy for decentralization, to the centre of the stage. He was chiefly interested in financial stability and administrative efficiency, both of which could be most effectively attained through tightening, not loosening, central control over the FMS. This was demonstrated by his work as chairman of the Committee of Financial Officers convened by Guillemard in 1923 to reorganize the FMS treasury machinery then partly blamed for the financial crisis. Among other things, Pountney directed the committee to effect measures that stiffened central control over the one-twelfth advance system adopted by most government departments and over the Executive Engineers, the state heads of the Public Works Department.⁶⁶ In fact, Pountney's hand was immensely fortified by the fact that the realization of austerity objectives necessitated strong central financial control over the FMS administration. He remarked: 'These are not times of general principles, but times of financial stress, and I associate myself with the Chief Secretary in seriously deprecating the loosening of the purse strings.'⁶⁷ As we shall see, Pountney seriously circumscribed the Maxwell and Guillemard decentralization movements.

In 1922 the Retrenchment Commission, appointed by Maxwell, held many public sittings in the FMS. This helped to focus strong public criticism, evoked by the slump, on the FMS administration to the effect that it was overcentralized, top-heavy, and extravagant. In January 1922 the slump prompted the Association of British Malaya, while chastising Guillemard for alleged extravagance, to urge a policy of decentralization in the FMS which the High Commissioner pledged to follow. In addition, the recession diverted the attention of the Unofficials of the Federal Council and commercial interests from the defects of the FMS financial system⁶⁸ and policy to the larger question of decentralization. Speaking on behalf of his colleagues in the Federal Council in June 1922,

J. H. M. Robson called for decentralization in order to reap economies and improve administrative efficiency. He wished the Resident to be re-vested with power over 'many things in his state' so that the Chief Secretary would have time to concentrate on policies and on supervising the federal departments. He wanted the State Council and the Ruler to take a 'greater share in the actual executive work' of each state and to have 'the state budgets maintained as state budgets'.⁶⁹ It is clear that the unofficial councillors, like MCS officers in general, contemplated no large degree of decentralization in the FMS. The introduction of elements of Advisory rule in the FMS, as Maxwell intended, certainly did not enter their perception of decentralization, and would only have engaged their unremitting opposition because it would have imperilled efficiency and, consequently, their economic interests in Malaya. As the government assiduously kept the pan-Malayan policy a secret, Unofficials, at most, had only a very faint inkling of the larger political objective behind decentralization when Robson urged action in his Federal Council speech. Despite their limited vision and inadequate grasp of the implications of the problem, it should be stressed that the slump awoke in the Unofficials and FMS commercial groups an interest in decentralization.

Outside the Federal Council, the Retrenchment Commission presented decentralists with an excellent opportunity to adopt the cause of decentralization as well as to highlight the defects of the FMS administration. In his submission, Meadows Frost, a District Officer in Perak, complained that the FMS administration was a boon to commercial interests and Westernized Chinese but 'not agreeable to Malays for whose benefits we profess to administer the country'.⁷⁰ Besides, he stressed, it was an excessively expensive administration relying on the employment of a large team of highly-remunerated European officials. During the public sittings, another point spotlighted was that administrative over-centralization had undermined grass-root contacts between District Officers and the Malay *rakyat* in the *kampong*. De-

centralization enthusiasts such as Meadows Frost and A. S. Haynes (another British official), both of whose submissions were reproduced verbatim by the Commission, pleaded strongly for the decentralization of the FMS administration. Their views were, in the main, endorsed by the Retrenchment Commission's final report early in 1923. 'There are in my estimation', the Commission quoted F. Lugard, 'two vital principles which characterize the growth of a wise administration—they are decentralisation and continuity.' Commending James' circular of July 1920, it urged that more power 'should be given to the State Councils and Residents, and that the Residents should in their turn rely more on their deputies, the District Officers'.⁷¹ Through popularizing the call for decentralization, the slump had, by mid-1922, converted a large number of British officials and members of European capitalist interests to the above view. Against this background Maxwell launched his decentralization experiment in May 1922.

1. Tan Song Chuan, 'The Career of Sir George Maxwell, 1891-1926', *Journal of the South Seas Society*, Vol. XXI, 1966, p. 63.

2. In May 1915 the villagers of Pasir Puteh led by To' Janggut and other leaders and supported behind the scene by Engku Besar attacked the District Office and took control of the district for about three weeks. The uprising was suppressed by troops sent from Singapore. For discussion, see J. de V. Allen, 'The Kelantan Uprising of 1915', *JSEAH*, Vol. IX, no. 2, September 1968; Khoo Kay Kim, 'The Beginnings of Political Extremism in Malaya, 1915-1935', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Malaya, 1973.

3. J. Gullick and G. Hawkins, *Malayan Pioneers*, Singapore, 1958, p. 19; Eric MacFadyen, 'Sir George Maxwell', *British Malaya*, October 1959, pp. 52-3.

4. Guillemard was the most severe critic of Maxwell and his perceptive comments on the latter's weaknesses are used in the above discussion on Maxwell's character.

5. See Ward-Jackson's account of Maxwell in J. H. M. Robson, *Records and Recollections, 1889-1934*, Kuala Lumpur, 1934, pp. 147-9.

6. Gullick and Hawkins, p. 17.

7. In 1932 he told Colonial Office officials that Malaya now had limited potentials for future development. He published an item on this in a Malay newspaper under a pen name, and it fell absolutely flat. He unabashedly stated that had he published it under his name, he might have caused 'a scare' in Malaya. Maxwell to Wilson 12.7.1932, CO 717/88/92300 Part II/1932.

8. Eric MacFadyen, 'Sir George Maxwell', p. 153; see also the Lucas case discussed in this chapter.

9. Gullick and Hawkins, p. 17.

10. *British Malaya*, Vol. XIII, no. 7, November 1937, p. 165; *ibid.*, Vol. VI, no. 11, March 1932, p. 300.

11. Guillemard to Churchill 8.12.1921 and Guillemard to Masterton-Smith (Private) 8.12.1921, CO 717/14.

12. Memo on a Malayan Advisory Council by J. D. Hall, British Adviser, Kedah, 3.5.1936, CO 717/119/51711/1936.

13. Memo by Maxwell 19.12.1921, CO 717/14.

14. James to Collins 21.11.1920, CO 717/10.

15. The gist of James' view was given to Collins during an interview before he wrote in officially. Minute by Collins 20.11.1920, CO 717/14.

16. Minute by Collins 13.8.1924, CO 717/36. Earlier Grindle wrote, 'The feud between [Maxwell and James] is becoming an impediment to administration. I did not dare to have both at a recent conference on a matter in which both were interested, and, as Mr. Maxwell was essential, invited him and discussed the matter separately with Sir F. James!' Minute 19.6.1923, CO 717/28.

17. Memo on a Malayan Advisory Council by J. D. Hall, British Adviser to Kedah, 3.5.1936, CO 717/119/51711/1936.

18. Minute by Collins 3.2.1921, CO 717/12; Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45.

19. L. N. Guillemard, *Trivial Fond Records*, London, 1937, p. 76.

20. Guillemard to Milner 19.4.1920 and 8.7.1920, Personal Papers of Alfred Lord Milner, Bodleian Library, Oxford University. (Henceforth cited as The Milner Papers.)

21. Memo on the Final Report of the Retrenchment Commission 1923, encl. to Guillemard to Devonshire 11.12.1923, CO 717/29.

22. Langley to Milner 28.8.1921, The Milner Papers.

23. For discussion on rubber restriction, see Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and Their Agricultural Economy in Colonial Malaya, 1874-1941*, Kuala Lumpur, 1977, ch. 5.

24. Swettenham's indignation was shared by Derbyshire, a former Straits unofficial councillor. Minute by Collins 22.3.1921, CO 717/12. S. Kenion, an Unofficial of the Federal Council, refused to attend the Federal Council meeting called to approve the 1921 Estimate. CO minute on Brockman to Collins 20.1.1922, CO 717/25.
25. Association of British Malaya to Colonial Office 28.1.1922, CO 717/24.
26. Guillemard to Churchill 26.1.1921, CO 717/14; Brockman to Collins, December 1921, CO 717/18.
27. Minute by Collins 16.6.1922, CO 717/20.
28. Guillemard to Masterton-Smith (Private) 8.12.1921, CO 717/14.
29. Guillemard to Churchill 3.6.1921 and 6.9.1921, CO 717/13; A Note by Amery 14.9.1921, *ibid.*
30. *Ibid.* The Colonial Stocks Act was only amended early in 1930 so that FMS loans could be floated as trustee security in Britain. Clementi to Passfield 22.2.1930, CO 717/71.
31. Minute by Collins 22.3.1921, CO 717/12.
32. Minute by Collins 23.6.1921, CO 717/13.
33. Memo on the Final Report of the Retrenchment Commission, encl. to Guillemard to Devonshire 11.12.1923, CO 717/29.
34. Minute by Beckett 24.8.1922, CO 717/21.
35. See Maxwell's statements and Guillemard's comments in paragraphs 15 and 16 of Guillemard to Devonshire 8.5.1923, CO 717/27; also *Times of Malaya* 3.5.1922.
36. Guillemard to Masterton-Smith (Personal) 21.12.1921, CO 717/14.
37. Petition to Secretary of State August 1921, encl. to Guillemard to Churchill 8.12.1921, *ibid.*
38. *PFC FMS*, Kuala Lumpur, 1921, p. B75; encl. to Churchill to Guillemard, no. 69, 27.2.1922 and Guillemard to Churchill, no. 109, 21.4.1922 (National Library of Singapore Collection).
39. Guillemard to Churchill 21.10.1921, CO 273/511. When Pountney's service was recommended for extension in 1924, Guillemard declined to consult Maxwell and the Colonial Office sanctioned the extension because of 'very special circumstances'. The Colonial Office clearly had in mind the Guillemard-Maxwell power struggle—see Minutes by Gent 18.10.1923 and by Beckett 29.10.1923, CO 273/523.
40. *British Malaya*, Vol. XV, no. 12, April 1941, p. 200.
41. Minute by Walter Ellis 11.6.1931, CO 717/76/72483/1931.
42. Report of the Committee appointed to Examine the Financial Aspect of the Devolution Policy outlined in Federal Council Paper no.

39 of 1925 (henceforth cited as Pountney Committee Report), p. 17, SSF 572/1933.

43. Memo by Maxwell 5.12.1921, CO 717/14.

44. Association of British Malaya to Colonial Office 9.2.1922, CO 717/24. Guillemard implied that Maxwell was disloyally writing to Swettenham about the petition. Whitehall officials were disinclined to believe him. Minutes by Beckett 3.5.1922 and by Collins 4.5.1922, CO 717/14.

45. Guillemard to Churchill 8.12.1921, *ibid*.

46. Maxwell to Guillemard 5.3.1922, SSF 1140/1922.

47. J. H. M. Robson, pp. 119-21; also *Straits Echo*, 28.12.1925.

48. Notes by Sir William Peel, Governor of Hong Kong, 1930-5, concerning his Colonial Service from 1897-1935, undated, Rhodes House, Oxford.

49. J. H. M. Robson, pp. 119-21.

50. *PFC FMS*, Kuala Lumpur, 1922, p. B45.

51. Encl. to Guillemard to Churchill 28.2.1922, CO 717/20.

52. Report on an Enquiry held in pursuance of a Commission dated 10.3.1922 issued by His Excellency the High Commissioner of the FMS to the Honourable Sir Lionel M. Woodward and the Honourable Mr. C. E. St. J. Branch 21.3.1922, *ibid*.

53. Minute by Beckett 13.5.1923, CO 717/28.

54. Memo by Maxwell 19.3.1923, CO 717/27.

55. Guillemard to Masterton-Smith (Private) 19.3.1923, *ibid*.

56. *Ibid*.

57. Devonshire to Guillemard 17.5.1923, *ibid*.

58. Minute by Masterton-Smith 18.3.1923, *ibid*.

59. See ch. 5.

60. See NSF 1851/1921 and SSF 3393/1921.

61. Pountney Committee Report, pp. 8, 10 and 12. For example, it was more difficult to transfer the financial provisions of a joint department from the federal to the state estimates. Pountney Committee Report, pp. 8, 19, 12, SSF 572/1933.

62. Maxwell's iron-tight control over FMS finance at times proved irksome to Residents and federal departmental heads, as manifested in an attempt to scale down Selangor's Public Works budget for 1923 to 90 per cent. The Resident of Selangor, O. F. Stonor, counter-proposed that the issue be decided by the Ruler-in-Council as a way of circumventing the Chief Secretary's decision. Maxwell did not accept this, but five weeks later was persuaded by the Director of the Public Works

Department to abandon his proposal. Although Stonor jibed at Maxwell's decentralization policy because the austerity proposal and its reversal were both decided without any consultation with the Resident or the departmental head, the incident, in fact, had hardly any bearing on decentralization. Stonor's proposal would involve only empowering the State Council to decide on a proposed alteration in the Selangor budget without affecting the general PWD budget as spelt out in the Annual Supply Bill enacted by the Federal Council in November 1922. And under the existing arrangements, all future PWD budgets in entirety would continue to be sanctioned by the Chief Secretary and the High Commissioner and legislated by the Federal Council so that, even if effected, Stonor's proposal would still have left Maxwell's financial power intact. In fact, Stonor had no intention at all of increasing the State Council's power, and the final outcome of the incident rather pleased him. He commented, 'Then we win our case, and the vote remains un-reduced. I am glad to hear it.' See SSF 496/1923.

63. See footnote (46), ch. 3.

64. Minute by Maxwell 12.1.1922, SSF 534/1926; Memo by Captain Coe 14.9.1922 and Minute by Maxwell 17.9.1922, SSF 322/1925.

65. Memo by Pountney 25.7.1922, NSF 2046/1922.

66. Under the one-twelfth advance system, each departmental head was given an imprest amounting to one-twelfth of the total estimated expenditure of his department. From this imprest he made payments for all expenditure incurred and reported matters to the FMS Treasury regularly. He was given a new imprest whenever the old allocation had been spent. The 1923 committee recommended a tightening of central control in order to rectify certain defects in the system. The measures taken—(i) reducing the number of imprests to the minimum, (ii) frequent and more speedy recoupment of all vouchers—led to an improvement in the system. Arising from the committee's report, the Public Works Department (PWD) dropped the above system and adopted the Sub-Accountant system then operating in the Railway Department. An Accountant, assisted by four Financial Assistants (one for each state), checked all expenditure in the PWD and reported monthly to the Treasury. In this way the Treasury tightened control over the PWD Executive Engineers. Pountney Committee Report, pp. 23–4, SSF 572/1933.

67. Memo by Pountney 25.7.1922, NSF 2046/1922.

68. See footnote (9), ch. 3.

69. *PFC FMS*, Kuala Lumpur, 1922, p. B45; also *Malay Mail*, 3.5.1922.

70. See Appendix III, *The Final Report of the Retrenchment Commission*, Kuala Lumpur, 1923, p. 24.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Decentralization Versus Efficiency and British Power

THE BRITISH PERCEPTIONS OF DECENTRALIZATION

It is obvious from the existing documents that Maxwell did not have a clear perception of decentralization and a pan-Malayan federation at the time his experiment actually began in May 1922. Although the ultimate objective was described as a 'loose-knit Malayan federation', Maxwell gave not the faintest idea on the division of powers between the centre and the state authorities; and while the FMS would continue to exist as a distinct unit within the larger federation, nothing was said about the relations between the two groupings. The administrative edifice Maxwell envisioned was 'a half-way house' between the systems of the FMS and the UMS.¹ In the reorganized FMS set-up the Chief Secretary would remain a strong executive head, apparently like the former Resident-General, while most Federal Heads would become primarily advisory and inspecting officers of departments as during the early days of the Federation.² This was to be accomplished partly by devolving powers from the centre downwards, thus according the federated states a larger degree of local autonomy. Here again nothing precise is known about the relations between the Chief Secretary, Federal Council, and Federal Heads on the one side and the Residents and State Councils

on the other. Maxwell was alive to the fact that a mere rearrangement of the FMS administrative system alone would not have inveigled the UMS to join a wider political unit. Hence, simultaneously, he sought to devolve powers from the Chief Secretary, Federal Heads and the Residents to the Rulers and State Councils so that the Rulers-in-Council would be enabled to exercise as much as possible of the powers long wielded by their UMS counterparts. In this way the Residents would assume to a significant extent, at least, the role of the Advisers in the UMS, advising the Rulers and State Councils how to administer the states; but how precisely powers in each federated state were to be shared between the Resident and the Ruler-in-Council remains obscure. Understandably, all this would have to be worked out as decentralization progressed. Maxwell was under no illusion that it was possible to advance a cut-and-dried scheme to bring about a wider Malay-an federation.

At the beginning of the Maxwell experiment, decentralization engaged the general support of the Residents and a large number of District Officers. But generally, MCS officials in the FMS were whole-heartedly committed to, and prided themselves on having established, an administration whose efficiency and integrity could not be easily matched. Even the decentralization enthusiast, Meadows Frost, admitted to the Retrenchment Commission that 'it is too late to start afresh and we are more or less bound to the present system'.³ In other words, it was generally intended only to rectify an over-centralized administration by transferring what would appear to be a significant degree of power from the British federal officers to their state counterparts; like Maxwell, British officials did not envisage the eventual abolition of the Chief Secretaryship. No schism existed within the MCS hierarchy over what may be termed the British side of decentralization in the sense that power was transferred from one group of British officers to another.

It should be noted that decentralization, as high policy, was decided by Whitehall officials, Maxwell, and Guillemard and

then foisted on the Residents and other British functionaries in the FMS. Owing to an absence of mutual discussion, the latter did not fully understand Maxwell's pledge to restore powers to the FMS Rulers and State Councils. The Residents generally supported Maxwell provided the move would not enable the State Councils to curb their power or hamper their performance, and would not lead to a serious drop in general efficiency; neither the Residents nor British officials in general initially grasped Maxwell's intention to draw the Rulers and State Councils into the administrative machinery of the federated states. Quite likely, they then believed that the Chief Secretary was largely indulging in rhetoric, but confronted with concrete proposals later, the Residents were vehemently, to resist Maxwell. By threatening ultimately to transfer power from British to Malay hands and endanger efficiency, the Malay side of decentralization, as the above may be described, was later to drive a deep fissure between the Chief Secretary and the Residents.

At the start of the Maxwell experiment a split existed between MCS officers and the technocrats. Among other areas, Maxwell intended to concentrate on transferring power from the federal departmental heads to the Residents, a target vigorously supported by E. Birch, former Resident of Perak. In fact, Birch strongly pressed for drastic reduction of every department in the federal establishment and even the complete abolition of certain departments.⁴ His view, although it did not include the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship at this stage, proved too advanced and radical for FMS officials; it certainly met a hostile reception from the technocrats. The truth was that the technocrats, who managed the technical and professional services, were generally antagonistic towards decentralization in any form because they were convinced that it was incompatible with maximum efficiency and would tighten lay control over their departments. Unappreciative of the political ramifications of Malay disaffection, they entertained an attitude conditioned by the obvious fact that in a small and compact country like the FMS (or Malaya) centra-

lized departments were conducive to administrative efficiency and economy.

Until late 1924 Guillemard played a nominal role in decentralization, which was virtually confined to endorsing proposals provisionally sanctioned by Maxwell and the Residents. In fact, he had hardly any room for manoeuvre as the Colonial Office chose to entrust decentralization to Maxwell who, in addition, worked actively to forestall Singapore's interference in FMS affairs. As a corollary, very little is known of Guillemard's ideas on decentralization at this time. All that is clear was his agreement with many of Maxwell's ideas (which he did not specify) outlined in the latter's 1920 memorandum on a pan-Malayan policy and that he did not even give the faintest hint that the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship was a precondition to successful decentralization. From mid-1924, after he had learned that the Colonial Office had lost faith in Maxwell, Guillemard adopted a more positive posture and pressed the Chief Secretary for action. It then transpired that he had no intention of introducing elements of Advisory rule in the FMS, except in the very distant future. Hence a schism occurred between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore on the Malay side of decentralization.

THE HOSE SCHEME

One key aspect of the British side of decentralization aimed at devolving powers and responsibilities from the federal to the state authorities so as to simplify the administration, lighten the work of the Chief Secretary, and enable him to concentrate on policy and federal matters. In particular Maxwell wished to leave matters concerning the appointment, promotion, and intra-state transfer of officers and the preparation of the state portions of departmental estimates to the state authorities as much as possible and without causing any serious damage to efficiency. This would also enhance the position and power of the Residents and result in more frequent Resident-Ruler consultations, thereby hopefully satisfying

Malay aspirations, at least to a significant extent. This aspect of decentralization enjoyed the greatest amount of consensus among British officials, Chinese and European commercial interests, and the Malay Rulers and élite.

Between May and October 1922 Maxwell instructed Captain T. P. Coe, a Federal Secretariat official, to open all major General Orders for discussion and possible amendments with a view to further decentralization. This produced a series of proposals which, even if entirely implemented, would not have substantially decentralized the FMS administration. Yet illuminatingly, several of the proposals fell by the wayside as victims of objections from the Residents or Maxwell's other British advisers.⁵ Overall, the exercise increased the power of eight federal departmental heads to appoint and promote subordinate officers drawing a salary below \$3,500 per annum;⁶ empowered the state secretariats to deal with all state petitions and the federal departmental heads to grant leave to clerical and subordinate officers under their charge; raised the salary level of officers whose service records were kept by the federal secretariat from \$240 to \$360 per annum; and introduced a new General Order to the effect that censures on federal officers should be inflicted by the Chief Secretary, and those on state officers by the Residents.⁷ It was, once again, a penetrating comment on the conservative attitude of British officials to decentralization.

Maxwell's original contribution to decentralization in an area first opened by James in 1920 was a re-definition of General Order 101 and Appendix D which spelled out the duties and powers of the heads of federal departments. In pressing very hard for this he stressed that the FMS administration was 'admittedly faulty' chiefly because its haphazard development tended to obscure the relations between the Residents and the Federal Heads. The result was not only inefficiency at times but 'far too much work [being] thrown upon the Chief Secretary'.⁸ To overcome this necessitated a clearer definition of Resident-Federal Head relations through amendments of the General Order 101 and Appendix D, thus curtail-

ing references to the Federal Secretariat and improving general efficiency. But Maxwell was also motivated by other considerations. It seems clear that he desired to return to a position in the early days before 1903 of the Federation when nearly all Federal Heads were primarily advisory and inspecting officers of departments. Maxwell believed that administrative over-centralization resulted in the progressive absorption of much of the Residents' powers by these departmental heads; decentralization accordingly partly meant the process of reversing the above development. This would not involve any drastic or even substantial reduction of the powers of the Chief Secretary if he were to remain the chief executive and co-ordinating officer directing the FMS like the Resident-General of those early days.⁹ In pressing the proposal on Hose in October 1922, Maxwell therefore emphasized that the government should devolve 'as much power as possible on the Residents', thus giving them 'the fullest control in state matters compatible with proper control of the Departments concerned by the Federal Heads'.¹⁰ The limit to this would be set by the need to ensure adequate efficiency, the preservation of the existing Federation, and by the larger question of a wider federation of all the Malay states. It should be noted that the relations Maxwell had in mind for the Residents and the Federal Heads closely resembled those he had formulated for the Federal Heads and the British Advisers in the UMS as outlined in chapter three. Clearly, this was intended to pave the way for the eventual extension of the federal departments to embrace those in the UMS as a step towards a wider Malayan federation.

Maxwell's proposal split the Residents in 1922. On the side of the Chief Secretary stood F. A. S. McClelland, the brash and tactless acting Resident of Pahang, and Major C. W. C. Parr, Resident of Perak. Parr was one of the few remaining pioneer cadets who had worked under Frank Swettenham in Perak in the early 1890s. As a conscientious outdoor officer with a strong sense of humour and camaraderie, he then became, for many years, the 'perfect District Officer' of Tampin

from where he was promoted to the Residentsip of Negri Sembilan. Subsequently, he went to British North Borneo as Governor, fought in the European theatre during the First World War, and returned to Malaya as Resident of Pahang and then of Perak in 1921.¹¹ As an enthusiastic follower of the early Malayophile group led by E. Birch, and a Malay scholar of some repute, Parr was to show the strongest sympathy, among the Residents, for decentralization. Against Maxwell's approach were O. F. Stonor, the strict, industrious and, at times, combative Resident of Selangor, and E. S. Hose, the bachelor Resident of Negri Sembilan. Son of a bishop, and himself affectionately known as 'the Bishop' because of his serious religious outlook,¹² Hose was a 'very sensible', capable but conservative officer.

On 26 October 1922 Parr wrote to Maxwell:

I should like to see other Departments [besides Medical], with the possible exception of the Forests, de-federalised to such an extent that their Heads became inspecting and advisory officers, the State Head being responsible for the Department within the State. This I know is the view of His Highness the Sultan [of Perak].¹³

In fact, believing that the 'Federal Heads have usurped the powers of the state authorities', Sultan Iskandar of Perak felt that they should be made to act 'in an advisory capacity only' in the states,¹⁴ a stand supported by the other FMS Rulers and later reiterated by Raja Chulan, a Malay unofficial in the Federal Council. Parr therefore cited the Sultan's opinion to strengthen his proposal to confine the executive power of the departmental heads to federal institutions and strictly federal matters. Around the same time, Hose commented on Maxwell's approach:

I have come to the conclusion that, with the exception of a few minor details, decentralization along these lines is neither desirable nor practicable, unless it is intended to reconsider the whole policy on which the Federation is founded. It would inevitably introduce into the administration the objectionable elements of dual control and lack of uniformity and cohesion, and would probably also result in loss of efficiency and economy.¹⁵

He rightly added that he assumed decentralization was not intended to reverse or modify the policy upon which the Federation was founded, a view reflecting the conservative outlook not only of himself but also of British officials in general.

This rift in official response came into the open over two proposals to amend Appendix D. In August 1922 Parr supported a move to make the Commissioner of Police an 'inspecting officer' and to vest the Residents with greater powers for the control of the state police contingents and over the preparation of the police state estimates. Hose, however, concurred with Conlay, the Commissioner of Police, that no amendment was necessary and that nothing should be done to weaken the Commissioner's undivided control over the police force.¹⁶ It was only due to Maxwell's insistence that the Commissioner of Police re-drafted Appendix D into one that came to be included in the 1923 Hose Decentralization Committee Report as discussed later.¹⁷ Again, in August 1922 Parr urged that the Director of the Public Works Department should be primarily 'an advisory officer' and that to further decentralization, the State Engineer should be made 'the controlling engineer in the state'. But Hose contended that it was unnecessary to amend Appendix D 'as the control already exercised by the Resident in reference to local public works appears to be adequate'.¹⁸ Maxwell then consulted Stonor whose views he regarded as 'of special value' because of the Huxley case¹⁹ then pending in Selangor. In October Stonor replied:

In a matter of this sort efficiency is in my opinion, of not less importance than decentralisation.

I do not think that greater efficiency will be secured by modifying Appendix D so as to obtain a greater measure of decentralisation. On the contrary I am of opinion that decentralisation (I am not, of course, speaking of any particular state) may easily result in decreased efficiency. I should be inclined to leave Appendix D as it is.²⁰

Despite the stand taken by Hose and Stonor, Maxwell persisted and the Public Works Department became one of the

five departments specifically targeted for decentralization under the Hose Decentralisation Committee Report.

Despite his grave misgivings, on 6 November 1922 Hose allowed himself to be persuaded by Maxwell, his 'life-long friend', to head a Decentralisation Committee to revise General Order 101 and Appendix D. The other two members of the committee were Captain T. P. Coe, the rather conservative Assistant Secretary of the Federal Secretariat, and the Head of each federal department involved. Maxwell was determined to see decentralization effected on political grounds even at a loss of efficiency but would prefer to go slow if it would substantially increase administrative cost.²¹ He was the moving spirit behind the committee which did most of its work before he went on overseas leave in May 1923, and reported in August. Deploring the loss of state individuality through over-centralization in recent years as contrary to the spirit of the Anglo-Malay treaties, the committee urged that a certain degree of decentralization was politically expedient in order to place federal departments more directly under the control of the Residents. It believed that this would renew the confidence of the Rulers and their people in British good faith towards their treaty obligations.²² The committee, however, imposed two safeguards. First, it exempted certain federal departments such as Railway, Posts and Telegraphs, and Customs from any decentralization scheme on grounds of efficiency and public convenience. For the first time the Museum Department was included in this category, while no change was introduced in Appendix D for nine departments.²³ Second, to ensure that nothing would be done to imperil the existing administration, the committee warned that its recommendations should be effected slowly and that no further instalment of devolution should be pressed for until decentralization had passed the first purely experimental stage.

Under the Hose Scheme, as the committee's recommendations came to be called, the status and functions of Federal Heads were redefined. Under the existing General Order 101, a Federal Head was an *executive* officer responsible to the

Chief Secretary. He received executive instructions from the Chief Secretary and transmitted these instructions to the heads of his state departments for implementation with or without consulting the Residents. Under the new order, a Federal Head became an *adviser* to the Chief Secretary on federal matters and to the Residents on exclusively state matters.²⁴ The Chief Secretary would continue, as at present, to send executive instructions to the Federal Head on matters affecting more than one state. However, in questions such as purely state matters, over which the Federal Head's status was advisory, the Chief Secretary would transmit executive instructions to the Resident who would then convey the directives to the state department officers for implementation. In other words, the executive instructions would emanate for each state from the Resident instead of from the Federal Head at Kuala Lumpur as hitherto.²⁵ Related to this, control over federal departments was partially assumed by the Resident. Under the existing General Order 101, the Federal Head was responsible to the Chief Secretary for the efficiency and discipline of his department, the distribution and movement of his staff, and the preparation of the entire departmental estimates.²⁶ The Hose Scheme now transferred to the Resident control over intra-state movements of officers and vested him with an influential, if not controlling, say over the drafting of the state departmental estimates. The Resident was also jointly responsible for the general efficiency of the state departments operating within his state.

The above recommendations were implemented after the Hose Scheme was approved, with very minor modifications, by a Conference of Residents in November 1923 and blessed by the Rulers as a step towards decentralization. The scheme affected, to some extent, the Prisons, Education, and Mines Departments, but mainly six departments namely, Medical, Survey, Police, Forests, Public Works, and Agriculture. In endorsing the decision of the Residents' Conference, Guille-mard agreed with Maxwell that the scheme was 'a very important step in the direction of decentralisation'.²⁷ He also

informed the Colonial Office that the Hose Scheme and Maxwell's other decentralization proposals should be implemented gradually and that it would take 'a longer time to judge of [their] success'.²⁸

The Hose Scheme, as approved, further urged that the measures discussed above could be rendered effective only if accompanied by a partial transfer of financial control over the departments from the Federal Heads to the Residents. The transfer it had in mind concerned 'the collection of revenue and state expenditure under 'Other Charges' in the departmental budget. It felt that the other item 'Personal Emoluments' should stay under the Federal Heads as they needed it to control the deployment of personnel. Maxwell however, suggested to the Decentralisation Committee that *both* 'Other Charges' and 'Personal Emoluments' should be shifted from the federal to the state estimates, but apparently as a precaution, he wished to restrict his proposal to five departments namely, Survey, Medical, Public Works, Police, and Forests.²⁹ With both suggestions the committee concurred.

Early in October 1923 the government convened an Estimates Decentralisation Committee to assess the adverse effects, if any, of the Hose Scheme on the efficiency and economy of the FMS administration.³⁰ Herein began a characteristic pattern of development in the decentralization scenario in the FMS during the 1920s and 1930s. Decentralization schemes were advanced and accepted on political grounds. But in working out the details of the schemes or during their implementation, British officers devoted greater consideration to the question of economy and administrative efficiency. These officers were generally not convinced of the political urgency for decentralization as they witnessed no nationalist movement or even organized Malay dissent in Malaya; nor were they fully conversant, if at all, with the larger political objective of a Malayan union. Frequently technical officers did not even understand the political motives behind decentralization.³¹ As bureaucrats whole-heartedly committed to the existing FMS administration, British officers were, how-

ever, acutely conscious of the need for efficiency and economy. The end result of all this was the progressive erosion of decentralization schemes by these bureaucrats and, to a significant extent, this was what happened to the Hose Scheme.

The Estimates Decentralisation Committee was presided over by A. M. Pountney until ill-health forced him to relinquish the chair to another conservative officer, C. S. Alexander, the FMS Treasurer, who continued to be assisted by an MCS member, H. S. Sircom, and the senior Federal Council Unofficial, J. H. M. Robson. It immediately decided to bring the Agriculture Department under its purview because A. S. Haynes, Secretary of Agriculture and an apostle of decentralization, had on his own initiative spearheaded and won the Residents' approval in January 1923 for a scheme to place 'Personal Emoluments' and 'Other Charges' under the state estimates of his department.³² Brimming with confidence, Haynes assured Pountney that the change was 'fool-proof' and had worked well in Johor.³³ But the committee at once ran into a storm of protest from the departmental heads involved who, however, knew it to be both futile and politically improper to try to block the Hose Scheme *in toto*. V. A. Lowinger, the Surveyor-General, explained:

I conceive it to be no part of the duty of an officer in my position, whatever his views may be, to reverse the declared policy of the Government, decided in such emphatic terms as to leave no doubt that objections based on the very highest grounds had been foreseen and discounted.³⁴

To the committee C. E. S. Cubitt, the Conservator of Forests, R. Dowden, the Principal Medical Officer, and Lowinger objected that the proposed change would lead to the submission of swollen state departmental estimates to cover contingencies, as horizontal transfers of provisions among budgetary sub-heads were no longer feasible as hitherto. While Lowinger further emphasized that the change might hinder his ability to economize on the employment of senior officers, Dowden asserted that it would discourage good medical men from

joining what would appear to be small state departments. More germane, both pointed out that the scheme would inject a damaging element of dual control in their departments, thereby resulting in lack of uniformity in procedure and policy. Dowden added that the Health Branch of the Medical Department must remain purely federal as it had no state heads to administer the funds in the states. Unable 'to see how a purely professional department such as Medical can be politically involved' and fearing the pinch of lay control, Dowden registered his 'complete dissension' from the so-called decentralization proposals which he condemned as 'retrograde in the extreme' and 'fatal to either progress or reform'.³⁵

The technocrats indirectly enjoyed the support of Pountney and then Alexander. Based on a highly damaging memorandum of Alexander, the committee's findings charged:

That in view of the absolute necessity for the present and for many years to come of a central control of the FMS finances occasioned by the existence of the Federal Sterling Loan the present proposals for the transfer of certain Federal expenditure to the four States are from the point of view of financial organisation and control likely to mean merely a cumbrous addition to the existing machinery. . . . Moreover one result which must not be lost sight of is that more work, and that mostly of a routine nature, will be thrown upon the State Secretariats without a corresponding decrease of work in the Federal Secretariat.³⁶

Alexander's memorandum also warned that under the Hose financial scheme the state treasuries, having no experience of supervising departments, would suffer an immediate loss of efficiency and would have less control and knowledge of details of the state financial situation.³⁷ In short the memorandum raised the spectre of both the government 'loosening the purse strings' and needlessly incurring additional work at a time of financial stringencies. The striking feature of the Treasurer's and departmental submissions is that the negative effects raised were boldly overdrawn and that the political rationale behind decentralization was studiously ignored. Nonetheless, these submissions led to a significant erosion of the Hose financial scheme.

On 4 December 1923 Alexander successfully persuaded the Estimates Decentralization Committee to scale down the financial scheme so as to affect only four departments namely, Forests, Police, Agriculture, and Medical.³⁸ Even so, it met Dowden's request that the Health Branch of the Medical Department should remain a purely federal organization and that European Nursing Sisters, Assistant Medical Officers, and Assistant Surgeons be retained on the federal estimate.³⁹ Owing to Lowinger's opposition, the committee recommended that only certain items concerning boatmen and peons under 'Other Charges' be placed in the 1924 state estimates of the Survey Department.⁴⁰ Lowinger succeeded even in deferring action on this to 1926 on the plea that he would be going on leave in 1924 and the Survey Department was still undergoing a major reorganization.⁴¹ The committee made few recommendations for the Public Works Department probably because it was already primarily a state-based organization. In the four departments involved the Resident, the State Treasurer, and the state head of each department now controlled the financial provisions under 'Personal Emoluments' and 'Other Charges'.⁴² The Federal Heads, on the other hand, retained their hold on the headquarters staffs, the senior officers, and other essentially federal provisions in the federal estimates of their departments.⁴³ It should also be noted that officers whose salaries were paid from the state estimates became state officers reporting to the Resident instead of to the Federal Head of Department at Kuala Lumpur as was the case when they were under the federal estimate. The overall outcome of the Decentralization Committee Report did not amount to a substantial decentralization of executive and financial powers from the Federal Heads to the Residents.

GROOMING THE RULERS-IN-COUNCIL

Maxwell's policy of grooming the Rulers-in-Council for more responsibilities had two aspects. The first involved, as the

Chief Secretary stated in his 1920 memorandum to the Colonial Office, the restoration of power to the Rulers and the State Councils.⁴⁴ Viewing the decentralization movement in perspective, he reiterated in January 1924:

The problem of 'Decentralisation' is really only one aspect of the problem of the restoration to the Rulers of powers which they have lost, partly owing to the 'Resident' system, and partly owing to the 'Federation' system; and the Government is beginning to realise its importance, because of the unfavourable opinions of the existing system among the Rulers and State Councils both in the Federated and the Unfederated States, and because of the effect of this feeling upon the future of British Malaya.⁴⁵

The second aspect aimed at training the Rulers-in-Council in the exercise of executive functions as was the position in the UMS. Together, they constituted Maxwell's strategy of bringing the Rulers and the State Councils into the administration of the states, thereby transforming Resident rule in part into Advisory rule.

On 10 September 1922, four months after he had initiated a revision of General Orders, Maxwell adumbrated 'a constructive policy' which aimed, among other things, at vesting the State Councils with a moderate measure of financial responsibility. It proposed to lay the estimates of federal departments (such as the Public Works Department) in the State Councils for discussion before their introduction in the Federal Council. More importantly, it advanced two measures of financial devolution to the State Councils. The 'major proposal' concerned the state budgets. Maxwell's central idea here was to transfer certain financial items such as 'Rulers and Chiefs', 'The Resident', 'District Officers', 'Sanitary Boards', 'Mosquito Destruction Boards' and 'Vehicles' from the control of the Federal Council to that of the State Councils. To make the proposal workable, the Federal Council would be required to vote annual lump sums for the transferred subjects, and these sums would be freely allocated by the state legislatures. The 'minor proposal' was more innovative

and, in a sense, more important, as it sought to vest the State Councils with the power to vote money for mosques, *wakaf*, and other charitable purposes relating to Islam.⁴⁶ As it was then generally accepted that the Federal Agreement exclusively empowered the Federal Council to vote supply, Maxwell's proposal raised delicate constitutional questions.

In November 1922 Guillemard discussed with Maxwell and generally approved the latter's 'constructive policy'. The Residents were then directed to work out the mechanics of effecting the policy. In a conference on 22 January 1923 the Residents, for reasons which are not clear, decided to defer Maxwell's proposal to allow the State Councils to discuss federal departmental estimates before their introduction in the Federal Council. The conference accepted a suggestion by Hose that 'new proposals for the state budgets' and 'recommendations for new appointments and changes under "Other Charges" ' should be provisionally sanctioned by the Chief Secretary (and then presumably passed by the federal legislature) before being laid in the State Councils which should be empowered to alter these proposals within the limits of the agreed sum totals. Any additional items that would have carried the budgets beyond these totals would again have to be approved by the Chief Secretary (and the Federal Council) and referred back to the State Councils. The Residents stated that Maxwell's major and minor proposals were covered by the above procedure.⁴⁷ It should be noted that the conference had adroitly side-stepped the delicate question of vesting the State Councils with the power to vote supply as recommended by Maxwell's minor proposal. Endorsing the above procedure, Guillemard informed the Colonial Office on 30 March 1923 of Maxwell's 'constructive policy' and proposed action on it.⁴⁸

A month later Maxwell circulated his minor proposal among the Residents, adding that he wanted the proposed new power of the State Councils extended to political pensions, compassionate and special allowances, gratuities and rewards for Malays. He suggested a new General Order to empower

the State Councils to vote money (outside the annual estimates) for the above purposes.⁴⁹ In May 1923 Stonor of Selangor and McClelland (acting for Parr as Perak Resident) fully supported Maxwell. Thomson of Pahang and R. Scott (acting Resident of Negri Sembilan) agreed with the proposal in so far as it concerned mosques, *wakaf*, and other charitable issues relating to Islam and excluded political pensions, compassionate allowances, gratuities, and rewards.⁵⁰ Scott warned that the latter issues would probably cause 'considerable heartburning and trouble' in Negri Sembilan, a confederation of 'six states'.⁵¹ Taking the question as a whole, Thomson cautioned that before any action was taken, the constitutional power of the State Councils should first be determined.⁵² Except for Stonor who did not comment, the Residents rightly pointed out that the State councils could not be so empowered by a General Order.

Understandably, on 20 June 1923 Hose, who was acting for Maxwell now on leave in London, at once ruled out the idea of a General Order. He then consulted Pountney, the Financial Adviser, especially on McClelland's suggestion that a lump sum be voted by the Federal Council and be freely allocated by each State Council to defray the items listed in Maxwell's minor proposal.⁵³ It was clear that any approval for McClelland's idea would certainly be extended to cover Maxwell's major proposal as well. It should be mentioned here that Maxwell's proposals had been considered by the Finance Committee of the Federal Council on 7 May. On this occasion Maxwell signified his readiness to see the constitution of the Federal Council amended, if necessary, so as to carry out his proposals. But, led by Pountney, the Finance Committee asserted that the prevailing recession advised against taking a decision on Maxwell's proposals. Understandably, on 22 June Pountney submitted a memorandum to Hose that not only virtually destroyed Maxwell's minor proposal but also dragged in his major one. Picking up Thomson's caution, Pountney claimed that Maxwell's minor proposal would be unconstitutional under the Federal Agree-

ment which had reserved the power to vote supply exclusively to the Federal Council. He considered McClelland's suggestion 'neither possible nor advisable' because sound financial principles dictated that the voting and allocation of expenditure be under unitary control. He then delivered his *coup de grâce*:

The question of amending the constitution of the Federal Council to bring into being other spending authorities is one that I have seen Mr. Maxwell's views on, and I have held (perhaps a narrow view) that the present time when we are trying to get our financial heads above water, is not the time to create independent spending authorities.⁵⁴

Pountney's views were well received by the conservative Hose who on 27 June asserted that the present time 'is inopportune for any change of a far-reaching nature'. On both Maxwell's minor and major proposals he ruled:

I think we shall have to content ourselves for the present with *consulting* the State Councils with reference to proposed expenditure for the purposes indicated in Mr. Maxwell's memorandum. As to the larger question of dealing with the State Estimates, there again we must await the reorganisation of the financial machinery before attempting any material change.⁵⁵

Pountney's views and Hose's decision now swung the Residents (except the non-committal McClelland) against Maxwell's minor proposal in July when consulted again.⁵⁶ Perhaps the Residents had no option in this but the rapidity and totality with which they rallied behind Pountney and Hose exposes their deep commitment to the existing FMS system and their natural tendency to shy away from change. In this way Maxwell's financial proposals were blocked without Guillemard being consulted. Upon his return from leave, a disappointed Maxwell minuted in October 1923, 'I have done my best . . . and can do no more'.⁵⁷

Arising from the above matter was a suggestion from the Yam Tuan of Negri Sembilan that the state budgets be laid in the state councils for general approval. Although the idea struck a sympathetic chord in Hose, it was brushed aside by

the Residents along with Maxwell's financial proposals. It attracted so little attention that only Scott bothered to comment on it. He conveyed his Secretary's (Vlieland) view that the State Councils could not 'approve' the state estimates as they had no power to vote supply and that the Ruler's suggestion, if effected, would only provoke dissatisfaction.⁵⁸ The final outcome of Maxwell's endeavour was that in order to give a semblance of state individuality, the Annual Supply Bill was divided into five major headings, one for the Federation and the others for the four states. And from November 1925 the draft state estimates, after approval by the Chief Secretary, were tabled in the State Councils for information and comments, prior to their introduction in the Federal Council.

But the above reform was not extended to legislation, even though Collins, in endorsing a decentralization policy in November 1920, recommended, among other things, that draft bills (as well as state estimates) should first be considered by the State Councils.⁵⁹ In May 1923 Maxwell supported a resolution by the Perak State Council that draft bills be discussed in the State Councils before they be tabled in the Federal Council.⁶⁰ The proposal however, met strong opposition from the Residents. As Thomson of Pahang put it, the move would involve unnecessary work, might create conflict between the State Councils and the Federal Council, and 'would merely tantalise [the State Councils] by allowing them to discuss matters which they had no power to decide'. In June 1923 Hose, acting Chief Secretary, threw out the proposal as not 'workable in practice'.⁶¹

To sum up, it should be made clear at once that the financial schemes discussed above were not intended to transfer a substantial degree of power from the Chief Secretary or the Federal Council to the State Councils. They had only a very modest objective of vesting the states with a measure of control over state funds, presumably as the first instalment of financial devolution to the State Councils. That British decision-makers destroyed them was not due to personal animosity towards Maxwell but to the British desire for effi-

ciency and economy and to their deep attachment to the FMS system. In fact, the staid and conservative Hose who ruled against the proposals was a life-long friend of Maxwell, one whom the Chief Secretary trusted and influenced.

Up to this point, the financial officers—men appointed by a 'financially-minded' High Commissioner to guide the FMS out of the prevailing economic gloom—displayed little sympathy for decentralization. At times they conveyed the impression that they were only keen to throw a spanner into the revolving wheel of decentralization. It was Pountney's memorandum of 22 June 1923 that turned the tide against Maxwell's financial proposals and threw out Hose's suggestion, approved by a Residents' Conference five months earlier, that the State Councils be empowered to vary new proposals in the state budgets within the limits of the agreed sum totals. Yet less than six months later, in December 1923, the Estimates Decentralization Committee chaired by the FMS Treasurer, C. S. Alexander, was to offer an alternative very close to Hose's, to the proposal of transferring expenditure items entitled 'Personal Emoluments' and 'Other Charges' to the departmental state estimates under the Hose Scheme. Determined by Alexander who undoubtedly enjoyed the blessing of Pountney, the Committee's statement explained:

A more suitable way to ensure the desired objective, viz Devolution would appear to be by strengthening and giving increased financial powers to the State Councils within the limits of the State Estimates as approved by the Federal Council.⁶²

Hence, what was rejected with one hand in June 1923 was proffered by the other six months later as a good alternative to a recommended measure of financial devolution to the states under the Hose Scheme. There is no indication whatsoever in the existing documents that Maxwell would have elicited a more positive response from these financial officers or his other senior colleagues had he proposed a greater degree of devolution to the State Councils. Once again we witness decentralization measures being advanced on political grounds

and being eroded during implementation by economic and administrative considerations.

The position at the close of 1923 was that the Hose Scheme was being implemented, Maxwell's financial devolution proposals had been stalled by senior British officials, and the time had come for Maxwell to enter another area of decentralization. As it turned out, this dealt with the related questions of restoring power to the Rulers and training the Rulers-in-Council in the exercise of executive functions as well as the transfer of part of the Chief Secretary's statutory power to the state authorities.

By then, however, the Guillemard-Maxwell power struggle had come to bear strongly on decentralization. Relations between the two men had sharply deteriorated so that in mid-1923 three major conflicts were referred to the Colonial Office, namely, a renewed petition for the restoration of the title of Resident-General,⁶³ an acrimonious dispute over a deficit suffered by the Railway Department, and a feud between the Federal and the Colonial Secretariats. The second incident involved Railway overspending \$7 million in 1921, an event blamed by an official committee on the laxity of financial control exercised by the FMS government over the department. When Guillemard accordingly instructed Maxwell to issue a public explanation the latter not only challenged the committee's findings but also counter-charged that the High Commissioner was partly responsible because he had earlier authorized the department to proceed with work as planned on the assumption that funds would be forthcoming from a loan. On Maxwell's refusal, in a 'discourteous manner', to withdraw his accusation Guillemard urged Whitehall to take disciplinary action against the Chief Secretary.⁶⁴ The third incident occurred when the acting Resident of Perak, McClelland, needlessly castigated a Straits scheme on Assistant Surgeons as 'a piece of feeble and undignified chicanery'. Though it was clear that Maxwell had read this minute, he did not instruct McClelland to withdraw it or draw James' attention to it. When it subsequently came to the knowledge

of the Colonial Secretariat, Guillemard, at James' request, reported the matter to the Colonial Office.⁶⁵ In all three instances, Whitehall did not side with Maxwell who, nonetheless, became more intransigent towards Guillemard and concentrated on gathering more and more power into his own hands. This, in turn, diverted his attention away from decentralization, rendered him reluctant to carry out whole-heartedly his proposal to devolve the Chief Secretary's statutory powers downwards, and destroyed any possibility of a widening or change in his decentralization plan. To exacerbate matters, the Guillemard-Maxwell power struggle became intertwined with another conflict that was soon to break out between Maxwell and the Residents over the grooming of the Ruler-in-Council for executive functions. In short, the changing pattern of personal relations augured ill for the next stage of the Maxwell experiment.

Maxwell first touched on this aspect of decentralization in his 'constructive policy' of 10 September 1922. In his memorandum he proposed to replace 'the prior sanction of the Chief Secretary' with that of the State Councils over several matters concerning forest reserves through an amendment of the Forests Enactment. He also proposed to transfer the Chief Secretary's power to approve mining concessions beyond 500 acres, agricultural alienation exceeding 640 acres, and special concessions concerning, for instance, paper, matches, china-clay, and wood-distillation to the State Councils under certain restraints.⁶⁶ Both the proposals were approved by the Residents' Conference on 22 January 1923. Earlier in October 1922 Stonor of Selangor suggested that the law be amended to empower the Residents to declare Sanitary Board areas without the prior sanction of the Chief Secretary as hitherto required. Maxwell met Stonor half-way but successfully persuaded the Residents to agree to substituting 'the sanction of the Chief Secretary' with that of the Ruler-in-Council.⁶⁷ He endeavoured to repeat this in November 1922 when Stonor put forward a similar proposal concerning the alienation of town or village lands by the Residents, but this

time the Residents opposed him on the ground that his proposal would cause 'inconvenient delay in some cases'.⁶⁸ What should be noted is that, if effected, the above proposals would have transferred a small measure of the Chief Secretary's statutory power to the Rulers-in-Council, thereby involving them in the exercise of executive functions.

But Maxwell did not take up this aspect of decentralization seriously until 23 January 1924 when he acted to transfer the Residents' executive power in land matters to the Rulers. He pointed out that the existing land enactment did not give 'sufficient prominence and power' to the Rulers and the State Councils, and implied that this was inconsistent with the decentralization policy and would have an important bearing on 'the future of British Malaya as a whole'. In a draft of the new land law, Maxwell proposed that the Rulers replace the Residents as the signatory and alienating authority of all land grants in the FMS as was the position before 1911. To prevent disruption, the law permitted the Rulers, by notification in the Government Gazette, to delegate their alienating authority to the Residents or other suitable officers.⁶⁹ In view of the Residents' control over the State Councils and of the treaty position, the change would only extend to the Rulers' formal control over land administration in the states. But looming large in the background was the end-product of this aspect of Maxwell's policy which had far-reaching implications for the Residents. Maxwell explained:

If the 'Resident' system is to continue to be a success, the Residents must, in my opinion, cease to administer the country, and must take up the task of advising the Rulers how to administer. That is the great difference between a 'Resident' in the FMS and an 'Adviser' in the UMS.⁷⁰

For the first time, the Residents fully grasped Maxwell's intention to introduce partial Advisory rule in the FMS and at once rallied behind the banner of Resident rule. In the short run they were apprehensive that Maxwell's proposal would hamper their performance or even enable the Rulers to be a

check on their power; in the long term they focused hostility on the larger question of Advisory rule in the FMS. The truth was the Residents were not prepared to accept any policy that might eventually lead to a transfer of power from British to Malay hands and to a drastic reorganization of a system of administration which they and their predecessors had painstakingly established. To gain leverage against the proposal, C. W. C. Parr decided to use Sultan Iskandar of Perak as a pawn in the current dispute with Maxwell. In a memorandum, which does not appear to have been substantiated by any letter from the Sultan,⁷¹ he claimed that the Ruler did not wish to sign land grants or become the alienating authority and that the latter only wanted 'to be kept informed of the general policy in land administration and the trend of alienation'. Parr then explained the Sultan's views on the existing system of administration:

The present (Resident) system has stood the test of time, and His Highness the Sultan has repeatedly told me that he is quite satisfied with it. He reaffirmed his satisfaction only a few days ago. He is quite content to leave the actual administration of his State in the hands of the Resident, so long as he is informed of what is going on and is consulted in important matters.⁷²

On the face of it, this seems a surprising statement. To begin with, it does not quite square with the generally accepted view that the Rulers were dissatisfied with the existing FMS administration partly because of the larger degree of autonomy and power enjoyed by their counterparts in the UMS. It is also safe to assume that the Rulers and the Malay élite understood the nature of Advisory rule in the UMS. That they repeatedly urged that more Malays be employed in the MCS and other government services indicates their wish to see the FMS administration manned and run by Malays as far as practicable, as happened in the UMS. It follows that the Sultan of Perak, like Malay leaders in general, could not have opposed the concept of Advisory rule. What happened was that the Sultan rightly felt himself and Malays

in general unequal to the task of effectively operating the FMS administration at present. One should also not underestimate the influence a Resident could exercise over a Ruler in a matter to which the former was hostile. Understandably, the Sultan realistically decided to settle for a limited objective in the short run—namely, an extension of state autonomy and closer Ruler-Resident consultation on official business. His view was presented by Parr in such a manner as to imply opposition to the idea of Advisory rule for the FMS.

In the face of solid opposition from the Residents during a conference on 29 July 1924, Maxwell was forced to modify the draft land bill and make the Rulers only the alienating authority in land matters. Under the amended draft, the Rulers could continue, through notifications in the government gazette, to delegate their power to the Residents. As the Residents remained impervious to his argument, Maxwell referred the question to the High Commissioner on 22 November 1924.

Meanwhile, the above conflict had poisoned the Residents' mind against any devolution measures that smacked of Advisory rule. This was evidenced in their reaction towards a Forests Amendment Bill, one among many enactments circulated by the Federal Secretariat on 22 August 1924 for amendment so as to effect the Chief Secretary (Dispensing Power) Enactment aimed at empowering the state authorities to act in certain matters without the prior consent of the Chief Secretary. The Residents generally favoured the amendment bill and were prepared to see the Chief Secretary's statutory power to approve the creation and revocation of forest reserves transferred to the State Councils. But they insisted that the Chief Secretary's power to sanction measures to inform the public of the creation and revocation of forest reserves, inquiries into claims submitted by interested parties in the areas affected, and the prohibition of timber-cutting and jungle-produce collecting in any forest reserves be conferred on the Residents. Although they rested their insistence on the alleged need to avoid delay and inconvenience, what

they presumably had in mind were the as yet unsettled controversy over the proposed draft land bill and the fear that any passive acceptance of Maxwell's action on the forests issue would spur him on to direct the devolution of the Chief Secretary's statutory powers on other questions currently in circulation to the State Councils. On such issues, the Residents were now resolute that they, not the State Councils, should be the beneficiaries of devolution.

The Residents' stand on the forests amendment bill, be it noted, was a partial volte-face of their earlier approval of Maxwell's proposal to devolve powers on all the above forest issues to the State Councils. It will be recalled that this approval was freely given in a Residents' Conference on 22 January 1923 and was endorsed by Guillemard two months later. Acting under instruction Cubitt, the Conservator of Forests, then recommended that the above matters concerning forest reserves should be embodied in a new forests bill.⁷³ Maxwell however, decided to defer action in February 1923 because Cubitt and W. S. Gibson, the FMS Legal Adviser, pointed out that the Hose Decentralization Committee might well suggest other changes relating to forest matters.⁷⁴ Maxwell now attempted to implement the earlier decision as a move to complement his effort to vest authority on the Rulers in land matters currently in dispute, and in October 1924 had the draft forests amendment bill enacted by the Federal Council.

It fell to E. C. H. Wolff, the only Resident who was not involved in the approval of Maxwell's forests proposal on 22 January 1923, to take issue with the Chief Secretary. A frank, thorough, pipe-smoking officer with a 'country-gentleman' outlook, Oxford-trained Wolff was Director of Education, 1921-3, acting British Adviser, Kedah, in 1924, and had just been promoted Resident of Negri Sembilan. Presumably supported by the other Residents, he requested on 29 November 1924 that the law be not gazetted until the unanimous views of the Residents had been considered in a conference. Two days later came Guillemard's ruling on the

controversy over the proposed draft land bill discussed earlier:

So far as I am aware, no Ruler has suggested that he has insufficient power *vis-à-vis* his Resident. The problem may arise some day but decentralisation is quite a stiff problem for us to face, without complicating it by such considerations now.⁷⁵

This decision threatened to annihilate Maxwell's policy of introducing partial Advisory rule in the FMS. The Chief Secretary was now in a quandary. He knew that he would be blocked if he referred the forests question to a Residents' conference, as Wolff requested, or be overruled if he asked Guillemard to arbitrate. In this parlous situation he brushed aside Wolff's request and declared on 14 December:

I have no objection to transferring the powers formerly under my control to the State Councils, but I object to transferring them to the Residents. It is the policy of the Government to bring the State Councils into the administration of the Government in every possible way; and I see no reason to share your belief that there will be any unnecessary delay in inviting the State Councils to deal with the important matters [concerned].⁷⁶

And smarting under Guillemard's ruling, Maxwell was more persistent than ever to have his own way and proceeded to gazette the new Forests Enactment on 6 February 1925,⁷⁷ thereby bringing it into effect.

This compelled Wolff to protest again in a lengthy memorandum two weeks later—a move presumably supported by the other Residents. The first major reason behind this was a reaction against Maxwell's high-handedness in the case. Wolff resented the fact that Maxwell had overridden the unanimous opinion of the Residents without discussing the matter in a Residents' Conference or referring the question to the High Commissioner, and when Maxwell ignored his first protest along this line by gazetting the law into force, he was furious. The truth was that Maxwell was an extremely difficult chief to work with and was in the habit of bypassing the Residents

when arriving at important decisions.⁷⁸ This time, however, the Residents were not prepared to take it lying down so soon after they had won a long-drawn-out battle with the Chief Secretary over the draft land law. Guillemard's ruling in their support must have encouraged Wolff to bring the matter to a head.

The second and more important reason was Wolff's opposition to the introduction of Advisory rule in the FMS and his fear, quite unwarranted, that Maxwell, in his bulldozing way, might push for a transfer of 'widely extended power' to the State Councils. Wolff conveniently ignored the fact that the new Forests Enactment would only transfer a very nominal degree of power to the State Councils concerning matters where uniformity was unnecessary; instead he concentrated his attack on the larger question of training the State Councils to govern the states. Rightly enough, he stressed that the Councils consisted of predominantly Malay aristocrats, had no administrative training, experience or the 'British desire for efficiency' and could not handle the 'very complicated Government machine in Malaya'. In fact, most members of the State Councils could not even understand laws dealing with complicated legal, technical, and financial questions. Wolff added that the State Council of Negri Sembilan (and implicitly of the other FMS states) was also not fit to exercise executive functions as currently wielded by, for example, the Kedah State Council.⁷⁹ In short, Wolff believed—and it is quite safe to assume that the other Residents thought so too—that the State Councils should not be vested with a substantial degree of legislative and executive power.

In his memorandum Wolff expounded his views on decentralization. He urged that attention should be focused on readjusting an over-centralized and top-heavy administration as decided by the High Commissioner on 1 December 1924, while the question of bringing the Malay Rulers and the State Councils more into the official machine should be dealt with in the very distant future.⁸⁰ The end result of this approach would be an administration with a clearer division

of powers between the federal and the state authorities. As Wolff explained:

Let the Chief Secretary instruct the Residents as to the accepted policy and administer the federal branches of the Government, but let the Residents (in consultation with the State Councils where possible) carry out the executive administration of their States on the lines of the policy laid down for their guidance.⁸¹

It should be noted that the above had gained general currency in the FMS and had been variously advocated by British officials and unofficial councillors in the federal legislature and by Maxwell himself.⁸²

Concomitantly, Wolff continued, decentralization would lead to a clear division in the legislative spheres of the Federal and the State Councils. It therefore, did not seem right, as was done in the case of the new Forests Enactment, 'that the Federal Council should prescribe the powers and duties of a State Council in the same manner as it prescribes those of an executive officer'. Besides the new Forests Enactment was unconstitutional because it empowered the State Council to veto a proposal of a Resident whose advice the council was bound by treaty to follow.⁸³ It should be pointed out that here Wolff had conveniently overlooked the fact that he and the other Residents were willing to leave decisions on the creation and revocation of forest reserves to the State Councils,⁸⁴ thus (in his own words) acting unconstitutionally; moreover, he was questioning the constitutionality of governmental practices in the northern UMS and even Johor. In any case, the position in 1925 was that most state matters had long come under federal laws enacted by the Federal Council. To attain a clear division in the legislative spheres of the Federal and the State Councils would necessitate extensive legislative amendments so that federal matters would come under federal laws, and state questions under state laws; 'If, for instance', declared Wolff, 'forests are a matter for the State Council, the Forests Enactment should be a State law, not a federal law'.⁸⁵ But not having this objective in mind,

Wolff made no suggestions whatsoever on how to proceed; rather, he was perfectly willing to leave the existing situation intact and unchanged, provided that whatever statutory powers the Chief Secretary was willing to part with should be transferred to the Residents through the Chief Secretary (Dispensing Power) Enactment. In other words, Wolff was utilizing general policy principles to obstruct a specific proposal of Maxwell, but was himself unwilling to act on these principles. In the concluding sentence of his memorandum Wolff offered Maxwell a solution to the current dispute:

In my opinion it would suffice for the present if, where powers and duties are allotted to the Residents by the federal legislature, and the approval of the Chief Secretary is not considered necessary, the Chief Secretary were to indicate to the Residents the matters on which they are expected to consult the State Councils before taking action.⁸⁶

This was, indeed, a puny step after such an impressive exposition of lofty constitutional and administrative principles.

The new Forests Enactment and Wolff's memorandum were placed before a Residents' Conference on 24 February 1925. The dispute was settled, apparently quite easily, with the new Forests Enactment remaining unchanged. As Stonor minuted two days after the conference: 'A misunderstanding took place. No alteration [was] made in [the] Conference.'⁸⁷ It is abundantly clear therefore that no deadlock existed between Maxwell and the Residents over the new forests law.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (DISPENSING POWER) ENACTMENT

Meantime, steps were taken to devolve part of the Chief Secretary's statutory powers to the state authorities. It was Maxwell's original intention to open a second series of papers inviting amendments to the existing enactments with a view to accomplishing the above.⁸⁸ This objective was somewhat deflected in August 1922 when Hose, in commenting on Maxwell's policy on amending General Order 101 and Appen-

dix D, suggested that a bill be enacted to enable the Chief Secretary to delegate his powers to the Residents along the lines of the High Commissioner Delegation of Powers Enactment No. 2 of 1919.⁸⁹ Maxwell endorsed Hose's intention but disagreed with the procedure. He stated: 'I am inclined to think that it is not as much a case of the Chief Secretary delegating his powers, as amending the various Enactments and substituting "British Resident" for "Chief Secretary to Government"'.⁹⁰ When the question came before Guillemard late in April 1923, he decided that 'the right method is to have a General Bill on the lines of Enactment No. 2 of 1919'.⁹¹ The Residents were glad to fall in line, with H. W. Thomson, the newly-appointed Pahang Resident, opining that the alternative of amending each enactment involved was 'an unsatisfactory if not an impracticable procedure'.⁹²

On being instructed to draft a bill, W. S. Gibson, the Legal Adviser, queried late in June 1923:

This paper *began* with the question of delegation to a Resident of powers conferred by law on the Chief Secretary to Government, but has deviated into the different though closely allied question, of eliminating the approval of the Chief Secretary to Government in cases where the power is conferred on the Resident but can only be exercised with that approval. The concrete cases mentioned in these papers all appear to be cases of the latter.⁹³

The Legal Adviser wished it clarified whether the draft bill should include both questions of power delegation and removal of the Chief Secretary's sanction. It was Hose, then acting for Maxwell who had gone on home leave in May, who ruled that the proposed bill should deal only with the question of eliminating the Chief Secretary's sanction, regarding this as part of the strategy of delegating powers downwards. Gibson also inquired whether the related power of the Chief Secretary to make rules governing issues decentralized under the proposed bill should likewise be devolved to the state authorities, a query the Residents negated on the ground that

uniformity in rules was essential throughout the Federation.⁹⁴ Thus determined, a bill known as the Chief Secretary (Dispensing Power) Enactment was passed by the Federal Council on 7 April 1924 under which the Chief Secretary was enabled through notifications in the Government Gazette, to dispense with reference to his office over matters where the Residents were empowered to act only with his approval or consent.

The degree of power Maxwell and the Residents intended to decentralize through the above enactment is not stated in the official records. It would appear that at the start of his experiment in mid-1922, Maxwell desired to devolve only a significant degree of power from the Federal Secretariat downwards so that he could still replay the role of the Resident-General of the early Federation—a target that, at most, fell slightly below that of the Residents. Hose was probably echoing the views of the other Residents when he assured Maxwell in August 1922 that, in suggesting a bill to devolve the Federal Secretariat's power downwards, he had 'not the least desire to lessen the general authority or control of the Chief Secretary'.⁹⁵ By 1924, however, Maxwell had become so completely embroiled in his power struggle with Guille-mard that he was now primarily interested in gathering more powers into his own hands, a development that invariably narrowed the scope of operation of the Chief Secretary (Dispensing Power) Enactment. What was achieved through this bill consequently fell short of the aspirations of the Residents. This was reflected in August 1923 when Stonor of Selangor criticized the 'Objects and Reasons' of the draft Chief Secretary (Dispensing Power) Enactment submitted by the Legal Adviser, W. S. Gibson, which stated that the Chief Secretary's consent should be eliminated in cases 'where such consent is merely a formality or the matter is of slight importance'. He pointed out that government policy aimed to increase the powers of the Residents, not to delegate to them matters which were merely 'formal' or 'of slight importance'.⁹⁶ This indicates that the Residents desired a meaningful transfer of power under the Chief Secretary (Dis-

pensing Power) Enactment. For this reason, the Residents submitted a list of laws to be amended according to the above enactment that was longer than that actually effected up to 1926.⁹⁷ But it should be noted that even if entirely implemented, their proposals would not have devolved a substantial degree of power from the Federal Secretariat to the state authorities.

At the outset, the Maxwell plan provided no clear information on whether the Residents or the State Councils should be the chief recipient of those statutory powers of the Chief Secretary earmarked for devolution. It will be recalled that in October 1922 and January 1923 the Residents concurred with Maxwell that the Chief Secretary's powers over forest reserves and sanitary board areas should be transferred to the State Councils; but at the same time they laid claim to the Chief Secretary's powers over the alienation of town and village lands as well as the fixing of drainage rates and fees for private water-works. The mode of power transfer finally arrived at had an important bearing on the above question. The amendment of individual enactments, as Maxwell urged, would have helped him, if he so desired, to try to devolve part of the Chief Secretary's statutory powers to the State Councils. The opportunity for this would present itself when the Chief Secretary and the Residents invariably came to decide during their deliberations whether the 'sanction of the Chief Secretary' in the enactments involved should be replaced by that of 'the Resident' or 'the State Council'. The Chief Secretary (Dispensing Power) Enactment, however, had the subtle effect of channelling devolution towards the Residents rather than the State Councils. It sought only to eliminate 'the sanction of the Chief Secretary' in the laws involved without necessitating a review of the powers currently vested in the Residents, thereby implicitly pre-setting the direction of decentralization. To promote Advisory rule in this connection, Maxwell would have to take a further step of specifically directing that the Resident's powers be transferred to the State Councils as occurred in the case of the

forests amendment enactment of 1924. But by now the Residents, fully aware of Maxwell's intention to introduce partial Advisory rule in the FMS, had prepared themselves for battle. Faced with this situation, and bearing in mind the truculent reaction of Wolff to the forests amendment bill, Maxwell became prudent and was eventually forced to beat a retreat.

The final outcome was that all the Chief Secretary's statutory powers decentralized through the 1924 enactment, excepting those on forest reserves but including others earlier earmarked for the State Councils, went to the Residents. Between late October 1924 and early 1925 nine notifications were issued in the Government Gazette by Maxwell; three others followed after he retired in mid-1926. These notifications dealt with local matters left to the Residents in pre-Federation days and continued to be within the competence of the Residents to tackle and in which uniformity was unnecessary because of the differing conditions among the states.⁹⁸ The most important notifications permitted the Residents a free hand in constituting Sanitary Board areas and in leasing and alienating town and village lands. Overall, only a small part of the Chief Secretary's statutory powers was delegated to the Residents.

To sum up, Maxwell's decentralization proposals in the years, 1922-5, were not meant immediately to transfer any substantial degree of power from the centre to the state authorities; rather, many of them were intended as first instalments of decentralization towards attaining a certain objective. Like British officials in general, Maxwell was burdened with the deadweight of a stern administrative tradition and believed that decentralization should be effected gradually and with efforts to reconcile its political rationale with considerations for administrative efficiency and economy. Even so, he failed to carry out his programme completely because his senior colleagues, at times including Guille-mard, entertained little sympathy for the Malay side of decentralization, particularly those measures seeking to train

the Rulers and the State Councils in the exercise of executive functions. In this area Maxwell's programme languished for want of support. The Chief Secretary's success therefore was virtually confined to the British side of decentralization in which the Residents were the chief beneficiaries of the fair degree of power devolved from the centre to the states. Even here, decentralization only affected the top levels of the state and federal administrations despite Maxwell's statement in 1922 'that the only way of [effectively] carrying out the policy of decentralization is by carrying it past the Residents down to the District Officers'.⁹⁹ Overall, Maxwell did not significantly decentralize the FMS administration.

In 1925 the Maxwell experiment had virtually ground to a halt. The Guillemard-Maxwell power struggle had diverted the Chief Secretary's attention from decentralization to centralization¹⁰⁰ and consequently prevented the experiment from possible development into more fruitful channels of devolution. This was, in any case, in keeping with Maxwell's centralizing proclivity. In addition, after the Residents were informed of Guillemard's new decentralization policy in March 1925, they lost interest in the Maxwell experiment as a large proportion of the Federal Secretariat's powers would inevitably be devolved downwards once the chief secretaryship was abolished as the High Commissioner wished. In other words, the stage had been set, for some time, for a new initiative.

1. Minute by Ormsby-Gore 6.1.1925, CO 717/34.

2. Maxwell's views were implied in many documents. For example, see Guillemard to Masterton-Smith 21.12.1921, CO 717/14; Notes on a Policy in respect of the UMS, Eastern no. 135 Confidential, 15.10. 1920, CO 717/10; McClelland's Memo. 19.7.1922, SSF 3006/1922 and Memo. 15.8.1922, SSF 3371/1922.

3. *The Final Report of the Retrenchment Commission*, Kuala Lumpur, 1923, p. 25.

4. Minute of the 2nd Meeting of the Estimates Decentralisation Committee 12.10.1923, SSF 3998/1923.

5. For example, the proposal of G. P. Bradney, the FMS Auditor-General, in May 1922 that the central service records should be kept by heads of federal departments instead of by the federal secretariat as hitherto was rejected. See discussion in SSF 3434/1922.

6. The eight heads were General Manager, Railway, Director of Public Works, Commissioner of Police, Conservator of Forests, Surveyor-General, Commissioner of Trade and Customs, Inspector of Prisons, and Director of Posts and Telegraphs. But the request by six other heads—Agriculture, Education, Audit, Mines, Printing, and Malay States Volunteer Reserves—for the same power was not granted. See SSF 3371/1922 and NSF 2046/1922.

7. For details, see SSF 3434/1922; SSF 485/1923; SSF 1185/1923.

8. Maxwell to Hose 17.10.1922, NSF 2035/1922.

9. See footnote (2).

10. Minute by Maxwell 25.10.1922, NSF 2035/1922.

11. *British Malaya*, Vol. XVIII, no. 3, July 1943, p. 182.

12. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII, no. 7, November 1946, p. 113; *ibid.*, Vol. XXII, no. 8, December 1946, p. 127.

13. Memo. by A. S. Haynes, Acting Resident of Pahang 13.2.1925, PSF 13/1925.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Memo by E. S. Hose 18.8.1922, NSF 2035/1922.

16. Memo by C. W. C. Parr 18.8.1922 and C. A. Vlieland, Secretary to Resident, Negri Sembilan, 16.8.1922, SSF 3012/1922.

17. Minute by E. S. Hose 21.6.1923, *ibid.*

18. Memo by C. W. C. Parr 23.8.1922 and C. Vlieland, Secretary to Resident, Negri Sembilan, August 1922, SSF 3010/1922.

19. Maxwell used the Huxley Case to support his argument for amendment to General Order 101 and Appendix D. But it is not clear what the case was about. It involved the Chief Secretary, the PWD Director (both federal officers), the Selangor Resident and Selangor State Engineer (both state officers) but 'each of them thought that the responsibility laid with some one or another of the other three'. Maxwell to Hose 17.10.1922, NSF 2035/1922. J. H. M. Robson recorded the case of Major Huxley being compensated for an abandoned project to build a hospital in Kuala Lumpur. See *Records and Recollections (1889-1934)*, Kuala Lumpur, 1934, pp. 83-6.

20. Minute by O. F. Stonor 3.10.1922, SSF 3010/1922.

21. Minute of the 2nd Meeting of the Estimates Decentralisation Committee 12.10.1923, SSF 3998/1923.

22. Report of the Decentralisation Committee appointed by the Chief Secretary in connection with the Revision of General Order 101 and Appendix D relating thereto. Federal Council Paper no. 36 of 1923, *PFC FMS*, 1924, p. 1. (Hereafter cited as *Decentralisation Committee Report, 1923.*)

23. These departments were the Co-operatives Department, Department of Fisheries, Treasurer and Auditor-General Department, Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, Legal Adviser Department, Official Assignee Department, Printing Department, Geologist Department, and Government Town Planner.

24. *Decentralisation Committee Report 1923*, pp. 2-3.

25. Note the similarity between the above and the relations Maxwell outlined for a Federal Head and an Adviser of the UMS as discussed in ch. 3. The only difference was that it was the Federal Head (not the Chief Secretary) who sent executive instructions or advice to the Adviser. *ibid.*, p. 2; Memo. by Maxwell 3.2.1923, NSF 2180/1922.

26. *The General Orders, FMS*, Kuala Lumpur, 1921, pp. 284-314.

27. Guillemard to Devonshire 23.12.1923, CO 717/29.

28. Guillemard to Devonshire 19.3.1923, Confidential, CO 717/27.

29. *Decentralisation Committee Report 1923*, p. 3.

30. Pountney to Haynes 2.10.1923, SSF 3998/1923A.

31. For instance, when Coe asked Lowinger, the Surveyor-General, to submit his draft on Appendix D by 20 January and discuss it with the Decentralization Committee on 25 January 1923, the latter wrote to Hose, 'I think that [procedure] is putting the cart before the horse. My feeling is that we should meet first and *that the political considerations should be explained to me* [emphasis added] so that I may form some idea how far I am expected to modify my views as to the organization of the Department in order to fall in with the policy of the Government.' Lowinger to Hose 18.1.1923, SSF 3998/1923D.

32. A. S. Haynes to Secretary to Resident, Selangor, 17.1.1923 and other documents, SSF 372/1923.

33. Haynes to Pountney 6.10.1923, SSF 3998/1923A.

34. Memo on Decentralisation by Lowinger 15.10.1923, SSF 3998/1923D.

35. For the above, see Memo on Decentralisation by Lowinger 15.10.1923, *ibid.*, and Dowden to Pountney 4.10.1923, SSF 3998/1923C.

36. Minute of the 5th Meeting of the Estimates Decentralisation Committee 4.12.1923, SSF 3998/1923.

37. Memo on Decentralisation of Estimates by C. S. Alexander undated, SSF 3998/1923E.

38. Minute of the 5th Meeting of the Estimates Decentralisation Committee 4.12.1923, SSF 3998/1923.

39. Minute of the 6th Meeting of the Estimates Decentralisation Committee 12.12.1923, *ibid.*, also see Report of the Committee appointed to Examine the Financial Aspect of the Devolution Policy outlined in Federal Council Paper no. 39 of 1925 (henceforth cited as Pountney Committee Report), p. 11, SSF 572/1933.

40. It should be noted that decentralization only affected the Revenue Branch of the Survey Department. The other four branches were purely technical units that could not be decentralized. These units were Trigonometrical, Topographical, Map Producing, and Instrument Making and Repairing. The Revenue Branch constituted the greater part of the entire department.

41. Minute by the 6th Meeting of the Estimates Decentralisation Committee 12.12.1923, SSF 3998/1923.

42. 'By control over expenditure', Pountney wrote to Haynes, 'I mean who would prepare and certify the vouchers and where would they require to be paid?' Letter 2.10.1923, SSF 3998/1923A.

43. For examples, the Central Mental Hospital run by the Medical Department and the research branch of the Agriculture Department.

44. See quotation in ch. 3, p. 80.

45. Observations upon the Constitution of the FMS, with particular Reference to the Policy of Decentralisation, and the appointment of the Chief Secretary to Government (henceforth cited as Observations on Decentralisation) by W. G. Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45.

46. Memo by Maxwell 10.9.1922, and in Guillemard to Devonshire 30.1.1923, CO 717/27.

47. Minute of a Meeting of Residents 22.1.1923, SSF 732/1923.

48. Guillemard to Devonshire 30.1.1923, CO 717/27.

49. Memo by Maxwell 31.4.1923, SSF 2271/1923.

50. Secretary to Resident, Selangor, to Under-Secretary, FMS, 23.5.1923, Memos by McClelland 6.6.1923, by Thomson 18.5.1923 and by Scott 14.5.1923, *ibid.*

51. Memo by Scott 14.5.1923, NSF 1398/1923.

52. Memo by Thomson 18.5.1923, SSF 2271/1923.

53. Memo by Hose 20.6.1923, NSF 1398/1923.

54. Memo by Pountney 22.6.1923, SSF 2271/1923.

55. Minute by Hose 27.6.1923, NSF 1398/1923.

56. Minutes by Scott 6.7.1923 and by Stonor 9.7.1923, and Memo by Thomson 7.7.1923, SSF 2271/1923.

57. Minute 29.10.1923, *ibid.*

58. Minutes by Vlieland 5.7.1923 and by Scott 6.7.1923, NSF 1398/1923.

59. Minute by Collins 2.11.1920, CO 717/10.

60. The proposal came from Raja Chulan in the Perak State Council and had the support of the Sultan of Perak. Maxwell stated, 'I am inclined to think this suggestion will be helpful.' Minute 9.5.1923, SSF 2369/1923.

61. Minutes by Thomson 16.5.1923 and by Hose 6.6.1923, *ibid.*

62. Minute of the 5th Meeting of the Estimates Decentralisation Committee 4.12.1923, SSF 3998/1923.

63. See ch. 4.

64. For details, see Guillemard to Devonshire 9.5.1923 and enclosures, CO 717/28. The Colonial Office was prepared to censure Maxwell but decided first to ask Guillemard whether he was satisfied with Maxwell's subsequent withdrawal of the offensive statement. For some reasons not clear, Guillemard did not reply until September 1924. The Colonial Office felt it was too late to act, and closed the case.

65. This deplorable case occurred in mid-1922 when James was Acting High Commissioner. The Colonial Secretariat circulated a scheme on Assistant Surgeons for the Residents' comments. McClelland minuted, 'The proposal . . . appears to me to be a piece of feeble and undignified chicanery to which I take the strongest possible exception. It is unworthy of any reputable Administration and is apparently inserted merely in order to display an ineffectual but nonetheless grovelling desire to comply with the Secretary of State's wishes. The Acting Colonial Secretary cheerfully sacrifices in his eager obsequiousness all the Assistant Surgeons in the FMS who never received any profit whatsoever from the delinquencies of the Colonial Secretariat.' In his memorandum early in 1923 James accused Maxwell of 'disloyalty in the Government service' and bringing 'the Head of the Administration into contempt'. Maxwell counter-charged that James was 'taking a deliberately perverse view of the case. . . . Reading Mr. McClelland's memorandum very carefully I cannot see that he ever intended to criticise Sir F. S. James'. See Guillemard to Devonshire 9.5.1923 and enclosures, CO 717/28. McClelland was not only censured by the Governor but subsequently was passed over for promotion on the ground of his poor

relations with his fellow officers. See Guillemard to Amery no. 19, 28.1.1925 and enclosures (National Library of Singapore Collection).

66. See ch. 7.

67. Stonor to Maxwell 30.10.1922 and Minute by Maxwell 3.11.1922, SSF 4300/1922.

68. Stonor to Maxwell 30.11.1922, Minutes by Maxwell 3.11.1922 and by Thomson 9.11.1922, SSF 4299/1922.

69. Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45.

70. *Ibid.* Maxwell was here stating a theoretical position and had no intention of carrying decentralization to that extent.

71. The file on the above dispute is not available in the Selangor, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang state files. The dispute is reported in Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, *ibid.* No letter from the Sultan is mentioned in Maxwell's memorandum.

72. *Ibid.*

73. Minute by Cubitt 15.2.1923, SSF 732/1925.

74. Minutes by Gibson 22.2.1922 and by Maxwell 28.2.1923, *ibid.*

75. Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45.

76. Maxwell to Wolff 14.12.1924, SSF 3367/1924.

77. Notes on file cover, *ibid.*

78. See the Lucas case in ch. 4 and the dispute over the road maintenance vote of the PWD in footnote (62) in ch. 4. In 1921 Maxwell authorized more agricultural education in the schools without consulting the Director of Education. Minute by Maxwell 15.5.1921, SSF 2640/1921. In 1925 he approved the establishment of a vernacular school in Selangor for children of Railway employees without obtaining the agreement of the Resident of Selangor. This school was to be financed by the Selangor Government. See SSF 1828/1925. Guillemard to Thomas 22.10.1924, CO 717/34. A Colonial Office man wrote, 'We have every reason to believe that Mr. Maxwell does not treat his subordinates considerately and that they find him in official matters very hard to get on with.' Minute by Beckett 13.5.1923, CO 717/28.

79. Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45.

80. This was a tactful way of dismissing the issue without revealing his opposition to Advisory rule.

81. Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45.

82. Maxwell summed up the views presented in the Federal Council in the years 1922-4 as follows: 'The consensus of opinion was in favour of the federal authorities concerning themselves with federal matters, and with such State matters as required uniformity of practice and of all State matters being left, so far as is practicable to the Rulers, the State Councils and the Residents.' See paragraphs 51 and 52. Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, *ibid.*, also refer to discussion on the revision of General Orders in this chapter.

83. *Ibid.*, also Wolff to Maxwell 16.12.1924, SSF 3367/1924.

84. Minute by Wolff 16.10.1924 and Wolff to Maxwell 29.11.1924, *ibid.*

85. Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45.

86. *Ibid.*

87. Minute 26.2.1925, SSF 3367/1924. The amendments of the Forests Enactment, 1918, were published in the *FMS Government Gazette* of 6 February 1925, no. 3, Vol. XVII, notification 583. The amendments were listed in clauses (3), (5) and (6). See *Federated Malay States Enactments Passed During the Year 1924 and Rules Thereunder*, FMS Government Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1925. There were no other amendments of the Forests Enactment of 1918 in 1925. See *Federated Malay States Enactments Passed During the Year 1925 and Rules Thereunder*, FMS Government Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1926. For amendments of certain Forests Enactment Rules, see *ibid.*, pp. 263-4.

88. Coe wrote to Maxwell, 'I have now opened on *all* the General Orders to which decentralisation seems possible. I have not yet started on Enactments. This will be a bigger job.' Minute 4.10.1922, NSF 2035/1922.

89. This was the FMS Enactment no. 2 of 1919 which empowered the High Commissioner, through notification in the *Government Gazette*, to delegate to the Chief Secretary powers vested in him by any written law.

90. Memo by Maxwell 17.10.1922, NSF 2035/1922.

91. Minute by Guillemard 25.4.1923, SSF 2196/1923.

92. Secretary to Resident, Pahang, to Under-Secretary, FMS, 4.5.1923, NSF 1357/1923.

93. Minute by Gibson undated, *ibid.*

94. Minutes by Thomson 15.8.1923 and by Scott 18.8.1923, *ibid.*

95. Memo by Hose 18.8.1922, NSF 2035/1922.

96. Minute by Stonor 21.8.1923, NSF 1357/1923.

97. See List of Cases in which the Resident of Selangor considered

that Reference to the Chief Secretary might be dispensed with, undated, SSF 5141/1923.

98. Amendments were made in the following bills during Maxwell's time:

- (1) The Pawnbrokers Enactment of 1914 was amended in 1924 so that the Resident could independently fix the number of licenses for brokers in each area for a three-year period.
- (2) The Drainage Rates Enactment of 1909 was amended in 1924 to enable the Resident independently, to impose, vary, or cancel annual drainage rates in the state.
- (3) The Mining Enactment of 1911 was modified in 1924 so that the Resident was empowered independently to impose a commutation fee on mining lands in his state.
- (4) In 1924 the change made in the Poisons Enactment of 1911 empowered the Resident independently to revoke licenses for dealers.
- (5) For the change in 1924 in the Sanitary Board Enactment of 1916, see text.
- (6) The Court Enactment of 1918 was amended in 1924 authorizing the Resident to decide independently on the design of the seal to be used in the Courts of the State.
- (7) In 1924 the changes made in the Traction Engines and Motor Cars Enactment of 1912 permitted the Resident independently to restrict the use of traction engines and motor cars and to impose rates or fares for conveyance of passengers and goods by such vehicles in the state.
- (8) Early in 1925 section 25 of the Land Enactment was amended so that the Resident could, on his own, alienate town or village land by auction.
- (9) The Wild Animals and Birds Protection Enactment of 1921 was amended in 1925 to empower the Resident, on his own, to prohibit the shooting or killing of animals or birds within the confines of the state.

Changes were made in the following three bills in 1926 after Maxwell's retirement.

- (1) The Forests Enactment of 1918 was modified so that the Resident could, on his own, invest the State Forests Officer with certain powers such as the issue of search warrant and public notices, etc.
- (2) The Official Administrators Enactment of 1905 was amended so that the Resident could independently permit an Administrator the right to deduct from the income of the estate administered by him or to retain as remuneration such a percentage of the income of the said estate.

- (3) In June 1926 section 24 of the Land Enactment was amended in order to empower the Resident to lease independently state lands for a period not exceeding one hundred years.

99. Maxwell to Guillemard 13.12.1922, SSF 446/1923.

100. In a memorandum written during internment in Formosa by the Japanese, Sir Shenton Thomas, High Commissioner, 1935-42, wrote, 'The fault [responsible for over-centralization] lay partly in the system and partly in the man who had to supervise it. Sir George Maxwell was at loggerheads with Sir Frederick James, the Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlements, who administered the Government (thereby assuming the duties of the High Commissioner) when the Governor and High Commissioner was on leave and was of course always accessible to him in Singapore. Reference to the High Commissioner must therefore in Sir George's mind be *tabu* and Sir George must deal with federal affairs himself. It was natural in such circumstances that undue centralisation should come into being.' Memorandum by Sir Shenton Thomas 29.2.1944, CO 273/677/50984/1946. Thomas' account was partly based on information provided by Sultan Iskandar of Perak.

Training Malays for the Public Service

BEFORE we discuss the next stage of decentralization, we must digress a little and examine the last aspect of the Maxwell experiment, namely the policy of employing Malays in the FMS administration. To begin with, it should be noted that this policy antedated decentralization by more than a decade and was introduced at a time when the administration was being centralized in the hands of the Resident-General. The British Malay employment policy, nonetheless, was related to decentralization to the extent that it was influenced and accelerated by the same factors that originated decentralization and that it sought to gratify, as far as practicable, the wishes of the Rulers and their community for a far larger Malay role in the administration. Ultimately, if the FMS administration was to be at least partially brought into line with the Advisory system in the UMS, then it must be manned largely by Malay officers. In other words the Malay employment policy was an essential complement to decentralization in the 1920s, but one that could have progressed as an entirely independent issue as indeed it did before the First World War.

THE MALAY ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE

During the period under review British officials dominated the senior services and non-Malay Asians the lower reaches of the

FMS administration. The premier service was the Malayan Civil Service (MCS) which consisted preponderantly of British cadets recruited through an open competitive examination in London. The MCS officers filled all the administrative posts in the secretariats and the district offices, headed certain quasi-technical and professional departments such as Posts and Telegraphs, Customs, Land, and Education, and manned and ran three specialist departments, namely Treasury, Labour, and Chinese Affairs. During the 1920s the MCS establishment totalled more than two hundred officers, slightly more than half of whom were stationed in the FMS and nearly all the rest in the Straits Settlements. As the decision-making and executive agency of the government, the MCS wielded a near monopoly of power in the FMS, and its members were continually reminded that, as the élite of the administration, they were not of other services nor of the European unofficial community and that they should preserve a distinct *esprit de corps*. This task was facilitated by the fact that by the turn of the century the MCS was increasingly manned by members of the English middle-class with a public school-Oxbridge background who shared a uniform scale of values.¹ The *esprit de corps* of the MCS assisted its members to maintain a high standard of performance and a remarkable integrity in financial matters. In terms of a more active Malay role in public life, the admission of Malays into the MCS was of crucial importance.

Around the turn of the century, politically-conscious Malays became disillusioned with developments after the federation of the four Malay states. During the Conference of Rulers in 1903 Sultan Idris of Perak strongly urged the appointment of Malays to important posts; others publicly asserted that, being the 'sons of the soil', Malays should enjoy preferential treatment in matters of government employment.² However, Malay discontent was not sufficiently strong to force the government to act, and the subsequent creation of a junior administrative service for Malays was chiefly the fruit of a 'pro-Malay' campaign conducted by a group of younger British officers led

by E. Birch, Resident of Perak, and R. J. Wilkinson, his secretary.³ These officers fought for more positive efforts to advance Malays in the political and economic spheres, as the non-Malay predominance in economic development glaringly outweighed the presence of three Malays in the lowest rung of the MCS and five others in minor administrative posts. A secondary consideration was the high cost of over-reliance on Europeans to run the elaborate, Westernized administration and the fact that the existing British officials were severely overworked because of rapid development in the federation.⁴

The result of the Birch-Wilkinson campaign was the establishment of the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar in 1905. Known as the *Bab-ud-Darajat* (The Gate to High Positions) to the Malays, this institution was designed to train Malays systematically for the public service. From the outset, its students came almost exclusively from the traditional Malay élite. By 1908 the Malay College had proved a success, and the government felt compelled to fulfil its promise to recruit the more promising graduates into the administrative service. Accordingly, acting on Anderson's instruction, the FMS government advanced a 'Scheme for the Employment of Malays (Higher Subordinate Class)' in 1910,⁵ under which a small number of Malays with a seventh standard certificate from the Malay College were selected by the Resident-General to undergo a three-year Probationership. Upon satisfactory completion of this course the Probationers were appointed as Malay Assistants in a separate Malay Administrative Service (MAS) whose function was to assist European officials in the administration of the country. It was tacitly assumed that outstanding Malay officers might cap their career with the fitting reward of admission into the MCS itself. In other words the MAS was senior to the Clerical Service but junior to the Civil Service.

The 1910 scheme operated till it was modified and improved in 1917. A major change in the 1917 scheme made promotion from Grade III to Grade I automatic on the officer concerned passing the requisite examinations. However, promotion to the Special Grade still depended on the existence of a vacancy

as under the earlier scheme, and further required the officer concerned to pass the Cadets' Law Examination. The other major change was that Grade I and Special Grade Officers were assigned increased responsibilities, including a number of posts hitherto occupied by British cadets. About the same time, in 1916, Raja Said Tauphy, a son of ex-Sultan Abdullah of Perak, petitioned for payment of a MCS Class V salary on the ground that he had long ago passed the Cadets' Law Examination; this forced the government to grapple with the question of admitting outstanding MAS officers into the MCS. The problem here was that promotion within the MCS relied on the occurrence of vacancies and British civil servants feared that their advancement in the service might be hampered by competition from Malay cadets. To obviate this, the government insisted that Malays possessing the requisite qualifications should only be admitted into the MCS as supernumerary officers who would be eligible for further promotion to higher classes but always as supernumeraries and not to rank with British cadets for seniority.⁶ Accordingly, Raja Said Tauphy, the most senior MAS man, was made a MCS Class V supernumerary officer. On the whole the 1917 scheme did little to remove frustration within the MAS over tardy promotions nor change significantly the limited nature of Malay participation in the administration. As the Chief Secretary, Brockman, later frankly confessed, Malay Officers continued to be 'kept back and no one bothered about them'.⁷ In the light of the composition of the Malay College, the scheme also continued to confine entry to the MAS chiefly to the traditional Malay aristocracy.

The general neglect of MAS officers came to an end after the First World War. The factor behind this was the government desire to strengthen its position within Malay society because, as the Director of Political Intelligence reported, 'the Malays, at any rate in the Federated Malay States, no longer feel that affection for the British that they undoubtedly felt some years ago'. To make matters worse, the British were apprehensive that Malays might come under the 'pernicious

influence' of the nationalist movement in the Netherlands East Indies. This factor significantly contributed to the British decision, partly designed to win Malay goodwill, to elevate the Malay position in the FMS administration after the war.

The government review of the post-war situation focused on certain specific considerations that were to determine the future and the nature of Malay participation in the administration. One consideration was that during the war years the MCS experienced an acute manpower shortage as younger officers were despatched to fight for Britain in the European front. By the time the war ended in 1918, the MCS was 'almost at the end of its tether' as it was seriously understaffed and the existing officers were deplorably overworked and exhausted.⁸ In terms of economy and administrative convenience, it was sound commonsense to admit more local recruits who, however, would have to be Malays as all other non-Europeans had been barred from joining the administrative service since 1904.⁹ The problem that thus emerged was that the government seriously doubted that the Malay College, as currently constituted, would be able to produce an adequate number of Malay Probationers with character and an acceptable standard of efficiency; after all only seven out of its twenty-four candidates passed the Junior Cambridge Examination (the entry qualification for the MAS) in 1918.¹⁰ This concern came at a time when the government felt inclined to conduct an overall review of the relations between the Malay College and the MAS. To date W. Hargreaves, the headmaster of the College, had been given an unusually free hand in organizing and training the Malay Probationers,¹¹ and with his retirement in 1917 changes were bound to come, especially when attention came to be focused on the college's shortcomings.

After the war the above problem preoccupied the Chief Secretary and the Residents to whom an enlargement of the field of recruitment for the MAS was warranted. How to realize this, however, drew forth two different approaches from the Residents. After reading criticisms of the training provided by the Malay College and of the limited nature of

Malay participation in the administration, A. H. Lemon, Resident of Selangor, pressed for radical changes early in November 1919. He urged the government to abandon the present practice of treating the Malay College as a training centre for the government service and instead 'convert it into a real college for the higher education of Malays'. Admission to the College should be determined by the performance of candidates in a competitive examination except for some aristocratic Malays (the Rulers' nominees) who had passed a qualifying test. To ensure a sufficiency of good candidates for the College, the government should liberally provide primary and secondary English schools for Malays and train outstanding scholars from the Malay vernacular schools.¹² In this way the Malay College would produce an adequate number of well-trained Malays, both aristocrats and commoners, for the MAS and presumably other government services as well. It should be noted that under the scheme the Malay College would cease to be an institution for *anak baik2* (boys of good birth), thus opening the Malay Probationerships to non-aristocratic Malays. The Malay Rulers and most key British officials, however, had no taste for such a drastic change. The latter desired, among other reasons, to preserve the Malay College as a venue where *anak baik2* from all the Malay states would intermingle at an impressionable age and broaden their outlook, thereby checking the potential emergence of over-narrow and parochial patriotism within the Malay ruling class. Understandably, Lemon's proposals fell by the wayside.

A more cautious approach was advocated by W. G. Maxwell of Perak, the most senior Resident in terms of status and salary. As Resident of Perak, Maxwell was also the chairman of the newly-formed Board of Governors of the Malay College, and from this vantage position started effectively to expound his ideas late in November 1919.¹³ Maxwell wished the college preserved as an institution essentially for *anak baik2*. During a Board of Governors meeting in December 1919, he supported a ruling limiting admission to the college to *raja, tengku ungu, syed*, and sons, nephews, and grandsons of the prin-

cial chiefs, and admitting commoners only as 'exceptional cases'.¹⁴ There is no doubt that most key British officials and the Rulers supported this ruling, but the former felt it politically inexpedient to lay down any rigid rule on admission. Rejecting the new rule, Brockman maintained the status quo. The position was later explained by Hume, the Resident who succeeded Maxwell in Perak:

We retain the substance by keeping the membership of the College as exclusive as we please and only give up the shadow. We lose nothing by not proclaiming the fact that we are ultra conservative and we thereby avoid laying ourselves open to attack to which in these democratic days we are especially liable and to which we have already been subject.¹⁵

At the same time, Maxwell felt that the existing practice, by which Malay College graduates had an exclusive entrée into the Malay Probationerships, was unfair to Malays and administratively unwise. He urged that the Probationerships should be opened to Malay graduates, who had a comparable education, from the other English schools in the FMS, thereby augmenting the area of recruitment for the MAS. As the MAS scheme stood at present, the government deprived itself of the service of many capable Malays (including *anak baik*) educated in these schools. Once again Maxwell enjoyed the general support of key British officials, but the Rulers' views on the issue are not exactly known. In brief, Maxwell proposed to preserve the existing character of the Malay College but to modify the MAS scheme so as to rope in capable Malays educated in the other English schools in the FMS.

Maxwell first laid his idea before L. A. S. Jermyn, the new headmaster of the Malay College, who was sympathetic. On 28 November 1919 the Board of Governors, Malay College, discussed Maxwell's idea but failed to arrive at a decision.¹⁶ At this point came a salvo against the MAS scheme from an 'Anxious Malay Father' who wrote to the *Malay Mail* on 2 January 1920. He attacked the policy of reserving the Probationerships for Malay College graduates only, thus excluding the 'middle-class' and other Malays who were just as good

material for the administrative service as *anak baik*.² When the whole 'world is clamouring for democracy', he wondered why Malaya should 'alone of all countries stand up for aristocracy'. Besides, the existing policy 'kills all ambition in the Malay youths of the middle class' and consequently 'the [Malay] people are far from being on the road to progress'. To overcome this, he urged the Sultan of Perak to press the government to set up a second college to train commoner Malays for 'high administrative appointments'. 'Let there be equal chances', he concluded, 'for Malay intellectual and social advancement as Favouritism is bound to kill the race'.¹⁷

Maxwell at once sent copies of the above letter to the Resident of Negri Sembilan and Jermyn, asserting in a covering minute that the Probationership system was 'undoubtedly bad'.¹⁸ Endorsing Maxwell's opinion that it was unfair to reserve all higher appointments for the Malay aristocracy, Jermyn asserted, 'The admirably temperate letter from an Anxious Malay Father plainly indicates that this unfairness is felt, and resented by the Commonalty'.¹⁹ Having thus prepared his ground well, Maxwell won acceptance of his idea by the Board of Governors of the Malay College on 15 April 1920.²⁰ It should be noted that the four Malay members of the Board who went along with Maxwell, hailed from the highest Malay nobility—namely, Raja Muda Musa of Selangor and Tengku Besar Suleiman of Pahang (both heirs apparent to the thrones of their states), Raja Chulan, soon to become the Raja di-Hilir of Perak (the third in the line of succession to the Perak Sultanate), and Dato Abdullah, the Undang of Rembau (one of the four 'sovereigns' in Negri Sembilan). Presumably this betokens a lack of opposition on the part of the Malay Rulers towards the admission of Malay graduates of commoner origin to the MAS scheme. However, the government was not willing to establish a second college for commoners as 'Anxious Malay Father' suggested. It decided, as a compromise, that half the Malay Probationers per year should continue to come from the Malay College and the other half from the other English schools in the FMS. This cautious but

significant decision determined a key component of the new MAS scheme introduced in January 1921, as discussed later.

In 1919 the Public Service Salaries Commission, pointing out that British officers were generally losing touch with Malays in the *kampong*, advised the government to return to the District Office system of earlier days when the officers spent most of their time visiting their wards. In circulating the Commission's report and a note on revolutionary propaganda in the Netherlands East Indies to the Residents, the Chief Secretary, Brockman commented:

It is essential that British officials should not lose touch with the native population but I am very much afraid that is what is happening in the FMS. The District Officers do not go about among the natives and do not spend so much time amongst them as they used to. I think it is a pity.²¹

All the Residents endorsed Brockman's view, warned of the 'great dangers' inherent in the situation, and forwarded two proposals to rectify the problem. First, an adequate number of Malay Assistants should be employed in District Offices, and be given improved training to increase their efficiency. The aim was to reduce the routine paper work that had chained District Officers to their stools, thereby enabling them to move, mingle, and get to know Malays and their problems intimately.²² Second, Parr urged that officers selected to take charge of Malay districts should, as far as practicable, be forced to stay put for 'a reasonable time' because frequent transfers, as happened in Pahang, were inimical to close grass-root British-Malay contacts.²³ While the second proposal was not acted upon until a couple of years later, the first one was endorsed in a conference in April 1920 attended by Guille-mard and other key British officials, and specific needs were soon presented by District Officers meeting in conferences in the states. It became clear that the above decision would soon entail a significant intake of Malay assistants; one source estimated that forty Malay assistants would have to be recruited.²⁴ Thus by April another factor had emerged pushing for a new

generous MAS scheme. Six months later the government decided to confine the Malay assistants to members of the MAS above the second efficiency bar and to designate them Deputy Assistant District Officers.

Meantime, widespread discontent had emerged within the MAS chiefly because of the tardy rate of promotion and of the fact that those officers who strove but failed to secure promotion received no reward.²⁵ This sentiment was aggravated by the phenomenal rise in the cost of living after the war which was sharply felt by Malay officers. Informed of the above situation in 1919, Brockman conducted his own enquiries and then authorized the formulation of a new MAS scheme along the lines of the 1921 scheme.²⁶

It is not clear whether Brockman's measure occurred before or after the Sultan of Perak had his first meeting with Guillemard on 25 March 1920. In any case Sultan Iskandar complained to Guillemard that the MAS 'did not go far enough' as it only opened junior MCS posts to Malays and then urged that efficient 'Princes and Rajahs' be given high administrative appointments; he added that Malay princes were not given a thorough education in the Malay College.²⁷ The Sultan did not state then, nor anywhere else in the official records, that he wished the MAS preserved *exclusively* for *anak baik*. It was most natural for him to advocate high appointments for 'Princes and Rajahs' because, as constituted, the MAS was intended for *anak baik*. During the meeting the Sultan also informed Guillemard that his Resident, Maxwell, agreed with his views.²⁸ It does not make sense that while fighting hard to open the Malay Probationerships to Malay graduates of non-aristocratic origin from the other English schools in the FMS, Maxwell should at the same time support the Sultan, had the latter indeed desired to exclude commoner Malays from the MAS. Besides, as mentioned earlier, on 15 April 1920 the four Malays of the highest birth on the Board of Governors, Malay College, backed Maxwell in admitting Malay commoners into the Malay Probationerships. It is not to be expected that these aristocrats did not previously consult the

Rulers who manifested such an avid interest in the matter. One may safely assume that the Board of Governors' decision indicates that the Rulers were not opposed to the move. It seems clear, therefore, that while Sultan Iskandar desired to preserve the Malay College for *anak baik*² and see 'Princes and Rajahs' offered high appointments, he was not pressing Guillemard to let the Malay aristocracy monopolize the MAS as K. K. Ghosh asserts.²⁹ Four days after the meeting Guillemard asked Brockman for a 'statement of the present position'. Although Brockman did not reply until more than two months later, Guillemard's inquiry presumably spurred the Chief Secretary to act on a new MAS scheme if he had not already done so.

It should also be noted that Malay discontent had, by now, come to be openly ventilated by Malay newspapers and discussed even in Malay *kampong*. Typical of this was an item in the *Utusan Melayu* of 26 September 1919, which Windstedt, the Assistant Director of Education, provided to the government as evidence of widespread Malay disenchantment. In this article the writer criticized European officers for monopolizing all the high posts and having a 'high old time (*hari raya*)'. Part of the reasons behind this was that the Malay College turned out 'insufficient students' and 'those poorly trained'. The root cause, however, was the loss of power and status by the Rulers and the Malays in the FMS; indeed, unlike their 'brothers' in the UMS, FMS Malays were now 'treated like dirt (*habu kasut*)'.³⁰ In April 1920 the *Lembaga Melayu*, another major Malay newspaper, echoed another complaint that the handful of Malay District Officers, Magistrates, and Collectors of Land Revenue did the same work as Europeans 'but when it comes to pay—well, we all know about that'. Added the *Utusan Melayu*, 'Malay Assistant District Officers get as much salary as Europeans draw in motor-car allowances, and a Malay District Officer gets half the salary of an European District Officer'. The newspaper also alleged that the government preferred members of 'the ebony race' to Malays, which accounted for Indian dominance in 'Selangor offices'.³¹ In short, the

gist of Malay discontent was that Malays were permitted to acquire only that level of education that would fit them for subordinate posts in the administration. The important point to note was that key British officers conceded that Malay grouses were substantially valid and regarded them, as Maxwell put it, as 'reasonable grievances'.³²

The 1921 MAS scheme, intended to meet the above problems, was drafted by A. Caldecott and largely by T. S. Adams, both Assistant Secretaries in the Federal Secretariat. It made generous improvements in the MAS in order to enable the Malays to take their 'proper share' in the administration of the country.³³ To incorporate Maxwell's idea that the Malay Probationerships be opened to non-Malay College graduates, the scheme stipulated that half of the yearly intake of Probationers should come from the Malay College, the other half from Malays educated in the FMS English schools. It also empowered the government to admit 'suitable Malays hitherto serving under any other scheme' into the MAS scheme as 'Malay Assistants' so as to provide sufficient staff to assist British District Officers in the FMS. Under the 1921 scheme Malay Probationers with a Junior Cambridge Certificate were required to undergo a two-year training in the Malay College to prepare them for the Senior Cambridge Examination and subsequent service in the MAS. They were nominated either by the Board of Governors, Malay College, or by the Residents and were required to pass a common qualifying examination set by the government to test their intelligence and proficiency in English—a stipulation absent in the 1910 and 1917 schemes. Successful candidates in the examination would then have to face a gruelling interview by a Board of Selectors to ascertain their personality and character. It should be noted that other things being more or less equal, preference continued to be accorded to candidates belonging to the aristocracy. Besides, many *anak baik*² were educated in the normal English schools in the FMS and competed for the open probationerships; in 1924 Malay College graduates also became eligible for these open posts. Hence, although the 1921 scheme offered a bet-

ter deal to Malay commoners, the MAS continued to draw its members largely from the traditional élite.³⁴

The 1921 scheme substantially increased the salaries of Malay Officers³⁵ and broadened their prospects of promotion in the service. Accepting the recommendation of the Public Service Salaries Commission of 1919, it introduced a time-scale with two efficiency bars, under which the average officer was assured of steady salary increments subject to his passing the requisite examinations; to the more competent officers, the time-scale provided a training ground for eventual promotion to the MCS³⁶ now brought nearer within their reach. Prospects for advancement in the service were improved in two directions. First, more officers could now be promoted to the Special Class since such promotions no longer depended on the existence of a vacancy. Second, the requirement of ten years' service for advancement to a grade one or special grade post was halved, provided the officer concerned had passed the Cadets' Law Examination and had performed the duties of an Assistant District Officer for two years. The above provisions were clearly framed to meet Malay discontent within and beyond the MAS over limited Malay participation in the FMS administration.

The 1921 scheme had a mixed reception among British officials. Supporting it were officials such as the Resident of Negri Sembilan, V. Hill, who argued that Malays now had 'more character and honesty' for higher posts in the administration.³⁷ Others, however, continued to regard Malays as a 'practically untried race' whose advancement in the service must be stringently 'watched and regulated'. To the latter the scheme was 'drafted on too high a plane to square with the general educational "timbre" of the present day Malays,' and its generous terms posed the danger of over-rapid promotion of comparatively mediocre Malays to senior positions.³⁸ Another major criticism of the scheme was that it did not make the MAS a closed service. C. W. Harrison, Secretary to the Resident of Selangor, commented:

If you are going to have a Malay Civil Service it should, if it is to be

worth anything, be a closed service like the MCS. Originally Government said that the Malay Civil Service should come from Kuala Kangsar College. Then we decided to admit boys from other schools—non-residential schools where no character was bred—to Kuala Kangsar as probationers. Those boys thus get into the Malay Civil Service. That is bad enough but here in this scheme we are to go further and admit to the Malay Civil Service Malays from almost anywhere who are to be put on a level with the Malay Civil Servant.³⁹

Despite grave misgivings among British officials, Guillemard approved the scheme, and it came into operation on 1 January 1921, thereby beginning a new phase for the MAS.

Along with this scheme soon came a vital decision to admit MAS officers as full-fledged members of the MCS, a move no longer considered a hindrance to the advancement of British officers who were given automatic promotion up to Class II in the MCS in 1919.⁴⁰ This concession was belatedly made in anticipation of strong demand by educated Malays for a larger role in the administration of the FMS. Accordingly, Raja Said Tauphy and Hamzah bin Abdullah (who was appointed MCS Class V supernumerary in 1920) became full-fledged MCS cadets in 1924.⁴¹ This extension of the 1921 scheme marked the maximum concessions the British were willing to offer the MAS throughout the inter-war years.

It is clear that Maxwell, on leave in London, played no active role in the final drafting of the 1921 scheme. After his return to Malaya as Chief Secretary in March 1921, he endeavoured to build up the MAS as a distinct service with its own *esprit de corps* and to advance Malay officers within the MAS. As early as 1917 the government was prepared to act on the long-standing assumption that the MAS should eventually become a closed service; hence, it restricted the 1917 Scheme to Malay Probationers and kept others, such as Settlement Officers, on the 1910 Scheme. In consonance with this policy, Brockman declined in March 1920 to admit into the MAS a Settlement Officer, Aziz bin Shaik Rahmat, who had acted successfully as Assistant District Officer in Perak and had been recommended by the Resident, Maxwell.⁴² Now the

new scheme, practically reversing this trend in order to obtain a large number of Malay Assistants, had by June 1921 absorbed at least eighteen out of the twenty-nine officers on the 1910 scheme.⁴³

This development was not welcomed by British officials and Harrison's criticism cited earlier reflected this. To rectify this, Maxwell took a definitive ruling for the first time on 12 March 1922 that henceforth the MAS was to be a closed service. For one thing the MAS had originally been conceived as such a service, and many British officials still felt that it should also be reserved exclusively for 'gentle folk', the *anak baik*.² For another, and more importantly, the admission of non-probationers into the service was believed to engender grievances among MAS officers and hamper the creation of a distinct *esprit de corps* patterned after that of the MCS. Claiming that the MAS had now 'crystallised and set', Maxwell explained his decision:

When a scheme is still in its early 'fluid' stage, it is necessary to hold the balance as fairly as possible between the claims on the one side of the applicant for the admission to the benefits of the scheme, and the opposing claims on the other side of the men already on the scheme.

There are, I feel sure, some excellent men who are not on the 'Malay Officers' Scheme. But I think that we must make up our minds that no one who is not now on the scheme is eligible for admission to it otherwise than in accordance with its provisions—the Scheme, that is today, should now be declared to be rigid and inviolable.⁴⁴

Maxwell further decided that the 'Administrative Appointments open to Officers other than Cadets' should continue to admit non-MAS Malay officers who, however, had to be truly 'exceptional'. This practically barred all others except MAS officers from these positions. It should be noted that although twelve of the twenty-two 'Administrative Appointments' in 1923 were held by non-Malays from the Clerical and other services as compared to five occupied by Malays, these posts were earmarked eventually for MAS officers only. Maxwell's decisions not only brightened the prospects of MAS officers but also vitally contributed to the growth of the MAS as a

distinct service with its own *esprit de corps* and its members as a distinct bureaucratic élite within Malay society.

As noted, the MAS was expected to model itself after its senior counterpart, the MCS, which projected itself as a profession of gentlemen carrying along with it prestige, fair-mindedness, diligence, discipline, and impeccable integrity. Expecting the Malay officers to be equally dedicated to the motto of 'Service before Self', the British endeavoured to develop a strong *esprit de corps* in the MAS. Towards this end, deliberate efforts were made to treat Malay officers, at least in appearance, as the equal of their British colleagues.⁴⁵ No energy was spared to impress upon Malay officers the need to keep up their station in life; to dine in the best restaurants, patronize the expensive seats in the cinema, and play games in the district clubs; to avoid associating with clerks and other subordinate officers;⁴⁶ and to contract a good marriage, especially when they were of commoner origin. As Adams told Ishak bin Haji Mohammed on more than one occasion, 'If you want to get married, I can fix you up with the daughter of a Dato'.⁴⁷ By the time they reached Class I, Malay officers found it a part of their official life to entertain Europeans; and for those in the MCS, a real knowledge of European customs and habits was considered essential for the efficient performance of their duties. Partly for this reason, starting with Raja Uda in 1926, Malay officers were sent, once in their career, on a visit to England.⁴⁸ In short the MAS officers were expected to follow as far as possible the somewhat extravagant life-style and to imbibe the ethos of British civil servants. Maxwell's decision to bar 'backdoor admissions' to the service should be viewed as part of the above process of shaping the character of the MAS. The British were not only highly successful in this exercise but, according to Khasnor Johan, MAS officers also devised their own code of behaviour under which they, like MCS members, adopted a hierarchical ranking for themselves. In this order the senior Malay officers were accepted as the natural leaders of the group and were expected to provide moral and practical guidance to their juniors.⁴⁹

It may be surmised from the above that Malay officers were subject to close and paternalistic supervision by British officials. This, together with Malay deference and acceptance of European superiority, rendered them cautious in asking for improved terms of service and faster promotions. It was with a view to eliciting their opinions and fostering a strong *esprit de corps* and Anglo-Malay goodwill within the MAS that Maxwell introduced an annual conference of Malay officers in 1923. Held at Carcosa, the official residence of the Chief Secretary, throughout the 1920s, the conference was warmly welcomed by Malay officers⁵⁰ and became a venue where the MAS officers, scattered throughout the FMS, gathered once a year to meet old friends and renew acquaintances and have a highly enjoyable, free holiday in the capital of the FMS. Above all, it was a marvellous opportunity to meet and chat with the Chief Secretary who, apart from his Secretary, was the only European in the meeting.⁵¹ The conference started in the morning with a speech by the Chief Secretary. During the 1925 Conference, for instance, Maxwell urged Malay officers to feel as 'a body corporate' and 'follow the MCS'. As a typical British practice, he then praised two outstanding officers as men the others should emulate: Raja Said Tauphy for being the first Malay to become chairman of the Taiping Sanitary Board and Raja Uda as the first Malay to sit as Magistrate of Kuala Lumpur. Maxwell concluded his speech by urging the Malay officers that 'in all that you do, [you should] have two things very clearly before your mind. One is your Religion and the other is your loyalty to your Rulers, and therefore towards the British flag, under whose protection this country is'.⁵² The conference usually ended with a morning tea during which the Chief Secretary mingled freely with Malay officers. In this way Maxwell contributed towards building up a strong *esprit de corps* within the MAS.

As Chief Secretary, Maxwell strove to train and advance Malay officers within the MAS. Although his sub-scheme of Deputy Assistant District Officers (DADO) was put into operation by Guillemard during his home leave, Maxwell took it

up in earnest after his return to Malaya. In April 1921 he instructed the Residents to ensure that the DADOs spent part of their time in out-door work and spelled out the functions of these officers presumably lest they became bogged down with the routine paper work that District Officers were expected to shift to them. He stated:

They [the DADO] should, for instance, pay visits of inspection and undertake the necessary journeys in connection with matters requiring investigation, and they should regularly visit the Malay school in their District and from time to time inspect Police Stations, Hospitals, Gaols, etc. They could also be particularly useful in paying morning visits to the towns and villages, and reporting on the work done by the employees of the Sanitary Board.⁵³

Maxwell then directed the Residents to train the DADOs for higher responsibilities:

It is the desire of the Government that in respect both of out-door and office work District Officers should do their utmost to train the Deputy Assistant District Officers to become efficient for promotion as Assistant District Officers and subsequently, for further promotion in the Malayan Civil Service.⁵⁴

Very much in keeping with orthodox official thinking, Maxwell also insisted that Malay officials be given as much responsibility as they could carry so that they would acquire 'an all-round' training. In October 1921 he complained to Hill, Resident of Negri Sembilan, that this was not observed in the districts of Port Dickson, Tampin, Seremban, and Rembau which he had recently toured. 'It is of the utmost importance', Maxwell wrote, 'that the Malay Officers should be encouraged in every way to undertake responsibility; and indeed to seek it'.⁵⁵ For instance, the officers in the above districts should be urged to take up court work as part of their training and to help them pass the Cadets' Law Examination. Consequently, two Malay officers were appointed Second Class Magistrates in the districts early in 1922. Not altogether satisfied, Maxwell directed that the Second-Class Malay Magistrates in the state should sit in when the First-Class Magistrates

heard their cases.⁵⁶ In this connection it may be mentioned that while Malay officers were generally efficient in land and district administration, they were noticeably weak in legal training and work.

In 1921 Maxwell further attempted to get Malay officers appointed in government departments—Trade and Customs, Fisheries, Forests, Agriculture, Treasury, and Audit.⁵⁷ But he made little headway. Departmental response was usually lukewarm and, at times, even hostile, while Malay officers themselves shied away from the idea partly from lack of confidence and partly from the desire to remain administrative generalists doing largely district work. Overall, the extent to which Maxwell succeeded in pushing Malay officers up the service ladder cannot be ascertained although it could not but have some beneficial results. In any case his idea that Malay officers should be given an all-round training became official policy throughout the 1920s.⁵⁸ Generally therefore, Maxwell contributed to the nurturing of an élite group of Malay bureaucrats conscious of their status and role and striving to attain a standard of performance approved by their British superiors with reasonable success.

In the first flush of enthusiasm, the government was prepared to recruit a large number of Malay officers for the districts. During the meeting of the Board of Governors of the Malay College on 15 April 1920, Windstedt estimated, and Maxwell implicitly agreed, that ten Malay probationers would have to be recruited each year and 'forty may soon be required by Government'.⁵⁹ In fact, the intake in 1921 was eleven probationers, but this slumped to two the following year as the government scaled down what it considered over-estimated needs and in view of the lack of suitable candidates after the MAS became a closed service. Thereafter, the annual recruitment by the MAS steadied, a batch of four probationers each being enrolled for the years, 1923, 1924, and 1925. As in the MCS, the principal factor behind recruitment was the desire to maintain as far as possible, an even level of enrolment in order to ensure a balanced 'cadre'.⁶⁰ But the

government also took into consideration the calibre of the candidates, the vacancies in the service, the ability of London to fill MCS posts, and the general economic situation in the country. During the rubber boom between 1926 and 1928, the annual intake was six probationers. It should be noted that Maxwell's decision to make the MAS a closed service helped to stabilize the size of the MAS, and official attention after the mid-1920s turned to establishing a 'normal cadre'. This was virtually accomplished in 1930 when the government accepted a cadre of eighty-one officers as 'a working principle'.⁶¹ During the 1920s the cadre was smaller than this and constituted about 25 per cent of the MCS establishment.

As expected, the 1921 scheme speeded up the promotion of MAS officers during Maxwell's time. For instance, twelve of the sixteen officers in the Special Class in 1922 secured their promotions after the introduction of the new scheme; and seven of these twelve officers passed the Cadet's Law Examination, a requirement for entry into the Special Class, shortly after the 1921 scheme came into operation.⁶² But the promotion of Malay officers into the MCS, as Raja Chulan bitterly complained in 1932, was agonizingly slow.⁶³ Though it was quite keen to see the lower administrative billets filled by Malays, especially in view of the increasing difficulties in MCS recruitment, Whitehall allowed its policy to be determined by the Malayan authorities because it had only a scanty knowledge of the MAS performance and experienced no strong pressure for a faster rate of Malay entry into the Civil Service. Little wonder that the Malayan government had an entirely free hand in the matter.

British officialdom adhered to the view that Malay officers needed close supervision and that their progress in the service should be scrupulously regulated. The latter were generally regarded as unfit to shoulder a high level of responsibility and enjoy equality with British cadets. In view of this Guillemard was only prepared to accept, in principle, the Association of British Malaya's plea in 1923 that more Malays be appointed to the Civil Service as part of the exercise in Malay

uplift. In practice however, Malay advancement had to be tempered by the objective situation thus succinctly described by the Guillemard in 1923:

There are fifty-three officers in the MAS. A few of the best of them have proved themselves fit to rank with the MCS and to be entrusted with the duties of District Officers or of other positions of responsibility. Others are men of solid reliable merit, fit for a limited amount of responsibility such as an Assistant District Officer. Others again (about half of the total number) are industrious and worthy 'donkey workers'. Only a small proportion have shown themselves unfit for any position of responsibility.⁶⁴

There can hardly be any doubt that Maxwell entertained the same view and felt, like most MCS members, that a fair deal had been accorded the Malay officers. Not surprisingly, there were only five Malays in the MCS⁶⁵ when Maxwell retired in June 1926. On an average these officers put in around seventeen years of service to become MCS members. In view of the British élitist attitude, it may be assumed that Malay promotion to the MCS (as within the MAS) was influenced by the social status of the officers concerned. The main criteria for promotion, however, were seniority in service and especially efficiency and integrity, which remained decisive as regards Malay promotion within the MCS, subject to the prior consideration of the interests of British civil servants. It seems clear that during Maxwell's time Malay civil servants were not considered fit to occupy Class II posts in the MCS.

In the British scheme of things, the MAS and Malay MCS officers were usually posted to outlying districts whose economic importance was not marked and where Malays predominated. This policy was a long-standing one and was only enhanced in Maxwell's time by British anxiety over the weakening Anglo-Malay grass-root contacts in the *kampong*. In the British perception, Malay officers were generally considered unfit to sit in judgement over the non-Malay communities. Understandably Malay officers were stationed in

predominantly Malay districts where they could most effectively help to strengthen the district administration. And within the MCS, Malay cadets were a small minority congregated on the lower rungs of the hierarchy and posed no threat to the interests of their British colleagues.

Nonetheless, the MAS was a significant concession to the Malay community and a partial restoration of political power to the traditional élite. By 1941 the Malay civil service numbered 113 men who formed 'a new Malay leadership group, English-educated and increasingly influenced by Western ideas of government and social organization, drawing its authority in part from inherited social status, in part from its association with the British colonial regime'.⁶⁶ Far from feeling unhappy or resentful of the inferior position assigned to them, the Malay administrators were grateful to the British for protection, relative affluence, and the token degree of power they could exercise and for enabling them to move into the highest Malay social circles. That they were the only Asians permitted to enter the British corridors of power was regarded not as a right but as a privilege and honour granted by the British.⁶⁷ For all this they were quite happy to accept a situation in which the relations between the MCS and the MAS have been very aptly likened by one writer to 'two separate and rigidly defined spheres in which the [British] were seen to steer the boat while the [Malays] obediently manned the ropes'.⁶⁸

MALAYS IN MIDDLE-RANKING SERVICES

During Maxwell's time the FMS government managed, to some extent, to further Malay employment in the government departments, but not a single Malay was admitted into the senior departmental service. As the policy-maker and executive co-ordinator, this senior service, in fact, had no non-European officers and had consequently come to be officially equated with one monopolized by Europeans.⁶⁹ Malays, however, succeeded in entering the middle-ranking service,

which undertook largely executive or specialist functions, in certain government departments, especially in Agriculture, Co-operatives, Forests, Medical, and Police. This was partly because these departments, except the Medical, had particularly intimate dealings with the Malay public or were not popular with non-Malays, and partly because of sustained efforts made by the government to help Malays to penetrate these areas. During Maxwell's time middle-ranking Malay officers were not eligible for promotion to the MCS or the senior service in their departments. Generally graduates from the Malay College were preferred to other applicants and except in the Forests Department, many of the recruits, especially in the Police Service, were in fact of a calibre virtually comparable to MAS probationers.⁷⁰

By the second decade of the present century Malays had already filled most of the subordinate posts in the Agriculture Department. Involved mainly with the rice industry, the economic stronghold of the indigenous community, the department had extensive dealings with rural Malays and warmly appreciated the work of Malay officers. But lacking in both systematic training and scientific knowledge, the Malay officers had little prospect of promotion within the department.⁷¹ To overcome this and create an efficient intermediate staff, E. S. Hose, then Director of Agriculture, introduced a Malay Agriculture Probationer Scheme in 1917, under which Malays with a Seventh Standard English qualification would be selected for a three-year course of training in the Malay College on subjects relevant to their future career such as botany, chemistry, and entomology. In 1920 the scheme was improved with the introduction of a salary time-scale and the Junior Cambridge Certificate as the entry qualification. Reporting the change to the Colonial Office, Guillemard explained that the Malay Agriculture and the MAS Schemes 'represent the government's policy to offer a career to the Malays in the [public] Service'.⁷² But mainly owing to the opposition of the Board of Governors who resolved to maintain the élite exclusiveness of the Malay College, the stipulated

course in the Malay Agriculture Scheme was not conducted and was officially jettisoned in 1925; instead, the probationers were trained within the department and (after 1931) in the School of Agriculture at Serdang. By the mid-1920s most of the middle-ranking posts such as Senior Agriculture Assistant and Agriculture Inspector were occupied by Malays. However, except for a lone Malay who was selected but unable to undertake a course of professional studies in England in 1924 because of ill health,⁷³ the government failed to train Malay officers overseas for a degree or diploma, a pre-requisite for entry into the senior service. Throughout the inter-war years, the senior service remained a purely European preserve.

In 1922 Maxwell founded the Co-operatives Department and introduced a Malay Co-operatives Probationer Scheme. In order to ensure the success of the movement, Maxwell sought to recruit Malays with 'a good education' and 'character' who could convincingly preach the 'new doctrine' to rural Malays. Accordingly, the Malay Co-operatives officers were blessed with a salary scale and terms of service similar to those of MAS officers in 1924. They were invariably posted to remote districts to work with Malay peasants, confronted with accommodation problems, burdened by long hours of unceasing work, and were not compensated by the sort of *hormat* (respect) carried by MAS officers.⁷⁴ Not surprisingly, there was a high turnover of Malay co-operative officers and at the time Maxwell retired in 1926, the group consisted of less than twenty men. Equally few were the middle-ranking officers such as Assistant Conservator of Forests in the Forests Department. Apart from the fact that educated Malays shied away from unpalatable assignments in the jungles, Cubitt, the Conservator of Forests, declined to lend a hand to Malay aspirants seeking positions in his department. Finally, in 1922 Maxwell devised a scheme under which two or three bright Malays were sent annually to study, at government expense, in the King Edward VII Medical College in Singapore. The fruit of his effort was the appointment of a few Malay

doctors to middle-ranking posts such as Assistant Surgeon in the Medical Department.

Malays made more impressive inroads in the Police Department. Before the war the Inspectorate attracted only poorly educated and low-class British officers from the British Army, the Irish Constabulary, and the Colonial Prisons Service, who were comparatively meagrely-paid, intensely discontented with their limited promotional prospects, and frequently corrupt.⁷⁵ Yet, in 1917 the government had admitted only two Malay Inspectors into their ranks. To lure better candidates and accelerate the process of change, the government created the post of Malay Assistant Commissioner of Police with an increased salary in 1920. Three years later, as an austerity measure during the slump and as an attempt to satisfy Malay aspirations, Maxwell endorsed a policy, advocated by Conlay, the Commissioner of Police, to replace the fifty-two British Inspectors as they retired with Malays at an average annual rate of three Malay Inspectors and three Malay Assistant Commissioners of Police over a period of eighteen years. Thus began a movement that virtually completely staffed the Inspectorate with Malay officers by 1941.⁷⁶

Encouraged by the success of the Malay Agriculture Scheme, Maxwell outlined a Malay Professional Service Scheme in May 1921 for technical departments such as Mines, Government Laboratories, Museum, Geological, and Fisheries. Under the scheme Malays with a Junior Cambridge Certificate would be recruited and trained for four years by the departments to which they were attached, and would be appointed as technical officers after they had passed the requisite examinations.⁷⁷ The proposal, however, was upset by a meeting of departmental heads and A. S. Jelf, the acting Under-Secretary, in 1922. The technocrats rightly pinpointed a glaring deficiency in technical and scientific training among Malays, and opposed the extension of the Malay Agriculture Scheme, upon which Maxwell's proposal was based, to their departments. In the end they agreed generally to the principle of employing Malays and offering them departmental training

to fit them for technical jobs. As expected, the idea fizzled out. Apart from the intransigence of technocrats, few suitable candidates were forthcoming, as qualified Malays generally gravitated towards the clerical and teaching services and shied away from any new venture.

MALAYS IN SUBORDINATE SERVICES

After the Conference of Rulers in 1903, the British took the first step to help Malays secure subordinate appointments in the form of a General Order which pledged to uplift the position of the Malays and employ them in the public service whenever possible. Heads of department were directed to appoint Malays first for posts like orderlies, peons, punkah-pullers, and apprentices, and to prefer local-born candidates to overseas ones in filling clerkships and similar positions. To the list of posts for which Malays enjoyed preferential treatment was added in 1910 Malay clerk, bailiff, outdoor customs officer, Malay writer, and other lower-paid subordinate appointments.⁷⁸ At the same time a Malay settlement, Kampung Bahru, was established in Kuala Lumpur partly to enable Malays to acquire an English education and qualify for the clerical service.⁷⁹ All this, however, bore little fruit so that the government continued to recruit English-educated Tamils from India and especially Ceylon to fill subordinate posts requiring an English education.

The dearth of English-educated Malays for government service sprang from two basic factors. In accordance with the policy of indirect rule, the British strove to preserve Malay rural society, and accordingly offered the Malay *rakyat* a Malay vernacular education geared to preparing them as peasants and fishermen. The other consideration was that an English education was generally beyond the reach of the Malays because they lived predominantly in rural areas, whereas the English schools were located in the towns. The small community of urban Malays either could not afford an English education or generally avoided it because they feared

the proselytizing aim of the various Christian missions⁸⁰ which virtually ran all the English schools before the First World War. Consequently the strong Malay demand for an English education, which had arisen by the second decade of the present century, was not met during Maxwell's time. This demand had emerged because Malay clerks felt unable to compete with their better-educated non-Malay colleagues and mainly because the MAS stood as a symbol of the value of an English education. But as late as 1928 there were only 2,661 Malays out of a total enrolment of 11,539 students in the English schools in the FMS.

The subordinate service in the FMS was therefore dominated by Chinese, Indians, and Ceylonese (Jaffnese), but this was not so marked as commonly believed. It was estimated in 1922 that, excluding menial workers, the total of 8,912 Asian officers was made up of 32 per cent Malays, 12 per cent local-born Chinese, 3 per cent Others and 53 per cent aliens from India and Ceylon.⁸¹ The Malay officers, mostly from Malay vernacular schools and lowly-paid subordinate positions, congregated in the land offices, the Malay teaching service, the native establishments,⁸² and the Agriculture and other departments which had intimate dealings with the Malay community. Most of them were state officers who, in 1922, constituted the majority in the total establishments of the four federated states.⁸³ The non-Malay officers, on the other hand, were employed chiefly in the secretariats and the large departments.⁸⁴ They dominated the clerical and the technical services, entry to which generally required a Cambridge Junior or Senior Certificate. In 1919 Malays only formed 10.5 per cent, as compared with the Indians and Ceylonese 60 per cent, of the 1,001 clerks in the General Clerical Service; the proportion of Malay clerical and other officers in departments like Railway, Medical, Public Works, and Posts and Telegraphs was even smaller.⁸⁵ In the subordinate service British policy during Maxwell's time concentrated on training Malays to play a larger role in the above areas.

This policy stemmed in part from a British design to strengthen the government's relations with the Malay community, and chiefly from the slump (1921-3) which evoked widespread soul-searching among British officials. Gaining wide credence in this climate of uncertainty was a belief that the federal administration was not only unduly extravagant and top-heavy but was also 'not agreeable to the Malays for whose benefit we profess to administer the country'. Subscribing to the above view, Maxwell had by mid-1921 decided that more local-born Asians, especially Malays, should be employed in the administration in order to economize and to ameliorate Malay disaffection—a decision endorsed by the Retrenchment Commission early in 1923. The Association of British Malaya went a step further to frame an appeal to the Secretary of State 'to secure an earlier and more definite employment of Malays than seems to be contemplated by the Retrenchment Commissioners' in order to forestall the emergence of an explosive Malay situation in the FMS.⁸⁶

In mid-1921 Maxwell invited the Residents to consider the question of restricting recruits into the Clerical Service to local-born candidates only.⁸⁷ In response, C. W. C. Parr of Perak asserted in June 1922 that the government had reached 'the parting of the way' and should broaden the question to embrace all subordinate services. Parr pointed out that the limited number of subordinate posts available during the slump should be reserved for Malaya-born applicants from the English schools so as to cut off the additional long-term expenditure incurred by overseas recruits in the form of pensions, long leave, remittances, and higher salaries.⁸⁸ While recognizing the force of Parr's contention, Maxwell rightly stated a month later that the proposal was premature because of an insufficiency of local-born candidates, and would only serve to starve the Railway, Public Works, and Posts and Telegraphs Departments of recruits from India and Ceylon. It would suffice for the present, Maxwell added, to ensure that no local-born candidates had been overlooked before an overseas candidate was recruited into the subordinate ser-

vice.⁸⁹ Accordingly the General Order 12 (VIII) was amended early in 1923 to prevent the intake of foreign-born applicants without the written approval of the Resident or the Federal Head of department concerned. In supporting Maxwell, McClelland, Acting Resident of Pahang, criticized the existing General Order as outdated and as tending to restrict Malays to menial appointments like 'orderlies, peons, punkah-pullers, apprentices and the like'.⁹⁰ The new General Order therefore expunged any reference to such menial posts and simply read that, 'It is the policy of the Government to bring forward the natives of the country as much as possible, and to provide them with employment by appointing them to such posts in the public service as they are qualified to fill'. It was also tacitly agreed early in 1922 that among the local-born candidates, Malays would invariably be given preference in government employment if the applicants' qualifications indicated no great disparity;⁹¹ concomitantly, Malay officers should be the last retrenched and Malay retrenchees the first to be re-employed when vacancies occurred.⁹²

The first concrete step had thus been mounted eventually to build a subordinate service fully manned by local-born and domiciled Asians. The more important feature of this policy was the distinction between foreign-born and local-born officers. The further distinction between local-born and domiciled non-Malays on the one hand and Malays on the other was less significant because there were sufficient openings in the government for both until the late 1920s; likewise, most of the non-Malay retrenchees during the slump were foreign-born Asians. The latter distinction failed to advance significantly Malay interests because, in so far as the policy curtailed the intake of foreign-born Asians, it facilitated the entry of all local-born candidates into the subordinate service.

To British officials the problem concerning Malay employment in the public service was to strike a balance between their moral obligation to the Malays and the need to safeguard administrative efficiency. Maxwell and the Residents held the view that under the existing circumstances, the

employment of Malays on a substantial scale in the junior services would lower efficiency, but this could be minimized, if not averted altogether, by recruiting Malays at a judicious rate and giving them proper training and guidance. Behind Maxwell's decision to push ahead Malay employment loomed the above rationale, a rationale frequently questioned by the non-Malay unofficials of the Federal Council and challenged by most heads of technical and professional departments. In this connection the hand of the FMS government was strengthened by the Malay Employment Committee chaired by T. S. Adams⁹³ which submitted its report in December 1922 and by the Retrenchment Commission which produced its final report early in 1923. The former report contended that properly trained and supervised, Malay officers would prove more efficient than 'the inferior men from India and Ceylon, both in character, social status, and intelligence' except in work involving supervision of non-Malay labour.⁹⁴ The Retrenchment Commission, on the other hand, spotlighted the desirability of employing more Malays in the administration for economic and political reasons. But as the above committees were not responsible for the British decision to launch a 'pro-Malay' employment policy, their importance should not be over-estimated.

Many of the Malay Employment Committee's proposals on assisting Malay admission to the public service were effected after 1922. With the assistance of school teachers, Rulers, chiefs, and *penghulu*, and through official notices in Malay, the Malay public became more fully informed about the various avenues of employment in the administration. A register of Malay candidates was also maintained in each State Secretariat to keep departmental heads fully informed of the supply of Malays for government service.⁹⁵ English-speaking Malays who had no Junior School Certificate were helped by three *ad hoc* committees in Kuala Lumpur, Taiping, and Ipoh in their search for jobs in either the private or the public sector. British officers in departments like Railway were instructed that the training of their staffs, especially Malays,

was an integral part of their duties. Although all this eased the implementation of policy, one should note that the committee's proposal that preference for government employment be given local-born candidates, especially Malays, and several other recommendations⁹⁶ had either been made or were being acted upon by Maxwell before it submitted its report. The government also rejected the more inordinate of the committee's recommendations such as the appointment of special officers to train Malays in survey, architecture, draftsmanship, and the like; the creation of a grade of Malay Assistant Clerks from Malay vernacular schools to clear clerical chores; the refusal to approve recruitment of foreign-born candidates by departments which failed to provide facilities for the training of Malay subordinates; the stipulation that 'a capacity to get good work out of Malays' should be essential to officers' promotion to all but a few specified posts; and the Audit Office's refusal to pass vouchers submitted by officers in departments which totally disregarded General Order 12 (VIII).⁹⁷ Finally, it is not known from the records whether the government endorsed the committee's suggestion that the subordinate and intermediate services should ultimately comprise 70 per cent Malays and 30 per cent local-born non-Malays.

In pushing Malay employment, the British encountered, as the Malay Employment Committee pointed out, obstacles such as the deplorable lack of training facilities for Malays, the dearth of qualified Malays, and the intransigence of the technocrats in government departments. What the committee missed, however, was that the nub of the problem was education. After the war, key British officials conceded that 'there is a crying need for increased facilities for Malays to acquire an English education'.⁹⁸ This need was not met because the British perception of decentralization and general Malay uplift basically did not embrace the education policy which concentrated on providing a primary vernacular education for the Malay *rakyat* so that they would continue to stay on the land as more efficient peasants and fishermen. Conse-

quently there was only a modicum of Malay students in the English schools, most of whom were government-sponsored students from Malay vernacular schools. In addition, private Malay students frequently failed to secure a place in the English schools even though these institutions enrolled a considerable number of foreign students.⁹⁹ To assist these Malays, the government directed the English schools in the FMS not to admit foreign-born pupils until all local-born applicants, especially Malays, had been enrolled. Meantime, in 1921 Wolff, then Director of Education, urged substantial expansion of English education so as to produce more local-born candidates for the public service. He convinced a sceptical Maxwell that there was no danger of a repeat of 'the mistakes made elsewhere in turning out lads with an English education in excess of the demand'.¹⁰⁰ But owing to the financial crisis, Maxwell only endorsed Wolff's proposal early in 1923 to scatter English schools in the smaller towns in order to bring English education nearer to the reach of Malays.¹⁰¹ This significant decision was effected slowly because of financial stringencies and the lack of teachers, but was reversed by Windstedt, the new Director of Education, in 1925 before it could produce any result. As the foremost exponent of the doctrine that English education would disrupt the rural regions and ultimately generate political unrest, Windstedt fought to restrict the output of graduates from the English schools in direct ratio to the available job opportunities in the country. Of these graduates, the overwhelming majority continued to be non-Malays throughout the 1920s. To a very important extent, this stymied the various steps taken to employ more Malays in the government.

The above development was manifest in the General Clerical Service, once 'the most sought after of the subordinate services'.¹⁰² Although the brighter Malay school students were sent to English schools, such as Victoria Institution in Kuala Lumpur, to be specially groomed as clerks after 1917,¹⁰³ the number selected was too small to make any impact. During the early 1920s, despite every attempt made

to prefer Malays for the clerical service, even at the risk of some loss of efficiency, Maxwell made little headway because of the shortage of Malay candidates with a Junior or Senior Cambridge Certificate. As there was also a dearth of qualified local-born non-Malays, only twenty out of the thirty-one clerical recruits in 1923 were local-born.¹⁰⁴ The situation did not improve after 1925 even though those students enrolled in the English schools after the war started to graduate. More Malays now passed the Junior or Senior Cambridge Examination¹⁰⁵ but chose to join the teaching or other intermediate services with prospects more attractive than those of the General Clerical Service, while non-Malay graduates (and even some Malays) headed for the more lucrative appointments in the booming rubber and tin industries in the mid-1920s. The shortage became so acute that the Inspector of Schools in Selangor frankly avowed that 'once in a way if anyone [local-born] comes up we appoint him at once'.¹⁰⁶ This problem would have been exacerbated but for the relegation since 1923 of the more routine clerical chores to Malay-educated clerks, writers, bailiffs, and even peons in the district offices and some departments.¹⁰⁷ Faced with such a situation, the government had no choice but to continue to draw many clerks from India and Ceylon or from locally-educated descendants of overseas-born clerical and other workers. In other words the Malay employment movement made no deep penetration into the General Clerical Service in the 1920s.

Hidebound in prejudices, the technical and professional departments were hostile towards the policy of grooming Malays for the subordinate services. Accustomed to either educated European subordinates or 'docile Tamils', senior European officers displayed little sympathy for the supposedly unreliable and indolent Malays. Instances of the failure of Malay recruits to adapt themselves to the preponderantly Tamil working force, who tended to be hostile to the newcomers,¹⁰⁸ or of their early resignations for other reasons were considered ample proof that Malays were not suited to technical work. Until after the war, departmental heads had

generally paid no heed to the official policy of assisting Malays to join the public service,¹⁰⁹ and had recruited their workers almost wholly from India and Ceylon.

It was Maxwell who launched the first sustained attempt to help Malays get into the technical departments, attention being focused on the Railway Department where there were in mid-1922 only 107 Malays out of a total of 2,503 junior officers.¹¹⁰ The problem here involved not only an acute shortage of technically-trained Malays but also the intransigent attitude of senior Railway officers and the stipulation that even subordinates like engine drivers and ticket collectors required a working knowledge of the English language. As Acting Perak Resident, Maxwell encountered these obstacles in 1917 when he unsuccessfully urged acceptance of Raja Said Tauphy's suggestion that Malay school graduates be employed as ticket collectors in the Railway Department. The Traffic Manager of the department replied most discouragingly:

In my opinion there is no work in the FMS service less suitable for Malays than that in the Traffic Department of the Railway and this opinion is supported by the fact that out of over a thousand Station Masters, Clerks, Signalmen and Guards I have under twenty-five Malays.¹¹¹

Reflecting the strong tendency of technocrats to ignore General Order 12 (VIII), the General Manager of Railway, who agreed with his Traffic Manager, added:

As far as the Railway Administration is concerned we show no favouritism to any nationality in our appointments which are open to all and our principal consideration in selection is to appoint those who are most suitable for the work to be performed.¹¹²

This dampening response did not deter Maxwell from reviving the question in December 1921, but Railway's insistence on a working knowledge of English again blocked the employment of Malay school graduates as ticket collectors.

In July 1922, arising from the Maxwell initiative, McClelland, Acting Pahang Resident, suggested that Railway should try

manning a station entirely with Malays with a view to extending the experiment, if successful, to a complete section of a line in Pahang. Maxwell at once pounced on the idea in August, and instructed the General Manager, Railway, to act, warning him to expect 'a considerable amount of *inconvenience*' but reminding him at the same time that 'it is our duty to the Malays to make the experiment.'¹¹³ In another minute a few days later, Maxwell asserted that Malays would make admirable pointsmen and porters and should be employed to replace Indians in the Railway Department.¹¹⁴ Two months later, inspired by a newspaper report on the Railway police, Maxwell pressed the department to engage Malays eventually to take over from the 800 Punjabi guards now under its employ.¹¹⁵ Overflowing with enthusiasm, Maxwell minuted:

Mr. Henshaw [Railway Traffic Manager] is making an experiment which will, I hope, mark an epoch in the administration, not only of the Railway Department, but of the whole FMS Government, by training Malays to become station masters. This experiment will be watched with the keenest interest by all those in the country, who have the interests of the Malays at heart. It will lead, I trust, to the employment of Malays as porters and pointsmen, and to Malays coming into the Railway Clerical Service. A scheme for encouraging Malays to join the Railway Department as watchmen would very well fit in with the scheme.¹¹⁶

With a great deal of misgiving, the General Manager, Railway, reluctantly complied.

But as matters moved lethargically, Maxwell, in a surge of impatience, threatened in December 1922 to convene a commission to work out specific proposals for the department.¹¹⁷ This spurred senior Railway men to meet late in January 1923 and soon after to submit concrete schemes. Under the station-master scheme, the department undertook to take in annually a batch of twenty Malays with a Standard Six certificate from an English school, who would be placed under Chinese or Malay station-masters for training in the Malacca, Kuala Pilah-Bahau, and Kuala Selangor branches of Railway, all three earmarked to be eventually staffed entirely by

Malays.¹¹⁸ By 1927 the Kuala Selangor railway branch had come to be completely manned by Malay station-masters who were assisted by Malay pointsmen. Under the Railway Policemen Scheme, the department proposed the annual appointment of one hundred Malays at an extra cost of \$21,324,¹¹⁹ the additional expenditure arising from the training of the recruits by the Police Department—an item omitted in the case of Punjabi guards who were former Indian Army soldiers—and from the provision of married quarters to Malays. The General Manager, Railway, hinted that this was not 'a fair charge on the Railway funds', while Cochrane, the Under-Secretary, advised that 'we are not justified at the present time' to take up 'this very expensive matter'.¹²⁰ Brushing aside both objections, Maxwell gave the go-ahead green light early in February 1923. After training the first batch of fifty Malay policemen, the Commissioner of Police, Conlay, proposed early in 1924 to reduce the squad to twenty recruits pleading that he could not shoulder the risk of 'another outbreak of meningitis' in the overcrowded barracks and that the police commandant could provide no adequate training for larger groups.¹²¹ Disagreeing with Conlay, Maxwell minuted brusquely, 'It seems to me deplorable that with vacancies of 110 [policemen] per annum, all that we can arrange is to give twenty or thirty of them to Malays'.¹²² This abrasive response was a pinprick to Conlay who thereupon decided to shorten the training period from six to three months, thereby enabling the Railway Department to resume the original intake of Malay recruits. By 1929 Malays constituted a quarter of the Railway Police Force.¹²³

In August 1924 Maxwell drew the attention of the General Manager, Railway, to the editorials of the *Straits Echo* and the *Malay Mail* (two major English newspapers) which urged the Central Workshops of the department to recruit Malays as apprentices since Malays could make good artisans and technicians.¹²⁴ The Central Workshops Manager pooh-poohed the idea showing that the apprentice scheme attracted only four Malays out of 137 apprentices; he foresaw no change in

Malay response 'possibly [because] they do not like being in the minority while at work'.¹²⁵ Undaunted by this reply, Maxwell instructed Raja Uda, a MCS member, to investigate.¹²⁶ By December 1924 Raja Uda had succeeded in securing twelve Malays who were then employed as apprentices in boiler-making, black-smithing, carpentry, and upholstering and rotan work; thus began a sustained effort to admit Malays into the Central Workshops which consequently had sixty-seven Malay apprentices in 1932.¹²⁷ Overall, Maxwell had been fairly successful in opening the Railway Department to Malays but much remained to be done. In passing it may be mentioned that Maxwell's efforts to promote Malay recruitment in the Posts and Telegraphs, Public Works, Electricity, and Mines Departments produced indifferent results except in certain categories of lowly-paid subordinate posts such as telephone operator, linesman, and chauffeur.

Related to the above was the idea of a trade school, first voiced by Windstedt in 1916 but which did not materialize until Maxwell picked it up in April 1922. Exuding confidence in the viability of such an institution for Malay school students, Wolff, Director of Education, advanced a scheme in July under which the students, after an initial six-month training, might join the government or private firms as apprentices or stay on to complete a course of studies.¹²⁸ In a fine gesture of support for Wolff, Maxwell sanctioned a sum of \$50,000 in the 1923 federal estimate for the project. In January 1923 Maxwell's hand was strengthened by senior Railway officials who argued that untrained Malay youths joining the Central Workshops, Railway, faced the risk of being squeezed out by the predominantly non-Malay work force, and suggested, as a solution, that Malays should first undergo a three-year course of training in a trade school before joining the department.¹²⁹ But owing to the difficulties of finding a suitable site and presumably to red-tape, the project was delayed for more than three years. Finding the delay 'heart-breaking', Maxwell instructed his Under-Secretary, Cochrane, in February 1926 to assume 'personal charge'

and 'do everything in your power to push matters on'.¹³⁰ By then, however, the school was virtually completed and officially opened early in July 1926. Under the scheme admission to the school was confined to FMS-born boys, especially Malays, and the recruits had to undergo a three-year course in order to become mechanics, black-smiths, machine-shop artisans, cabinet-makers, carpenters, or builders. Owing to preferential treatment, Malay students preponderated in the school from the outset.¹³¹ It was this trade school which turned out a substantial number of Malay technical subordinates for government departments such as Railway and Public Works in the 1930s.

At the time of Maxwell's departure from Malaya, the ethnic configuration of the public service remained similar to that in 1920: the Europeans continued virtually to monopolize the senior service, while the non-Malay Asians still dominated the junior service. Nevertheless, the Maxwell experiment was important. It ordered the principal framework of the MAS and set the direction along which Malay administrators developed till 1941. He also spearheaded the movement to build a junior service staffed by local-born Malaysians, especially Malays. Equally important, Maxwell injected a new consciousness among British officials of the need to engage Malays at all levels of the administration as well as cast some light on ways to unravel the related problem of finding Malays with the requisite training and qualifications. Maxwell could not achieve more chiefly because he only skirted the crux of the problem, namely, an English education and tertiary training for Malays. Had British officialdom been as strongly convinced as the small group of ardent decentralists of the political expediency of according Malays a larger share in the administration, and more willing to shift their gaze to a lower standard of efficiency (which was not the case), the government achievement would have been more impressive, as this matter was free from the impediment of interminable disputes and strident conflicts between Guillemond and Maxwell. At least in this one area, the two protago-

nists were able to agree in both objectives and strategies. But not being the man on the spot, Guillemard left implementation to Kuala Lumpur and restricted his role to giving full gubernatorial backing to Maxwell whenever required, a situation in stark contrast to their relationship in the wider area of decentralization to which we must now return our attention.

1. For discussion, see Robert Heussler, *Yesterday's Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service*, New York, 1963; J. de V. Allen, 'The Malayan Civil Service: Colonial Bureaucracy or Malayan Elite', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. XII, no. 2, April 1970.
2. Minute of Conference of Residents March 1904, HCO 422/1904.
3. Introduction by Peter Burns in R. J. Wilkinson (ed.), *Papers on Malay Subjects*, Kuala Lumpur, 1970, p. 5.
4. Minute of Conference of Residents, March 1904, HCO 422/1904; Chai Hon Chan, *The Development of British Malaya, 1896-1909*, Kuala Lumpur, 1964, p. 58.
5. For discussion of the Malay College and the MAS schemes of 1910 and 1917, see W. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur, 1967, ch. 4; Khasnor binte Johan, 'The Malay College, Kuala Kangsar, 1905-41', M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, 1969, and 'The Administrative Elite in the FMS: An Aspect of Malaysian Social History', Ph.D. Thesis, Monash University, 1974; Yeo Kim Wah, 'The Grooming of an Elite: Malay Administrators in the FMS, 1903-1941', *JSEAS*, Vol. XI, no. 2, September 1980, pp. 287-319.
6. Guillemard to Devonshire, no. 4, 8.1.1924 (National Library of Singapore Collection).
7. Minute by Brockman 12.6.1920, NSF 33/1920.
8. In fact the Under-Secretary, Mackray, who helped draft the 1917 MAS scheme died in harness and several others were on the verge of a breakdown. Memo on Recruitment to the MCS by A. S. Jelf 31.5.1922, encl. in Guillemard to Devonshire, no. 682, 11.12.1923 (National Library of Singapore Collection).
9. Anderson to Lyttelton 17.8.1904, CO 273/300.
10. R. Windstedt to H. W. Firmstone (Director of Education) 9.10.1919, PSF 1667/1919.
11. Khasnor binte Johan, 'The Administrative Elite', p. 119.
12. Lemon to Maxwell 3.11.1919, PSF 1667/1919.
13. Officially Maxwell became Resident of Perak on 19 December

1919 but in effect he occupied the post some time before the above date.

14. Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Governors, Malay College, 19.12.1919, SSF 652/1920.

15. W. J. Hume to O. Marks (Resident of Selangor) 16.9.1920, *ibid.*

16. Khasnor binte Johan, 'The Administrative Elite', p. 84.

17. *Malay Mail*, 2.1.1920.

18. Maxwell to Aldworth (Resident of Negri Sembilan) 5.1.1920, NSF 1066/1920.

19. Khasnor binte Johan, 'The Administrative Elite', pp. 84-5.

20. Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Governors, Malay College, 15.4.1920, SSF 1830/1920.

21. Minute by Brockman 17.2.1920, NSF 17/1920.

22. Minutes by Hume 16.3.1920, by Parr 8.3.1920 and by Lemon 1.3.1920, *ibid.*

23. Minute by Parr 8.3.1920, *ibid.*

24. Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Governors, Malay College, 15.4.1920, SSF 1830/1920.

25. Memo by T. S. Adams undated 1926, NSF 1147/1926.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Notes of an Interview between His Excellency, the High Commissioner and His Highness, the Sultan of Perak, at Government House, Kuala Kangsar, 25.3.1920, NSF 33/1920.

28. *Ibid.*

29. K. K. Ghosh, *Twentieth-Century Malaysia: Politics of Decentralization of Power, 1920-1929*, Calcutta, 1977, pp. 141-3.

30. *Utusan Melayu*, 26.9.1919, encl. to Windstedt to Firmstone, 9.10.1919, PSF 1667/1919.

31. *Utusan Melayu*, 12.4.1920 and *Lembaga Melayu*, 20.4.1920, encl. in Windstedt to Jelf 24.4.1920, NSF 27/1920.

32. Minute by Maxwell 7.5.1920, *ibid.*

33. Memo by T. S. Adams undated 1920, NSF 3084/1920.

34. For instance, in 1923 there were twenty-three Rajas, two Syeds, five Datas, and seventeen others who were MAS officers. The Establishment List of the MAS 1.10.1923, SSF 2076/1923.

35.	<i>The 1917 MAS Salary Scale</i>	<i>The 1921 MAS Salary Scale</i>
Class III	\$600-720 p.a.	\$1080-1320 p.a.
Class II	\$840-1200 p.a.	\$1400-2160 p.a.
Class I	\$1440-2400 p.a.	\$2400-3600 p.a.
Special Class	\$3060-3500 p.a.	\$3900-4500 p.a.

36. Memo by T. S. Adams undated 1920, NSF 3084/1920.
37. Memo by Hill 15.7.1920, NSF 33/1920.
38. Memo by G. E. London, Secretary to Resident of Pahang, 19.10.1921, NSF 3084/1920; also Memo. by W. D. Scott, acting Resident of Pahang, 9.7.1920, NSF 33/1920.
39. Memo by Harrison 6.11.1920, SSF 5429/1920.
40. Guillemard to Devonshire no. 4, 8.1.1924 (National Library of Singapore Collection).
41. *Ibid.*
42. Minute by Brockman 16.3.1920, SSF 1921/1920.
43. District Officer, Kuala Selangor, to Secretary to Resident, Selangor 14.6.1921, SSF 2471/1921; in 1920 there were twenty-nine officers on the 1910 scheme. See SSF 5534/1920.
44. Memo by Maxwell 12.3.1922, SSF 1384/1922.
45. Memo by E. B. William, Collector of Land Revenue, Seremban, 15.4.1925, SSF 3749/1925.
46. Adams to Cochrane 15.12.1930, SSF 1202/1930.
47. Roff, p. 228.
48. Memo by Adams 6.11.1936, NSF 1712/1936.
49. Khasnor binte Johan, 'The Administrative Elite', pp. 299-300.
50. On the other hand, it caused a certain degree of envy and dissatisfaction among non-MAS Malay officers. See Haji Abdul Majid to Sansom, Commissioner of Police, 14.10.1931, SSF 2469/1931.
51. Khasnor binte Johan, 'The Administrative Elite', pp. 269-270.
52. Annual Address of Sir George Maxwell to Malay Officers 16.5.1925, SSF 252/1940.
53. Maxwell to Stonor 26.4.1921, SSF 1944/1921.
54. *Ibid.*
55. Maxwell to Hill 3.10.1921, SSF 683/1922.
56. Minute by Maxwell 23.3.1922, NSF 2322/1921.
57. W. E. Pepys to O. F. Stonor 20.11.1925, SSF 4933/1925.
58. That this had become the practice by 1925 is clearly brought out by the Residents in SSF 3749/1925.
59. Minutes of Meeting of Board of Governors, Malay College, 15.4.1920, SSF 1830/1920.
60. Minute by Resident of Negri Sembilan undated; Secretary to Resident of Pahang to Under-Secretary FMS 4.3.1927, SSF 1417/1927.
61. Minutes by N. R. Jarrett 10.9.1930, by W. E. Pepys 11.9.1930 and by C. W. H. Cochrane 13.9.1930, SSF 1455/1930.

62. Khasnor binte Johan, 'The Administrative Elite', p. 170.
63. *PFC FMS* 1932, p. B16.
64. Guillemard to Devonshire no. 682, 11.12.1923 (National Library of Singapore Collection).
65. The five Malay MCS members were Raja Said Tauphy (promoted in 1917), Che Hamzah bin Abdullah (1920), Raja Uda bin Raja Mohamed (1924), Raja Musa bin Raja Bot (1924), and Captain Hashim Noor bin Mohamed (1924). Captain Hashim was not a member of the MAS but was promoted to the MCS because of long efficient service. It was a most unusual case. Osman bin Haji Dahat to Adams 8.4.1931, SSF 143/1939.
66. Roff, p. 109.
67. For discussion, see Khasnor binte Johan, 'The Administrative Elite'.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 319.
69. Minute by Assistant Secretary, FMS, 13.11.1922, SSF 4344/1933.
70. For instance, see Minute by Adams 19.4.1934, NSF 431/1934.
71. Caldecott to Windstedt 9.5.1916, SSF 4248/1916.
72. Guillemard to Milner no. 22, 16.1.1921 (National Library of Singapore Collection).
73. *PFC FMS* 1926, p. B46.
74. A. Cavendish, Director of Co-operatives, to W. E. Pepys, Under-Secretary FMS 23.5.1930, SSF 1287/1930.
75. Memo by Conlay 13.7.1923, SSF 3341/1923.
76. By 1935 there were only twelve British Inspectors, while their Asian counterparts now totalled fifty-six (nearly all Malays). Thomas to MacDonald 24.8.1935, CO 717/110.
77. Minute of a meeting to consider the possibility of a Malay Professional Service Scheme 30.5.1921, NSF 1693/1923; also Scheme for Malay Officers, Technical Departments, undated, SSF 2747/1923.
78. See General Order 12 (VIII) 1908, HCO 809/1910.
79. J. Hands, 'Malay Agricultural Settlement, Kuala Lumpur', *Malayan Historical Journal*, Vol. II, no. 2, December 1955, p. 146.
80. *The Malays in Malaya*, by One of them, Singapore, 1928, p. 83.
81. Parr to Maxwell 22.8.1922, SSF 3103/1922.
82. This term refers to the traditional establishments which employed *Kathi*, *Penghulu*, religious *guru*, and court officers.
83. Excepting European officers, there were 457 Malay officers out of 597 officers in Negri Sembilan, 255 out of 559 in Selangor, 763

out of 1,182 in Perak, and 301 out of 389 in Pahang. Parr to Maxwell 22.8.1922, SSF 3103/1922.

84. In the Federal Establishment in 1922, there were only 988 Malays out of 3,642 officers, *ibid.*

85. For instance, of the 1,651 clerks in the Railway Department in 1922, 22 were Malays; of the other 952 subordinate officers, 85 were Malays, *ibid.*

86. Memo by Association of British Malaya 28.1.1922, encl. in Churchill to Guillemard no. 60, 8.2.1922 (National Library of Singapore Collection).

87. Memos by Maxwell 12.7.1922 and by Parr 22.8.1922, SSF 3103/1922.

88. Memo by Parr 28.6.1922, *ibid.*

89. Memo by Maxwell 12.7.1922, *ibid.*

90. Memo by McClelland 19.7.1922, *ibid.*

91. For instance, the order of preference for the recruitment of clerks was as follows: (i) local-born Malays, (ii) local-born non-Malays, (iii) foreign-born candidates who were locally-educated. Minute by Secretary to Resident, Negri Sembilan, 3.3.1925, NSF 224/1925. In Negri Sembilan, Malays born in the state were given preference over Malays born in other states. Presumably the same practice prevailed in Perak, Selangor, and Pahang.

92. Circular no. 15, 19.5.1922, SSF 2078/1922; Minute by Secretary to Resident, Selangor, 21.7.1922, SSF 2884/1922.

93. The other members of the committee were Hamzah bin Abdullah, Mohamed Eusoff, and Raja Aznam Shah.

94. The Report of the Malay Employment Committee 5.12.1922, HCO 545/1922.

95. *PFC FMS* 1928, p. B3.

96. For example, that technical departments should provide training facilities to train Malay artisans, that the Railway Department should train Malays as Railway workers by staffing small branch lines with Malays.

97. The Report of the Malay Employment Committee 5.12.1922, HCO 545/1922.

98. Minute by Lemon 12.1.1920, SSF 5001/1919.

99. Memo by Firmstone, Director of Education, 24.11.1919, *ibid.*

100. Minutes by Maxwell 16.10.1921 and by Wolff 18.10.1921, SSF 2648/1921.

101. Minute by Maxwell 26.1.1923, *ibid.*

102. Minute by A. C. Jamoron, Assistant Secretary, FMS 30.3.1928, SSF 913/1928.

103. Parr to Brockman 26.10.1916, SSF 5472/1916.

104. E. Pengilly, Secretary to Resident, Selangor, to Coe, Acting Under-Secretary, FMS, 3.8.1923, SSF 3227/1923.

105. Year	Malays who passed Junior	Malays who passed Senior
1922	22	4
1926	49	12
1928	67	20
1930	66	29

Source: Bazell, Headmaster, Malay College, to Board of Governors, Malay College, 14.6.1932, SSF 1278/1932.

106. Minute 7.4.1927, SSF 4/1926.

107. See SSF 5189/1923, 3363/1925 and 836/1931 for discussion of this issue.

108. Minute by P. Anthony, General Manager, Railway, 26.8.1922, SSF 3103/1922.

109. The Report of the Malay Employment Committee 5.12.1922, HCO 545/1922.

110. Appendix to Memo. by Parr 22.8.1922, SSF 3103/1922.

111. Minute by G. H. Fox, General Manager, Railway, 9.2.1917, NSF 1170/1922.

112. Ibid.

113. Minute by Maxwell 19.8.1922, *ibid.*

114. Minute by Maxwell 31.8.1922, *ibid.*

115. Memo by Maxwell 21.10.1922, PSF 260/1924.

116. *Ibid.*

117. Memo by Maxwell 17.12.1922, SSF 171/1923.

118. Minute of meeting at General Manager, Railway's Office 23.1.1923, *ibid.*, also Memo by Henshaw, Traffic Manager, Railway, 19.11.1923, SSF 3103/1922.

119. Memo on 'Scheme for the Employment of Malays as Railway Policemen', 29.1.1923, SSF 711/1924.

120. Minute by Cochrane 3.2.1923, *ibid.*

121. Minute by Conlay 10.4.1924, PSF 260/1924.

122. Minute 2.12.1924, *ibid.*

123. *PFC FMS* 1929, p. B90.

124. *Straits Echo*, 5.7.1924; *Malay Mail*, 3.7.1924.

125. Henshaw, Traffic Manager, Railway, 21.10.1924, SSF 1014/1925.
126. Minute by Maxwell 31.10.1924, NSF 628/1925.
127. S. Strachan, General Manager, Railway, to Under-Secretary, FMS, 14.1.1932, SSF 443/1932.
128. Memo by Wolff, Director of Education, 18.7.1922, SSF 4354/1922.
129. Minute of meeting at General Manager, Railway's Office 23.1.1923, SSF 171/1923.
130. Minute by Maxwell 3.2.1926, SSF 1017/1926.
131. *PFC FMS*, 1931, p. B3. In 1930 fifty-four of the seventy-one students were Malays.

PART THREE
THE GUILLEMARD POLICY

The Birth of the Guillemard Policy

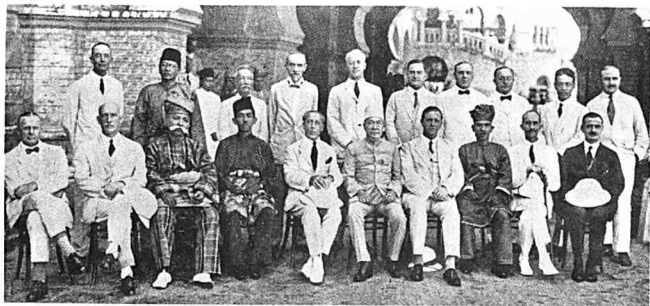
THE ISKANDAR INITIATIVE

THE power struggle between Guillemard and Maxwell had, by July 1924, become so 'deplorable' that 'at any time there may come a crisis requiring trenchant treatment'.¹ Up to then the Chief Secretary had succeeded, to a very great extent, in excluding Guillemard from many spheres of the FMS administration and in retaining the initiative of decentralization in his own hands. For one thing, the vaguely defined relations between the High Commissioner and the Chief Secretary enabled Maxwell to limit references to Singapore to those important questions requiring Guillemard's sanction and to permit the latter little initiative in other matters. This was facilitated by the fact that Guillemard forfeited the support of the Unofficials of the Federal Council and to a significant extent, of British officials in the FMS as well. His opposition to the Resident-General petition, his policy of lowering the status of the Chief Secretary, the interlocking of FMS and Colony finances as a result of the sterling loan, and his predisposition to run FMS affairs himself were responsible for his unpopularity.

The above situation was clearly reflected in Maxwell's highly effective efforts to foil Guillemard's policy of developing the Colony and the FMS on uniform lines through the

formation of joint departments with jurisdiction over both territories. Maxwell condemned this policy chiefly because joint departments whose heads were based in Singapore tended to enhance the High Commissioner's control over FMS affairs. In this connection the most stormy issue of dispute was the proposed creation of a Malayan Medical Service under a head based in Singapore with largely advisory powers in the FMS, a plan formulated by Dr Horn, temporary SS-FMS Director of Medical and Sanitary Services. In 1923 the Colonial Office, for the sake of efficiency, decided to vest the Director of the Malayan Medical Service with executive power.² To make matters worse, this decision was conveyed to the FMS on 18 May 1923, a day after Whitehall's final rejection of the Resident-General petition. Thus the impression was apparently created that the modified scheme was a sequence directly stemming from London's confirmation of Guillemard as the real head of the FMS, and that it was another move to attach the FMS more closely to the leading strings of the Colony.³ On 8 December 1923, the Chief Secretary opposed the amended scheme, which recommended an executive Director heading a highly centralized medical department, as incompatible with the Hose decentralization plan,⁴ a contention strongly supported by the Residents. On 22 January 1924, with defeat staring him in the face, Guillemard withdrew the reform. He told Whitehall, 'I am face to face with a FMS Chief Secretary, Residents and Unofficials alike, solid against the Colonial Office Scheme, and hostile even to the original scheme of Horn'.⁵ Instead in 1924 the government, as Maxwell advised, officially recognized that all medical men now belonged to a Malayan Medical Service whose work was coordinated by a Medical Standing Advisory Committee comprising representatives from the FMS, the Colony, Johor, and Kedah.

The Guillemard-Maxwell power struggle gradually undermined Whitehall's confidence and trust in the Chief Secretary. This was particularly significant because before 1923 it was to the Chief Secretary that the Colonial Office had repeatedly



1. Group photograph of Federal Council Members taken in front of Selangor State Secretariat Building in Kuala Lumpur on 8 March 1926. Seated (L to R): B. W. Elles, Acting British Resident of Perak; E. C. H. Wolff, British Resident of Negri Sembilan; H.H. Tuanku Muhammad, Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan; Raja Muda Abdul Aziz of Perak (representing the Sultan of Perak); H. E. Sir Laurence N. Guillemand, High Commissioner; H.H. Sultan Alaedin Suleiman Shah of Selangor; Sir William George Maxwell,

Chief Secretary to Government; Che Wan Muhammad Salleh bin Ungku Temenggong (representing the Sultan of Pahang); H. W. Thomson, Acting British Resident of Selangor; A. F. Worthington, Acting British Resident of Pahang. Standing (L to R): C. Ritchie; Raja Chulan, Raja di-Hilir of Perak; Dato Wong Yick Tong; J. H. M. Robson; W. S. Gibson, Legal Adviser, FMS; R. C. M. Kindersley; A. M. Pountney, Financial Adviser, FMS; H. T. Jones; Choo Kia Peng; J. H. Rich (Reproduced from *British Malaya*, vol. 1, no. 5, September 1926)



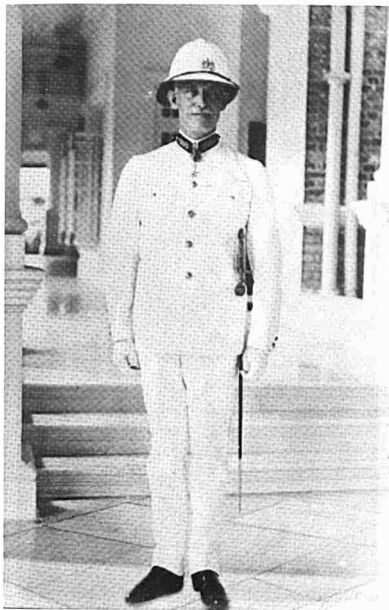
2. A. M. Pountney, Financial Adviser, SS and FMS, 1921-1926
(Reproduced from *British Malaya*, vol. 14, no. 12, 1941)



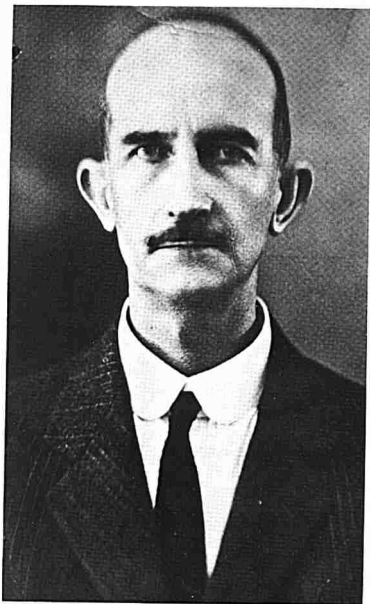
3. Sir Raja Chulan, Raja di-Hilir of Perak (1920-1933) and the first Malay Unofficial of the Federal Council (1924-1933) (Reproduced from J. H. M. Robson, *Records and Recollections, 1889-1934*, Kyle, Palmer & Co., Kuala Lumpur, 1934)



4A. E. S. Hose, Resident of Negri Sembilan, 1922-1924 (Courtesy Arkib Negara Malaysia)



4B. E. C. H. Wolff, Resident of Negri Sembilan, 1924-1928 (Courtesy Arkib Negara Malaysia)



5A. H. W. Thomson, Resident of Pahang, 1921-1926 (Courtesy *New Straits Times* (Malaysia) Library)



5B. C. W. C. Parr, Resident of Perak, 1921-1926 (Courtesy Arkib Negara Malaysia)



6. Sir Laurence Guillemard, Governor-High Commissioner of Malaya, 1920-1927 (Courtesy Arkib Negara Malaysia)



7. Sir William George Maxwell, Chief Secretary, FMS, 1920-1926
(Courtesy Arkib Negara Malaysia)



8A. Tuanku Muhammad, Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan, 1895-1934 (Reproduced from *British Malaya*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1926)



8B. Sultan Sir Alaedin Sulaiman Shah, Sultan of Selangor, 1898-1938 (*seated*) (Courtesy Arkib Negara Malaysia)



9A. Sultan Abdullah al-Muktasim Bilah, Sultan of Pahang, 1917-1932 (Reproduced from *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Malayan Branch*, vol. XIV, pt. 2, 1936)



9B. Sultan Iskandar Shah of Perak, 1918-1938 (Reproduced from *British Malaya*, vol. 1, no. 4, August 1926)



10. Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor-High Commissioner of Malaya, 1927-1929 (Reproduced from *British Malaya*, vol. 1, no. 12, April 1927)



11. Sir William Peel, Chief Secretary to the Government, FMS, 1926-1929 (Courtesy *New Straits Times* (Malaysia) Library)



12. The last meeting of the Federal Council in which the Rulers participated on 28 February 1927 (Reproduced from *British Malaya*, vol. 2, no. 11, March 1928)

turned for advice. For compared with Maxwell's thirty-odd years of Malayan experience, the greenhorn Guillemard stood in a singularly disadvantageous position; besides, he had so many 'rubs' with Whitehall officials that Lord Milner felt compelled to advise him privately in January 1921 'to avoid, so far as is humanly possible, treading on [their] toes'.⁶ However the tables began to be turned against Maxwell because of his agitation for the restoration of the title of Resident-General. The Chief Secretary's persistence in the matter was regarded as active disloyalty to the High Commissioner and the Secretary of State.⁷ Whitehall also strongly disapproved of Maxwell's blatant insubordination to Guillemard, and held him chiefly responsible for the official feuds that had impeded the administration of the Colony and the FMS.⁸ In other words, the Colonial Office was rendered receptive to any wind of change blowing from the FMS.

Meanwhile, Guillemard concentrated his efforts, among other matters, in winning the Malay Rulers to his side. From the outset he displayed an uncanny ability to cultivate the goodwill of the Rulers with whom he was to get on famously. As his power struggle with Maxwell intensified, and as he alienated the Unofficials of the Federal Council and quite frequently the Residents as well, Guillemard not unnaturally strove to gain the support of the Rulers. By 1924 he had, on occasions, consulted them personally on official matters, thus bypassing the Residents and the Chief Secretary.⁹ Presumably, the Rulers welcomed this approach. In social life he found Lady Guillemard 'a great help' in fostering the Rulers' goodwill and support.¹⁰

The High Commissioner devoted particular attention to Sultan Iskandar Shah of Perak. Born in May 1881, Iskandar was the third son of Sultan Idris of Perak. After attending a Malay school and then an English school in Taiping, he proceeded to Oxford where he studied at Balliol College for five years. Back in Malaya in 1902, Iskandar had a short stint as Second Assistant Secretary in the Perak Residency before he joined the FMS Police Force in 1905 where he designed the

well-known khaki police uniform.¹¹ Iskandar served as Assistant Commissioner of Police till 1916 when he became the Raja Bendahara of Perak, the second in the line of succession to the throne. Until then he had been no more than a carefree prince in pursuit of pleasure. When his half-brother, Sultan Abdul Jalil, died in 1918, Iskandar ascended the throne as the Raja Muda-ship was vacant, and by 1920, had so impressed the British as an 'enlightened' Ruler that Guillemard hyperbolically likened him to 'our own King Henry V'.¹² By the time that he died of a heart attack in October 1938, he had been awarded a KCMG (in 1921) and a KCVO (in 1924).

Sultan Iskandar Shah was a man of many faults and many interests. 'A trifle spoilt'¹³ and a man with a quick fiery temper, he at times was wont to behave like a traditional Malay despot. An amateur writer, a big-game hunter, and a keen sportsman, Iskandar was known for his love for horses and polo. He was also a great spendthrift, in the habit of throwing a six-week wedding celebration at a cost of \$50,000 for his sons or daughters.¹⁴ Yet, Iskandar was a devout Muslim. In public life he was the unofficially acknowledged leader of the FMS Rulers partly because of past practice and chiefly because Perak was the premier state in the Federation. Iskandar fought to maintain the principle of Malay paramountcy in the FMS and preserve Perak as a Malay state with its own distinctive characteristics¹⁵—objectives, he believed, that could be attained partly through decentralization.

Thus it was that Iskandar became profoundly troubled by Maxwell increasingly centralizing power in his own hands in 1924. What disconcerted him most, so it appears, was the iron control Maxwell imposed on his royal purse as well as those of the other Rulers.¹⁶ The Chief Secretary apparently felt that this was necessitated by financial difficulties in the FMS and by the fact that Iskandar was a spendthrift not easily amenable to control.¹⁷ Iskandar reacted strongly to this and, understandably, welcomed Guillemard's show of sympathy. Already, in mid-1920, Guillemard had gratified his

desire to remove a ban imposed by Anderson in 1909 debarring Raja Chulan from any possible succession to the Perak throne. The Colonial Office, at first, rejected Iskandar's petition on this question, but later relented when Guillemard assured Milner that Raja Chulan, being older than the Sultan and the Raja Muda (the Heir Apparent), had at most a very remote chance of, and could be legitimately prevented from, ascending the Perak throne.¹⁸ Accordingly, Raja Chulan was permitted to become Raja-di-Hilir, the third in the line of succession to the Perak sultanate. Now Guillemard further humoured Iskandar by refusing to support the overly-stringent regulations Maxwell attempted to apply on the royal purse involving, at times, petty reduction in the Sultan's motor-car allowance and abolition of the state band.¹⁹ In this way he won the Sultan to his side.

Around 1924 Guillemard and Iskandar began to discuss privately decentralization in the FMS. It seems likely that these discussions had a stimulating effect on the Sultan's aspirations for effective decentralization in the FMS. Possibly, Guillemard might even have informed the Sultan of the gist of a decentralization scheme he claimed in September 1924 to 'have for some time past been engaged in' for eventual submission to the Colonial Office.²⁰ If this scheme was indeed similar to the one he subsequently sent to London, he could not have himself raised it with the Colonial Office without exposing his ulterior motive of wanting to elbow Maxwell out of the FMS. It made sense therefore to let the Sultan appeal first to Whitehall for radical decentralization and clear the way for him to make his move. While the Sultan undoubtedly desired a large degree of state power, one is tempted nonetheless to conclude that his subsequent petition to the Secretary of State for a new decentralization policy might have been partly instigated by the High Commissioner.

Against a background of growing Colonial Office alienation, together with the High Commissioner's active hostility towards Maxwell, Sultan Iskandar made his memorable trip to London in August 1924 that triggered off a chain of polit-

ical actions and manoeuvres. During the visit Iskandar appealed to the Labour Secretary of State, J. H. Thomas, for a policy of accelerated decentralization in the FMS. He also went out of his way to entreat the Colonial Office to extend Guillemard's stay in Malaya for a few years so that the latter could carry out real decentralization. The memorandum he submitted became the basis for a detailed discussion with Collins and Beckett of the Far Eastern Department on 7 August. Among other things, Iskandar wished to see most of the Chief Secretary's powers transferred to the Residents so that the Chief Secretary would become a purely co-ordinating officer on federal affairs. As a corollary, the Perak State Council should have power 'to deal with everything', including the enactment of state laws and rules, except 'the Laws of the Country and the administration of the Railway'. It should approve and pass the state budget independently prepared by the Perak authorities; no reference to the Federal Council on this matter was necessary.²¹ In this way the council would be restored to the position of exercising 'paramount authority in the state' as during pre-Federation days—a position corresponding to that of its counterparts in Johor and Kedah.²² Overall, Perak policy should be jointly formulated by the Sultan, the Resident, and the State Council, not by the Federal Secretariat, the Federal Heads, and the state secretariats as at present. It seems clear that Sultan Iskandar wished Perak to have the same administration as that in the UMS, especially Johor or Kedah, when practicable. He was, of course, aware that in the UMS policy was executed by a Malay bureaucracy guided by the Adviser and his staff, and that this situation did not obtain in Perak and could not be attained in the short run. For the present therefore the Resident should continue to wield executive power and direct the administration in Perak. He stated:

The original [Pangkor] Treaty [should] be followed in its exact terms. . . . The Ruler should be treated as a Ruler and the Resident carry out on his behalf and with his co-operation the policy arrived at by them and in consultation with a more powerful State Council.²³

Clearly, Sultan Iskandar was extremely unhappy with excessive over-centralization in the FMS. In a farewell letter to Collins, he wrote:

I am particularly glad that we were able to discuss the question of the FMS policy. . . . My personal feeling in the matter is that a chess-board king is not enviable. We cannot help feeling that we are treated like that sometimes. The last thing we wish is to lose the British influence, but there is that strong desire to have things done on our behalfs. I hope you do see that this is really very important at this time.²⁴

As if to apply more pinpricks to the Sultan, Maxwell carried his stringent supervision of the royal purse to a tactless extreme in the matter of the Sultan's visit to London. He provided only a paltry sum of £2,000 for the visit, which was nearly all spent by the time the royal entourage arrived in London and over which the Sultan threatened to cut short his visit.²⁵ Maxwell also opposed Iskandar taking the Raja Permaisuri with him because she was only his second wife and not of royal blood. Mainly owing to the former reason, Iskandar was antagonized, and his animus for Maxwell manifested itself during his discussion with the Colonial Office. He complained of the Chief Secretary dictating to the Rulers and refusing to accept his suggestion of a law to bar Perak Malays from having business transactions with chettians who endangered Malay ownership of land.²⁶

The Sultan's disenchantment shattered whatever confidence Whitehall still had in Maxwell. Collins concluded that 'not only is the present system wrong, but the man who works it, Sir George Maxwell, is clearly using his practically autocratic powers in an arbitrary manner, and is showing less and less tact and sympathy with the Rulers'.²⁷ Collins rightly pointed out that Maxwell's policy had borne little fruit. The revision of the General Orders had only led to the Residents being more fully consulted and informed, while nothing substantial had issued from the Chief Secretary (Dispensing Power) Enactment. It is clear that the Colonial Office was not fully conversant with the decentralization movement in

the FMS. Collins openly admitted ignorance concerning the outcome of the Maxwell scheme to vest the State Councils with a measure of financial and administrative powers. He showed no sign that he knew Maxwell's policy of grooming the Rulers-in-Council for executive functions was almost completely frustrated by senior British officials, nor that Maxwell was just then on the point of initiating the implementation of the Chief Secretary (Dispensing Power) Enactment. Nonetheless, bearing in mind Maxwell's support for the Resident-General petition, Collins stressed that since appointed Chief Secretary Maxwell had become greedy for more and more power. He added that this was probably responsible for the failure of the present devolution policy, and that Maxwell would be 'the chief obstacle to a complete political reorganisation in Malaya'. Collins advised that, if necessary, the Chief Secretary should be retired before his term of service expired in May 1926.²⁸ On the Sultan's request that Guillemard's stay be extended, Collins was less sympathetic. He felt that Guillemard himself was unlikely to welcome the idea; even more important, he was not impressed by the performance of the High Commissioner.²⁹ Collins in fact had in mind Hugh Clifford³⁰ as the next High Commissioner to carry out accelerated decentralization in the FMS.

Collins came out strongly in support of the Sultan. As early as November 1920, it will be recalled, Collins had unsuccessfully advocated a radical decentralization policy based on the conversion of the Chief Secretary into a co-ordinating officer. He now made dexterous use of the Sultan's petition in order to persuade the Colonial Office to adopt his ideas on decentralization. Understandably, he described Iskandar's proposals, basically similar to his own, as 'moderate' even though they could be fully implemented only through 'a break-up of the present Federation'. At this juncture however, the Colonial Office was not willing to dissolve the Federation since this would damage efficiency, economy, and uniformity of policy in the four states, but was prepared to do so in the future if a wider Malayan federation would thereby materialize.³¹ In

this larger unit British control would be retightened over the member states, though not to the extent of the present centralization in the FMS. Ormsby-Gore explained:

I entirely agree. Maxwell told me last year that the trouble is that the federated states are over-controlled and over-federated while the un-federated states are not sufficiently controlled or federated and that what is universally wanted is a half way house between the two systems.³²

In other words, as in 1920, the Colonial Office viewed decentralization chiefly as a strategy towards attaining a wider political unit. The only difference was that Whitehall was now far more acutely conscious of the Rulers' disenchantment with the existing administration than previously; even so, it was not prepared fully to meet the Rulers' aspirations if this would entail any drastic sacrifice of administrative efficiency.

Through exploiting the Sultan's appeal, Collins inveigled Whitehall to take two decisions before the High Commissioner was consulted—one, drastically to decentralize the FMS; the other, to retire Maxwell prematurely if necessary. On 26 August the Colonial Office outlined the Sultan's ideas in a despatch to Guillemard and enclosed Iskandar's memorandum. It instructed the High Commissioner to discuss the matter with Iskandar and 'come to a comprehensive arrangement with him' for loosening the federal administration.³³ This despatch was music to the ears of Guillemard who could not but see that the Chief Secretaryship was under attack and under consideration for abolition by both Iskandar and the Colonial Office. In fact, with a little reflection Guillemard would also have smiled with inner pleasure at the criticism levelled at Maxwell for the manner with which he directed affairs in the FMS. Whitehall, of course, offered no indication of its readiness to retire Maxwell but clearly revealed its loss of confidence in him. It informed Guillemard that he might consult his advisers, including the Chief Secretary, but that it was his own views on the question that the Secretary of State was

particularly interested in.³⁴ Here at last was a golden opportunity, offered on a platter, for Guillemard not only to seize the initiative of decentralization from Maxwell but also to eliminate his arch-rival from the FMS altogether.

THE GUILLEMARD RESPONSE

Guillemard responded to the Iskandar initiative by initiating two courses of action. The first was an offensive to downgrade further the Chief Secretary's status and against Maxwell's conduct of FMS financial affairs. On 31 July 1924, shortly before he received the fateful despatch on decentralization, Guillemard decided to rank the newly-designated post of 'General Officer Commanding the Troops, Malaya' (GOC) senior to the Chief Secretaryship. He clearly based his move on the fact that in the Colony the GOC was senior to the Colonial Secretary whom he considered the Chief Secretary's equal. Early in September 1924 Maxwell counter-claimed for seniority over the GOC on the ground that on federal occasions the Chief Secretary took precedence over the Malay Rulers.³⁵ Although Maxwell was stating what had tacitly acquired general currency as the Chief Secretary-Rulers relationship since the days of Frank Swettenham, Guillemard seized upon this on 23 October to advise Whitehall to rank both the Rulers and the GOC senior to the Chief Secretary. In a key despatch on decentralization a day earlier, Guillemard alleged that Maxwell's stand had generated resentment among the Rulers.³⁶ The Chief Secretary naturally lost his case, for by now Whitehall officials had come to view him as a power-hungry man unable to deal with the Rulers with tact and finesse. They ruled that on federal occasions the Rulers should take precedence over the Chief Secretary except when the Chief Secretary stood in for the High Commissioner, and that the GOC's status should be decided by the Rulers.³⁷ Subsequently Guillemard was forced partially to retreat because the Residents in conference on 24 February 1925 gave him a slap in the face by recommending that the GOC should rank junior

to the Chief Secretary on federal occasions and to the Residents on state occasions.³⁸ To a significant extent, however, Guillemard had succeeded in accomplishing his objective and in strengthening Whitehall's antipathy towards Maxwell.

In October 1924, Guillemard dealt a harder blow to Maxwell. A month earlier, Pountney induced the Finance Committee of the Federal Council, on the ground that the 1925 budget standing at \$81 million was too high, to scale down the estimates to \$73 million so as to attain a balanced budget.³⁹ Maxwell demurred. He charged that the above decision was *ex parte* as Pountney had failed to consult him, and his views on the budgetary cut were not known to the committee. Stressing that the amended budget was too cautious, he wished the cut reconsidered.⁴⁰ His memorandum failed to convince Guillemard who informed him on 9 October, 'I have talked over with Mr. Pountney . . . and am satisfied that I was correct in my opinion that your memorandum was not convincing.'⁴¹ Maxwell was accordingly overruled.

But seeing the incident as another instance of intransigence towards Singapore, and knowing that the winds of Whitehall's displeasure were blowing against Maxwell, Guillemard pounced on two factual errors in the former's memorandum and then severely censured him for 'frequent carelessness and inaccuracy' in official matters. Calling Maxwell 'an amateur in finance combatting the expert advice of the Financial Adviser', Guillemard warned that 'if I have further ground for complaint, I may have to take official action'.⁴² The Chief Secretary appealed in vain to the Colonial Office against this censure. As Whitehall had by then decided to remove the Chief Secretary in order to clear the way for Guillemard's decentralization policy, it told Maxwell on 17 February 1925 to work in 'harmonious subordination to the High Commissioner' or take his optional retirement 'if he wishes' before he attained the age of fifty-five.⁴³

The second course of action Guillemard took was to snatch the initiative of decentralization from Maxwell. In October 1924 he instructed Maxwell to revive his minor financial

proposal, which the latter thereupon modified into one seeking to empower the State Councils to vote and lend money to defray expenditure on mosques and *wakaf* only. The proposal was accepted by a Residents' Conference on 24 February 1925 and again came before Hose, now acting for Guillemard on home leave. Hose referred it to the Legal Adviser, W. S. Gibson, who opined that the government could legally act under clause nine of the Federal Agreement, which reserved certain matters exclusively for the State Councils.⁴⁴ But late in August 1925 the Finance Committee, led by Pountney, reiterated that the time was 'inopportune for any commitment' to Maxwell's proposal in view of Guillemard's new policy.⁴⁵ Despite Maxwell's entreaties, Hose faltered and refused to act. Instead, he hid himself in a bland sweeping pronouncement, 'I should much prefer to deal with the problem of the powers of individual States in the matters of finance as a whole than in a piece-meal fashion'. Once again Maxwell was left out on a limb.

In October 1924 Guillemard also directed Maxwell to revive his proposal on concessions as outlined in his 'constructive policy' of 10 September 1922. Under the plan, applications for any mining concessions beyond 500 acres, agricultural alienations exceeding 640 acres, and special concessions concerning, for example, paper, matches, china-clay, and wood-distillation would come before the State Councils for a final decision after the Chief Secretary had given his provisional sanction. For some reason not clear, this proposal, approved by the Residents' Conference of 22 January 1923, was not implemented. On 24 February 1925 the Residents in conference again accepted Maxwell's proposal but with a rider that offered them the option, if they so wished, to continue to submit any application for such concessions to the Chief Secretary for a decision as was the existing practice.⁴⁶ This rider stemmed from the Residents' opposition to Maxwell's policy of grooming the Rulers-in-Council for executive functions as already discussed. It would enable the Residents to bypass the State Councils, whenever desirable, over the

concessions question. Thus modified, Maxwell's proposal was effected in 1925.

Under the impact of the Guillemard offensive, Maxwell managed to effect two other measures first discussed in 1921. Early in 1925 he empowered the Federal Heads of department and District Officers to grant advances to their subordinates to purchase conveyances such as motor cycles and bicycles in order to help them in performing their duties. Later, in April 1926, he raised the limits of the High Commissioner's, Chief Secretary's, and Residents' power to incur supplementary expenditure from \$10,000 to \$20,000, \$5,000 to \$10,000, and \$500 to \$2,500 respectively.

The central scheme for action was a programme of radical decentralization Guillemard jubilantly despatched to the Colonial Office on 21 October 1924. This bears many similarities to the scheme presented by Maxwell four years earlier. Both schemes, for example, acknowledged the centrifugal and centripetal forces operating in Malaya. But while Maxwell focused attention on the unifying factors since he sought to persuade the Colonial Office to accept a wider Malayan federation as the ultimate goal of British policy, Guillemard concentrated on the divisive forces which purportedly called for a programme of radical decentralization. In his despatch Guillemard traced the history of administrative centralization from the days of the Resident System to the present position. He explained that after Federation the insistent claims of commercial interests and the rapacious demands for uniformity soon transferred nearly all powers from the states to the centre. This development not only engendered discontent among the Rulers and their Residents but also created an alien bureaucracy controlled by Europeans and manned largely by non-Malay Asians in its lower reaches.⁴⁷ To redress the above necessitated real decentralization in the FMS.

Guillemard rested his policy on the assumption that before 1896 the Rulers and the State Councils 'had taken an active part in the general control of public affairs and in legislation', and that decentralization should aim at bringing the various

states in the Federation back to the above position. Sir John Anderson attempted to achieve this but failed because he did not reduce the powers of the Chief Secretary, and the Federal Council he established 'robbed the Rulers of even the semblance of independent rule'. Guillemard then reiterated Whitehall's assessment of Maxwell's policy which, he claimed, would 'never give to the Rulers, the Councils, and the Residents the same measure of power and dignity as are enjoyed by their counterparts of the Unfederated States'.⁴⁸ Hence, a radical policy was warranted, and all that was needed was the support of the Rulers and the State Councils which he felt confident of obtaining. Here Guillemard was clearly underestimating the strength of commercial interests and members of the bureaucracy expected to oppose his scheme.

The High Commissioner then drew the attention of the Colonial Office to another vital reason for genuine decentralization namely, the strong aversion with which the UMS viewed the FMS administration. Maxwell had, of course, mentioned this in 1920 but Guillemard presented a far superior explanation for the emergence and nature of Advisory rule in the UMS. The High Commissioner pointed out that British officers had to face a different set of Rulers and aristocrats when the UMS came under their protection. As these Malays had benefited from modern education and had learnt from the administrations of Singapore and Penang, the British Advisers were compelled to adopt a new approach in dealing with them and eventually came to promote Malay interests more actively in their states. In the UMS therefore emerged Malay bureaucracies that controlled public life under the guidance of British Advisers and technical officers. Not surprisingly the unpopularity of the over-centralized federal government in the FMS became the insuperable obstacle to the UMS joining a wider Federation.

The remedy for the above problems, Guillemard asserted, was radical change based on the premise that the FMS was not a sacrosanct and permanent entity as Maxwell believed. He then explained the nub of his policy:

I am convinced that the only effective decentralisation in the Federated States and the only cure for the dissatisfaction of their Rulers lie in such devolution of the Chief Secretary's powers to State Councils, Residents, and, if necessary, to Federal Heads of Departments, as will in fact abolish the appointment and substitute for it an office analogous to that of the Secretary to the High Commissioner for the Unfederated States. This change would gratify the Rulers by removing an officer who claims precedence over them, loosen the knot of the existing close Federation, and prepare the way for a wider loose-knit union of all the Malay States.⁴⁹

He therefore proposed that Maxwell's successor should be the last Chief Secretary and that thereafter a Secretary for the FMS without executive power should be appointed as a co-ordinating agent and a channel of communication between the Residents and the High Commissioner. This officer would have a seat in the Federal Council but would be junior in status to the Residents. The above was the only clear-cut, definitive proposal in the entire scheme, and constituted Guillemard's most important contribution to decentralization in the FMS.

In anticipation of strong opposition from 'certain quarters', Guillemard proceeded to lay down his defence. As the change, he stated, would not affect his position as the real head of the FMS—a position long established by Anderson—it would therefore not increase his power over the Federation. While admitting that there would be a loss of efficiency initially, Guillemard was confident that the Residents and their Secretariats would maintain efficiency in the long run. Under this arrangement, FMS interests would not suffer when they clashed with Colony interests because the High Commissioner would always look at them from the FMS point of view and the Conference of Residents could be relied upon to defend them more effectively than the Chief Secretary. Guillemard also assured the Colonial Office that control over FMS affairs would not be centralized in Singapore as he would direct the Federation with as light a hand as he presently directed the UMS with the co-ordinating assistance of the Secretary to the High Commissioner.⁵⁰

Two points should perhaps be made on the High Commissioner's argument. To begin with, as the UMS, not being a combined unit, had a minimal need for co-ordination, there was no necessity for the High Commissioner to intervene frequently in their affairs. The FMS, on the other hand, was a 'federation' that would always confront conflicts of views among states and a compelling demand for a substantial degree of co-ordination. As no officer was senior to the Residents under the Guillemard scheme, decisions on many of these matters could only be made by the High Commissioner, and this inevitably would transfer a substantial part of the Chief Secretary's powers to Singapore.⁵¹ Besides, this scheme left the nature of FMS-Singapore relations overly dependent on the personality of the High Commissioner who, if an energetic centralizer by temperament, would concentrate administrative power in his own hands. There would be no institutional check against this development under the Guillemard scheme as there was in the Chief Secretaryship under the 1896 Agreement. Clearly then, Guillemard's argument would never satisfy opponents of his scheme.

The rest of the Guillemard scheme was nebulous and, in one vital respect, ill-conceived. As he did not envisage a genuine federation Guillemard made no division of powers between the centre and the states in the reorganized FMS. Explicit in promising to devolve most of the Chief Secretary's powers to the Residents, he yet forwarded no specific proposals to attain this end. Guillemard was even more vague on the transfer of power from the Federal Council to the State Councils. He not only mapped no specific steps to bring this about but also failed to mention the degree of legislative and financial powers that should be conferred on the State Councils. All his suggestions concerned the composition of the Federal Council—that the Council should be chaired by the senior Resident in the absence of the High Commissioner, that its members should be appointed from State Councillors, and that the Rulers should eventually withdraw from the council. While the second proposal might assist co-ordination

in a decentralized FMS, how the other measures would promote decentralization is by no means clear. Like Maxwell in his 1920 memorandum, Guillemard intended that specific proposals be worked out in the process of implementation; in fact, he had in mind official committees 'to draw up the necessary changes in Treaty, Law, Finance, and General Orders'. With a great deal of naïveté, he stated that 'these are matters which will present no insuperable difficulties'.⁵² As we shall see, virtually the same officials who stalled Maxwell's policy came to sit on these committees and proceeded to stultify the Guillemard scheme.

In the existing FMS power was centralized in three areas namely, the Federal Secretariat, the Federal Council, and the Federal Heads of department. Maxwell's policy embraced all three but succeeded mainly in transferring power from certain Federal Heads to the Residents. Guillemard, on the other hand, concentrated on the first two centres, especially on devolution from the Chief Secretary downwards. He paid no heed to decentralization from Federal Heads to the Residents even though the Hose Decentralization Scheme had only effected the first instalment of a power transfer. He reiterated Maxwell's idea that other than purely technical heads the Federal Heads should become advisory officers; but he remained uncertain whether, in addition, they should be vested with some executive authority. By changing certain Federal Heads into advisory officers, Maxwell aimed to ease the transfer of part of their powers to the Residents; whether Guillemard had the same idea is not clear. It is only clear that he intended the advisory Federal Heads, if necessary, to receive part of the Chief Secretary's powers.⁵³

To illustrate, Guillemard mentioned the fact that under the federal land enactment the Resident could only alienate town or village land other than through auction after he had obtained the Chief Secretary's approval. Under the Maxwell scheme, decentralization would have proceeded by deleting reference to the Chief Secretary, thus empowering the Resident to act independently in this land question, as in fact oc-

curred in 1925.⁵⁴ Under the Guillemard scheme however, 'the approval of the Chief Secretary' would be substituted by 'the approval of the Commissioner of Lands', which meant that power would be transferred from the Chief Secretary to a Federal Head and would remain in the centre. If effected, the change would lead to amendments of a great many federal laws similar in nature to the above land enactment, thus involving a substantial transfer of power at the federal level. It seems most likely that the Residents would strongly oppose this, since it would subject their freedom of action to be circumscribed by officials ranked junior to them in the bureaucratic hierarchy.⁵⁵ Another point to note is that under the new order the Residents and their secretariats were expected to exercise 'close surveillance' over the Federal Heads in order to maintain efficiency, but how they could perform this effectively when they needed the approval of the latter in so many areas of public life is nowhere explained. Clearly, Guillemard was guilty of much muddled thinking in this aspect of his scheme.

Since both the Rulers and the FMS commercial interests opposed the amalgamation of the Malay States with the Colony, Guillemard's conception of a Malayan federation would exclude the Straits Settlements. The High Commissioner felt confident that once his scheme had been implemented, the UMS Rulers would realize the benefits of a wider federation. They would then agree to the extension of federal departments to their states and the formation of Malayan committees. Since the purely technical Heads would retain their present status and other Federal Heads might be vested with some executive authority, the transformation of their departments into Malayan ones would encroach on the autonomy of the UMS. This seems to indicate that Guillemard realized that, the FMS being a federation, it was not possible to place the Rulers and the State Councils on exactly the same footing as those in the UMS, and that a Malayan federation would lead to some tightening of the federal bond on the UMS. In any case once a Malayan federation had been

formed, Guillemard argued, the two posts of Secretary to the High Commissioner should be merged into one. Finally, the High Commissioner suggested the idea of an annual durbar—an idea Maxwell abhorred in 1920—to which the UMS Rulers would be invited to discuss common problems with their FMS counterparts. This was Guillemard's contribution towards promoting Pan-Malayan consciousness.

It seems clear from another despatch of 22 October 1924 that a central motivation behind the scheme was Guillemard's eagerness to remove Maxwell from the FMS. The reader will recall that soon after his arrival in Malaya in 1920 Guillemard got rid of Sir Edward Brockman and nearly succeeded in June 1922 in retiring Maxwell over the Lucas case. Since then his power struggle with the Chief Secretary had become increasingly embittered, and acerbity now characterized their relations. It is safe to assume that his determination to eliminate Maxwell had since hardened. It would therefore be natural for Guillemard to seize the golden opportunity presented to him on a platter to draw up a scheme that would enable him to realize his aim. Besides, under the new order it would be far easier for the High Commissioner to wield real control over the FMS than in the past when his actions were so effectively checkmated by a powerful Chief Secretary. All this, however, is not to deny that the need to overcome the Rulers' and general Malay dissatisfaction with the over-centralized administration and the hope of eventually forming a larger Malayan federation remained key background factors behind the new policy Guillemard outlined.

One of the two objectives behind Guillemard's second despatch sought to speed Maxwell out of the FMS. In drafting his scheme the High Commissioner was fully aware of Maxwell's view that the Chief Secretary was a quasi-independent head and was indispensable to the preservation of the federal administration: a view completely incompatible with the Guillemard scheme which hinged on the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship. Accordingly, stressing that his policy could not be carried out under the existing arrangement,

Guillemard urged the Colonial Office to transfer the Chief Secretary to another colony so that he could start his scheme early.⁵⁶ To insure his case, he charged that Maxwell had only 'paper sympathy' for the Malay Rulers as demonstrated by the Chief Secretary's attempts to regulate their purses over stringently. Furthermore, he alleged that Maxwell, being by temperament a centralizer, could not even implement the decentralization policy hitherto pursued. Thus, like Collins, Guillemard pinned the entire blame on Maxwell for the failure of the decentralization policy. He explained:

With a Chief Secretary whose heart is not in decentralisation, and whose actions, even in small matters, run counter to the sympathy with the Rulers he declares, it is impossible for a High Commissioner to make any substantial progress with the policy of devolution. It is more impossible still for the Rulers or any officers junior to the Chief Secretary to do anything.⁵⁷

Two comments should be made on the above assessment of Maxwell's performance. First, Maxwell's policy did not seek to transfer immediately a substantial degree of power to the states; many of the proposals, so it appears, were designed as first instalments of a power transfer. In endorsing the Maxwell scheme on 19 March 1923, Guillemard himself advised the Colonial Office that the proposals should be carried out gradually and that it would take 'a longer time to judge of [their] success'. As it happened, Maxwell's policy, except for the Hose scheme, was almost completely thwarted by the Residents and the Financial Adviser; otherwise, a larger degree of decentralization would have been achieved in the FMS. Second, neither Guillemard nor the Residents had, before October 1924, pressed for a more radical decentralization scheme; rather, Guillemard had supported the Residents in defeating Maxwell's efforts to bring the Rulers and the State Councils into the FMS administration. As for the Chief Secretary (Dispensing Power) Enactment, Maxwell and the Residents were then acting in concert in framing steps to effect it. It is clear therefore that Guillemard's assessment of

the Maxwell experiment up to October 1924 is sadly lacking in objectivity. It is understandable for Collins to arrive at such an assessment since he was insufficiently *au fait* with local developments. For a man on the spot like Guillemard, who knew the details of the Maxwell experiment, to do the same could only mean he harboured an ulterior motive which aimed at convincing the Colonial Office that Maxwell was the chief obstacle to decentralization and should be retired or transferred elsewhere immediately. It seems clear therefore, that Guillemard had either been formulating a scheme which would necessitate Maxwell's removal from the FMS before the Sultan of Perak's visit to the Colonial Office, or had seized upon Whitehall's sympathy for the Sultan's views on decentralization to draft such a scheme. This scheme may also be viewed as a logical conclusion to Guillemard's policy of downgrading the status of the chief secretaryship.

The other objective of Guillemard was to 'sell' himself as the most suitable man to carry out the task ahead. In drafting his scheme he made no reference at all to Iskandar's plea or the Colonial Office's despatch, but presented himself as the sole author of the new policy on the ground that this would facilitate publication of his despatch of 21 October, if necessary, in the future; and if he should further successfully implement his scheme, he would have scored a complete victory over Maxwell. This was probably a key consideration behind his eagerness to stay in Malaya beyond his retirement date in February 1926. In any case he informed Whitehall that the Rulers were worried that the almost simultaneous retirements of himself, Maxwell, and Hose, the Colonial Secretary might impede progress of the new policy. For this reason the Sultan of Perak had requested him to stay beyond his retirement and he had tentatively agreed subject to Whitehall's approval. He then proceeded to knock down potential candidates for his post. While extolling F. S. James for his loyalty, energy and 'natural bent for decentralisation', Guillemard stressed that he was not the right person to effect the new scheme as he would 'go too fast in questions of co-ordination'

to carry the FMS Rulers with him. The appointment of Maxwell as Governor-High Commissioner, Guillemard warned, would spell disaster. Maxwell would centralize all powers in his own hands under the new order, and the ideal of a Malayan federation would recede further into the background.⁵⁸ The High Commissioner accordingly suggested that his term of service be extended for two years, or for a shorter period if Maxwell be removed from the FMS to enable him to start his scheme early.

The Colonial Office approved the Guillemard scheme with alacrity. The High Commissioner's assessment of Maxwell was received as a vindication of its own decision to retire the Chief Secretary prematurely. Whitehall decided to offer Maxwell the post of Malay States Information Agent in London provided he took it up in November 1925.⁵⁹ Guillemard's two despatches also dissuaded Collins from pressing for the appointment of Hugh Clifford as the new Governor-High Commissioner largely because Guillemard had ideas on decentralization that almost entirely coincided with his own. When Collins commented that 'I do not think that there can really be much question that [Guillemard's] policy is in the main right', he was in fact stamping a seal of approval on his own ideas. Besides, Guillemard was obviously keen for an extension. He had 'sold' himself so well for the task that Collins minuted that 'he seems the best man to carry out the policy'.⁶⁰ But Collins felt that it was only necessary to extend Guillemard's service by one year. He was unable to overcome his relatively poor assessment of Guillemard's performance and grossly underrated the complexity of the undertaking and the depth and intensity of opposition the new scheme would engender in Malaya and London. He was so confident that he successfully advised Whitehall to appoint an acting Chief Secretary, not a substantive officer as Guillemard recommended, who would devolve powers downwards, and then the post he occupied would cease to exist.⁶¹

On 11 February 1925 L. S. Amery, who became the new Secretary of State upon the downfall of the Labour Govern-

ment, condemned Maxwell to the political wilderness. He approved the Guillemard scheme and agreed to the High Commissioner returning to London on leave for discussion. He informed Guillemard that his tenure in Malaya would be extended accordingly to enable him to carry out his policy. Two weeks later Amery further instructed Guillemard to conduct preliminary consultations with all interested parties before he left Malaya for London.⁶² In this fashion a new phase in the decentralization movement had begun in the FMS.

1. Minute by Collins 13.8.1924, CO 717/36.

2. Devonshire to Guillemard 18.5.1923, CO 717/27.

3. D. H. Hampshire, an Unofficial of the Federal Council, stated that he opposed the principle of joint appointment as tending towards fusion of administrations. Thirty-first Interim Report of the Retrenchment Commission on the Medical Department, encl. to Guillemard to Devonshire 30.1.1923, *ibid.* This was a common opinion held before the Whitehall medical scheme was presented to the FMS on 18.5.1923.

4. Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45; Memo by Maxwell 4.12.1923, SSF 732/1923.

5. Guillemard to Grindle 22.1.1924, CO 273/525.

6. Milner to Guillemard 29.1.1921, The Milner Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

7. Minute by Beckett 13.5.1923, CO 717/28.

8. Minute by Grindle 19.6.1923, *ibid.*

9. Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45.

10. Minute by Collins 12.12.1924, CO 717/34.

11. Ahmad Sabki Jahidin, 'Iskandar Shah of Perak', Academic Exercise, University of Malaya in Singapore, 1958, p. 4. This uniform consisted of the khaki tunic and shorts, with khaki puttees, a pair of black boots and a black *bakul* (basket) type cap.

12. Guillemard to Milner 13.10.1920, CO 717/4.

13. Peel to Birch 19.5.1926, Personal Papers of Sir Ernest Birch, Rhodes House, Oxford.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Minutes of the Meetings of the Perak State Council 22.10.1936, SSF 70/1935, and 20.10.1938, SSF 342/1938; see also Ahmad Sabki Jahidin, ch. V, for discussion on the Sultan's views on nationality and Malay paramountcy.

16. Memo by Shenton Thomas 29.2.1944, CO 273/677/50984/1946.

17. Peel to Birch 19.5.1926, Personal Papers of Sir Ernest Birch, Rhodes House, Oxford.

18. Guillemard to Milner 10.6.1920 and 13.10.1920, CO 717/4.

19. Guillemard to Thomas 22.10.1924, CO 717/34.

20. Guillemard to Thomas 25.9.1924, *ibid.*

21. Memo on the FMS Government Policy by Sultan Iskandar of Perak undated, CO 717/36.

22. Arnold to Guillemard 26.8.1924, *ibid.*

23. Memo on the FMS Government Policy by Sultan Iskandar of Perak undated, *ibid.*

24. Iskandar to Collins 13.8.1924, *ibid.*

25. Hume to Collins 27.4.1924, CO 717/40. In the end the Sultan was given another sum of £4,000 for the visit. Hume successfully persuaded Collins to take steps to regulate the Sultan's expenditure after the above increase in allowance. Hume to Collins 17.5.1924, CO 717/33; Welsh to Collins 18.5.1924, *ibid.* But despite this, the Sultan overspent a sum of £300 by the time he left London. Iskandar to Collins 13.8.1924, CO 717/36. During the visit the Sultan bought an Austin sports-car. Collins willingly authorized the Crown Agent to cover the over-expenditure. Collins to Iskandar 13.8.1924, *ibid.*

26. Memo on the FMS Government Policy by Sultan Iskandar of Perak, undated, *ibid.*

27. Minute by Collins 13.8.1924, *ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. Minute by Collins 12.12.1924, CO 717/34.

30. Minute by Collins 13.8.1924, CO 717/36.

31. Arnold to Guillemard 26.8.1924, *ibid.*

32. Minute by Ormsby-Gore 6.1.1925, CO 717/34.

33. Arnold to Guillemard 26.8.1924, CO 717/36.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Guillemard to Thomas, no. 246, 23.10.1924 and enclosures (National Library of Singapore Collection); also Hose to Amery, no. 112, 16.5.1925 and enclosure, and Hose to Amery, no. 222, 28.8.1925 and enclosure (National Library of Singapore Collection). The question was first raised by Guillemard in March 1922 in connection with the

Prince of Wales's visit to Malaya. Maxwell conceded that on that occasion the Rulers should take precedence over the Chief Secretary. No official ruling on the question was made in 1922. See SSF 1140/1922.

36. Guillemard to Thomas 22.10.1924, CO 717/34.

37. Amery to Guillemard no. 317, 30.12.1924 (National Library of Singapore Collection).

38. Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45.

39. Encl. II, Memorial by Maxwell to Amery 18.12.1924, CO 717/41.

40. Encl. III, *ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*

43. Amery to Guillemard 17.2.1925, *ibid.*

44. Minute by Gibson 16.8.1925, SSF 832/1925.

45. Extract of Minute of Meeting of the Finance Committee 29.8.1925, *ibid.*

46. Minute by Guillemard 5.1.1925 and Extract from Minute of the Residents Conference 24.2.1925, SSF 910/1925.

47. Guillemard to Thomas 21.10.1924, CO 717/34.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*

51. Hose to Amery 30.7.1925, and Minute by Collins undated, CO 717/42.

52. Guillemard to Thomas 21.10.1924, CO 717/34.

53. *Ibid.*

54. See footnote (98), Chapter 5.

55. However, Guillemard wrote, 'Correspondence would take place only between the Resident and the Commissioner [of Lands], and not, as now between the Resident, Commissioner and Chief Secretary. One branch of the work of the Federal Secretariat would be lopped off and handed over to a specialist, to whose recommendations Rulers and Residents could listen without loss of face or executive power, a specialist who is in no sense their administrative chief but one who as their adviser has certain legal functions in one limited sphere.' Guillemard to Thomas 21.10.1924, CO 717/34. Two comments may be made here. First, the Residents would not have lost any executive power but there would be no decentralization from the centre to the states either. The Chief Secretary's power in this question would be transferred to the Federal Head. Second, Guillemard ignored the inevitable problem

of disagreement between the Resident and the Federal Head. Would the dispute be resolved by the Conference of Residents? Would the Commissioner of Lands have the right to appeal to the High Commissioner against the Conference's decision? What would happen if the Conference was itself divided over the matter under dispute? It seems clear that under the scheme the High Commissioner would have to arbitrate and co-ordinate in such disputes. This meant that he would play the role hitherto played by the Chief Secretary. Hence, power would flow to Singapore from Kuala Lumpur.

56. Guillemard to Thomas 22.10.1924, *ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Ibid.*

59. Minute by Collins 12.12.1924, *ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Ibid.*

62. Amery to Guillemard 25.2.1925, CO 273/526/1924.

The Rough Road to Inauguration

FIRST ROUND TO MAXWELL

ARMED with the authority of the Secretary of State, Guillemard began to prepare the stage for the launching of his new policy. Up to this time the new policy was top secret, known only to the Sultan of Perak and probably one or two senior British officials such as Hose, the Colonial Secretary, with whom the High Commissioner might have generally discussed the matter. In view of the Iskandar initiative and Amery's endorsement of the new policy, Guillemard felt assured that the Rulers would rally behind him and that little trouble might be expected from the Residents, but he was aware of two stumbling blocks in view, namely, the Unofficials of the Federal Council representing the voice of commerce, and Maxwell, the defender of the existing system, with whom he had spent his days at daggers drawn. What Guillemard had to concentrate on, therefore, was to secure the general agreement of the Unofficials to the new policy, at the same time containing and isolating Maxwell before he left Malaya for London on 8 May 1925.

On 28 February the High Commissioner made his first move by summoning Maxwell to Government House in Singapore. In an unvarnished fashion during the meeting he read out three typewritten pages stating that the Secretary of State

had approved a new decentralization policy he himself had recommended which aimed at the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship. As this would place Maxwell in an 'exceedingly difficult' position, Whitehall was willing to offer the Chief Secretary the Malay States Information Agency provided he took up the post in November 1925. When Maxwell assumed that 'there is nothing to prevent me staying until June 1926 if I want to', Guillemard replied:

Not so far as I am concerned—but I take this offer as a hint by way of answer to your Memorial,¹ to get out comfortably to a position you want. . . . I have made no suggestion to the Secretary of State that you should be offered the appointment, and had no idea it was to be made. Quite frankly, I think it may be a result of your Memorial.²

As Guillemard knew that the Secretary of State's decision stemmed from his new policy³ and not from Maxwell's memorial, his intention clearly was to humiliate the Chief Secretary as far as possible. Stunned and indeed humiliated by the tragic turn of fortune, Maxwell willingly agreed to retire after the announcement of the new policy, but requested that the Agency offer be kept for him till his retirement in June 1926 or earlier, or alternatively that he be given time to consult his wife about the matter when she returned to Malaya early in May 1925.⁴

On 8 March Maxwell was again summoned to Government House to be told the outcome of his request. Amery's reply, based on Guillemard's recommendation, was that the original offer of the Agency should stand and that Maxwell should take a decision on it within fourteen days.⁵ The latter rejected the offer and applied for the Governorship of Kenya or any other big colony, as he felt that an acceptance would be degrading since it would create the impression that he was relinquishing his position post-haste in order to take up another. Guillemard then suggested that this could be avoided if Maxwell would announce that the new policy was his own and that he was retiring earlier to facilitate its implementation. This provoked Maxwell into stating that he 'would

never agree to the policy'.⁶ Like the first encounter, the discussion terminated with both men, as Guillemard instructed, initialling the record of the interview.

Guillemard then moved in to demolish Maxwell. In a telegram three days after the interview, he supported Maxwell's application for a Governorship but implied that should this application fail, he would not agree to Maxwell remaining in Malaya till June 1926. He explained that Maxwell categorically opposed the new policy and would from now intrigue against it.⁷ As an experienced administrator, Guillemard must have been aware that this would compel Amery to sack the Chief Secretary immediately, as indeed happened. The outcome of the interviews posed a problem that Whitehall officials had not foreseen. Until then they had confidently expected Maxwell to leave Malaya in August 1925 and move into the Malay States Information Agency three months later, as he had earlier requested to succeed Brockman in the Agency and would strongly disagree with the Guillemard policy.⁸ Now however, Whitehall officials were forced to take a second look at their decision to retire Maxwell prematurely. A key official pinpointed a problem that had emerged: 'This reorganization [of the FMS administration] is a delicate matter in which Sir George Maxwell's hostility might be embarrassing and I should prefer to see him muzzled by a government appointment.'⁹ Understandably the Colonial Office decided to keep the Agency for Maxwell in case the latter changed his mind.¹⁰ But Guillemard's despatch left the Colonial Office no option but to retire Maxwell in 'the public interest'. This, in turn, raised a constitutional obstacle. As the Malay States were technically sovereign states, the Chief Secretary could not be recalled at the King's pleasure if he should choose to challenge the Colonial Office. In that eventuality, however, Whitehall felt that a public announcement of the Secretary of State's decision would render Maxwell's position in Malaya untenable. On this basis, Amery told Maxwell on 17 March to take his pension and preserve secrecy about the new policy.¹¹

Guillemard now became overzealous in wanting to get Maxwell out of Malaya before he himself left for London on 8 May 1925. Accordingly, late in March he bluntly told Amery that he would not agree to Maxwell remaining in Malaya till November 1925.¹² Although Maxwell had undertaken to seal his lips, Guillemard still laboured under a cloud of anxiety as he was aware of the enormous influence his rival commanded in the FMS and was apprehensive that the members of the secret committees he had in mind to concert his future plans would be hampered by their awareness that their superior opposed the new policy. Another consideration was the impending return to Malaya of Maxwell's wife early in May. Guillemard warned the Colonial Office that her presence would stir personal sympathy for Maxwell and place her close friend Hose, as acting High Commissioner, in an 'intolerable' position.¹³ Consequently, Guillemard urged Whitehall to recall Maxwell home for consultation, thus preventing Lady Maxwell from sailing for Malaya and removing the Chief Secretary from the FMS for good. Feeling that Guillemard was 'pushing the Secretary of State too far', Grindle minuted, 'It would put us hopelessly in the wrong to try to interfere with Lady Maxwell's movements'.¹⁴ Besides, Whitehall officials felt that Maxwell's pledge to maintain silence 'ought to obviate any danger of his opposing or criticising [the new policy] in the meantime'.¹⁵ Whitehall accordingly accepted Maxwell's proposal to proceed on leave before retirement three months after the announcement of the policy or upon Guillemard's return to Malaya in November 1925, whichever date was the earlier.

Meanwhile, Guillemard consulted the Rulers and the Residents in a conference on 22 March 1925. He barred Maxwell from the conference lest the latter voiced dissent against the new policy—a move that proved counter-productive as events unfolded. Opening the discussion with a reminder that the Rulers and the Residents had already endorsed a decentralization policy on 23 November 1922, the High Commissioner stated that the conference was being held on the express

instruction of the Secretary of State in order to ascertain whether he had correctly presented the Rulers' views to the Colonial Office to the effect that 'decentralisation will never be a real success until we get back more nearly to the Pangkor days'. Effective decentralization would entail the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship which had adversely affected the Rulers' status and hindered closer co-operation with their Residents in advancing the welfare of the states. The bulk of the Chief Secretary's powers would then be transferred to the Rulers-in-Council or the Residents. Should the Rulers concur, Guillemard added, the Colonial Office would be prepared to sanction the new policy. Then indicating that the Secretary of State had, in fact, approved the policy and anticipated the Rulers' agreement, he concluded that 'I have his promise that I shall remain here as High Commissioner—you have already learnt that my term of office has been extended—for a period at present unspecified, which will be long enough to insure that I see the policy on a sound basis and in good working order before I finally leave Malaya.'¹⁶ As expected, the Rulers eagerly endorsed the new policy and urged an early start. The situation confronting the Residents was that the Secretary of State had approved the new policy, the High Commissioner's tenure had been extended indefinitely to implement it, and the Rulers had clamoured for its early accomplishment; besides, the Residents knew that Maxwell opposed the new policy and presumably also that he had been sacked because of his opposition. Under the circumstances, the Residents had no choice but to offer their general agreement with the Guillemard scheme.

After the conference Guillemard met four Unofficials of the Federal Council individually. He declined to consult the two Chinese Unofficials largely out of personal distrust and partly because he felt that political issues concerned only the British and the Malays. To the Colonial Office Guillemard later presented a bright account of his consultation with the Unofficials; most probably their response was not as favourable as reported. Three of the European councillors agreed

generally with the new policy, but Kindersley, a staunch supporter of Maxwell, considered the policy 'distinctly dangerous' and reserved his right to oppose it.¹⁷

By May Guillemard had decided to postpone any announcement of the new policy or the formation of secret committees in the belief that this would allow Maxwell less leeway for intrigues during his absence from Malaya. His next move was determined by Maxwell's request early in April for payment of passage to London for himself and wife and full-pay leave from November 1925 to June 1926.¹⁸ Guillemard urged the Colonial Office to grant Maxwell the above concessions as 'a security of good behaviour'. But Whitehall was keen to gild the pill of Maxwell's premature retirement so long as the Chief Secretary's requests were 'non-essential' and 'reasonable'. As Maxwell's request was eminently of this order, Guillemard's insistence created a 'most delicate and most unpleasant' situation.¹⁹ Yet the Colonial Office let him have his way. But his above and other acts led Wilson, the Permanent Under Secretary, to write later to Hugh Clifford that in the Guillemard-Maxwell quarrel 'I always thought your predecessor was not very dignified in the attitude he took up. In his position he could have afforded to be a little less biassed than he was.'²⁰ Early in July Maxwell learned that his request was granted provided he did nothing to embarrass the inauguration of the new policy.

As already noted, Maxwell agreed to retire as soon as possible during his first Government House meeting with Guillemard. But the humiliation he suffered during the interviews and more importantly, London's decision to sack him led him to decide to delay his departure up to November 1925. For this reason, Maxwell made his rejection of the Malayan Information Agency offer final in April, although the Colonial Office had just agreed, at his request, to wait till he had consulted his wife in May. He now schemed to work on his old friend Hose and through the latter, gain the ear of the Secretary of State and hopefully derail the new policy. The opening shot in this game was a memorial he sent

to London on 8 June detailing the two interviews with Guillemard. He complained that Guillemard had prejudiced his case by sending an inaccurate and tendentious account of the interviews to the Secretary of State and categorically denied he had ever stated that he 'would never agree to the policy'. According to his notes, what he did say was that he would not agree to announce the new policy as his own and that the policy would amount to 'a terrible change'.²¹ Maxwell stressed that his views had not been considered and that he was barred from attending Guillemard's conference with the Rulers and the Residents. But this attempt to get a hearing from London failed. Collins minuted in amusement that Maxwell 'has a singular talent for elaborating details which all amount to just about nothing',²² while Hose rightly felt that he had delivered himself more completely into Guillemard's hands. The point is that in a related memorial dated 16 June Maxwell reiterated his unqualified opposition to the new policy.²³

The Maxwell manoeuvre, however, left a deep impression on Hose. In December 1924 Hose himself had sent a memorandum to Collins advocating a policy leading to the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship; in April 1925 Guillemard had successfully persuaded the Colonial Office to earmark Hose for succession to Maxwell so that he could help carry out the new policy.²⁴ But in his memorandum Hose stressed that 'Sir George Maxwell has rendered such signal service to Malaya that it would be peculiarly ungracious to inaugurate any such policy during his tenure of office.'²⁵ Understandably he now felt a pang of innermost sympathy for his lifelong friend, Maxwell. Not only was the new policy introduced during Maxwell's time but the Chief Secretary was soon to be also eliminated by it, and presently was being shabbily excluded from the entire consultation exercise. In this frame of mind, Hose received Maxwell's second move in June in the form of a document on decentralization, intended for Whitehall and presumably enlarged into a bulky memorandum discussed later, which contained many views and criticisms he

informed the Colonial Office he concurred with.²⁶ In other words Maxwell was the decisive influence undermining Hose's support for Guillemard and leading him to have a second look at decentralization. By June, long before 'public' opposition to the Guillemard policy made itself felt, Hose had begun to succumb to the Maxwell charm. He was soon to revert to his past conservative views on decentralization, which apparently were akin to those of British officialdom as a whole.²⁷ Early in August Hose advised the Colonial Office:

Some of the best official opinion here is to the effect that it is better at this stage not to be committed to any concrete change in administration and that it is advisable merely to insist for the present on accelerated decentralisation and to determine at a later date and having regard to progress made what definite changes can be effected. I concur with this view.²⁸

By then Guillemard had lost a key supporter of his policy.

Earlier in June 1925 the situation had tilted slightly in Maxwell's favour. In fact, Hose was 'drifting into the arms of Maxwell' and now tried 'to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds'.²⁹ In a private letter to Guillemard on 18 June Hose tried to repair the breach between Guillemard and Maxwell. He requested that Maxwell be allowed to stay till June 1926 if the latter agreed to withdraw his opposition and co-operate to further the new policy. Whitehall officials warmly welcomed this gesture;³⁰ Guillemard had no choice but to go along with Hose. When Maxwell learned of this at the end of July, he rejected it out of hand stating that 'he does not wish to be asked to discuss the extent and details of the policy since he considers it to be disastrous'.³¹

Hose however, persisted. This time he attempted to persuade the Colonial Office to accommodate Maxwell. The occasion for this was a leak on the new policy as reported in the *London Times* on 15 June and reproduced in the *Straits Times* in Malaya exactly a month later. The report alleged that the Chief Secretaryship would be abolished on Maxwell's retirement and that the High Commissioner would then

centralize control over the FMS in Singapore. On 30 July Hose proposed to issue a communiqué on the report, which he showed to Maxwell without London's sanction, that stated that the government 'aimed at the greatest possible decentralisation to the local government of each individual state'. The communiqué denied any truth in the *London Times* report, but made no mention at all of any policy leading to the eventual abolition of the chief secretaryship.³² Hose was fully aware that the above represented a major retreat from Whitehall's stand on decentralization as explained to Maxwell by Guillemard during the Government House interviews and as recorded in the official documents accessible to him. Apparently it was a calculated attempt to clear the way for Maxwell to remain in Malaya till normal retirement in June 1926. Not surprisingly, on 7 August, Hose informed London that Maxwell had conditionally agreed to help advance the new policy provided he be given a right to express 'his opinions freely and frankly' and an assurance from the Secretary of State of 'an open mind on the policy of eventual abolition of [the] Chief Secretaryship'. If this assurance was not forthcoming, then Maxwell intended to leave Malaya in November as planned.³³

Unhappy with Hose's communiqué, Collins and Guillemard jointly framed a replacement, which focused attention on decentralization from the Federal Secretariat to the states leading to a 'considerable re-arrangement of the functions now centred in the Chief Secretary'. The statement however, made no clear-cut commitment to the eventual abolition of the Chief Secretaryship but stated instead that 'the whole matter is still under consideration'.³⁴ Although the above statement was drafted before receipt of Hose's despatch of 7 August, the Colonial Office proceeded to despatch it to Hose on 13 August, thus allowing Maxwell to serve till normal retirement on his own terms.³⁵

One key reason behind this was the desire to contain the incipient agitation against the new policy and play for time till Guillemard returned to Malaya in November to take charge

of the situation. To issue a clear-cut commitment to the eventual abolition of the Chief Secretaryship (and thus eliminate Maxwell) would only intensify agitation which might prove embarrassing with the High Commissioner away from the Malayan scene.³⁶ Perhaps equally important the Colonial Office had not quite overcome its sense of uneasiness over the failure to muzzle Maxwell with the Agency. The manner by which the Chief Secretary was eliminated did not altogether conform with the British Malayan tradition of open and adequate consultation of vital issues with all interested parties before implementation. Guillemard's total exclusion of Maxwell from the consultation exercise created the impression that justice, even if done, was not seen to have been done; Hose even implicitly attributed it to 'personal reasons' involving Maxwell and Guillemard.³⁷ 'It is of paramount importance', Hose frankly told Collins on 7 August, 'to avoid the grave scandal of official disagreement resulting in [the] premature retirement of Maxwell without [him] having been consulted'.³⁸ But if the 'scandal' could not be averted, the government would only be presenting opponents of the new policy with 'a martyr and such a martyr as Maxwell' who commanded such immense influence within the Malayan commercial community.³⁹ And all this was to be borne, Hose pointed out, in order to remove Maxwell from the FMS four or five months earlier than his normal retirement. Advising Whitehall to reverse its decision, Hose stated, 'Even if Maxwell's opinions fail to convince you the time lost by his remaining until April [1926] is insignificant compared with the deplorable effect of the scandal to which I have referred.'⁴⁰ Faced with such formidable reasons the Colonial Office decided to step down; Guillemard again had no choice but to follow suit. On 18 August the Colonial Office advised Hose that Maxwell's terms were acceptable provided the Chief Secretary transmitted his comments on the new policy solely through official and confidential channel. As this *modus vivendi* allowed him sufficient scope to oppose the Guillemard scheme, Maxwell accepted it three days later.⁴¹

THE INITIAL HUSTLING

Meanwhile, at the time Guillemard left for London early in May, nearly all the anti-Guillemard forces—Chinese Unofficials of the Federal Council, commercial interests, Malayan English newspapers, and many British officials—knew hardly anything about, least of all were they organized against, the new policy. But there were already gentle murmurs of discontent among the European Unofficials Guillemard consulted. All of them were aggrieved by Guillemard's instruction, intended to plug a possible loophole of leakage and prevent organization of dissent, that they maintained complete individual secrecy and refrained from discussing the policy among themselves or with anyone else. It was cold comfort to be told they might discuss the issue with Hose who would soon act as High Commissioner. Handicapped by the lack of detailed knowledge of the new policy, they understandably adopted the strategy of attacking Guillemard's method of consultation. On the eve of the High Commissioner's departure, two Unofficials, Kindersley and Ritchie, protested against the embargo imposed on them; on 26 May, the former carried this protest to the Colonial Office, at the same time playing up the fact that Maxwell was excluded from Guillemard's conference with the Rulers and the Residents.⁴² However, all this was muffled and unknown to the administration at large and the public.

The agitation widened and came into the open for the first time after the *London Times* item on the new policy appeared in the *Straits Times* on 15 July. In a public meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 13 August the Planters' Association of Malaya, FMS Chamber of Commerce, Asiatic Planters' Association, and other bodies raised their mast of obstruction against what had now been branded Guillemard's 'secret policy'. The meeting expressed 'grave concern' over the absence of any government statement on the *London Times* report and requested an official assurance of full and free consultation with all interested parties before any change was

carried out. The Malayan newspapers splashed the news of this event on a prominent page and commenced a campaign against 'the secret policy'. Not knowing details of the Guillemard policy, and taking the cue from the *London Times* report, they exploited wild rumours—chiefly those concerning the abolition of the chief secretaryship and the Federal Council, and the High Commissioner personally taking over the running of the FMS administration. As already discussed, the *London Times* report led to the government communiqué on the new policy and to Maxwell regaining his right to serve till normal retirement in June 1926.

On 19 August 1925 the Colonial Office communiqué on decentralization was published in the Malayan press and had the immediate effect of extending agitation to the Chinese Unofficials of the Federal Council. Already resentful at having been cold-shouldered by Guillemard, the two Chinese members—Choo Kia Peng and Wong Yick Thong—immediately protested that it was not true that they had been consulted as the communiqué implied; their action was reinforced by another protest against the injunction on individual secrecy by Ritchie, another Unofficial, a day later, 20 August.⁴³ The Chinese protest exposed another tactical error made by Guillemard⁴⁴ and brought embarrassment to the Colonial Office, but had no influence whatsoever on Whitehall's decision on 13 August to allow Maxwell to serve till his normal retirement.

In their remonstrance the Chinese Unofficials revealed their intention to issue a public statement repudiating the Colonial Office communiqué. Guillemard advised them not to do so. He explained that his failure to consult them was due to a mere oversight on his part.⁴⁵ Rejecting this explanation out of hand, the Chinese Unofficials then threatened to organize Chinese mass meetings on Guillemard's return to demand a public apology amounting to the latter's recall from Malaya.⁴⁶ As Hose rightly pointed out to the Colonial Office, the protesters were incensed by the High Commissioner's lack of trust in them personally.⁴⁷ Hose advised the

Colonial Office to disavow Guillemard's method of consultation, as the Chinese Unofficials urged, so that the 'British reputation for impartiality' in administration would be 'maintained beyond reproach'.

The whole affair, as Collins rightly summed up, was an 'overdone outcry',⁴⁸ just as Guillemard's reaction to it was equally 'overdone'. While Collins felt that Hose was pretty badly rattled by the Chinese protest, Guillemard believed that the agitation was the handiwork of Maxwell, and suspected that Hose, Maxwell, and the Chinese Unofficials were acting in concert to embarrass his new policy. Accordingly he pressed Whitehall to censure Hose. This was overruled by Wilson who believed nothing could be gained from it as Hose had already indicated his intention to retire in November 1925.⁴⁹ 'Less than six weeks ago', Wilson added, 'Sir Laurence Guillemard could not have been more enthusiastic than he was in praising Mr. Hose to me.'⁵⁰ Rationalizing on the Chinese protest, Guillemard advised Collins of the growing political ambition of Malayan Chinese to run the country themselves and that this must be strongly resisted. Presumably the view of Guillemard and Whitehall officials was significantly influenced by Chinese strikes in Hong Kong around mid-1925 which nearly paralyzed the island. Early in September the Colonial Office bluntly told Hose that political questions such as decentralization only concerned the British and the Malays and that any Chinese attempt to exert control over Malaya should be nipped in the bud at once.⁵¹ To this Hose cogently rebutted that the point at issue was 'not that Chinese claim that their interests and opinions should control Malaya but that Chinese members of Council claim that they should be accorded equal degree of confidence with other members of Council'. 'The difficulty of the position', he rightly added, 'is that [Sir Laurence] excluded the two Chinese members and no others'⁵² from the preliminary consultation. In any case early in October the Chinese Unofficials decided to call off the agitation till Guillemard's return to Malaya when they planned to demand a public apology in the Federal Council.

The enlargement of local agitation and the publication of the Colonial Office communiqué invariably led to the removal in September of the embargo Guillemard imposed on the European Unofficials concerning discussion of the new policy. The Chinese and European Unofficials then avidly discussed the new policy among themselves, prepared the ground, and marshalled support for the anticipated tussle on Guillemard's return to Malaya in November 1925. In other words, an anti-Guillemard camp had emerged in the FMS.

At this stage, the agitation against 'the secret policy' had impinged on the bureaucracy, for faint rumblings of dissent were soon heard among certain British officials. Ignorant of the details of the new policy, these officials anchored their dissent to the Galloway Report, the most violent attack on the Hose scheme administered by a committee of medical men appointed by Guillemard in February 1925. At this time, the Medical Department was in a state of disarray chiefly because of conflicts within the department and between the Principal Medical Officer and the Chief Secretary. Decentralization aggravated the situation to a certain extent, as it injected an element of dual control into the department,⁵³ but was seized upon by the Galloway Committee as the scapegoat responsible for 'splitting up the Medical Department into smaller units, each unit working under lay control'. Charging that the Hose scheme had subverted discipline and emasculated the Principal Medical Officer, the committee warned that 'the decentralization of the small and already unpopular FMS medical service will lead to its rapid and complete disintegration'.⁵⁴ On the eve of his departure for London, Guillemard directed that the Galloway Report be kept strictly confidential lest it fostered opposition to his new policy.⁵⁵ There now emerged in official circle 'strong feeling' that the report should be circulated among the Unofficials or published⁵⁶ so as to build up opposition against the Guillemard policy. (The report however, was not published until after Guillemard returned to Malaya in November 1925.)

In October the agitation spread to London where the Association of British Malaya, led by Frank Swettenham, entered the scene against Guillemard. Under the pull of this agitation, Guillemard consulted Swettenham and Ernest Birch on his new policy. He won over Birch, a staunch champion of 'state rights', who felt compelled to support his proposal of converting the FMS executive head into a coordinating Federal Secretary as over-centralization had resulted when the Federation was under a Resident-General and then under a Chief Secretary. Birch also urged the abolition, or the drastic reduction of the size, of federal departments, an idea not found in the Guillemard scheme. Convinced that the above proposals were essential to overcome the Rulers' dissatisfaction, Birch entreated the Association of British Malaya not to fight for the restoration of the title of Resident-General.⁵⁷ Guillemard, however, made no impression on Swettenham who was convinced that the new policy was both ill-conceived and impracticable.

After the meeting with the High Commissioner, Swettenham met Amery, the Secretary of State, to press his views and subsequently, as requested, submitted a hard-hitting memorandum opposing the Guillemard scheme. He contended that over-centralization in the FMS could be overcome by restoring the title of Resident-General, by instructing the High Commissioner, Resident-General, and Residents to adhere closely to their respective roles under Federation, and by frequently consulting the Malay Rulers and Chiefs about public matters. According to him there was nothing inherently wrong with the system of administration he established; the fault lay in his successors' deviation from previous practice and policy. The Federation Scheme of 1896, he concluded with an air of authority, should therefore be restored *in toto*.⁵⁸ While recognizing Swettenham as the leading authority on Malaya, the Colonial Office rejected his views as out-of-date.⁵⁹ More helpful to Maxwell perhaps, was a letter to Amery from F. G. Penny, a former Malayan businessman and now Conservative Member of Parliament with powerful influ-

ence in the Colonial Office, who had obviously received appeals from Malayan commercial interests to assist. He stated that 'extreme antagonism' had emerged in Malaya against Guillemard for his attitude towards Maxwell, and between the two men, the general feeling there was that Maxwell 'is far and away the better man'. Although both Guillemard and Maxwell were 'personal friends', Penny added that 'I should be wrong if I were not to apprise you of this so that you would not take for granted that the wrong is all on one side.'⁶⁰ This plea for a fair hearing of Maxwell's views, as we shall see, did have some effect on the Colonial Office.

Upon his return to Malaya in November Guillemard encountered a potentially different situation astir with the excitement of impending conflicts. He arrived in the nick of time to face the charge of the bull. From Maxwell came a lengthy memorandum assaulting the new policy root and branch. The apparent aim of the memorandum was to assist the official and unofficial members of the Federal Council in dealing with the new policy;⁶¹ the real aim, as Guillemard rightly surmised, was to 'create an atmosphere of opposition' to his scheme. Knowing that the memorandum would inevitably be sent to London, Maxwell presumably also intended to answer Whitehall's charge that he had been 'playing with decentralization'. Through the memorandum he would show that his own experiment was in the main frustrated by other British officials, and at the same time demonstrate the enormous complexities of the problem, thereby hopefully dampening the Colonial Office's enthusiasm for the Guillemard scheme.

In his memorandum Maxwell traced the establishment of the Resident system in the Western Malay states and the natural evolution of this system into Federation. Not knowing details of the new policy, he assumed that Guillemard intended to break up this Federation in order to restore each state to its position before 1896.⁶² In any case, he considered the Chief Secretaryship as such an indispensable part of the federal administration that its abolition would be tan-

tamount to the destruction of the existing Federation. Adopting a strong posture in defence of the Federation, Maxwell poured scorn on the new policy to the effect that 'for better or for worse, the four States have now been federated, and it is as impossible to destroy that federation as it is to restore an omelette to the egg stage'.⁶³ Admittedly he had failed to demonstrate the absolute necessity of the Chief Secretaryship to the survival of the Federation. Later in reporting to the Colonial Office Guillemard more than adequately dealt with Maxwell's posturing by pointing out that there was no intention at all to dissolve the Federation of the four states.⁶⁴

Maxwell also recounted how Guillemard had progressively downgraded the status of the Chief Secretaryship since 1921. He warned that 'any project to reduce further the status of the Chief Secretary and to divide some of his powers and duties between the High Commissioner on the one side, and the State Councils and Residents on the other, must be disastrous';⁶⁵ such a move would also be unnecessary as the Residents had never protested against the Chief Secretary's powers. They supported the existing system for the sake of uniformity and continuity of policy and because of the benefit of expert advice from Federal Heads of departments. Subject to the above constraints, the Residents, Maxwell added, 'have not only as much power as their predecessors, but even greater authority' since they now looked after more developed areas and larger population.⁶⁶ The above assertions weakened Maxwell's memorandum. His denial of the existence of administrative over-centralization in the hands of the Chief Secretary contradicted his earlier advocacy of decentralization from the Federal Secretariat to the states.

Commenting on the new policy, Maxwell dismissed the proposed abolition of the Chief Secretaryship as both impracticable and detrimental to efficiency. First, such a move would shatter the 'public confidence in the Federal administration' upon which European and Chinese entrepreneurs had agreed to sink massive investment in Malaya that had brought

about the current prosperity of the FMS. For this reason the Chinese and European communities 'can demand, as of right, to be consulted before any [such] change is made in the constitution of the country'.⁶⁷ Thus, pre-empting newspaper response to the Guillemard scheme, as discussed later, Maxwell posited non-Malay viewpoint against Malay interest on the question of decentralization.

Second, Maxwell contended that the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship would damage the interests of the FMS. The first reason for this (a dubious one) was that a High Commissioner, new to the country, would not be able to take the place of the Chief Secretary in the Federal Council. Taking a dig at Guillemard, Maxwell claimed that even when the High Commissioner 'has some five or six years experience, he can hardly undertake this duty'.⁶⁸ Maxwell's second reason was that the Chief Secretary was an essential equivoise to the Colonial Secretary in the Straits Settlements and that his disappearance would harm the FMS when its interests failed to harmonize with those of the Colony.⁶⁹ There was substance in this allegation. When FMS interests clashed with Colony interests, the Colonial Secretary, having better access to the High Commissioner and briefed to champion the Colony's viewpoint, would press his views more effectively than a junior Federal Secretary. In any case, Maxwell rightly claimed that 'even if [FMS interests] do not suffer, it is extremely probable that public opinion in the FMS will believe that they do suffer'. Finally Maxwell contended:

It is obvious that in any Federation, there must be a senior administrative officer who is in a position to decide disputes between the State[s] and the Federal authorities, namely, the Residents and the Heads of the great Federal Departments. This officer must be one whose decision carries the respect of all; and it is manifest that the decision of an officer junior to a Resident or to a Federal Head of Department would not carry that respect. If some junior officer is to take the place of the Chief Secretary, it follows inevitably that decisions must be carried to the High Commissioner. Any such system means . . . the conversion of a High Commissioner into a Governor.⁷⁰

Except for the last sentence, the above assertion is indisputable and was virtually admitted by Collins himself.

Undoubtedly, the above views of Maxwell were deeply-rooted in the mind of Malayan commercial interests and other influential groups in the FMS. But the solution Maxwell advocated, which urged that the government should revert to the original system, backed by treaty, of having a Resident-General under the High Commissioner, had little appeal to these interests. In this Maxwell agreed with Frank Swettenham and no doubt, this would have won him much support within the Association of British Malaya. But the unofficials of the Federal Council and other FMS groups, although sympathetic, regarded the proposal as a futile one as succinctly explained by the *Malay Mail* on 5 November 1925:

We would like to see a restoration of the title and independence of the Resident-General. But we have ceased to advocate this particular ideal for several reasons. The Colonial Office absolutely refuses to entertain the proposal; and neither their Highnesses the Rulers nor the British Residents have, so far as we know, ever expressed the slightest desire for such a restoration. And as usual the public are apathetic.⁷¹

To redeem his own credibility with the Colonial Office, Maxwell explained at considerable length his decentralization experiment. Here Maxwell craftily used the views of his British colleagues to deepen Whitehall's awareness of the dangers to administrative efficiency involved and the caution essential in the implementation of any decentralization policy. He reiterated the conclusion of the Hose Report that decentralization should progress by stages and outlined the condemnation by the Galloway Report of decentralization in the Medical Department. He then reproduced the entire memorandum by Wolff condemning the present State Councils as unfit to shoulder any significant degree of administrative, legislative, and financial powers.⁷² To this he added the fact that these councils consisted predominantly of non-English-speaking Malay aristocrats and warned that the careless inclusion of non-Malay members in these councils might swamp

the former. Speaking from personal experience, Maxwell stressed that these councils were far inferior to those of Johor and Kedah chiefly because of the markedly 'lower intelligence' of the Malay councillors in the FMS. The FMS therefore, must continue to rely on the Federal Council. 'We cannot be too thankful', Maxwell concluded, 'that we have in the Federal Council, with all its imperfections, an institution in which public opinion can find some expression.'⁷³ In this Maxwell went along with FMS commercial interests and differed from Frank Swettenham who was implicitly prepared to see the Federal Council abolished. The gist of Maxwell's message was that decentralization should not impair the Federal Council and entrust responsibilities and authority to State Councils not ready and capable enough to shoulder them effectively. There is no doubt that this section of the memorandum commanded wide support among Malayan capitalist interests and within British officialdom; in fact, his comments on the Federal and State Councils were subsequently echoed by the Malayan English newspapers. Even Guillemard grudgingly conceded that Maxwell's advice on the need for caution in decentralization 'is useful'.⁷⁴

As the memorandum was written as a broadside against the new policy, Maxwell was understandably very vague on the need for decentralization in the FMS. He implied that decentralization should proceed to a stage when 'federal authorities [should concern] themselves with federal matters, and such State matters as required uniformity of practice, and all State matters [should be] left, as far as is practicable, to the Rulers, the State Councils and the Residents'.⁷⁵ Maxwell explicitly reaffirmed his support for 'devolution to the Rulers and the State Councils' so as to give them 'a greater share and a keener interest in the administration of the States'. But he warned that decentralization to the Residents, carried to an inordinate extent, would merely return the FMS to the 'somewhat distracted affairs' of the later days of the Resident system; it was to restore order to chaos that the FMS was formed in 1896.⁷⁶

It is clear that Maxwell's memorandum would not prove useful to all who desired an accelerated programme of decentralization in the FMS. No constructive suggestions on this score could be found in it. Although Guillemard denigrated the memorandum as 'a ridiculous composition',⁷⁷ he nonetheless recognized the potency of Maxwell's ideas, many of which were of abiding interest to and were long considered valid by influential quarters in the FMS. Partly because of the abrasive overtones of personal animosity, and chiefly because it would foment opposition to his scheme, the High Commissioner forbade Maxwell to circulate it among the unofficial members of the Federal Council.

THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW POLICY

In December 1925 Guillemard was all set to launch his policy. But first, he despatched Maxwell's memorandum to the Colonial Office. In a brief report he stated that he did not regard the memorandum as 'an honest attempt to state problems' to be dealt with. As the memorandum was intended to foster opposition to his policy, Guillemard urged Whitehall to support him in prohibiting its circulation among the unofficial councillors.⁷⁸ On the eve of the inauguration of the new policy in the Federal Council, Guillemard was in a sanguine and optimistic mood. He informed Collins that he expected 'to romp home' and foresaw no serious troubles unless 'Maxwell goes mad' by publicly opposing it;⁷⁹ in that eventuality he would telegraph London to have Maxwell recalled home for good. On 14 December, 'amid rumours of rows and resignations of certain Unofficials', the High Commissioner outlined his scheme to the Federal Council. He gently chided the Unofficials for an 'unintentional' leakage of his policy but apologized for not having consulted the two Chinese councillors during the preliminary discussions. He assured the Council that as Governor-High Commissioner in the new order, he would hold the 'balance even' between the interests of the Colony and those of the FMS. He then needled Max-

well by expressing doubts that this could be accomplished if his successor were a former Colonial Secretary or Chief Secretary in Malaya. In another provocative vein he ended his speech by stating that 'the acid test of my policy is the attitude of the Rulers of the FMS'.⁸⁰ His presentation stirred no uproar in the Council, and Maxwell did not attack the policy as Guillemard feared he would 'like Ajax in the lime-light defying lightning'.⁸¹ As Guillemard later informed the Colonial Office, he was 'on the whole satisfied' with the inauguration of the new policy.

The scheme thus presented was essentially the same as that adumbrated in his despatch of 21 October 1924 to the Colonial Office. Certain changes however, were made to meet existing circumstances in Malaya. As expected, Guillemard carefully avoided any mention of decentralization as a step towards a larger Malayan federation in order not to generate suspicion and unrest in the UMS. His views on the role of federal departmental heads as explained in his October despatch were also deleted partly because he did not believe much decentralization was attainable in that direction and partly because he wished to free his policy from the harsh criticisms voiced by the Galloway Report. In answer to Swettenham's and Maxwell's agitation for the restoration of the title of Resident-General, he curtly stated that the question was outside the pale of practical politics and would provide no solution to the FMS problem. Another point to note was that in view of the explicit statement on the degree of power to be devolved to the State Councils and the steps to achieve this, the scheme was superior to that presented to Whitehall in October 1924. Guillemard clearly explained that the abolition of the Federal Council was never entertained. Under the scheme however, the legislature's 'work will be diminished and the width of its authority curtailed' because a large degree of legislative and financial powers would be restored to the State Councils to be detailed by a Legal Committee and a Financial Committee he intended to appoint. The four Residents would likewise be constituted a committee to tackle

'the general question of administrative devolution and the consequent changes in General Orders'.⁸² It was on the last body that Guillemard largely depended for recommendations to abolish the Chief Secretaryship and unknot the over-centralized FMS.

The Guillemard scheme, whose 'contents had been more or less anticipated',⁸³ split the council members. Long before its inauguration, the protagonists had crystallized their thoughts and formulated their strategies towards the new policy. In a restrained and 'statesmanlike' fashion, J. H. Robson presented the opposition case on behalf of the Chinese and European Unofficials. He began by reiterating the view held by the Unofficials since 1922 that the status and influence of the FMS Rulers should be enhanced and that 'a generous measure of local self-government' be conferred on the four states. This should nevertheless leave the FMS administration to be headed by a resident executive head with a status at least equal to that of the Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlements. While this indicated that the Unofficials had dropped their support for the restoration of the Resident-General title, it also meant a firm rejection of the central pillar of the Guillemard scheme. Besides, the Unofficials feared the idea of the federal administration being directly run from Singapore and being eventually merged with the Colony's administration. This explains Robson's suggestion that Malaya be placed under a distinct High Commissioner who would exercise a controlling influence on the Governor of the Straits Settlements, the executive head and Residents of the FMS, and the British Advisers in the UMS. Finally Robson urged the convening of a conference so that the Unofficials could hear the views of the Chief Secretary, Residents, and other high British officials on the new policy.⁸⁴ The aim was to enable Maxwell to speak out against the policy. Overall, Robson's speech amounted to a gentle but firm rejection of the Guillemard scheme.

The Malay Rulers and the lone Malaya Unofficial, Raja Chulan (the Raja-di-Hilir of Perak), however, rallied behind

the High Commissioner. In 'an event of rare occurrence',⁸⁵ the Sultan of Perak voiced his heartfelt gratitude for the new policy and the personal friendship of Guillemard. The Yam Tuan of Negri Sembilan recounted his initial opposition to the Federation Treaty and later the formation of the Federal Council, till he was assured that the above moves would not lead to the amalgamation of the states. This assurance, he charged, had been violated and he therefore fully supported the Guillemard scheme which sought to return to 'the original principles' of the Federation. The most impressive speech was delivered by Raja Chulan, English-educated son of the exiled Sultan Abdullah of Perak and a retired member of the MCS. Supporting the Yam Tuan, Raja Chulan stressed that over-centralization at Kuala Lumpur had 'left the State Councils less than their proper share in the administration'. He praised Guillemard as 'a great administrator' and for his 'far-seeing and generous policy of decentralization'. He explained:

This is a great historic occasion and speaking as a Malay member of this Council I say that the policy of giving back a larger measure of independence to the individual states is worthy of the highest British tradition. It is fresh proof that the trust which we Malays have always reposed on the good faith of His Majesty's Government will never be betrayed. The word of the British Government is its bond and we welcome Your Excellency's reference to the spirit of the early treaties.

I know the Malays are ready and eager to take up some of the burden which in less enlightened times fell almost entirely upon the British officers of that fine service—the MCS. Today Malays are responding eagerly to the call of their country.

I feel sure that among no section of the community will [the scheme] receive greater appreciation than among the Malays.⁸⁶

Late in December 1925 Guillemard submitted a favourable report on the occasion to the Colonial Office. The Rulers had given their unqualified support, and he was confident of adequately answering all future criticisms of the policy from the Unofficials. He then outlined his strategy to Collins:

My intention is to concentrate on (a) [the enhancing of the Rulers' status and 'generous' decentralisation to the states] for the present.

When we see how far we can go in devolution of the Chief Secretary's powers under (a) it will then be enough to consider (b) [the Chief Secretary's status]. By that time Maxwell will have gone when the atmosphere will improve.⁸⁷

Guillemard's report and Maxwell's memorandum were jointly considered by Whitehall officials. Without the least hesitation the Colonial Office endorsed Guillemard's embargo on the circulation of Maxwell's memorandum to the Unofficials; it went further to stress that this decision was irreversible. It was also ready to recall the Chief Secretary from Malaya but no telegram about this arrived from the High Commissioner. Collins, Grindle, and Wilson fully agreed that the new policy had made 'a decidedly good start' although Collins hoped that the report was not too 'couleur de Guillemard'.⁸⁸ But they must have noted that the High Commissioner had made no explicit statement on the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship in his report. It was clear to them that the future of this post now hinged on the recommendations of the committees Guillemard intended to form. As the report was favourable, and as specific measures for action could best be worked out by the men on the spot, there was very little the Colonial Office officials could usefully suggest; understandably Collins minuted, 'Until things develop, the less we say the better.'⁸⁹ At this stage Whitehall officials did not waver in their support of Guillemard; rather it may well be argued that the strategy adopted indicates that it was the High Commissioner himself who vacillated on his stand towards the Chief Secretaryship before the storm of opposition broke in the FMS.

1. This was the memorial Maxwell sent to Whitehall in December 1924 requesting the Secretary of State to instruct Guillemard to withdraw the censure inflicted on him as a result of a disagreement over cuts in the 1925 budget. See Chapter 7.

2. Typed Copy of Minutes of Interviews signed by Maxwell and Guillemard 28.2.1925, CO 717/42.

3. See Amery to Guillemard 25.2.1925, CO 273/526/1924.
4. Guillemard to Amery 1.3.1925, CO 717/41.
5. Ibid. Amery to Guillemard 6.3.1925, *ibid.*
6. Typed Copy of Minutes of Interviews signed by Maxwell and Guillemard 8.3.1925, CO 717/42.
7. Guillemard to Amery 11.3.1925, CO 717/41.
8. Minute by Collins 12.12.1924, CO 717/34.
9. Minute by H. Lambert 14.3.1925, CO 717/41.
10. Amery to Guillemard 17.3.1925, *ibid.* For Maxwell's final rejection of the Agency offer, see Guillemard to Amery 27.4.1925, *ibid.*
11. Amery to Guillemard 17.3.1925, *ibid.*
12. Guillemard to Amery 26.3.1925, *ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. Minute by Grindle 30.3.1925, *ibid.*
15. Amery to Guillemard 31.3.1925, *ibid.*
16. Cecil Clementi to Philip Cunliffe-Lister 18.2.1932, CO 717/88/92300 Part I/1932.
17. Kindersley to Guillemard 27.4.1925, CO 717/47.
18. Guillemard to Amery 8.4.1925, CO 717/41.
19. Minute by Grindle 2.7.1925, *ibid.*
20. Wilson to Clifford 7.2.1928, CO 717/59. Wilson was replying to a complaint by Clifford, Guillemard's successor, that the Guillemard-Maxwell squabbles adversely affected the FMS administration. Presumably Wilson also had in mind incidents like the two Government House interviews between Maxwell and Guillemard, Guillemard's attempts to prevent Lady Maxwell from sailing to Malaya, his efforts to bar Maxwell completely from his decentralization programme, and his opposition to Maxwell being given three-months leave with pay after May 1926. The position was that Hose, as Acting High Commissioner, promised Maxwell the above grant between May and August 1926. The Secretary of State more than readily endorsed this concession in view of Maxwell's distinguished service in Malaya. Guillemard opposed this on personal and technical grounds. He pointed out that Maxwell's retirement should officially occur on 9 June and that Hose had no sanction from Whitehall to promise Maxwell anything. He also gave some fatuous argument that to extend Maxwell's leave to August 1926 would strengthen the latter's opposition to the new policy. The Secretary of State pointed out that the regulation allowed an officer to retire beyond the age limit of fifty-five years and rightly stated that Maxwell

could do no more harm to the new policy if he retired in August 1926. But regarding the matter as 'a petty affair', he allowed Guillemard to have his way. Consequently, Maxwell was given a grant of paid leave from 7 May when he left Malaya to 9 June 1926, the official date of his retirement. Unlike other officers therefore, Maxwell did not enjoy three-months paid leave before retirement.

21. Memorial to the Secretary of State by Maxwell 8.6.1925, CO 717/42.

22. Minute by Collins 29.7.1925, *ibid.*

23. Maxwell to Hose 16.6.1925, *ibid.* The first newspaper report of the new policy appeared in the *London Times* of 15 June. It was most unlikely that Maxwell was aware of it when he wrote to Hose on the same day, 16 June (Malayan time). It seems certain that he was not influenced by newspaper agitation when he reiterated his unqualified opposition to the new policy.

24. Guillemard to Amery 16.4.1925, CO 717/41.

25. Some Notes on the Problem of the Future Administration of the Malayan Territories under the Control, direct or indirect, of the Colonial Office 28.12.1924, CO 717/40. It was possible that Hose's scheme was based on ideas discussed between himself and Guillemard and represented a bid for the chief secretaryship after Maxwell's retirement.

26. Hose to Amery 24.6.1925, CO 717/42. The Colonial Office declined to receive this document because Maxwell maintained his unqualified opposition to the new policy.

27. See discussion in Chapter 10.

28. Hose to Amery 7.8.1925, CO 717/42.

29. Collins to Guillemard 10.8.1925, *ibid.*

30. Hose to Guillemard 18.6.1925, *ibid.* 'A letter very creditable to Mr. Hose', minuted Amery 17.7.1925, *ibid.* With regard to Hose's gesture, Collins commented, 'I should regard this as the lesser of the two evils' (the other being Maxwell's premature retirement). Minute by Collins 29.7.1925, *ibid.*

31. Hose to Guillemard 30.7.1925, *ibid.*

32. Hose to Amery 30.7.1925, *ibid.*

33. Hose to Amery 7.8.1925, *ibid.*

34. Amery to Hose 13.8.1925, *ibid.*

35. Minute by Collins 12.8.1925, *ibid.*

36. Guillemard to Ormsby-Gore 5.7.1925, CO 717/47.

37. Hose to Amery 24.6.1925, CO 717/42.

38. Hose to Amery 7.8.1925, *ibid.*

39. Hose to Guillemard 18.6.1925, *ibid.*

40. Hose to Amery 7.8.1925, *ibid.*

41. Amery to Hose 18.8.1925, *ibid.*; Hose to Amery 21.8.1925, *ibid.*

42. Both Ritchie and Robson supported Kindersley's protest to the Colonial Office against Guillemard's embargo. Kindersley to Ormsby-Gore 26.5.1925, CO 717/47; Hose to Amery 20.8.1925, CO 717/42. Yet in answering Kindersley's letter to Ormsby-Gore on 26 May, Guillemard wrote, 'None of the other Unofficials objected . . . Poor Kindersley had to object. He cannot (lacking the machinery) think for himself, and only says what Maxwell tells him. "His master's voice".' Guillemard to Ormsby-Gore 5.7.1925, CO 717/47.

43. Hose to Amery 19.8.1925 and 20.8.1925, CO 717/42.

44. Collins minuted, 'Of course Sir Laurence Guillemard made a mistake in not consulting them privately and is now aware of it.' Minute 9.10.1925, CO 717/43.

45. Amery to Hose 29.8.1925, *ibid.*

46. Choo Kia Peng to Hose 1.9.1925, encl. to Hose to Amery 3.9.1925, *ibid.*

47. Guillemard himself told Collins, 'Choo Kia Peng is not a bad little man but a bit swollen headed. [I did not consult him] because he is careless in confidential matters and I am afraid he would talk. His colleague is a Second', Guillemard to Collins 19.8.1925, CO 717/42.

48. Minute by Collins 9.10.1925, CO 717/43.

49. After his support for Maxwell and the Chinese Unofficials, Hose knew his position was no longer tenable. So on 1 September he signified his intention to retire in November 1925. Soon after this, Guillemard and the Colonial Office selected William Peel as the future successor to Maxwell.

50. Minute by Wilson 3.10.1925, CO 717/43.

51. Hose to Amery 12.9.1925 and Minute by Collins 10.9.1925, *ibid.*

52. Hose to Amery 21.9.1925, *ibid.*

53. Guillemard to Amery 8.4.1926, CO 717/52.

54. Report of the Galloway Committee 5.5.1925, *ibid.*

55. Guillemard to Maxwell 19.12.1925, SSF 5108/1925.

56. *Ibid.*

57. Birch to the Association of British Malaya, 7.10.1925, CO 717/46.

58. Memo by Swettenham 31.10.1925, CO 717/47. In reply to Swettenham, Whitehall very craftily sent the Association of British Malaya the memorandum of E. Birch.
59. Minute by Collins 9.1.1926, CO 717/43.
60. Penny to Amery 10.12.1925, CO 717/47.
61. Observations on Decentralisation in the FMS by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
64. Guillemard to Amery 6.12.1925, CO 717/48.
65. Observations on Decentralisation in the FMS by George Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45, p. 55.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
69. William Peel, A. R. Richard, and J. D. Hall (Guillemard's Private Secretary) subscribed to the same view. For discussion, see Memo on Malayan Advisory Council for Malaya by J. D. Hall, British Adviser, Kedah, 3.5.1936, CO 717/119/51711/1936. Sir Edward Brockman likewise agreed. See Collins to Brockman 15.8.1922, CO 717/21.
70. Observations on Decentralisation in the FMS by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45.
71. K. K. Ghosh, *Twentieth-Century Malaysia: Politics of Decentralisation of Power, 1920–1929*, Calcutta, 1977, p. 260.
72. See Chapter 5.
73. For details, see Observations on Decentralisation in the FMS by George Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45, pp. 15–29.
74. Guillemard to Amery 6.12.1925, CO 717/48.
75. Observations on Decentralisation in the FMS by George Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45, p. 14.
76. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.
77. Guillemard to Collins 10.12.1925, CO 717/52.
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Ibid.*
80. Federal Council Paper no. 39 of 1925 and High Commissioner's Speech, *PFC FMS*, 1925, pp. C544–7 and B91–4.
81. Guillemard to Collins 31.12.1925, CO 717/48.
82. *PFC FMS* 1925, pp. C544–7.

83. J. H. M. Robson, *Records and Recollections (1889-1934)*, Kuala Lumpur, 1934, p. 142.

84. *Malay Mail* 17.12.1925.

85. *Ibid.*, 18.12.1925.

86. *Ibid.*

87. Guillemard to Collins 31.12.1925, CO 717/48.

88. Minutes by Collins 9.1.1926 and 21.1.1926, *ibid.*

89. Minute by Collins 21.1.1926, *ibid.*

The Assault on the Guillemard Policy

THE inauguration of the new policy in the Federal Council in December 1925 represented Guillemard's triumphant hour. But after the last magnificent flare of the inauguration had fizzled out came the anti-climax in which the High Commissioner ceased to be the decisive force in shaping events as the initiative passed into the hands of the three decentralization committees he convened. Until their recommendations had come in, Guillemard lived in a state of helpless impotency, unable to transfer the powers of the Chief Secretary or other bodies downwards; nor could he significantly guide the committees towards the accomplishment of his objectives. This interlude which lasted till the Pountney (Financial) Committee handed in its report in April 1926 was a painful one for Guillemard as he witnessed the new policy, for which he had fought tooth and nail, being torn to shreds not only by the European commercial interests but even more so by the men he himself had appointed to form the committees to work out detailed proposals for his policy.

MOUNTING CRITICISMS OF THE GUILLEMARD POLICY

After the Federal Council Meeting in December 1925 the battle royal commenced. Guillemard had to contend with

the powerful Malayan English press which poured scorn on his policy.¹ The eight English dailies were founded to cater, directly or indirectly, to the interests of commerce; the *Straits Times* (established in 1845) and the *Singapore Free Press* (1835) were perfect examples of this, while the *Straits Echo* (1903) and the *Malaya Tribune* (1914), in addition, voiced the views of the English-speaking domiciled Asians and Eurasians. By the 1920s all of them were funded by business interests or closely associated with businessmen. The Singapore-based *Straits Times*, the most successful, influential, and wealthy newspaper and proprietor of the *Singapore Free Press*, was largely owned by British companies; the *Malaya Tribune* was almost exclusively Asian-owned and depended on Straits Chinese merchants; the *Straits Echo* was Chinese-owned till it became the property of F. H. Grumitt, a leading Penang businessman, who eventually controlled the northern Malayan group of English newspapers.² Second to the *Straits Times* in terms of profit and influence, and most successful in the Malay States, the *Malay Mail* (1896) belonged to J. H. M. Robson, but on its Board of Directors sat the Hampshire brothers, two highly prosperous merchants, planters, and miners. In fact, D. H. Hampshire, once a Federal Council Unofficial and then a member of the 1923 Retrenchment Commission who advocated decentralization, acted as Managing Director of this newspaper whenever Robson went on leave.³ Finally the *Times of Malaya* (1904) had a sole proprietor, Jack Jennings, who was a fervent admirer of George Maxwell.

By the 1920s the English newspapers had long terminated their dependence on government support. The growth of trade and industry in Malaya had bestowed on them a regular source of income, namely, advertising fees, and helped to establish their financial independence,⁴ a pre-requisite for the uninhibited expression of views. Needless to say, the bulk of the advertisements in the newspapers came from European enterprises. And this brings us to the fact that the readership of the English dailies was primarily the European community

which consisted of the British officials and the private Europeans, preponderantly businessmen and professionals; only the *Straits Echo* and the *Malaya Tribune* were tailored to the taste of the small minority of English-speaking Asians. Invariably, the English press articulated the views of Malayan business interests.

The main thrust of the English dailies' editorial policy therefore, aimed at promoting the political and especially the economic development of Malaya as part of the British empire. At this time the *Straits Times*' editor was A. W. Still, 'a forceful, picturesque and fearless writer' and 'a merciless exploiter of unpleasant facts',⁵ who was a close associate of Joseph Chamberlain.⁶ As an avid champion of commerce, he used the *Straits Times* as an organ to campaign for rubber restriction long before the advent of the slump (1921-3), and on his retirement late in 1926, was handsomely rewarded by grateful planters.⁷ Characteristically, he became a member of the Association of British Malaya Committee in 1928.⁸ The *Malay Mail*, on the other hand, drew its influence largely from its founder, Robson—the 'grand Old Man of Malayan journalism', the senior Unofficial in the Federal Council, the financial adviser of the wealthy Chinese towkay, Loke Yew, and a close associate of many businessmen.⁹ As the *Malay Mail* lacked an outstanding editor in the mid-1920s and as editorials generally echoed his views, it is safe to assume that Robson controlled the editorial policy at the time of the decentralization controversy. Thus led, these two leading newspapers naturally became opponents of the Guillemard policy. Likewise, the *Straits Echo* and the *Malaya Tribune* which championed the interests of the domiciled non-Malay Asians, could not be expected to sympathize with the Guillemard policy which professed to advance the position of the Malay community. And in the small, exclusive, and close-knit European society in Malaya, in which interest in economic development was all-absorbing and where the press was accepted as the articulator of 'enlightened public opinion' in the absence of democratic institutions,¹⁰ the English news-

papers could not but have a strong and pervasive influence; and indirectly a vital bearing on official policy.

After its inauguration in the Federal Council, the Guillemard scheme was engulfed by a storm of obstreperous and virulent attacks by virtually all the Malayan English newspapers. The *Straits Echo* condemned the scheme as 'ill-conceived and reactionary'; the *Straits Times* rejected it as 'miserably lacking in definition', 'hopelessly retrograde and illogical'; the *Malaya Tribune* castigated it as 'purely negative, vague, shadowy, irritating utterances, dictated by a mind that knows not its own flight'.¹¹ Only one newspaper, the *Pinang Gazette*, which had a small circulation praised the scheme as 'statesmanlike and wise, brilliant in simplicity, and the work of a genius'. The newspaper comments underlined the fact that the new policy had welded FMS commercial interests, the Unofficials and Maxwell in Malaya as well as the Association of British Malaya and Frank Swettenham in London in common opposition to Guillemard. In view of their close ties and common interests one may even assume that there was some active co-operation between Malayan capitalist interests and the Association of British Malaya in attacking the new policy.

The above parties entertained a large area of common views diametrically opposed to those underpinning the Guillemard scheme, especially the proposed abolition of the Chief Secretaryship. Far from being isolated from Malayan commercial interests and the Unofficials because of their agitation for the restoration of the Resident-General title, Swettenham and Maxwell retained their influence in Malaya unimpaired. The commercial interests continued to extol Swettenham as a 'brilliant administrator'¹² who founded the Federation and to praise Maxwell's outstanding career in Malaya. In other words, their differences with Maxwell over the question of the Resident-General title and with Swettenham over the same question and his implicit proposal to abolish the Federal Council, did not undermine common opposition to the Guillemard scheme. It is safe to agree with Guillemard that Max-

well did foster opposition to the new policy; in fact, in certain aspects such as the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship, one may even concur with Sir Cecil Clementi that this opposition was led and fortified by Maxwell himself.¹³ It is also true however, that the Chief Secretary's attitude, on occasions, was influenced, at least for tactical reasons, by the views of the Unofficials and Malayan newspapers.

Newspaper editors directly challenged two key premises of the Guillemard programme. The first, discussed later in connection with Maxwell's second memorandum, concerned Guillemard's intention to return the State Councils to a position 'up to 1896 when [they] had taken an active part in the general control of public affairs and in legislation'. On 8 February the *Straits Echo* showed that this was a fallacy in 1895.¹⁴ The second premise under attack was the High Commissioner's provocative assertion that his programme was well-grounded and sound simply because the Rulers unanimously supported it. Malayan editors reiterated Maxwell's view that it was alien capital that brought economic prosperity to the country and consequently, the 'enlightened public' (meaning the non-Malay and European commercial community) had the right to evaluate the validity and wisdom of the Guillemard scheme.¹⁵

In rejecting Guillemard's ultimate justification for the new policy, the Malayan press delivered highly abrasive and derogatory comments on the Rulers. The thrust of the argument was that the administration had far outrun the capacities of the Rulers who had perforce to entrust it to the British government; in fact, the Federation was a British idea and was run by British officials on British principles. *The Straits Times* warned:

[His Excellency] knows that the credit of the Imperial Government has been pledged to everyman who has adventured his capital into Malaya and that if the Sultans attempted to thwart the purposes of the British administration, they would be quietly but very effectively removed. That is merely . . . a statement of fact.¹⁶

That being the case, the newspapers advised Guillemard to

stop using the Sultans as pawns in the political arena;¹⁷ otherwise, the *Straits Echo*, normally a Guillemard supporter, predicted dire consequences:

In regard to the Rulers two obvious dangers are already in sight. The first is that the harmonious relations which have hitherto existed in Malaya may be broken up into two camps, with the Malays on one side, fighting for State Government, and with the Europeans, Chinese and Indians, on the other side, supporting Federal Government. The second danger is that when the Malays realise—as inevitably they will and must—that the hopes of Government by State Councils are a mere illusion, they will show their resentment against the manner in which the proposals were brought before the Federal Council.¹⁸

The *Straits Echo* subsequently derided as self-delusory and myopic Guillemard's reliance on the Sultans as 'the acid test' of his policy. 'The acid test', it warned, might well 'come home to roost' and bedevil the future British government in the country.¹⁹

Malayan newspapers, as Maxwell did in his second memorandum, flung another challenge which put Guillemard completely on the defensive. This concerned his statement that 'the Rulers, the [State] Councils and the Residents of the Federated Malay States naturally desire the same measure of power and dignity as are enjoyed by their counterparts in the Unfederated States'. During the Federal Council meeting in December 1925 Choo Kia Peng skirted the issue when he queried whether the new policy would change the administrative personnel in the FMS in the direction of those in the UMS. The newspapers now came directly to the core issue by bluntly asking Guillemard whether he intended to introduce Advisory rule in the FMS through transforming the executive Residents into advisory Advisers. Stressing that Advisory rule would be entirely novel and revolutionary to the FMS, the press warned that it would undo all the good work of past officials who built up the present Federation and lead to 'an appalling loss of efficiency'.²⁰ Throughout, Guillemard maintained a stony silence on the matter. He had

no intention of introducing Advisory rule to the FMS; at best he regarded it as only a possibility in the very remote future. But he was in no position to state his view openly without contradicting his own pronouncement cited above or dampening the enthusiasm of the Malays and their Rulers who envied the position of their counterparts in the UMS. His silence on this issue in turn deepened to some extent the suspicion of his opponents.

As expected, the focal point of the press assault was Guillemard's proposed abolition of the Chief Secretaryship. Echoing Maxwell and the Unofficials, Malayan editors charged that this would result in a great loss of efficiency as the Chief Secretary was regarded as *primus inter pares* essential to the effective co-ordination of the works of Federal Heads and to ensuring the smooth functioning of the entire federal machine. His place could not be effectively taken over by an absentee High Commissioner or a junior Federal Secretary.²¹ To some extent this charge was true. The abolition of the Chief Secretaryship, by all admissions, would certainly lower the degree of administrative uniformity and co-ordination in the FMS. This was conceded by Guillemard as far as it applied to the short term, admitted by Grindle,²² and even foreseen by the Pountney Committee in terms of FMS financial affairs.²³ Nonetheless, one is inclined to the view that in the long run the Guillemard scheme would not lead to any severe loss of efficiency or drastic sacrifice of FMS interests when these came into conflict with those of the Colony. This was conditional however, on the High Commissioner substantially assuming the co-ordinating role of the Chief Secretary; the more substantially he did so the higher the chances of maintaining efficiency, and vice versa. But Guillemard could not openly admit this without lending support to the widespread belief that his scheme was a subterfuge to centralize power in Singapore. All that he could do, as already mentioned, was to offer an undertaking to run the FMS with as light a hand as he did the UMS. This assurance was no consolation to the fears of his opponents because the UMS were

not a federation and confronted few of the problems attendant upon the massive economic development in the FMS. Besides, his opponents had for long harboured the conviction that the disappearance of the Chief Secretary, the champion of the Federation, would prove detrimental to FMS interests when these interests failed to agree with those of the Straits Settlements.²⁴

Malayan editors however, did not adopt a purely negative attitude towards the Guillemard scheme. On the contrary, they fully backed the idea of giving the states as much autonomy as consonant with administrative efficiency and financial stability in the FMS. 'Lop off, by all means', urged the *Malay Mail*, 'the state branches from the Federal bush, and "watch it grow" in consequence and put forth the proverbial rare and refreshing fruit', while the *Straits Echo* claimed that the High Commissioner was merely 'bursting into an open door' in this matter.²⁵ Admitting the presence of over-centralization in Kuala Lumpur, the press felt that this was not in accord with British treaty obligations to the Rulers. More germane to British commercial interests was its echo of the long-standing view that decentralization would result in economies and bless the hard-pressed Chief Secretary with more time to concentrate on policy decisions, thereby improving efficiency.²⁶ Furthermore, the newspapers entreated the government to divide public affairs into federal matters to be placed under the central administration and purely state matters under the state authorities so that 'the Federation should be purely and simply federal, not parochially meddling'.²⁷ In this connection press reports mirrored the limited degree of decentralization envisaged by capitalist interests. Malayan editors agreed that the Chief Secretary should remain in overall charge with a status no less than the Colonial Secretary's. All supported higher emoluments and enhanced status for the Rulers who should at the same time be encouraged to take an intelligent interest in state affairs. The *Times of Malaya* called for steps to force Federal Heads to devote more time and attention to serving the states; the *Straits*

Echo wished to see a substantial reduction in the reference of minor matters to the Federal Secretariat; the *Malay Mail* stressed that the central government must control at least two-thirds of the FMS revenue and expenditure.²⁸ Finally, two newspapers felt that much decentralization had already been accomplished by Maxwell.²⁹

The most constructive suggestions, however, came from J. H. M. Robson who adumbrated a financial scheme in the *Malay Mail* on 2 January 1926. As the senior Unofficial, Robson had been deeply involved with the Maxwell experiment, was *au fait* with orthodox official thinking, and presented no revolutionary doctrines on decentralization. Robson began by demonstrating that the four states had no financial independence at all, and then advocated the idea of a state budget prepared by the state authorities and passed by the State Council. For a start, in order to avoid complications, the federal government would continue to collect and control all revenues in the FMS, but would allocate lump sums to the states to cover their budgets. To help formulate the state budgets, the government should first divide the public services into Federal and State services. Robson then devised a tentative division, listing thirty-one items as purely federal services, thirteen as mixed services (that is, partly federal and partly state), and the rest as state services. He urged the Pountney Committee to concentrate on the task of separating the mixed services into federal and state services, in order to enable all the state services to be constituted into the state budgets. Robson estimated that under the final scheme the federal budget would take up two-thirds and the state budgets one-third of the total expenditure. After these budgets had been approved by the High Commissioner, the Federal Council would proceed to vote the necessary funds. Then 'it would be up to the Federal and State Councils to add, alter or omit, any details in their draft expenditure estimates so long as the sum total did not exceed the authorised lump sum figures as sanctioned by the High Commissioner'.³⁰ It should be noted that the lump-sum idea had been advocated by Maxwell in

September 1922, and eventually became the central pillar of the financial scheme presented by the more conservative Pountney Committee.

From this point Malayan newspapers applied strong pressure on Guillemard to reorganize and strengthen both the Federal and State Councils. One major aim behind this was to forestall what they perceived to be the adverse effects of the Guillemard scheme which aimed at diminishing the work and narrowing the authority of the Federal Council. Any strengthening of the federal legislature would not be compatible with any drastic devolution of powers to the State Councils. Not surprisingly, early in January the *Malay Mail* urged that the Rulers should withdraw from the Federal Council, as Guillemard suggested, and join a proposed Rulers' Councils chaired by the High Commissioner. The Federal Council itself should then be made more representative through the appointment of another Unofficial and three new Federal Heads as members and be presided over by the Chief Secretary, not the High Commissioner as at present.³¹ What the *Malay Mail* presumably had in mind therefore, was a council with only slightly less authority than the existing body but one free from gubernatorial control as far as possible. Another major objective of the press was to prepare the State Councils to shoulder adequately additional responsibilities under the new policy through the inclusion of European and non-Malay members.³² As discussed later, the idea of strengthening the Federal Council was subsequently effected, but most newspaper suggestions fell by the wayside. And while the *Malay Mail* was prepared to see the immediate reorganization of the State Councils, Guillemard in the end refused to act in this matter.

To sum up, it should be noted that the Malayan English press was virtually the voice of the commercial community which supported decentralization so long as it was limited and subject to safeguards. Businessmen and investors had a vested interest in ensuring the continued existence of the FMS administration because its prized efficiency had immeasurably advanced their economic stake in the country. Under-

standably, their basic criticism of the Guillemard scheme was that the drastic reorganization of the FMS system, especially the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship, which it foreshadowed, was dangerous to efficiency and financial stability, and consequently was a threat to their economic interests in Malaya.

The opposition of FMS commercial interests was greatly intensified by two factors. As discussed earlier, Guillemard had already antagonized these interests by his efforts to wield real and direct authority in the FMS and especially by the measures he took to downgrade the status of the Chief Secretary. As Collins minuted in December 1925, there had been 'strong agitation, fostered no doubt by Sir George Maxwell, against reducing the status of the post of Chief Secretary'.³³ Accordingly, FMS commercial interests viewed the Guillemard scheme as a culmination of a policy which sought to pulverize the FMS chief executive officer and eventually 'fetter' the Federation to Singapore. The other consideration stemmed from the personality of the High Commissioner and the Chief Secretary. Though an extremely approachable, hospitable, and open-minded man, Guillemard only managed to maintain excellent relations with the Malay Rulers. He had no following outside the official community, being regarded by the FMS commercial interests as an 'outsider' without adequate colonial experience and as far inferior to Maxwell as an administrator. The embargo he imposed on the Unofficials during the preliminary discussion and his over-scrupulous efforts to exclude Maxwell completely from the entire decentralization exercise sent a wave of resentment and even hostility through the commercial community. Maxwell, on the other hand, was widely esteemed as one of Malaya's most outstanding officials, was strongly pro-business, and wielded profound and far-reaching influence within both the official and unofficial circles.³⁴

Meanwhile, within the government, Guillemard, in order to contain Maxwell's opposition to his scheme, decided to bar the decentralization committees from any dealings with

the Chief Secretary. Still uneasy over the Maxwell obstacle, Guillemard further ruled that the conference the Unofficials requested in the Federal Council meeting, would prove useful only when concrete proposals had been forwarded by the committees for discussion.³⁵ While this sounded rational enough, the decision was apparently a dilatory tactic seeking to defer the conference to as near the date of Maxwell's departure from Malaya as possible, thus blunting Maxwell's ability to oppose the detailed proposals as effectively as adequate time would permit. Consequently, the High Commissioner dragged his feet in the appointment of the committees. It was not until more than a month after the council meeting, late in January 1926, that the financial committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Pountney, and this committee began serious deliberations only in February.³⁶

On 1 February Maxwell reminded Guillemard that no action at all had been taken to convene the other committees.³⁷ Two days later the latter replied, 'I had told the four Residents that a committee will be formally appointed, but that they are meantime to consider individually the problems'.³⁸ However, in another message on 6 February, Guillemard informed Maxwell that the Residents had, *on their own*, asked for time for this personal reflection presumably because they desired to await the recommendations of the Pountney Committee.³⁹ The apparent contradiction in Guillemard's two messages warrants discussion. Three of the Residents namely Thomson, Stonor, and Wolff had worked hand in glove with Pountney on the Maxwell scheme and were aware of Pountney's generally conservative views on decentralization and his dogmatic insistence on the absolute necessity for tight central control over FMS funds. It seems most likely that they did not expect anything substantial to issue from the Pountney Committee. Another point to consider is that the Guillemard scheme was formulated without any consultation with the Residents and was practically foisted on them. We have however, seen that three of the Residents, by their response to the Maxwell programme, were not decentralization enthusiasts. It appears

highly likely that they entertained privately grave doubts over the new policy, especially the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship, and desired time to ascertain the extent to which the Pountney Committee would whittle it down. It would therefore, appear that both the High Commissioner scanning the situation from Singapore, and the Residents directing their gaze towards Kuala Lumpur, were stalling for time: one to ensure that Maxwell was virtually out of the way before consideration of detailed proposals began, the other to see how far the new policy would be eroded before they embarked on their own task. Be that as it may, the Residents were not formally constituted a committee until late February and did not commence sitting until after they had learnt the general purport of the Pountney Committee report; the Legal Committee, on the other hand, was not appointed until late June. Thus, whether intended or not, Maxwell would not have been able to attend the conference had it been held after the committees—or at least after the Pountney and Residents Committees—had submitted their recommendations as Guillemard planned.

Fighting with the tenacity of a bulldog, Maxwell sent Guillemard on 8 February his second scathing analysis of the new policy as outlined in the Federal Council. As most of the issues had been previously discussed by Maxwell, only two points are worthy of note. First, Maxwell's second memorandum set out to demolish the historical premises of the Guillemard scheme. Contrary to his earlier pronouncement but historically correct,⁴⁰ Maxwell contended that Anderson did not pursue any policy of decentralization; rather, Anderson's policy and measures pointed in the opposite direction. More important, Maxwell tried to debunk Guillemard's assertion that 'up to 1896 the State Councils had taken an active part in the general control of public affairs and in legislation'. He gave an analysis of the four state councils in 1895 that was more critical and comprehensive than that offered by the *Straits Echo* as mentioned earlier. He began by surveying matters transacted by the councils—criminal cases (such

as murders), appointments of *penghulu*, *kathi*, and chiefs, grants and loans to mosques and *wakaf*, pensions of Malay royalty, orders-in-council, and the like. The most important issue dealt with was legislation but the councils enacted laws virtually automatically in the form presented by the Residents. On such occasions council discussion was markedly perfunctory; the Malay-speaking members who constituted a clear-cut majority in councils at most understood a little of all the complex laws enacted in English; thus, as far as legislation was concerned, the councils were mere rubber stamps. Finally the state budgets were never even submitted to the councils for information and discussions.⁴¹ Maxwell therefore concluded that the performance of the Selangor and Perak Councils, which met five and six times a year respectively, and even more glaringly obvious, of the other councils which sat once annually, utterly failed to substantiate Guillemard's assertion.

Maxwell's conclusion was incontestable as far as it concerns the four state councils after the late 1880s. But it did not completely demolish Guillemard's claim because, as Emily Sadka's study demonstrates, the Perak and Selangor State Councils did play an active and meaningful role in public life before the above date.⁴² At the time of the controversy however, the 'FMS public' accepted the *Straits Echo's* conclusion that the Perak State Council dealt chiefly with 'trivialities' and that given the same powers as the Kedah State Council, it would have rendered Perak's continued inclusion in the existing Federation impossible. On the other hand, the Colonial Office and, as far as financial question was concerned, the Pountney Committee conceded that Maxwell was right.⁴³ To the extent that the Guillemard scheme rested on historical premises, it was weakened by Maxwell and the *Straits Echo*.

The second point to note is that in view of the opinions of the Unofficials and Malayan newspapers, Maxwell now came out explicitly in support of a certain degree of decentralization. While maintaining silence over whether this would

involve any devolution of the Chief Secretary's powers downwards he urged the transfer of all purely state matters to the state authorities: a move that would adequately overcome the Rulers' dissatisfaction but would not entail the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship or the emasculation of the Federal Council. In fact, Maxwell emphasized that his own decentralization policy had sought to achieve the above objective during the past three years. 'As the policy is still young', he continued, 'it is too early to say whether the success is "temporary" or not. The policy would have a better chance [of success] if it were not pulled up by the roots for an examination of its growth'.⁴⁴ It should be noted that the High Commissioner again forbade Maxwell to circulate his memorandum to the Unofficials.

Meantime, Guillemard's opponents began to worry about the date of the conference requested by the Unofficials, as they were completely in the dark as to when the three decentralization committees would submit their reports. To aggravate matters, it soon became known that Guillemard had imposed an embargo on the circulation of Maxwell's memoranda.⁴⁵ Accordingly newspapers accused Guillemard of muzzling Maxwell and scheming to hold up the conference until after Robson and Kindersley (both of whom were due to go on leave late in March) and Maxwell had left Malaya.⁴⁶ The above considerations prompted Robson to ask Guillemard late in January to convene the conference in February,⁴⁷ a request the latter considered premature. Thereupon, the anti-Guillemard camp drew on its resource of backstair influence by appealing to George Penny in London to secure a fair hearing for Maxwell. Penny obliged by a motion in Parliament early in February requesting an undertaking by the Colonial Office that both Guillemard's and Maxwell's memoranda on decentralization be made accessible to the Unofficials of the Federal Council. Obviously Amery could not agree to this. But in view of his earlier assurance to Penny that he would receive Maxwell's views and of Guillemard's agreement to hold a conference in due course, Amery assured

Parliament that the Chief Secretary and the Residents would be offered an opportunity to express their views to the Federal Council.⁴⁸ This committed Guillemard to hold the conference before Maxwell left Malaya in May regardless of whether the decentralization committees had forwarded their recommendations by then. The Penny motion was a tonic to Guillemard's opponents in Malaya. On 16 February the *Straits Echo* urged the Unofficials to press for a March conference and to 'resign en bloc' if the High Commissioner remained unresponsive.⁴⁹ A day later the Colonial Office instructed Guillemard to act on Amery's undertaking in Parliament.⁵⁰ Manoeuvred into a corner, Guillemard reluctantly accepted Kindersley's request in the Federal Council meeting on 8 March to call the conference before the end of the month.

THE WEAKENING POSITION OF GUILLEMARD

During the above Federal Council meeting the High Commissioner presented his second memorandum partly to answer his critics and partly to explain his attitude towards the Unofficials' stand on decentralization. By then tempers had cooled markedly. Besides, weighing the spread and balance of political forces, and after backstage efforts had been held to arrive at a compromise,⁵¹ Guillemard decided to adopt an extremely conciliatory attitude towards his opponents.⁵² In response the Unofficials agreed 'that certain powers of the Chief Secretary of a local character should be delegated to the State Councils as far as possible;⁵³ but they declined to go beyond this. Ritchie explained the nub of the matter in this way:

When the point of the Head of the Federal Government was reached, instead of continuing the process of decentralisation, the [Guillemard] policy, as I understood it, changed suddenly round into centralisation, because it was intended to transfer a large proportion of the powers of the Head of the Federal Government which it was not possible to devolute to the State Councils, to the High Commissioner in Singapore.⁵⁴

Understandably, Guillemard declined to comment on Ritchie's contention. He and the Unofficials then joined battle in the Federal Council when Kindersley introduced as a motion a resolution passed on 10 February by a meeting of various commercial bodies under the auspices of the Planters' Association of Malaya.⁵⁵ This motion proposed that the Council, recognizing that the economic development of Malaya came largely from the confidence inspired by the Federation, should declare (i) that, while permitting the states full internal autonomy, that policy should not affect the maintenance of a strong Federal Government, (ii) that a full and efficient maintenance of all Federal Services was essential to the country, and (iii) that equally essential to the efficient working of the federal system was a resident executive head of the federal administration, under the High Commissioner, having a status equal at least to that of the Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements.⁵⁶ In reply Guillemard signified his acceptance of the preamble and the first two clauses of the resolution, but made it clear that the official vote would be cast against the last clause if the motion was moved in council.

The High Commissioner, in fact, attempted to persuade the Unofficials to expunge the last clause lest the defeat of the motion would convey the wrong impression that a decision on the Chief Secretary's status had been made. It seems likely that by now he had learnt the rough purport of the Pountney Committee's views and knew that there was unlikely to be any substantial financial devolution to the State Councils.⁵⁷ He probably had also scented the deadweight of official aversion towards going all the way with his policy. If this was indeed the case, then in order not to lose face, it would be expedient for him to come to some form of agreement with the Unofficials. Hence, he spared no efforts in stressing that the differences between the two sides were 'one of degree'. He assured the Unofficials:

It may help to clear the air if I admit that I have always contemplated the necessity of a resident Chief Officer, under the High Commissioner, of high status. *I am not without hope that*, when the problem has been

thoroughly examined and fully discussed in a judicial spirit, *an agreement will be reached*⁵⁸.

At this stage however, Guillemard obviously could not accept the last clause of Kindersley's motion without openly admitting failure since his entire scheme revolved around the eventual abolition of the Chief Secretaryship; it would also have undercut the work of the decentralization committees. If the above analysis is incorrect (as seems unlikely), then Guillemard clearly had decided to hinge his entire hopes for success on the reports of the decentralization committees and was merely temporizing. Hoping that subsequently armed with favourable reports, he would be able to ride roughshod over the Unofficials in implementing his scheme. Be that as it may, Kindersley's motion was put to the vote and was defeated by the official majority. A modified motion with the last clause deleted was then tabled and accepted by the government.

Soon after this, Maxwell's memoranda, together with the proceedings of the two Federal Councils meetings, came to be seriously considered by Whitehall officials. But although Collins earlier believed that Maxwell's first memorandum warranted close scrutiny,⁵⁹ the officials provided no detailed comments. On the eve of his retirement, Collins was probably too busy tying loose ends to perform this task; his successor, Walter Ellis, a newcomer to the Malayan scene, was presumably reluctant to do the same. In any case Ellis explained, 'As I understand the matter we are committed to Sir Laurence Guillemard's policy in its general outline at least and there seems no object in discussing his [Maxwell's] memoranda at length'.⁶⁰ The Colonial Office's views on Maxwell's memoranda therefore, are not entirely known.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Whitehall officials completely agreed with Guillemard that the documents were fit neither for publication nor circulation to the Unofficials. Presumably, Whitehall officials now realized that Maxwell was not chiefly to be blamed for the failure of his experiment but

viewed his policy as unhelpful for accomplishing radical decentralization. What Whitehall officials took to heart was Maxwell's warning that caution was necessary in carrying out any decentralization policy and that the Guillemard scheme would result in a great loss of efficiency. For the first time they fully felt the immense complexities involved in decentralization as laid bare by Maxwell and reflected in the current uproar in the FMS.

Ellis conceded that Maxwell had clearly demonstrated that the State Councils did not play an active role in public affairs in 1895. While insisting that the councils could nonetheless still be groomed for such a role, he must now have become more inclined towards prudence and moderation. Ellis added that the other strongest point made by Maxwell was 'the drop of efficiency' arising from the circumscribing effects of the Guillemard scheme on 'the growth of federal departments'.⁶¹ But once again Whitehall officials reaffirmed that the cardinal consideration remained a Malayan federation, not optimum efficiency. Grindle explained:

I think it is agreed on all hands that there may be some loss of efficiency [that is] the uniform and centralised action of a strong bureaucracy, but the new policy is based on the conviction that efficiency is bought too dear at present by the estrangement of the Sultans who are federated and the determination of those who are not to remain outside so long as federation involves loss of power and status.⁶²

Earlier, commenting on the memorandum Guillemard presented to the Federal Council in December 1925, Grindle also stated:

The gist of the whole matter is contained in [section] 14 of the print—viz the Rulers of the Federated Malay States want the same degree of authority in their own states as the Rulers of the Unfederated States have. Until we can assure them of this and show in practice that we mean it honestly, it is hopeless to think of getting the Unfederated States to join the federation. Therefore, in any clamour that may be raised by European Unofficials we must not forget that it is the views and wishes of the Sultans that really matter.⁶³

In view of the above considerations, the Colonial Office told Maxwell that the new policy could not be abandoned but that the government would bear his views in mind when implementing it.

On 26 March Guillemard, Maxwell, the Residents, and the Unofficials met in the long-awaited conference. A bowdlerized version of Maxwell's two earlier memoranda was circulated and discussed in this meeting. Much of what Maxwell wrote was deep-rooted in the thinking of the Unofficials, but his memorandum did not prove helpful to them. As the Unofficials were willing to devolve some of the Chief Secretary's powers downwards, they did not take kindly to Maxwell's persistent assertion that the Federal Secretariat was not administratively overgrown; nor were they impressed by his insistence that he had pursued the correct decentralization policy since 1922.⁶⁴ As the Colonial Office had rejected this policy, Maxwell's contention was a negative one, offering no alternative to the Guillemard scheme.

After the conference four European Unofficials, on their own volition, approached Maxwell to suggest he modify his memorandum for publication with a view to help carry out Kindersley's amended motion passed in the Federal Council. The result was Maxwell's fourth memorandum which showed the unmistakable influence of the views of the Unofficials and Malayan newspapers. Most striking of all, Maxwell, for tactical considerations, now dropped the call for the restoration of the Resident-General title partly because it had created no ripple of interest in the FMS and partly out of deference to Whitehall's negative ruling on the question. Instead, Maxwell submitted that what was wanted with regard to a policy for Malaya 'is a Governor of the Straits Settlements who is ex-officio High Commissioner for the Malay States, with a Chief Secretary to Government in the Federated Malay States, a Colonial Secretary in the Straits Settlements, and the Advisers in the Unfederated States'.⁶⁵

Maxwell's fourth memorandum contained certain proposals in keeping with Kindersley's call for 'a strong federal

government' and enjoying the Unofficials' support. Of these proposals to strengthen the Federal Council, State Councils and Federal Secretariat,⁶⁶ only that on the Federal Council deserves discussion. Maxwell's ideas here were essentially similar to those propounded by the *Malay Mail* discussed earlier.⁶⁷ But he urged that three additional Unofficials be appointed from representatives selected by the FMS Chambers of Commerce, Chambers of Mines, and planting interests. Although his specific suggestions were ignored by the government, the idea of strengthening the Federal Council was effected partly because the need to improve council performance through the appointment of certain Federal Heads as members had been felt since 1920. Besides, Guillemard by now must have learnt the gist of the Pountney Committee report⁶⁸ and knew that the Federal Council's financial power would remain essentially intact. This would permit a strengthening of the Council, which might, in turn, help him to secure the Unofficials' support for the Pountney Committee report. So once again Guillemard took a step down from his policy. Instead of diminishing the work and curtailing the authority of the council as his scheme sought to accomplish, Guillemard proceeded to strengthen the federal legislature.

By the time of the March conference the differences between Guillemard and Maxwell had degenerated into an embittered private quarrel. Although he completely ignored the question of decentralization from the Federal Secretariat downwards in his fourth memorandum, yet Maxwell pinpointed as a major problem facing the government 'the adjustment of the powers and functions of the appointment of the Chief Secretary, as at present constituted, between the High Commissioner on the one side and the state authorities on the other'.⁶⁹ As Guillemard rightly advised the Colonial Office, Maxwell 'knows the existence of the problem [of overcentralization in the Federal Secretariat] better than anyone else, and yet is deliberately unwilling to deal with it honestly'.⁷⁰ At the same time, seeing his own scheme eroded by the Pountney Committee, and bereft of backing or plans for

action, Guillemard became more abrasive and personal in his attack against Maxwell. In May in a long despatch to the Colonial Office he picked, as a target for attack, Maxwell's weakest point—that is, his fatuous insistence that over-centralization in the hands of the Chief Secretary was a myth. As Maxwell challenged him to prove the contrary, Guillemard threatened to expose him in the conference by showing the Unofficials a letter he wrote in June 1920 lamenting the existence of over-centralization in the Federal Secretariat. Thereupon, Guillemard told the Colonial Office, Maxwell climbed down.⁷¹

Whitehall officials felt the High Commissioner had 'won' the quarrel 'on the merits'.⁷² But they were chiefly interested in practical steps to carry out the new policy, none of which had to date come from the High Commissioner. Impressed by Maxwell's call for prudence and aware of the implacable opposition towards the Guillemard scheme, the Colonial Office, by now, had arrived at the conclusion that it was not feasible to implement Collins's proposal of merely appointing an acting Chief Secretary to devolve the Federal Secretariat's powers downwards. Accordingly, exactly a month after William Peel was appointed to act as Chief Secretary on 9 May, he was confirmed as a substantive successor to Maxwell.

Now led by Walter Ellis, the Far Eastern Department devoted increasing attention to the question of efficiency of the FMS administration. Ellis did not think highly of the Guillemard scheme, believing that 'very little will come' of it but that 'it will be sufficient to "save the face" of the Sultans'.⁷³ As he subsequently minuted, 'I never could see that Sir Laurence Guillemard's "decentralizing" proposals were any more than eye wash' nor 'how it is possible to reduce [the] importance' of the Chief Secretary.⁷⁴ In fact, Ellis was a 'pro-Chinese' official who believed it a mistake to bolster up the position of the 'petty' Malay Rulers as the future of Malaya 'lay in the hands of the Chinese and Indians'. He predicted that the Malays would be increasingly outnumbered by 'industrious and intelligent Indians and Chinese' in the

future and that developments in India and China would before long compel the British to concede 'representative institutions' to the above non-Malay communities. When this happened, the position of the Rulers would become a serious impediment. Ellis therefore, concluded that British policy should aim at changing Malaya into 'a single centralised colony'.⁷⁵

Understandably, the question of administrative efficiency weighed more with him than the position of the Rulers. On 2 June Ellis minuted:

I think that in any reply to this letter the Governor might have a hint [that] the important thing to do is not to delve into ancient history in order to score debating points against Maxwell—but to put forward considered proposals for solving the very difficult question of how the policy of giving more independence to the States was to be reconciled with efficient administration of the Federal Department.⁷⁶

Wilson readily endorsed Ellis' suggestion, and Grindle added that 'what we want is to raise the really important issues here at stake from the level of a personal quarrel to that of a problem of high policy'.⁷⁷ Presumably Guillemard was given a hint of Whitehall's attitude when the Colonial Office, as requested, confirmed his refusal to allow Maxwell to publish his fourth memorandum. But by now Maxwell's opposition had ceased to be important, for the decentralization committees had begun to submit their reports and deliver Guillemard to his Waterloo.

1. There is no full-scale study of the Malayan English press. The above account is based on data collected from the following sources: A. Kanayson, 'The Newspapers of Singapore, 1824-1914', Academic Exercise, University of Malaya in Singapore, 1956; P. Burns, 'The English Language Newspapers of Singapore, 1915-1951', Academic Exercise, University of Malaya in Singapore, 1957; J. H. M. Robson, *Records and Recollections (1889-1934)*, Kuala Lumpur, 1934; W. Makepeace, G. E. Brooke, and R. Braddell, *One Hundred Years of*

Singapore, 2 Vols., London, 1921; three articles on 'The Malayan Press: A Story of over a Hundred Years', by W. A. Wilson in *British Malaya*, Vol. XX, no. 12, April 1946, Vol. XXI, no. 1, May 1946, and Vol. XXI, no. 4, August 1946.

2. It is not clear, however, when Grumitt acquired possession of the *Straits Echo*.

3. J. H. M. Robson, p. 169.

4. A. Kanayson, pp. 28-9.

5. *British Malaya*, Vol. XXI, no. 1, May 1946, p. 7.

6. P. Burns, p. 10.

7. *British Malaya*, Vol. XX, no. 12, April 1946, p. 7.

8. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, no. 3, July 1929, p. 87.

9. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXV, no. 6/7, October/November 1950, p. 119.

10. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, no. 4, August 1946, p. 58.

11. *Straits Echo*, 16.12.1925 and 22.12.1925.

12. For praises of Swettenham and Maxwell, see *Straits Times*, 17.2.1926; *Straits Echo*, 22.12.1925; *Malay Mail*, 16.2.1926; *Times of Malaya*, 26.6.1926 and 28.6.1925.

13. Clementi to Cunliffe-Lister 8.2.1932, CO 717/88/92300/ Part II/1932.

14. *Straits Echo*, 8, 9 and 17 February 1926.

15. *Times of Malaya*, 19.12.1925; *Straits Echo*, 24.12.1925.

16. *Straits Times*, 30.1.1926.

17. *Straits Echo*, 15.12.1925; *Times of Malaya*, 17.12.1925.

18. *Straits Echo*, 29.12.1925.

19. *Ibid.*, 15.12.1925.

20. *Ibid.*, 6.1.1926.

21. *Ibid.*, 15.12.1925.

22. Minute by Grindle 1.4.1926, CO 714/48; Guillemard to Thomas 21.10.1924, CO 717/34; Sir Cecil Clementi, High Commissioner-Governor, 1930-4, who advocated a scheme very similar to Guillemard's, admitted that it would result in a loss of efficiency. Minute of Meeting at the Colonial Office 15.5.1931, CO 717/81/82395/1931. The Colonial Office officials readily agreed with Clementi. Minute by J. M. Martin 30.3.1931, CO 717/76/72483/1931.

23. Report of the Committee appointed to Examine the Financial Aspect of the Devolution Policy outlined in Federal Council Paper no. 39 of 1925, 9.4.1926 (henceforth cited as Pountney Committee Report), p. 17, SSF 572/1933.

24. As an example of FMS interests being sacrificed when there was no Chief Secretary, the *Times of Malaya* (21.12.1925) raised the old spectre of FMS funds being used for non-FMS developments. The newspaper stated, 'FMS money in a big stream has already gone the way Mr. Robson has indicated and we in the FMS fear that, with the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship, the last restraining influence will go and that the big flow away of FMS money will become a great river.'

25. *Malay Mail*, 15.12.1925; *Straits Echo*, 9.3.1926.

26. *Ibid.*, 18.12.1925 and 11.1.1926.

27. As cited in *ibid.*, 22.12.1925.

28. *Ibid.*, 17.2.1926; *Malay Mail*, 18.12.1925; *Straits Times*, 10.3.1926; *Times of Malaya*, 29.6.1926.

29. *Straits Echo*, 29.12.1925.

30. For details, see 'FMS Finance: States' Desire for Local Budgets: A Suggested Scheme', by J. H. M. Robson, *Malay Mail*, 2.1.1926.

31. The three new Federal Heads suggested were the Controller of Labour, Director of Public Works, and Principal Medical Officer, *ibid.*, 11.1.1926. They were in fact, appointed as members of the reconstituted Federal Council in 1927.

32. The *Malay Mail* (5.1.1926) suggested that two European Unofficials be appointed to each State Council except the Pahang State Council which should have only one European Unofficial. There should also be two Chinese Unofficials in each State Council. Finally one Indian should be appointed to each of the State Councils of the three western states; and one Eurasian each to the Perak and Selangor State Councils.

33. Minute by Collins 8.12.1925, CO 273/529. Grindle stated, 'I agree on all points'; so did Wilson. Minutes by Grindle 8.12.1925 and by Wilson 17.12.1925, *ibid.*

34. For assessments and comparisons of the two men, see Penny to Amery 10.12.1925, CO 717/47; *Straits Times*, 20.2.1926; *Straits Echo*, 15.12.1925, 22.12.1925, 18.1.1926, 9.3.1926 and 26.3.1925; J. H. M. Robson, pp. 146-53; J. Gullick and G. Hawkins, *Malayan Pioneers*, Singapore, 1958, pp. 14-21; 'Notes written by Sir William Peel, Governor of Hong Kong, 1930-35, concerning his Colonial Service from 1897-1935', Rhodes House, Oxford; W. A. Wilson, 'Malayan Pioneers-II', *British Malaya*, Vol. XIII, no. 7, November 1937; R. Windstedt's Obituary on Guillemard, *ibid.*, Vol. I, no. 2, 1952; E. MacFadyen's Obituary on Maxwell, *ibid.*, October 1959.

35. Guillemard to Collins 31.12.1925, CO 717/48.

36. Federal Council Paper no. 9 of 1926, *PFC FMS*, 1926, p. C2.

37. Maxwell to Guillemard 1.2.1926, SSF 533/1926.
38. Minute by Guillemard 3.2.1926, *ibid.*
39. Guillemard to Maxwell 6.2.1926, *ibid.*
40. For discussion, see E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1910*, Kuala Lumpur, 1969.
41. Memo by Maxwell 8.2.1926, encl. to Guillemard to Amery 18.2.1926, CO 717/48.
42. For discussion, see E. Sadka, 'The State Councils of Perak and Selangor, 1877-1895', K. Tregonning (ed.), *Papers on Malayan History*, Singapore, 1961, pp. 89-119.
43. Minute by Ellis 1.4.1926, CO 717/48; Pountney Committee Report, p. 5, SSF 572/1933.
44. Memo by Maxwell 8.2.1926, encl. to Guillemard to Amery 18.2.1926, CO 717/48.
45. *Straits Echo*, 16.2.1926.
46. *Ibid.*, *Times of Malaya*, 19.12.1925.
47. Robson to Guillemard 27.1.1926, SSF 533/1926.
48. *Malay Mail*, 15.2.1926; *Straits Echo*, 16.2.1926.
49. *Ibid.*
50. Amery to Guillemard 17.2.1926, CO 717/48.
51. R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study of Direct and Indirect Rule*, Kuala Lumpur, Reprint, 1964, p. 164.
52. The *Straits Times* (10.3.1926) and the *Times of Malaya* (10.3.1926) remained dissatisfied with Guillemard's new memorandum. The *Straits Echo* (9.3.1926) and the *Malay Mail* (10.3.1926) were gratified by the High Commissioner's conciliatory attitude. The *Malay Mail* stated, 'We do not consider this situation by any means unsatisfactory, and if we are not out of the political wood yet, we can at least see daylight ahead through the trees. [Sir Laurence Guillemard decided] to go a long way towards meeting the wishes of the Unofficials and to co-operate rather than to dictate to them.'
53. *PFC FMS*, 1926, p. B16.
54. *Ibid.*, p. B17.
55. For a report on this meeting, see *Times of Malaya*, 11.2.1926.
56. *PFC FMS*, 1926, p. B16.
57. Three days after the Federal Council met on 11 March, Guillemard informed Amery that by the time of the conference on 26 March 'the Committee on Finance expects to have advanced enough to be able to discuss their scheme in outline'. Guillemard to Amery 11.3.1926.

CO 717/48. The above shows that Guillemard, as expected, kept in close touch with the Pountney Committee at work.

58. Italics added. *PFC FMS*, 1926, p. 4; *ibid.*, p. B20. On the above point the *Malay Mail* (10.3.1926) commented, 'We can only conjecture that what Sir Laurence really objected to was a definite final committing of himself on the question of the Chief Secretary's Office, although he may now be inclined to agree with what both the public and his critics demand in this connection.' In a survey of decentralization, J. A. Calder, a Colonial Office official, stated that in the Federal Council meeting on 8 March Guillemard 'was practically forced to modify his earlier attitude'. Memo on Decentralisation and the Post of Chief Secretary by J. A. Calder 11.4.1932, CO 717/88/92300 Part II/1932.

59. Minute by Collins 9.1.1926, CO 717/52.

60. Minute by Ellis 1.4.1926, CO 717/48.

61. *Ibid.*

62. Minute by Grindle 1.4.1926, *ibid.*

63. Minute by Grindle 23.1.1926, *ibid.*

64. Guillemard to Amery 6.5.1926, CO 717/52.

65. The Fourth Print of Maxwell's Memo on Decentralisation 12.4.1926, *ibid.*

66. Maxwell was more cautious in suggesting the reform of the State Councils. He proposed that one European and one non-Malay representatives be appointed to each State Council. He stated that more senior officers be appointed to the Federal Secretariat to relieve the Chief Secretary of minor chores. This, he claimed, had the agreement of the High Commissioner in 1924.

67. Maxwell however, called for the formation of an Executive Council chaired by the Chief Secretary and urged that Federal Council members be grouped into four committees (Finance, Ways and means, Legislation, and General Purposes) to tackle specific matters. See *ibid.*, pp. 47-8.

68. See footnote (57). The Pountney Committee Report was dated 9.4.1926, thirteen days after the conference.

69. The Fourth Print of Maxwell's Memo on Decentralisation 12.4.1926, p. 54, CO 717/52.

70. Guillemard to Amery 6.5.1926, *ibid.*

71. *Ibid.*, Maxwell's letter to Guillemard dated 24.6.1920 mentioned above was personally handed in to the Colonial Office by Pountney.

72. Minute by Beckett 25.6.1926, *ibid.*

73. Minute by Ellis 1.4.1926, CO 717/48.

74. Minute by Ellis 25.11.1930, CO 717/76/72483/1930.
75. Note of Conference at the Colonial Office on 15.5.1931, CO 717/81/82392/1931. Minute by Ellis 21.4.1931, *ibid.* Ellis's above minutes were written in opposition to Sir Cecil Clementi's decentralization policy which was similar to the Guillemard policy. The same views of Ellis on the future of Malaya and the Rulers were presented even before Clementi advanced this proposal. See, for instance, Minute by Ellis 15.1.1930, CO 717/564. In fact, right from the start of his headship of the Far Eastern Department, Ellis indicated in his minutes views that came to be elaborated and so clearly expressed in 1930 and 1931.
76. Minute by Ellis 2.6.1926, CO 717/52.
77. Minute by Grindle 28.6.1926, *ibid.*

The Outcome

THE MCS AND THE GUILLEMARD POLICY

IN the midst of the open debate on the new policy in the Federal Council and newspapers and of the covert squabble between the High Commissioner and the Chief Secretary, the decentralization committees Guillemard had formed concerted a programme of action. To understand this programme fully, it is necessary to have a close look at the personalities to whom the new policy had been entrusted.

The Financial Committee was headed by the Financial Adviser, Pountney, who was assisted by C. S. Alexander, FMS Treasurer, and G. P. Bradney, FMS Auditor-General. All three were MCS members and financial officers, and financial men in the FMS, by the nature of their function, tended to be conservative in their outlook. While Bradney's attitude towards decentralization was unknown, both Alexander and Pountney had been unsympathetic towards Maxwell's decentralization proposals. Pountney was clearly the key man of the Financial Committee. He was so closely identified with Guillemard—in fact, he was widely known as the latter's personal appointee—that the *Straits Echo* assumed that he would invariably submit a favourable report to the High Commissioner.¹ In reality however, Pountney was an unblushing conservative first and last, who was dogmatic in his insistence on the absolute indispensability of a single central control of FMS finance. Besides, he was appointed to

nurse the FMS back to financial health. Now that financial buoyancy had returned to the FMS, for which he presumably claimed credit, he could not be expected to relish the idea of subjecting FMS finance to what was admittedly a 'risky' experiment with which he had little sympathy and felt no moral obligation to follow.²

The Legal Committee was headed by W. S. Gibson, FMS Legal Adviser, who was assisted by A. S. Bailey, a newly-appointed Unofficial of the Federal Council. Bailey's views on decentralization were not known until 1931 when he stated that he was in favour of the Guillemard scheme.³ The man who really mattered to the committee, however, was Gibson whom Guillemard had elevated from half-way down the Class II list to his existing Class IA post in 1922,⁴ and who supported Maxwell's attempt to empower the State Councils to vote and lend money to cover expenses incurred by mosque and *wakaf*.

After the inauguration of the new policy, Guillemard instructed Gibson to draft a memorandum discussing the nature and implications of the Federation Treaty of 1895 and the Federal Agreement of 1909 and recommending a new constitution for a reorganized FMS. The Legal Adviser produced a perceptive and analytical document. After demonstrating the vague, incomplete, and self-contradictory nature of both documents, he rightly stressed that in 1895 British officials never had in mind a real federation with a rigid division of powers between the centre and the states. This contributed substantially to the existing unforeseen over-centralization in the FMS, but it was inevitable that Federation would deprive the states of important powers. Hence, the pledge in the treaties to preserve the powers of the Rulers intact was a mere meaningless inducement to secure the Rulers' agreement to Federation; it had not been and could not be honoured so long as the existing Federation continued. In other words Gibson implied that the British were not morally bound under treaty to return powers to the Sultans which they purportedly enjoyed before 1895; he explicitly stated that it

was neither practicable nor desirable to do so.⁵ This line of thought was clearly incompatible with the underlying Guillemard idea that 'decentralisation will never be a real success until we get back more nearly to the Pangkor days'. In any case, as an alternative to the existing Federation, Gibson outlined proposals for the creation of a genuine federation in the FMS. In this political unit, the executive head would be co-ordinate with the Residents, performing purely federal functions and chairing a central legislature that would replace the existing Federal Council.⁶ Clearly, Gibson did not support Guillemard's proposal to replace the Chief Secretary with a co-ordinating Federal Secretary junior to the Residents. Not surprisingly, in 1931 Gibson was not in favour of Sir Cecil Clementi's scheme⁷ which was similar to that of Guillemard. It is clear from the above that Gibson did not support the new policy.

The Residents, who generally endorsed the new policy, had been deeply involved in the Maxwell decentralization experiment. The most radically-inclined of them, C. W. Parr of Perak, chose however to retire prematurely on unknown personal grounds in February 1926. Like Hose, he publicly announced his entire agreement with the new policy before he left Malaya. The new Resident, A. F. Worthington, whose bad stammer ruled him out of the race for Maxwell's post, had hitherto not officially expressed his views on decentralization *per se*. The four Residents were constituted into a Residents Committee chaired by Thomson of Selangor, whose meteoric rise to the Pahang Residency in 1921 over the heads of many senior colleagues (including William Peel) was due to his having 'caught Sir Laurence's eyes'.⁸ He was assisted by Stonor of Perak, Wolff of Negri Sembilan, and Worthington of Pahang. It is clear from their involvement in the Maxwell programme that Thomson, Stonor, and Wolff were not decentralization enthusiasts. Nothing traumatic had since happened in the FMS up to March 1925, when they learned of the new policy, to cause these personalities to leap-frog from a conservative base to the drastically radical assumptions of the

Guillemard scheme. While Residents generally desired more power from the Federal Secretariat, 'it is' Peel wrote in May 1926, 'not always the case';⁹ in fact, some Residents working under Peel were even 'not always prepared to face the responsibility already laid on them' under treaty.¹⁰ If past outlook and behaviour and fragmentary evidence on their attitude towards decentralization in 1926 were a reliable guide, the Residents could not form a team from which much change could be expected.

The man who succeeded Maxwell in May 1926 was William Peel. Joining the Colony service as a cadet in 1897, Cambridge-trained Peel soon moved to the FMS where he became Secretary to the Resident of Selangor in 1908. Two years later he was appointed Superintendent of Indian Immigration, and during the First World War performed 'very well' as Food Controller. As British Adviser of Kedah, 1922-3, level-headed Peel persuaded the Regent of the state to accept an Anglo-Kedah treaty in November 1923. From there Peel moved into the post of Resident Councillor, Penang, where he made a strong bid for the chief secretaryship in 1925 by submitting a radical decentralization policy based on the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship. The Colonial Office had already earmarked him to succeed Maxwell before Guillemard's recommendation came in. Rated as 'an outstanding man' by Whitehall, and praised by the *Straits Echo* as 'a first-class brain with a fine reputation, an excellent record and a broad and open mind',¹¹ Peel nonetheless did not have the stature or the influence of Maxwell in the FMS. His tenure as Chief Secretary was a period of quiet consolidation, of mending the fences damaged by the scuffles between his predecessor and the High Commissioner, of careful avoidance of controversial policies. This period lasted till late 1929 when Peel became Governor of Hong Kong where he served till he retired in 1935.

As Chief Secretary, Peel was appointed chairman of a Co-ordinating Committee to sieve and co-ordinate the recommendations of the three decentralization committees. Clearly, the efficacy of the Co-ordinating Committee would be lim-

ited by the nature of the recommendations forwarded to it. True, Peel, Arthur Richards (Secretary to the High Commissioner) and J. D. Hall (Private Personal Secretary to the Governor) were ardent supporters of decentralization, who were called into 'daily consultation' with Guillemard during the inauguration and the initial period of the implementation of the new policy. But Peel and Richards soon underwent a sea change on the crucial issue of the proposed abolition of the Chief Secretaryship. It is safe to assume that the reasons behind this were the enormous difficulties involved in reconciling administrative efficiency and the new order proposed by Guillemard, and the powerful opposition to the new policy. Both Peel and Richards soon arrived at the view that it would be a serious mistake to replace the Chief Secretary with a relatively junior Federal Secretary as Guillemard planned. They believed that in the current Malayan set-up the Chief Secretary was an essential counterpoise to the Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlements, and his elimination would prove detrimental to FMS interests when these clashed with those of the Colony.¹² In terms of effective co-ordination, 'I believe', Peel later wrote, 'that in every Colony and Protectorate in the British Empire there is a "Chief of Staff" in the person of the Colonial Secretary or Chief Secretary who stood next to the Governor in the administrative service.'¹³ It is not clear when precisely Peel arrived at this view—a view similar to Maxwell's—but certainly before Clifford succeeded Guillemard in 1927. Under the circumstances, neither Peel nor the Co-ordinating Committee would feel inclined to steer the decentralization committees, even if they could, in the direction of adopting measures that would ultimately efface the Chief Secretaryship in the FMS.

Another point relevant to the new policy was the standing of Guillemard within the Malayan Civil Service. The manner in which Maxwell was nearly sacked by the Colonial Office and Guillemard's attempts to cut him out completely from the entire decentralization exercise apparently antagonized many British officials. The point was that Maxwell had a large

following in the service; a great many supporters, in fact, tended to hero-worship him even though he was a hard taskmaster.¹⁴ In any case Guillemard was by no means a popular High Commissioner to the service. One key reason behind this was that he frequently ignored seniority in the question of promotion and many officers in the service enjoyed big jumps over the heads of their seniors. When Thomson was pushed up to the Pahang Residency in 1921, for instance, one London official rightly minuted that this was because he had 'caught Sir Laurence's eyes'.¹⁵ As promotions to posts above Class II in the service were 'by merits', the High Commissioner virtually had a completely free hand in the matter. The Colonial Office found it extremely difficult to question his recommendations partly because of lack of knowledge and partly because of 'special qualifications' needed for certain appointments, such as the Residentsip.¹⁶ Guillemard underrated the importance of seniority even more blatantly after London approved his new policy. In connection with this policy he had requested 'a freer hand than usual' and 'not be tied down too closely by consideration of seniority' in filling the higher posts,¹⁷ and Whitehall agreed 'to give him whatsoever officers he asks for'.¹⁸ As the High Commissioner himself asserted, the success of the new policy depended on appointing pro-decentralization officers to the key posts,¹⁹ and partly for this reason he offered the Chief Secretaryship to Hose and subsequently to Peel. But as the majority of the MCS officers were not decentralists, Guillemard's policy antagonized a great many of them.

The promotion of a relatively junior man, G. Hemmant, to Under-Secretary, Straits Settlements, early in 1925 to enable him to help carry out the new policy brought discontent to a head. In a petition to the Secretary of State twenty-four MCS officers requested that seniority should be recognized as the overriding factor in matters of promotion when the qualifications of deserving officers were similar. In view of recent instances of relatively junior officers being elevated from Class II to Class I posts, they charged:

That this apparent trend of recent promotions has undoubtedly caused a widespread feeling of injustice and insecurity among senior officers in the Service and Your Memorialists desire to bring to your notice that there are many deserving officers, senior to those recently promoted, whose work, though it may not have been performed in such positions as to bring them prominently into notice, has yet been so meritorious as to justify them in expecting that their claims to promotion would not be passed over.²⁰

The appeal fell on deaf ears. The Colonial Office considered Guillemard's reply to be amply adequate and accordingly rejected the officers' request for an inquiry into recent promotions;²¹ in fact, Whitehall's decision was a foregone conclusion since it had given the High Commissioner a free hand in the matter. But it should be noted that the petition did not come from a bunch of incompetent and disgruntled men; rather, twelve of the petitioners ended their career as Residents, British Advisers, or Resident Councillors, and another four as Class IA appointees.²² Whether justifiable or not, Guillemard's method of promotion devalued the importance of seniority and upgraded the influence of political considerations, and all this engendered discontent among MCS officers. In other words, the new policy attracted MCS hostility which stemmed from causes partly outside the decentralization scheme.

Concrete information on the identity of the protagonists in the new-policy line-up is most scanty. Peel, Richards, Hall, Hemmant, and A. S. Haynes were known ardent supporters of Guillemard, whereas Maxwell and his Under-Secretary, C. W. H. Cochrane, were known to oppose the new policy.²³ According to the *Straits Echo* the new policy managed only to 'command a certain measure of support among some of [the MCS] members';²⁴ and Guillemard himself admitted that his policy enjoyed the support of the 'more enlightened members of the Malayan Civil Service'.²⁵ Most of the MCS officers however, were not so 'enlightened'. It follows that they did not support the Guillemard scheme for personal and larger considerations.

Generally, MCS officers had a vested interest in the continued existence of the Chief Secretaryship in the FMS. This high post was 'invariably filled by local promotion'²⁶ since it needed 'special qualifications' only MCS officers were believed to possess. And what a 'most attractive' billet the Chief Secretaryship was in the entire Colonial Service. The Chief Secretary earned a handsome income, possessed wide statutory powers, enjoyed the facilities of three 'charming residences' in the FMS, and administered 'a rich country' with ample resources for the carrying out of 'progressive schemes' except during slumps. Not surprisingly, three Chief Secretaries—William Taylor, George Maxwell, and William Peel—regarded the post as 'preferable to most Governorships'.²⁷ The abolition of this post under the Guillemard scheme would narrow down the prospects of promotion for MCS officers; in fact, to most of them, it would mean the disappearance of the highest post they could aspire to, since the Governor-High Commissionership was not infrequently filled by some senior man from outside Malaya. And to add insult to injury, Guillemard now tactlessly stated in the Federal Council that a Chief Secretary, FMS, or a Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements, would not be fit to become Governor-High Commissioner of Malaya. Guillemard's reason was that experience in FMS or Colony affairs, which MCS men considered their forte for local promotions, would inhibit the ability of both officers to hold an even balance between the interests of the Malay States and those of the Colony. Probably Maxwell was right in alleging that Guillemard's statement was regarded as a slur on the service and stirred deep resentment among its members.²⁸

Even more basic to MCS refusal to support the Guillemard scheme were the larger interests involved. As discussed earlier, MCS officers prided themselves on having established a highly efficient administration in the FMS, and consequently were apprehensive that the Guillemard policy would reorganize the administration over-dramatically, seriously reduce efficiency, and jeopardize financial stability in the FMS. The views of

the technocrats on the Guillemard scheme are not known. The scheme did not centre attention on depriving departmental heads of their executive authority; rather, it might even increase the power of some of them. Nonetheless, one may assume that for the sake of administrative efficiency and convenience, the technocrats did not back the new policy.

To members of the FMS branch of the MCS there were additional reasons for not favouring the Guillemard scheme. In his memoirs, Guillemard pointed out the jealousy and mild contempt existing between administrators in the Colony and those in the Malay States. While Straits officers regarded their counterparts in the FMS 'as wild denizens of the jungle, whose ideas of business were amateurish and childish', the latter looked upon 'their brothers in the Colony as pedantic and narrow-minded bureaucrats who spent their days on office-stools penning tiresome and often unnecessary minutes'.²⁹ To remove this and create a common outlook among the officers, Guillemard succeeded in 1920 in bringing the two branches of the service under the common nomenclature of the Malayan Civil Service (MCS). This had, at most, only a marginal effect on the career developments of MCS officers during his time. Those who originally joined the FMS branch of the service, continued to be paid by the FMS government and generally had spent the bulk of their working life in the Federation, while the Straits officers, as a rule, remained in the Colony and were remunerated accordingly:³⁰ the two sets of officers were not even put on a common establishment until 1934. Besides, of the seventeen Residents and Chief Secretaries in the 1920s, twelve originally belonged to the FMS branch of the service.³¹ Generally, Guillemard's move failed to eradicate the parochial outlook and petty jealousies existing between the two groups of MCS officers.

In one significant aspect, the Guillemard move aggravated mutual jealousies between Colony cadets and their colleagues in the FMS. Guillemard made it a settled policy when suitable vacancies occurred to transfer Colony men to the FMS, and vice versa.³² Although this did not affect the fundamental

position discussed above, it did facilitate the interchange of officers between the two areas to a small but sufficient extent to generate suspicion and discontent among many FMS officers. As E. A. Dickson, a FMS man and a signatory of the memorial sent to the Colonial Office in 1925 mentioned earlier, complained to a former top Whitehall official, Sir Charles Lucas, in 1922:

The system was clever. Cadets, junior to us Junior Officers, were promoted in the Colony where we were told we could never go and then brought back to the FMS over us. The Cadets were able and deserved their promotion but then so did we.³³

It was likely that this sentiment was entertained by many of the signatories of the memorial, seventeen of whom belonged to the FMS branch of the service and had spent most of their working life in the Federation.³⁴

In addition, the Guillemard–Maxwell squabbles adversely affected the FMS administration and deepened the rift existing between Colony men and at least those FMS cadets who were Maxwell's followers. Evidence on this is naturally hard to come by but has been provided by F. A. S. McClelland, a staunch supporter of Maxwell. In 1922 upon receipt of a scheme for Assistant Surgeons emanating from the Colony, McClelland brushed it aside, commenting, 'Again, the question arises as to why the FMS should be rushed into this procrustean uniformity with the Colony in regard to its subordinate Medical Service. The FMS don't employ this class of persons to the extent the Colony does. Conditions in the FMS are different.' He then condemned the scheme as 'a piece of feeble and undignified chicanery' which showed the Acting Colonial Secretary cheerfully sacrificing 'all the Assistant Surgeons in the FMS who never received any profit whatsoever from the delinquencies of the Colonial Secretariat'.³⁵ Again in the same year McClelland, in backing Maxwell's proposal that cheap temporary buildings be used as English schools, diverged into another attack on the Colony administration:

Until our financial situation is improved by the removal of the tribute exacted from us for the provision of extravagant railways, docks, and causeways outside our own borders we must be content to provide what education we can in such centres as seem most suitable and to postpone the gratification of seeing the advertisement of our educational policy displayed by the magnificence of the building in which we cater for the needs of posterity.³⁶

To what extent Dickson's and McClelland's sentiments prevailed among MCS officers in the FMS cannot be ascertained; it must have soured up the attitude of a section of FMS men towards the Guillemard scheme. As a manifestation of this, there was a move in 1925 to get the adverse Galloway Report on decentralization in the Medical Department shown to the Federal Council Unofficials or published so as to damage Guillemard's case for drastic decentralization in the FMS. To cite Guillemard on this:

I was not informed while I was in England that there was a *strong feeling* [emphasis added] in favour of circulating the Report to Unofficials or publishing it. If I had known I should have agreed to publication. As soon as I was informed on my arrival last month, I at once agreed.³⁷

It should be noted that McClelland's views coincided with those of the FMS Unofficials who petitioned for the restoration of the title of Resident-General in order to protect FMS funds from being 'pillaged' by the High Commissioner for development outside the Federation. This reflected an underlying feeling of narrow FMS exclusiveness which likewise prevailed among the Residents who unanimously supported the Unofficials' petition in 1922. Among the more perceptive remarks Guillemard made in 1923 concerning the Residents was one that stated:

I have found it impossible to avoid the feeling that the perspective of the present generation of Residents is confined to the limits of the FMS and does not extend to British Malaya as a whole. This perhaps is not surprising, as they have grown up with the Federation, and their desire to guard the interests of the Federation over whose development they have watched possibly inclined them to a dislike of any change which might in any way affect the traditions which they inherited.³⁸

Understandably, the Residents as well as other FMS officers were generally dissatisfied with Guillemard's policy of lowering the status of the Chief Secretary, regarding it as an attack on the administration to which they belonged. As Collins stated, this dissatisfaction was 'no doubt' fostered and exploited by Maxwell. The proposed abolition of the Chief Secretaryship under the Guillemard scheme, therefore, served only to stoke existing discontent to a new height. Apart from the larger question of efficiency, a substantial body of FMS officers viewed the Chief Secretaryship as a counterpoise to the Colonial Secretaryship³⁹ and believed that its removal would damage general FMS interests as well as the collective interests of FMS officers; even Peel and Richards, as mentioned earlier, soon came round to this conclusion. One therefore feels confident in accepting the subsequent assertion of one Colonial Office man that Maxwell's views on the indispensability of the Chief Secretaryship in the FMS 'received a large measure of support from both officials and unofficials'.⁴⁰

THE POUNTNEY FINANCIAL SCHEME

The Pountney Committee was the first committee to be appointed because finance was of overriding importance to the entire decentralization scheme and presumably also because Guillemard was relying on Pountney, his own appointee and personal financial adviser, to formulate a positively favourable report on financial devolution, thereby paving the way for similar submissions on other aspects of decentralization by the other committees. It was entrusted with the task of working out steps to increase the financial authority of the State Councils without undermining the financial stability of the FMS. This standard Malayan practice of delegating detailed planning of policies to official committees on which MCS officers invariably sat operated against decentralization. While Maxwell retained control and direction of most of the decentralization measures he formulated and introduced, Guillemard chose to hand over his entire programme to such

committees. As the reports of such apparently impartial committees were rarely rejected, this approach enabled the MCS to stultify the new policy.

The Pountney Committee was a case in point. Concerned chiefly with safeguarding the financial stability of the FMS, its three conservative members were less affected than their MCS colleagues by the question of moral obligations towards the Malays. The committee set out first to undermine Guillemard's case for financial devolution to the State Councils by claiming that the Treaty of 1895 implicitly indicated that the founders of the FMS had intended to create a common purse,⁴¹ and that this intention was clearly understood by the Rulers at the time the Federation was formed. In agreeing to all this, the Rulers were fully aware that they were surrendering financial control of their states to the Federal Councils. Like Maxwell, the committee then rightly pointed out that the state estimates were never laid before the State Councils until 1925. It follows that the establishment of the Federation and the Federal Council did not diminish the already negligible financial authority of the State Councils.⁴² Having purportedly refuted the Rulers' protest against British violation of treaty obligations and Guillemard's claim that the State Councils exercised important financial authority before Federation, the Committee declared:

We admit that we have paid considerable attention to the past history of this question. We have done so because we felt that it was essential to our consideration of the devolution policy to know whether the present position, which we claim to be a natural and beneficial one, had been arrived at with the fullest publicity possible. We are satisfied that this is the case and that there are, therefore, no moral obligations to proceed with the devolution policy, in so far as its financial aspect is concerned, more rapidly than the preservation of financial security permits.⁴³

Having thus struck a note of caution, the committee then proceeded to construct a scheme based purely on economic and financial considerations, whereas the devolution policy was motivated primarily by political factors. Once again the

familiar scenario emerged of decentralization being eroded by non-political influences. In drawing up the scheme, the committee was also guided by the preamble of the Federal Council constitution to the effect that 'a Federal Service is one of common interest to the Federation or one affecting more than one State, while a State Service is one which affects an individual State only'.⁴⁴ Thus, the committee divided the public services into three categories: twenty-four Federal Services to be provided in the federal estimates, twelve Reserved (State) Services to appear in the state estimates, and eighteen Unreserved Services to be provided in both the above estimates.⁴⁵ Under the scheme, the Unreserved Services would eventually be classified in either of the other two categories. Devolution would therefore, involve bringing many of these services into the Reserved (State) Services until there emerged state budgets of purely local services sanctioned by the State Councils. For a start, however, the services reserved to the states were so limited that they provided no risk of extravagance and necessitated no strengthening of Council membership. The services for each state were to be financed by a lump sum appropriated by the Federal Council according to a preliminary budget drawn up by the Resident and approved by the High Commissioner. The State Council would then allocate the lump sum as it deemed fit to the various Reserved (State) Services. The Committee conceded that the services reserved to the States might vary depending on the State Councils' competence, as it would be unwise to hold back the advance of the more capable councils. Likewise, at all times the Federal Council should retain the right to delete any Reserved (State) Service found to have been incompetently handled by the State Councils.

The Pountney Committee Report possessed two hallmarks, both reflecting the rigid attitude of the Financial Adviser towards decentralization. The first was caution and conservatism. All the twelve services affected under the report had been recommended for transfer to the State Councils by Robson in a scheme discussed earlier, while Maxwell himself

had given five of them as *examples* for devolution in his 1922 proposals,⁴⁶ and presumably had intended to include the others since all were purely state services appearing in the state estimates. The lump-sum procedure for carrying out the change had likewise been advanced by Maxwell and Robson and had hitherto not been implemented largely because of Pountney himself. The committee indirectly conceded that its scheme failed to vest the State Councils with any real financial authority since the Federal Council would continue to sanction supply for the Reserved (State) Services and exercise ultimate control over them. Under the scheme, the total sum involved for the four states amounted to only \$5.1 million, a sum nearly five times smaller than Robson's recommended figure of around \$23.2 million.⁴⁷ The committee did not advise a larger degree of devolution chiefly because it wished to ensure financial stability in the FMS, a vital consideration since the existing State Council members almost entirely lacked experience in handling financial matters. The committee added that a larger measure of devolution might also result in undesirable 'speedy increase or change' in State Council membership. Presumably, it had in mind Maxwell's idea that thoughtless changes in this area could lead to the swamping of Malay by non-Malay members or, at least, put an end to the essentially Malay character of the present State Councils.

The second hallmark of the Pountney Committee Report was its insistence on the maintenance of a single central control over FMS finance. For this purpose, the common purse must be preserved. This purse was 'a primary factor in building up the present financial strength and credit of the Federation', 'affords the best possible form of guarantees' for general financial stability, and ensured fair treatment of the individual states which retained their respective shares in it.⁴⁸ Likewise, the existing financial machinery should remain intact with the Federal Treasury continuing as the sole depository of surplus funds and the Federal Council the sole sanctioning authority of supply for public expenditure. Feeling uneasy

that it had to abandon, to some extent, the long-established principle that the voting and allocation of public funds should be under a single unitary control, the committee warned that financial devolution should not result in 'any appreciable weakening' of the existing tight control over expenditure proposals.

In drawing up its scheme the Pountney Committee assumed the continued existence of the Chief Secretary who was regarded as the natural authority to scrutinize, comment on, and provisionally approve the estimates for the federal and unreserved services before these estimates went to the High Commissioner for final sanction. The Chief Secretary would continue to sign warrants to cover expenditure incurred in these estimates, just as the Residents did in connection with state expenditure. Under the scheme he would lose control over the estimates for the Reserved (State) Services which would now proceed direct from the Residents to the High Commissioner. The committee feared that this would weaken central financial control, thereby leading to approval of unnecessary or lavish expenditure proposals which would otherwise have been chopped off or reduced by the Chief Secretary.⁴⁹ To avoid this, the committee advised the High Commissioner to assume personally the Chief Secretary's power to sanction new appointments, salary increases (other than incremental) and changes in provisions in connection with the Reserved (State) Services. The committee also recommended that the FMS Treasurer should be upgraded to become the Financial Adviser so that he could offer the 'independent criticisms' of the federal and state estimates formerly presented by the Chief Secretary. The above measures were considered necessary because the Colonial Secretary, not having the 'intimate local knowledge' nor 'the stature' of the FMS executive head, would not generally be able to deal with the estimates as effectively as the Chief Secretary.⁵⁰ Accordingly the Chief Secretaryship was regarded as an essential part of the existing FMS administrative system if financial efficiency were to be maintained. It is clear from the above

that Pountney was not in favour of the abolition of the above post as Guillemard planned.

The Pountney Committee Report must have come as a heart-breaking disappointment to Guillemard. Nonetheless, it should be noted that Pountney had softened his stand on decentralization. The most important reason behind this was that the Secretary of State had personally approved a policy of accelerated decentralization and it was not politic to turn in a completely negative report; presumably Pountney's own intimate relations with Guillemard rendered it difficult to disappoint the latter too deeply. In any case the report was tantamount to a frontal assault on the central pillar of the Guillemard scheme as it rested on the Chief Secretary playing a vital role in financial affairs. By itself this did not make it impossible to abolish the Chief Secretaryship in a reorganized FMS. Assisted by a Federal Secretary and a Financial Adviser with enhanced power and status, the High Commissioner could take over the role of the Chief Secretary. To carry this through, Guillemard would have to brave and overcome enormous problems. The move would substantiate the widespread apprehension that his scheme would result in over-centralization in Singapore, thereby sharply stiffening opposition in the FMS. The High Commissioner would have to ride roughshod over the Unofficials who would certainly not agree thereafter to any devolution proposals laid in the Federal Council, a development that would prove truly embarrassing to the government. And not having sounded the UMS on the pan-Malayan question, and consequently unable to justify to the Colonial Office any sweeping move by the good prospects of forming a larger Malayan federation, Guillemard would find it difficult to brush aside the considered opinion of an 'impartial' official committee he himself had appointed. Nonetheless, the High Commissioner would still possess a good chance of success if only he could win over the other committees, particularly the Residents Committee, to the idea of abolishing the Chief Secretaryship. But here too the committees left him out on a limb.

By June 1926 Guillemard was painfully conscious of the last factor. Beginning work in January Gibson by now must have completed and submitted his memorandum on the constitutional position of the FMS as discussed earlier. Consequently, Guillemard was aware that Gibson (and therefore, the Legal Committee) would not agree to the supersession of the Chief Secretary by a relatively junior and purely co-ordinating Federal Secretary. About the same time the Residents Committee presented a report on financial devolution which presumably did not differ, to any material extent, from the Pountney Committee report; otherwise, its chairman, Thomson, would have registered his dissent from the report of the Co-ordinating Committee (of which he was a member) which endorsed the Pountney financial scheme.

Chaired by Peel and consisting of Thomson, Gibson, Alexander (who succeeded Pountney as Financial Adviser) and two Unofficials (C. Ritchie and H. T. Jones), the Co-ordinating Committee submitted a final financial scheme based on that devised by the Pountney Committee. Under this scheme the Chief Secretary would play a slightly more important role than that assigned by the original report. To prevent any loss of efficiency, he would now comment on the estimates of the Reserved (State) Services (as well as the other estimates) before final sanction came from the High Commissioner.⁵¹ In view of this, the proposals to saddle the High Commissioner with additional responsibility and to enhance the Financial Adviser's role were not included in what came to be called the Financial Devolution Scheme. This scheme however, liberalized the Pountney Committee scheme in certain aspects. While agreeing that financial devolution should be slow and by gentle stages, the Co-ordinating Committee did not stipulate that the list of twelve Reserved (State) Services should remain unchanged for three years as the Pountney Committee recommended. Another change was that the federal services would be reduced from twenty-four to nineteen, so that the unreserved services would increase from eighteen to twenty-two.⁵² This would involve Co-

operative Societies and Fisheries which the Pountney Committee considered capable of developing as purely state services in the future, and Official Assignee and Public Trustee, Police, and Malay Officers which were firmly classified as federal services. In addition, the Pountney Committee's suggestion that Public Works Special Services should be shifted from the unreserved to the federal list was rejected. Finally, the Co-ordinating Committee proposed, in the face of Alexander's disagreement, to empower each state to incur supplementary expenditure up to 10 per cent of the total budget for the Reserved (State) Services. Within this limit, the Residents could sanction supplementary expenditure up to \$5,000 per item (instead of the \$2,500 introduced as recently as April 1926), and the State Council any item between \$5,000 and \$10,000.⁵³ This change was of immediate consequence and was to enable the states to spend significantly beyond the lump-sum limits.

THE GUILLEMARD RETREAT

When the Federal Council assembled again on 23 June 1926 Guillemard had clearly decided to abandon his proposal to abolish the chief secretaryship primarily because of lack of support; presumably Maxwell's retirement a month earlier had also eliminated whatever interest he still might have in the matter. During this meeting the Financial Devolution Scheme was laid for general approval. The Unofficials felt the scheme would fulfil their agreement to a 'generous' measure of devolution to the states. But, they knew that the scheme by itself would not necessarily preclude the removal of the Chief Secretaryship or a drastic reduction of the Chief Secretary's powers. Should this occur, they planned not to vote for the decentralization proposals in the Federal Council, thereby forcing Guillemard to carry them through with the use of the official majority. In a calculated move they urged that consideration of the financial scheme be postponed till it could be jointly deliberated with the related Residents Committee

Report.⁵⁴ Guillemard then went out of his way to reassure the Unofficials that during his remaining term of office he would not advance any proposals to reduce the status and power of the Chief Secretary, except over purely local affairs.⁵⁵ There would always be, Guillemard stressed, an 'Executive Head of the Federation under the High Commissioner, an officer different from though *not necessarily less powerful* than the present Chief Secretary'.⁵⁶ He also directed the Residents Committee to study and report on the question of reforming the Federal Council,⁵⁷ thus jettisoning its original task of charting out steps to decentralize the Chief Secretary's powers to the states. He then accepted a postponement of the motion.

After the June meeting, Guillemard was deeply disconcerted by the news that the Association of British Malaya had launched a campaign in London to engineer the return of the Resident-General to the FMS. This came in the form of an article entitled 'Malay Problems, 1926' which Frank Swettenham published in the May issue of the Association's magazine, *British Malaya*,⁵⁸ followed by a supporting paper in August by Maxwell which contained the revelation that in November 1922 the four FMS Rulers unanimously supported the restoration of the Resident-General title.⁵⁹ Guillemard recoiled at the thought of success for the Swettenham-Maxwell campaign which would have represented a complete rout for himself and a vindication of Maxwell's view. Uncertain of the repercussions of the agitation, he sent a lengthy despatch to the Colonial Office late in August 1926 in which he rightly pointed out that Swettenham's opinions on Malayan affairs were twenty years outdated and that the Resident-General question was locally accepted as beyond the pale of practical politics. He warned that the restoration of the title would prove fatal to his policy of eventually creating a larger Malayan federation.⁶⁰ Guillemard's anxiety was unwarranted. Any reversal of the 1923 ruling against the title restoration would have made a mockery of the new policy and caused irreparable damage to Whitehall's credibility in Malaya. The Colonial

Office's rejection of the Swettenham-Maxwell effort was a foregone conclusion. But to prevent Guillemard from 'plunging into press controversy', London expressed concurrence with the High Commissioner's views early in October.⁶¹ The Colonial Office, acting on Guillemard's complaint, also mildly rebuked Maxwell for divulging confidential information concerning the Rulers' stand on the Resident-General title.

Having shut the back-door against the re-entry of the Resident-General to the FMS, Guillemard re-introduced the Financial Devolution Scheme in the Federal Council on 13 December 1926. As it had become abundantly certain by then that the Chief Secretaryship would remain intact, the Unofficials readily agreed to pass the scheme. In fact, Robson suggested that the Unreserved Services should be divided between the other two categories of services in 1928⁶²—an idea far more progressive than the intention of both the Malayan Government and the Colonial Office. The sole Malay Unofficial, Raja Chulan, again poured out Malay gratitude to Guillemard for bringing forward the financial scheme and other decentralization measures in the face of immense odds, although he was disappointed with government refusal to lay the scheme in the State Councils for comments as he requested in June. He urged the government to insist that heads of federal departments should be purely non-executive advisers, unless it was 'absolutely necessary' to vest them with administrative powers, because executive heads '*pro tanto* reduce the powers of local heads'.⁶³ Dissatisfied with the Financial Devolution Scheme, Raja Chulan later added that financial devolution should be viewed in the light of the position of the State Councils in the UMS and of the future development of the FMS.⁶⁴ The Colonial Office was not impressed with the change either. Walter Ellis minuted with understandable cynicism that the Guillemard scheme was 'gradually being whittled away into camouflage to satisfy the dignity of the Rulers. If they, as appeared are satisfied and the High Commissioner satisfied, I don't see that we need complain'.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, attaching more weight to the question of effi-

ciency, Ormsby-Gore decided to caution against the over-early transfer of subjects from the Unreserved group to the Reserved (State) Services. He was particularly impressed with Choo Kia Peng's suggestion in the Federal Council that Education, Agriculture, Forests, Mines, Survey, and Medical should be shifted to the list of federal services.⁶⁶

Guillemard's change of heart, as indicated clearly in the Federal Council, must have been quietly but warmly received by the Residents and the Legal Committees. It drew out a more candid report from the Legal Committee convened to report on legislative devolution to the State Councils. In view of his want of sympathy for the Guillemard policy, Gibson presumably welcomed the fact that the Pountney Committee Report (and therefore the Financial Devolution Scheme) and his own memorandum on the FMS constitutional problem discussed earlier were incompatible in two major respects. First, the alternative constitution Gibson adumbrated for a real federation in the FMS insisted on a rigorously-defined division of powers between the centre and the states. No such division in financial matters was provided in the Pountney Committee or the Financial Devolution Scheme; instead, a long list of subjects was left suspended, as it were, in mid-air within the Unreserved group of services. Second, Gibson's memorandum advocated two types of budgets, one for the federal government under the control of a newly-formed central legislature, the other for the states to be sanctioned independently by the state councils.⁶⁷ This meant a break-up of the common purse so strongly defended by the Pountney Committee and maintained by the Financial Devolution Scheme. The financial scheme therefore, helped to shape the Legal Committee Report which asserted that it was too late to revert to the system during pre-Federation days when identical laws were separately enacted by four State Councils and too early to establish a real federation wherein the Federal Council would enact federal laws only, leaving state matters to be legislated by the State Councils. The conclusion therefore, was that for the present no effective extension of

legislative authority to the State Councils could be made.⁶⁸ The Legal Committee Report was accepted by the Federal Council in December 1926.

Late in 1926 the Legal and the Residents Committees submitted separate reports on Federal Council reform to the Co-ordinating Committee chaired by Peel. The final report was successfully tabled in the Federal Council on 28 February 1927. Under the plan, the four Rulers withdrew from the Council and instead met in an annual *durbar*. Undoubtedly this move did enhance the dignity of the Rulers as the Co-ordinating Committee intended and, to this extent, the constitutional change may be regarded as relevant to decentralization. The other point to note is that the Committee rejected nearly all the specific proposals of Maxwell and the Malayan newspapers on council reforms. To increase efficiency, five new official members⁶⁹ were nominated to the legislature who would deal more effectively with government affairs raised in council. The overall result was to increase the official members from twelve to thirteen, and the Unofficials from eight to eleven with the addition of three Malay members. It should be noted that this reform was not advocated in the Guillemard scheme and was essentially a by-product of anti-Guillemard agitation. Besides, in sharp contrast to his declaration in December 1925 that the new policy would curtail the work and authority of the Federal Council, the High Commissioner now unblushingly emphasized that the constitutional reform would have exactly the opposite result.⁷⁰

As noted, the Residents Committee was originally convened 'to deal with the general question of administrative devolution and the consequent changes in General Orders'. The idea of a genuine federation raised by Malayan newspapers and Gibson during the controversy did influence Guillemard to think along the same line. This was evident not only in Gibson's memorandum on the constitutional problem in the FMS, but also in a change in the committee's terms of reference which now urged an inquiry into 'what functions of Government should be classified as *purely Federal*' and 'what

administrative changes should be made'.⁷¹ The committee submitted a report on financial devolution and later another on the reform of the Federal Council,⁷² but observed complete silence on the central question of the Chief Secretaryship. The reason behind this was obvious. Once Guillemard had given an undertaking in the Federal Council in June 1926 that he would take no steps to reduce the power and status of the Chief Secretary, the only thing left to the Committee to consider was another report on the pattern of the Home Decentralization Report of 1923: a task Guillemard had little interest in and the Pountney Committee advised against.

Taking a last look at decentralization before he retired in May 1927, Guillemard informed the Colonial Office that the financial devolution scheme and the reform of the Federal Council were the essential portions of his policy. He emphasized however, that much remained to be done such as the gradual extension of transferred subjects to the State Councils and the strengthening of these councils through changes in membership so as to prepare them for increased legislative authority. As for the pivotal question of the Chief Secretaryship, he explained that the issue would practically settle itself as decentralization proceeded.⁷³ But late in June 1926 the Unofficials successfully pressed Guillemard to sanction a more dignified ceremonial welcome for the Chief Secretary's arrival to attend the annual opening of the Federal Council.⁷⁴ This move tended to enhance the status of the Chief Secretary—a reversal of Guillemard's previous policy on the same question. Just before he left Malaya, he sealed his term of office by signing the 1927 Federal [Council] Agreement with the FMS Rulers.

As a summing up, let us assess the achievements of Guillemard. The High Commissioner himself claimed that the financial scheme and the reconstituted Federal Council together amounted to 'a substantial measure of constitutional reform' that went far to meet the aspirations of the Malay Rulers.⁷⁵ This assessment lacks factual support. On the other hand, Peel in his memoirs rightly asserted that the decentra-

lization measures actually taken were 'superficial rather than essential'.⁷⁶ Compared with the extent of decentralization recommended by Sultan Iskandar of Perak to the Colonial Office in August 1924, Guillemard's achievements paled into insignificance and could hardly be expected to satisfy the FMS Rulers to any important extent. In his scheme Guillemard explicitly stated that the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship, expected to be accomplished by the end of the tenure of Maxwell's successor, represented 'the only effective decentralization in the FMS and the only cure for the dissatisfaction of the Rulers'. At the time Guillemard left Malaya in May 1927, the Chief Secretary occupied the same position as at the time the new policy was inaugurated; equally noteworthy, nothing was afoot to reduce his status or power in the future. In terms of decentralization, Guillemard's most important achievement was the Financial Devolution Scheme which, however, failed to devolve 'a large measure of financial authority from the federal legislature to the State Councils as the High Commissioner set out to accomplish. As for his objective of devolving 'a large measure of original legislative power' to the State Councils, Guillemard not only achieved absolutely nothing, but ironically claimed that the Federal Council now commanded increased authority and improved efficiency. One may imagine the chagrin of Guillemard on reading the sardonic appraisal of his policy by *British Malaya* in February 1927 which stated:

On the whole, while one is reminded of the classic tale of a mountain which, after great labour, produced a mouse, those who have been waiting with anxiety to see what would result from the throes of the Malay mountain will be relieved to find that it was a case of mistaken diagnosis.⁷⁷

THE AFTERMATH: STATUS QUO UNDER CLIFFORD

Guillemard's successor was the outstanding Malayan pioneer, Sir Hugh Clifford, whom Collins initially had in mind in 1924

as Governor-High Commissioner to carry out accelerated decentralization in the FMS. His return to Malaya raised keen hopes among Malays, and Raja Chulan declared in the Federal Council that to his community Clifford was 'the long lost *Batu Sahmora* regained'.⁷⁸ But to the great relief of Peel⁷⁹ who had come round to the view that the Chief Secretaryship was indispensable in the FMS, the *Batu Sahmora* decided to defer action on decentralization chiefly because he was a staunch supporter of the FMS administrative system he had helped to establish. Shocked by the demoralizing effects of the recent squabbles and the decentralization furore on the FMS administration, about which he complained to Wilson, he understandably directed his energy to strengthening the existing system.

Clifford acted promptly to revamp the morale and improve the performance of the MCS. For instance, he forced MCS cadets to learn the Malay language in London University before their departure to Malaya and then stationed them for at least a year in remote districts so that they would acquire at first-hand an intimate knowledge of the Malay community. It was believed 'that in his short time here Clifford got more out of [the MCS officers] than anyone else for years'.⁸⁰ His efforts were appreciated by MCS officers in the FMS who sent a common letter of sympathy on his premature retirement from Malaya in 1929 because of ill health.⁸¹

In a different direction, Clifford tried to strengthen the executive head of the FMS government. In August 1927 he advised the Colonial Office that if decentralization was to proceed successfully 'a strong and efficient Chief Secretary' was most essential. Reflecting their lack of commitment to the Guillemard scheme which they officially supported, the Residents and Peel at once changed their front and rallied behind Clifford.⁸² Accordingly Clifford sought to elevate the status of the Chief Secretary to that of a Lieutenant-Governor or at least to restore the title of Resident-General on the ground that the latter had always been the FMS *de facto* executive head and was expected to assume more responsi-

lity from the High Commissioner in future.⁸³ When Ormsby-Gore visited Malaya in 1928, he and Clifford discussed the matter and the latter evidently believed that Ormsby-Gore was converted to his view. But both the requests were rejected by the Colonial Office. Not convinced that the Chief Secretary's duties warranted a rise in status, Whitehall in any case thought it inexpedient to restore the title of Resident-General because of the circumstances surrounding its abolition.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the Colonial Office seems to have tacitly agreed that a strong executive officer was indispensable to the FMS administration.⁸⁵ In short during Clifford's time decentralization was to all intents and purposes tucked away in a pigeon-hole.

Efforts however, were made to ensure that administrative practices did not deviate significantly from the official policy of decentralization, and attempts by Federal Heads to centralize their departments⁸⁶ or to free them from the Residents' control were resisted. For instance, the Director of the Electrical Department, W. J. Williams, tried in 1927 to eliminate lay control over his department by proposing to federalize all electrical undertakings and pool all revenues for future development under the supervision of an autonomous Electrical Board.⁸⁷ Williams felt that state control would prevent the construction of an inter-connected electrical system throughout the FMS and presently was hampering efficiency. He explained the latter point:

I have had to deal with numerous cases where prospective consumers have approached me for power load and it is with extreme difficulties that it has been possible to hold such would-be consumers from making other arrangements as it takes such a long time to get a decision from the Government. Moreover, a policy of 'Wait, I must go and ask Father' is frequently out of the question when dealing with hard-headed businessmen.⁸⁸

This effort to create what the Resident of Negri Sembilan, Wolff, termed an electrical *imperium in imperio* was immediately scotched by the government. Williams was informed

that he could not expect to see the Residents relinquishing their control over public institutions operating within their states and that he had ignored the policy of decentralization.⁸⁹ All that Williams secured for his efforts was a recognition that he was an *executive* head and had slightly more power over intra- and inter-state transfers of personnel in his department.

No progress was made under the Financial Devolution scheme during Clifford's time. In 1929 the government disagreed with the Surveyor-General that it was time to transfer the Survey Department from the Unreserved Services to the Reserved (Federal) Services. On the same ground that it was too early to review the policy of financial devolution, it also rejected the suggestion of Raja Chulan that some unreserved services be converted into Reserved (State) Services.⁹⁰ Hence, no efforts were made to strengthen the State Councils or to extend their financial authority. The government only undertook to review the Financial Devolution Scheme in 1930, thus indicating that the three-year freeze on the scheme recommended by the Pountney Committee was by no means too conservative for official thinking on the matter. In short the status quo was firmly maintained in the FMS between 1927 and 1930.

1. *Straits Echo*, 8.2.1926.

2. Report of the Committee appointed to Examine the Financial Aspect of the Devolution Policy outlined in Federal Council Paper no. 39 of 1925, 9.4.1926 (henceforth cited as Pountney Committee Report), p. 5, SSF 572/1933.

3. *PFC FMS*, 1931, enclosure to Clementi to Cunliffe-Lister 17.12.1931, CO 717/88/92300 Part I/1932.

4. Minute by J. J. Paskin 2.5.1922, CO 717/20.

5. Memo by W. S. Gibson, undated, CO 717/76/72483/1931.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Minute by J. M. Martin 28.1.1931, *ibid.*

8. Minute by J. J. Paskin 2.5.1922, CO 717/20.

9. W. Peel to E. Birch 19.5.1926, Personal Papers of E. W. Birch, Rhodes House, Oxford.
10. Notes written by Sir William Peel, Governor of Hong Kong, 1930-35, concerning his Colonial Service from 1897-1935, Rhodes House, Oxford.
11. *Straits Echo*, 9.3.1926 and 26.3.1926.
12. Memo on a Malayan Advisory Council by J. D. Hall 3.5.1936, CO 717/119/51711/1936.
13. Notes written by Sir William Peel, Governor of Hong Kong, 1930-35, concerning his Colonial Service from 1897-1935, Rhodes House, Oxford.
14. John Gullick and Gerald Hawkins, *Malayan Pioneers*, Singapore, 1958, pp. 14-21; Hose to Guillemard 18.6.1925, CO 717/42.
15. Minute by J. J. Paskin 2.5.1922, CO 717/20; also Guillemard to Grindle, June 1922, *ibid.* In his reply Guillemard failed to answer certain doubts Paskin had in mind concerning Thomson's promotion. Thomson was recommended on grounds of special experience and qualification. But his career background was not unusual for a FMS man; he spent most of his time in Perak, Selangor, and Kelantan, and only two years in Kuantan, Pahang. Guillemard made a far stronger case for the promotion of W. S. Gibson to the Legal Advisership, FMS. In 1923 A. S. Haynes, a decentralization enthusiast, jumped over nearly the whole of Class II to become Secretary for Agriculture (Class IA). Likewise C. W. H. Cochrane (recommended by Maxwell) and E. W. F. Gilman were promoted to Under-Secretary, FMS (Class IA), and Controller of Labour (Class IA) respectively, thereby by-passing all the Class IB officers.
16. Minutes by H. Beckett 3.5.1922 and A. E. Collins 9.3.1922, *ibid.*
17. Guillemard to Thomas 22.10.1924, CO 717/34.
18. Minute by W. S. Wilson 17.12.1925, CO 273/529.
19. Guillemard to Grindle 27.2.1925, CO 717/41.
20. Hose to Amery 30.9.1925 and enclosure, CO 717/43.
21. Guillemard to Amery 14.1.1926 and Minute by H. Beckett 23.2.1926, CO 717/48.
22. B. W. Elles, J. Lornie and C. F. J. Green were Residents in the FMS; T. W. Clayton, G. E. Shaw and R. J. B. Clayton were British Advisers in the UMS; C. H. G. Clarke and Meadows Frost were Resident Councillors in the Straits Settlements. The Class IA holders were L. McLean, A. Cavendish, P. T. Allen and M. D. Daly.
23. When Clementi decided to revive accelerated decentralization he had Cochrane, then Chief Secretary, retired from service on the

ground that the latter was not heart and soul behind his policy. Notes of a Meeting in the Colonial Office 26.11.1930, CO 717/76/72483/1930.

24. *Straits Echo*, 22.12.1925.

25. Guillemard to Amery 6.5.1926, CO 717/52.

26. Minute by H. Beckett 8.2.1926, CO 717/48.

27. Notes written by Sir William Peel, Governor of Hong Kong, 1930-35, concerning his Colonial Service from 1897-1935, Rhodes House, Oxford.

28. Memo by Maxwell 8.2.1926, encl. to Guillemard to Amery 18.2.1926, CO 717/48; also *Straits Echo* 22.12.1925.

29. L. Guillemard, *Trivial Fond Records*, London, 1937, p. 91.

30. See, for instance, *The Malayan Civil List, 1929*, Kuala Lumpur, 1929.

31. The twelve persons were J. R. Aldworth (Resident, Negri Sembilan), W. J. P. Hume (Resident, Perak), O. Marks (Resident, Selangor), V. Hill (Resident, Negri Sembilan), E. S. Hose (Resident, Negri Sembilan), C. W. C. Parr (Resident, Perak), E. C. H. Wolff (Resident, Negri Sembilan), H. W. Thomson (Resident, Selangor), A. F. Worthington (Resident, Pahang), C. W. H. Cochrane (Resident, Pahang), J. W. Simmons (Resident, Negri Sembilan), and W. G. Maxwell (Chief Secretary). The five Straits officers were E. L. Brockman (Chief Secretary), A. H. Lemon (Resident, Selangor), O. F. Stonor (Resident, Perak), J. Lornie (Resident, Selangor), and W. Peel (Chief Secretary).

32. L. Guillemard, p. 91.

33. This feeling, in fact, existed before Guillemard became Governor-High Commissioner. Junior officers petitioned the Secretary of State on this question in 1916. Guillemard's policy aggravated matters. Dickson to Lucas, 7.5.1923, CO 717/20.

34. The seventeen were E. Pratt (FMS-19 years; SS-3 years), H. Norman (FMS-17 years; SS-2 years), T. W. Clayton (FMS-12 years; SS-1 year), L. McLean (FMS-20 years; SS-4 years), S. H. Langston (FMS-20 years; SS-4 years), R. Crichton (FMS-17 years; SS-4 years), B. W. Elles (FMS-23 years; SS-3 years), C. H. G. Clarke (FMS-10 years; SS-14 years), P. T. Allen (FMS-10 years; SS-9 years), F. W. Douglas (FMS-22 years; SS-nil), E. A. Dickson (FMS-23 years; SS-nil), M. D. Daly (FMS-23 years; SS-nil), G. E. Shaw (FMS-9 years; SS-nil), R. J. B. Clayton (FMS-25 years; SS-2 years), Meadows Frost (FMS-25 years; SS-2 years), H. S. Sircom (FMS-11 years; SS-1 year), and W. Pryde (FMS-19 years; SS-1 year). It should be noted that the time these officers spent in the UMS (which generally was much shorter than that spent in the FMS for FMS officers) has been

omitted. G. E. Shaw had the longest period of nine years' service in the UMS. Also, the years stated in brackets are rough estimates based on information in the *Malayan Civil Lists* of 1923 and 1929. For information on other MCS officers' careers, see Biographical Notes, Appendix.

35. Memo by McClelland 26.5.1922, encl. to Guillemard to Devonshire 9.5.1922, CO 717/28.

36. Memo by McClelland 2.5.1922, SSF 1960/1922.

37. Guillemard to Maxwell 19.12.1925, SSF 5108/1925.

38. Guillemard to Devonshire 19.3.1923, CO 717/27.

39. Collins to Brockman 15.8.1922, CO 717/21; Observations on Decentralisation by Maxwell 22.11.1925, CO 717/45; Memo on a Malayan Advisory Council by J. D. Hall 3.5.1936, CO 717/119/51711/1936; Minute by Collins 8.12.1925, CO 273/529; Pountney Committee Report, pp. 16-17, SSF 572/1933; Memo on Decentralisation and the Post of Chief Secretary by J. A. Calder 11.4.1932, CO 717/88/92300 Part II/1932. One Colonial Office man wrote, 'Much as we deplore the fact, there is great jealousy between the FMS and the Straits Settlements, each of which suspects the other of parasitism on itself, while the FMS in particular suffer from an *idée fixe* that the Governor-High Commissioner is always being led into favouring the Colony.' Minute by Beckett 24.8.1922, CO 717/21. Some of the other sources cited in this footnote established that Beckett was referring to the attitude of both the Unofficials of the Federal Council and British officers in the FMS. Further, see Hose to Amery 7.8.1925, CO 717/42.

40. Memo on Decentralisation and the Post of Chief Secretary by J. A. Calder 11.4.1932, CO 717/88/92300 Part II/1932.

41. The Pountney Committee Report, p. 4, SSF 572/1933.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

45. The Federal Services recommended were (1) The High Commissioner and the Chief Secretary, (2) Charges on account of Public Debt, (3) Pensions, (4) Malayan Civil Service, (5) Treasury, (6) Audit Office, (7) Commissioner of Lands, (8) Customs and Excise, (9) Exchange, (10) Geological Department, (11) Museums, (12) Labour Department, (13) Malay Officers, (14) Legal Adviser, (15) Posts and Telegraphs, (16) Printing Department, (17) Railways, (18) Office of Directors, Widows and Orphans' Pensions Enactment and Public Officers' Guarantee Fund, (19) Supreme Court, (20) Miscellaneous (Federal) Services, (21) Co-operative Societies, (22) Fisheries, (23) Police, (24) Official Assignee and Public Trustee.

The Unreserved Services listed were (1) Town Planning, (2) Transport, (3) Chinese Protectorate, (4) Military, (5) Marine, (6) Clerical Service, (7) Agriculture, (8) Infant Welfare, (9) Surveys, (10) Forests, (11) Prisons, (12) Mines, (13) Public Works Department, (14) Education, (15) Medical, (16) Public Works Annually Recurrent, (17) Public Works Special Services and (18) Valuer-General.

The Reserved (State) Services proposed were (1) The Rulers and Chiefs, (2) Political Pensions, (3) The Residents (including provision for the emoluments of the British Residents), (4) The District and Land Offices, (5) Settlement Officers, (6) (Magistrates') Courts, (7) Sanitary Boards, (8) Mosquito Destruction Boards, (9) State Bands, (10) Government Gardens and Plantations, (11) Miscellaneous (State) Services and (12) Purchase of Land.

The lists of services presented bear a close resemblance to those outlined by Robson in the *Malay Mail* (2.1.1926). Robson however, placed Clerical Service, Military, Public Works Department (Upkeep Federal), and Transport in the federal list of services, and put Fisheries and Museums in the Unreserved list.

See *ibid.*, pp. 6-17.

46. There were (1) The Rulers and Chiefs, (2) The Residents, (3) District Offices, (4) Sanitary Boards and (5) Mosquito Destruction Boards. Maxwell named a sixth item called 'Vehicles' which was not found in the Pountney Committee list.

47. The Pountney Committee Report, p. 13, SSF 572/1933; *Malay Mail*, 2.1.1926.

48. The Pountney Committee Report, p. 32, SSF 572/1933.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

50. *Ibid.*

51. 'Report of a Committee appointed by His Excellency The High Commissioner to make Recommendations in regard to Financial Devolution', Federal Council Paper no. 28 of 1926, *PFC FMS* 1926, p. C453. (Henceforth cited as The Financial Devolution Scheme.)

52. Under the scheme, Infant Welfare was included under Medical, hence the total was twenty-two, not twenty-three services.

53. The Financial Devolution Scheme, *ibid.*, 1926, p. C454. It was later decided that the Chief Secretary could sanction supplementary expenditure up to \$20,000 per item. See Draft Memo on General Order 244, SSF 4610/1927.

54. *PFC FMS* 1926, pp. B55-56.

55. *Ibid.*, 1926, p. B98.

56. *Ibid.* Italics added. See, also, Memo on Decentralisation and the

Post of Chief Secretary by J. A. Calder 11.4.1932, CO 717/88/92300 Part II/1932.

57. *PFC FMS* 1926, p. B98.

58. *British Malaya*, Vol. I, no. 1, May 1926, pp. 7-14.

59. Grindle feared that any controversy arising from Maxwell's article might drag in the FMS Rulers. Minute by Grindle 27.9.1926, CO 717/49.

60. Guillemard to Amery 28.8.1926, *ibid.*

61. Minute by Grindle 27.9.1926, and Amery to Guillemard 2.10.1926, *ibid.*

62. *PFC FMS* 1926, p. B132.

63. *Ibid.*, p. B172.

64. *Ibid.*, 1927, p. B170.

65. Minute by Ellis 12.4.1927, CO 717/55.

66. Minute by Ormsby-Gore 10.2.1927, *ibid.*, *PFC FMS* 1926, p. B133.

67. Under the scheme, FMS revenue would be divided between the central and the state governments and therefore would be under dual control and allocation.

68. 'Report of a Legal Committee appointed by His Excellency The High Commissioner to consider the subject of the Extension of the Legislative Powers of State Councils', Federal Council Paper no. 37 of 1926, *PFC FMS* 1926, pp. C633-4.

69. Four of the departmental heads appointed to the council as ex-officio members were the Principal Medical Officer, Controller of Labour, Director of Public Works and Director of Education. The fifth official would be appointed by name. Council Reform Report, *ibid.*, 1926, p. C636.

70. *Ibid.*, p. B126.

71. Federal Council Paper no. 9 of 1926, *ibid.*, p. 3.

72. Unfortunately neither report is available in the records.

73. Guillemard to Amery 4.1.1927, CO 717/55.

74. The request was made by Choo Kia Peng and Ritchie in order to impress the Asian community in the FMS that the Chief Secretary was senior to the Residents. Peel recommended and Guillemard approved the request. Accordingly during the ceremonial opening of the Federal Council, the Chief Secretary's arrival was greeted by a salute by the guards. It was also stated that the Chief Secretary should arrive *first*, presumably before the Rulers and the Residents. See Minutes by Peel 22.7.1926 and by W. E. Pepys 23.7.1926, SSF 3824/1926.

75. *PFC FMS* 1927, p. B7.

76. 'Notes written by Sir William Peel, Governor of Hong Kong, 1930-35, concerning His Colonial Service from 1897-1935', Rhodes House, Oxford. Ellis wrote that Guillemard's devolution measures did not 'really amount to much'. Minute by Ellis 12.4.1927, CO 717/55. In reviewing this position in the early 1930s the Colonial Office officials unanimously arrived at the same conclusion. See, for example, Minutes by J. M. Martin 19.11.1930 and 30.3.1931, and A Summary on Decentralisation by Martin 14.11.1930, CO 717/76/72483/1930.

77. *British Malaya*, Vol I, no. 10, February 1927, p. 274.

78. Raja Chulan continued, '*Batu Sahmora* is that precious stone reported to possess certain wonderful properties, one of which is to soothe and cure all ills.' *PFC FMS* 1927, p. B73.

79. 'Notes written by Sir William Peel, Governor of Hong Kong, 1930-35, concerning His Colonial Service from 1897-1935', Rhodes House, Oxford.

80. Diary of Shenton Thomas, High Commissioner's Inaugural Tour of West Coast States, 3.1.1923-11.2.1935, CO 717/111.

81. This letter was signed by William Peel on behalf of MCS members in the FMS and sent 'to convey to Your Excellency and Lady Clifford their sincerest sympathy in the illness which has fallen her. Your Excellency may not be fully aware of the personal pride which the Malayan Civil Service has felt in having at its head, as Governor and High Commissioner, the oldest active member, who is also the most distinguished member of the British Colonial Service'. Peel to Clifford 16.10.1929, SSF 1902/1929. It should be noted that it was Clifford, not his wife, who was sick. The letter was a reflection of the existence of a strong *esprit de corps* within the MCS. Also the letter was sent on behalf of MCS members resident in the FMS. It was possible that these members felt grateful to Clifford for his efforts to strengthen the existing FMS administration to which they belonged, in particular the position of the Chief Secretary.

82. Clifford to Amery 20.8.1927 (National Library of Singapore Collection).

83. *Ibid.*, Clifford to Amery 14.7.1928 (National Library of Singapore Collection).

84. See also A Summary on Decentralisation by J. M. Martin 14.11.1930, CO 717/76/72483/1930; Amery to Clifford 19.12.1928 (National Library of Singapore Collection).

85. Minute by J. M. Martin 19.11.1930, CO 717/76/72483/1930.

86. For instance, the government did not agree to the employment

of two extra engineers in the head office of the Public Works Department because the move might lead to over-centralization. See SSF 4696/1927.

87. Memo by W. J. Williams, October 1927, SSF 4357/1927.

88. Ibid.

89. Memos by Wolff 10.3.1928 and by Peel 2.5.1928, *ibid.*

90. Minute by Peel 17.5.1929, NSF 347/1929; *PFC FMS* 1929, pp. B67, B80.

Retrospect

As we have seen British efforts in the 1920s were to decentralize the FMS administration with a view to creating a Malayan union of all the Malay States. The process had begun with the rapid modernization of the Malay states of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang as represented by the establishment of a western administration and an export-oriented economy based chiefly on the tin and rubber industries. In this administration power was concentrated in the hands of the federal heads of departments, the Federal Council, and especially the Chief Secretary. Decentralization sought to loosen this tight-knit administration by devolving powers and functions from the federal to the state authorities so as to enable Malays to shoulder a larger degree of responsibility and overcome the restlessness of British Residents, as well as to create a decentralized administration in the FMS as a strategy to entice the UMS to join a Peninsular federation.

That the above were the principal motivations behind decentralization is indisputable. Two trends conditioned the attitude of British officials after the First World War. First, British officials were concerned that the Malay Rulers were disillusioned with the results of Federation; that some Residents were chafing under over-tight central control; that district officers' grassroot contacts with *kampong* Malays were weakening. Felt more strongly by men-on-the-spot than by bureaucrats in Whitehall, this sentiment underlined the

necessity for some measure of decentralization in the FMS in order to counter local disaffection: James' circular of 1920 was partly the fruit of this trend of thought. Second, the war had propelled the question of a Malayan federation of all the Malay states into the realm of open public speculation which forced Guillemard to urge the Colonial Office to take a decision. The outcome was Whitehall's adoption of such a Pan-Malayan policy geared towards the establishment of a federation which would rationalize the political arrangement, simplify the administration, and increase administrative efficiency in Malaya. To the Colonial Office decentralization was chiefly a strategy towards realizing the above political objective as clearly demonstrated by its deliberations and acceptance of Maxwell's memorandum of 1920 and Guillemard's policy four years later; likewise, the larger political question, together with concern for efficiency, determined Whitehall's response to the vociferous controversy triggered off by the Guillemard scheme in the mid-1920s. The Pan-Malayan goal also provided the ultimate justification advanced by Maxwell and Guillemard for their decentralization efforts. Overall, it was the more weighty of the two motivations behind the decentralization movement in the 1920s.

This evaluation differs from the assessment of the same question by K. K. Ghosh who asserts that 'strengthening the state authorities in general, and improving the position and dignity of Malay Rulers in particular, became the prime consideration of the Colonial Office and the High Commissioner'.¹ Ghosh rests his assessment on two premises: one that substantial decentralization had to be attained before it was possible to move towards a Malayan union; the other that the British intended to consolidate the Malay monarchies so as to preserve the traditional values of the Malay community.² The first premise is incontestable but, as we have seen, decentralization was officially accepted chiefly as a means to an end, a strategy towards a larger political union. While British concern for stability in the indigenous community was equally beyond dispute, there is no clear evidence to in-

dicate that Malay society was losing its cohesiveness and that politically-conscious Malays were posing a real political threat to British rule in the FMS. Indeed the general policy of strengthening indirect rule in the Malay states, which aimed at enhancing the status and prestige of Malay social and political institutions,³ is not to be confused with decentralization which overlapped but was not identical with that policy.

It is obvious that the need to assuage local disaffection stemmed from a vague sense of failure in fulfilling British moral obligations to the Malays under treaty and primarily from a bout of nervousness borne by both Whitehall and Malayan officials as a repercussion of the world war. Its importance however, should not be over-estimated as the British witnessed no organized Malay dissent or nationalist movement with popular support and knew that the Malay society was not disintegrating under the impact of colonial rule. In this connection, decentralization was a measure to gratify a set of Malay Rulers whose loyalty to Britain was proverbial as well as a precaution to forestall 'what is now a feeling of indifference [among Malays] developing into actual hostility'.⁴ As the British regained composure after 1923, this concern became less evident and obtrusive in orthodox official thinking in Malaya,⁵ even though the discontent of Sultan Iskandar of Perak with over-centralization made a deep impression on Whitehall officials in August 1924.

Although the Pan-Malayan goal was not discussed publicly, the attitudes of the various groups towards it are known. This goal enlisted the general support of the FMS Rulers as echoed by Sultan Iskandar of Perak during a durbar presided over by Clifford in 1927. But enthusiasm was absent since they were strongly state-oriented and entertained no sense of belonging to a wider Malayan nation. What appeared more clearly was the Rulers' opposition to the concept of a wider Malayan federation inclusive of the Straits Settlements which, they feared, would efface the sovereign status of their states. Even more clear-cut, the UMS Rulers regarded the idea of a larger Malayan federation as an anathema because such a grouping

would deprive them of their local autonomy. The FMS commercial interests, in contrast, favoured the idea as it would broaden the horizons of their economic operation, but at the same time, were apprehensive of the possible inclusion of the Straits Settlements in the larger grouping. This sprang partly from the dichotomy of interests existing between the producer economy in the FMS and the entrepôt economy in the Colony; even more significant perhaps was their aversion to any over-centralized control by the High Commissioner who, they alleged, would sacrifice FMS interests when these failed to agree with those of the Colony. In fact, as matters stood, many believed that administrative over-centralization in Kuala Lumpur would presage the absorption of the FMS by the Straits Settlements.⁶ To circumvent this, a section of the FMS commercial interests, through the *Times of Malaya*, backed Swettenham's advocacy in 1926 of a separate High Commissioner for the Federation. Finally Straits commercial interests opposed the idea of the Colony joining a Malayan union unless inviolable guarantees were forthcoming to ensure the continuing existence of the Colony's free-port status. In any case the amalgamation of sovereign Malay states and a British Crown Colony would raise delicate constitutional issues, entailing sanction by the British Parliament, which British officials were not prepared as yet to grapple with in the 1920s. In short, the British Pan-Malayan conception embraced a Malayan federation of all the Malay states co-existing with a separate Straits Settlements, both being headed by a Governor-High Commissioner based in Singapore.

Despite the absence of unanimity of views, the Pan-Malayan question generated hardly any discussion in Malaya. This was partly because the government astutely veiled its real intentions and adopted a low posture aimed at putting the UMS at ease. As Guillemard declared in the Federal Council in December 1921, the government had no intention whatsoever to extend the Federation by compulsion and left the question of the UMS joining a larger political unit entirely to their own discretion. This undertaking, as intended, left little

scope for any discussion of the question. Besides, most understandably, British officials concentrated first on decentralization and, bogged down completely in it, tended to lose sight of the larger political objective. However, the British adhered to the aim of encouraging the UMS to adopt the general policies of the FMS/Colony and participate in Pan-Malayan projects as Maxwell advised in 1920. In 1922 the head of the military forces was redesignated General Officer Commanding the Troops of Malaya rather than of the Straits Settlements as hitherto; in 1924 a Malayan Medical Service Committee was formed on which sat representatives from Kedah and Johor; and in 1925 the jurisdiction of the Labour Department was stretched to cover the UMS. At the same time high British policies on rubber restriction and eventual opium eradication were imposed on the UMS. And as already accomplished substantially in Kedah and Johor, Kelantan, Perlis, and Trengganu were persuaded to remodel their state treasuries after those, and to follow legislation on important matters such as land and criminal jurisdiction already in operation, in the FMS and the Colony.⁷ But all this was essentially a continuation of pre-1920 practices, and was acted upon in the quietest and most tactful fashion. No UMS Ruler was ever compelled to seek the advice of Malayan advisers of departments or attend a *darbar* with the FMS Rulers; nor were the Straits Settlements and the UMS ever invited in the 1920s to consider joining a larger Malayan federation. Little wonder that the Pan-Malayan goal excited little interest in Malaya.

Another striking feature is the aura of unreality enveloping the entire decentralization exercise. Nobody had a clear-cut plan for decentralization, and all the actors were groping in the dark. Perhaps Maxwell, the most innovative character, was right in asserting that no cut-and-dried scheme could be formulated in advance. Even more glaring was the fact that both Guillemard and especially the Colonial Office grossly underrated the depth and complexities of the issues involved. In October 1920 Collins, the man behind it all in Whitehall.

stated that decentralization and Pan-Malayan federation would have 'to be grappled with and solved' in a decade; again, in endorsing Guillemard's policy in 1924, he believed that the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship could be so easily accomplished that he successfully advised the Colonial Office not to appoint a substantive officer to succeed Maxwell. Maxwell was far more discerning on this score, but was equally unrealistic in recommending the establishment of partial Advisory rule in a multi-racial state and an industrial-commercial complex that was the FMS. He showed an inadequate appreciation of the fact that decentralization and Advisory rule threatened the twin goals of British colonialism in the FMS, namely, the direct control of political power in British hands and rapid economic development directed by non-Malay Asian and especially European capitalist interests.

As a strategy decentralization contained within itself no seed of success in attaining its ultimate goal in the 1920s. It offered few additional benefits to those—such as seconded British officers, financial grants and loans, modern up-to-date administrative and legal practices—which the UMS currently enjoyed. True, a larger political unit might well accelerate economic development in the UMS but this would reward alien capital more than the Malays. In any case, the UMS response to the Pan-Malayan policy was dictated by three basic considerations. First, this policy commanded no appeal among Malay Rulers and élite who were so state-oriented that they had no vision or even consciousness of belonging to a Malayan nation. Second, decentralization and its ultimate goal were self-contradictory. While decentralization would loosen the FMS administration, it would, once a Pan-Malayan federation had been formed, enable the government to centralize power over the UMS. Hence, the Colonial Office and Maxwell concurred that the final edifice set up in a Malayan federation would be 'a half-way house' between the administrative systems of the two groups of Malay states. Inevitably, in this larger unit, the UMS would have to surrender at least a significant degree of power to the centre—a proposition

abhorrent indeed to the existing Rulers and élite. Finally the idea of partial Advisory rule in the FMS did not even penetrate the perception of Guillemard and the core of British officialdom; accordingly, Maxwell was badly mauled by his senior colleagues when he raised the issue in 1924. However successful decentralization might have been in achieving an overlying structural uniformity in the various administrations, it would not have conferred on the FMS Rulers-in-Council the same share of powers and functions currently wielded by their confrères in the UMS. The UMS opposition to the British Pan-Malayan policy was therefore, both logical and valid.

Prospects looked bright and rosy at the start of the decentralization movement in 1920 when all British decision-makers concurred on its desirability. Beneath this facade of agreement however, existed different perceptions of the problem. Determined by Collins, an 'outsider' to the Malayan system, Whitehall's perception envisioned a drastic degree of decentralization in the FMS. It was prepared to abolish the Chief Secretaryship as presently constituted or even dissolve the existing Federation provided this would not substantially sacrifice administrative efficiency and that a Pan-Malayan union would thereby materialize. The MCS men-on-the-spot, however, contemplated no such extent of decentralization. They wanted the FMS administration preserved essentially intact and led by a strong executive Chief Secretary. From decentralization they expected more power for the Resident so that he could conduct state affairs without undue references to the Chief Secretary, would wield more control over the state branches of the federal departments, and would run a State Council with a significant degree of financial and legislative power. This perception generally engaged the support of the FMS commercial interests and was basically similar to Maxwell's own ideas. What was innovative and novel about the Maxwell scheme was that it included the introduction of partial Advisory rule in the FMS. Before 1924 Guillemard expressed no concrete ideas on decentralization as, generally, he only

endorsed Maxwell's proposals except the idea of Advisory rule for the FMS. There is nothing in the official records to show or even imply that he had any intention drastically to decentralize the FMS administration before 1924.

From the above discussion, it is clear that deep-seated fissures existed between London and Kuala Lumpur on the desirable degree of decentralization in the FMS. As it was impracticable to direct decentralization from London, the implementation of any policy must necessarily be entrusted to the men on the spot. And had Maxwell (and his successors) and the MCS been able to agree on how to proceed, the likely consummation in the long term would have been a looser federation in which the balance of power would still have tilted very much in favour of the centre. The division of powers between the centre and the states was likely to be demarcated at the point beyond which it would have involved a major loss of efficiency, or centralization in Singapore which any assertive Chief Secretary would invariably resist. This resort to 'speculation' is necessary precisely because the British decision-makers presented no clear vision of the future loose-knit administration in the FMS or a larger Malayan union.

Before Maxwell could act on his very moderate programme of decentralization, he became entangled with the post-war trade recession and a power struggle with Guillemard. Not having the benefit of access to official records at the time he wrote his *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule* in 1937, Emerson asserts that the recession was a key motivation behind decentralization.⁸ This has rightly been refuted by Ghosh who points out 'the relative unimportance of the economic factor' behind decentralization.⁹ It is clear that the slump played no part at all in initiating a decentralization policy which was decided late in 1920 before the financial crisis impinged on the Colonial Office and the Malayan authorities. In any case the slump had contradictory effects on decentralization. On the positive side, as Emerson rightly explains, it focused public attention on the FMS administra-

tion and highlighted it as top-heavy, over-centralized, and extravagant. In this way it converted a large number of British officials and the FMS commercial interests to the cause of decentralization. On the negative side, as Ghosh emphasizes, it delayed action on decentralization for nearly a year. What has been missed, however, is the fact that financial stringencies during the recession did narrow the scope of the Hose Decentralization Scheme and vanquish Maxwell's attempt to devolute a measure of financial authority to the State Councils in the period, 1923-4. Even more glaringly, both have ignored the vital significance of the appointment of Pountney as the Financial Adviser because of the recession, who was to use the need for tight central financial control, itself enhanced by the slump, to circumscribe the decentralization programmes of both Maxwell and Guillemard.

It is not true, as Emerson believes, that 'the personal-political relationship between the High Commissioner and the Chief Secretary' was a motive behind the adoption of a decentralization policy in 1920.¹⁰ Soon after, however, a Guillemard-Maxwell power struggle erupted basically over the status of the Chief Secretary. While Guillemard regarded the Chief Secretary as standing exactly on a par with his Colonial Secretary, Maxwell viewed himself as the quasi-independent head of the FMS. Equally important, conflicts flared when Guillemard attempted personally to direct FMS affairs and, in particular, to exercise tight control over FMS finance. The Guillemard-Maxwell struggle should, at least, be placed in the same order of importance as the slump in terms of repercussions on decentralization. But it should be noted that the conflict did not define the scope of the Maxwell programme at its commencement in May 1922 as Ghosh asserts,¹¹ for at that time British officials did not intend to decentralize drastically the administration, and even without this struggle, Maxwell would not have urged any larger degree of decentralization than that embodied in his programme. But as the struggle gathered momentum, it strengthened and released centripetal forces from within the institutional ar-

rangements between the FMS and the Colony. Under the existing order the Chief Secretary had always endeavoured and usually managed to check real control of FMS affairs by the High Commissioner. It is difficult to envisage a Chief Secretary voluntarily decentralizing to the extent that he became a mere co-ordinating agent of federal affairs, thereby compelling the High Commissioner to absorb part of his executive power in order that effective direction and co-ordination of policy would be maintained in the FMS. The Guillemard-Maxwell struggle festered on this point, and imperceptibly pushed Maxwell into increasingly centralizing powers in his own hands so as to debar Guillemard from meddling in FMS affairs as far as possible. This not only helped to stall the decentralization movement, but also suppressed any possible alteration or extension of Maxwell's proposals in the period 1922-5.

The position by late 1924 was that Maxwell had managed to transfer a fair measure of power from the centre to the Residents but had failed to carry his senior advisers and the High Commissioner with him in introducing an element of Advisory rule in the FMS. That his policy had reached an impasse set the stage for a new initiative. For one thing, the Colonial Office was strongly alienated by Maxwell's intransigence and insubordination towards Guillemard; for another, it was not only unimpressed by his decentralization achievements but also viewed with strong disapproval his hogging of power in the FMS. All this antagonized Collins, the key man in Whitehall so far as Malayan affairs were concerned, who himself desired radical decentralization in the FMS as a prelude to a larger Malayan federation. This accounted for the galloping effects of Sultan Iskandar's petition to the Colonial Office in August 1924 for a new decentralization policy. By itself the Iskandar appeal, possibly instigated by Guillemard, only provided an excellent excuse for Collins to press his own decentralization ideas for adoption by the Colonial Office.

The new policy was entrusted for implementation to

Guillemard who was thereupon transformed from a nominal actor into the leader of the decentralization movement after late 1924. But Guillemard's contributions to the new policy should be seen in the right perspective. In a despatch in August 1924 the Colonial Office placed Guillemard in a position of opportunity by unmistakably indicating its preference for a new policy involving the possible abolition of the Chief Secretaryship, and that it was prepared to delegate the policy to the High Commissioner rather than to the Chief Secretary. What Guillemard did was to throw his whole weight behind Whitehall by devising a scheme to suit the leads in the London despatch which happened to coincide with his own predilections. It is clear that the background aims of a larger Malayan union and the removal of local dissatisfaction with administrative over-centralization remained key constants behind the new policy. In formulating his scheme however, Guillemard, unlike Collins, was powerfully influenced by what he considered to be the legitimate role of the High Commissioner to wield real control and directly run affairs in the FMS. As this aspiration had to date been largely frustrated by the Chief Secretary, Guillemard had, on his own, arrived at the conclusion that Maxwell, his arch-rival, should be removed from the FMS and that the Chief Secretaryship, the institutional bugbear against Singapore's control, should be abolished. Understandably, Guillemard strongly recommended both measures in his response to the London initiative. In other words the Guillemard-Maxwell power struggle had helped to bring about a fundamental change in the decentralization movement by making the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship its central component which, in turn, became a hotbed of dissension. Henceforth, decentralization necessarily entailed centralization in Singapore and the direction of change by the High Commissioner operating from Singapore. In these circumstances the significance of the Guillemard-Maxwell power struggle as a factor behind the Guillemard policy must not be underestimated.

It is pertinent to note that the Guillemard scheme contri-

buted few concrete ideas to the problem of decentralization. It had no intention of creating a genuine federation with rigid and clearly-defined division of powers between the centre and the states until 1926 when Guillemard implicitly picked up the idea from press discussions and, in particular, from W. S. Gibson, the FMS Legal Adviser. In terms of scope the Guillemard scheme was, in certain respects, narrower than the Maxwell programme. It had only one clear-cut, definitive proposal namely, the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship, but the intention behind this—the devolution of powers from the federal secretariat to the states—had been a motive of the admittedly far more conservative programme of Maxwell. Moreover it ignored two major features of the Maxwell experiment, namely, the decentralization of powers from the federal departmental heads to the Residents and the introduction of partial Advisory rule in the FMS. During the controversy in 1925 and 1926 Guillemard spelled out no concrete steps towards accomplishing his goals. In fact, what is most remarkable about the entire exercise is that Guillemard's ideas on the mechanics of decentralization from the Chief Secretary downwards and from the Federal Council to the State Councils, and on the re-structuring of the state legislatures prior to substantial decentralization, remain completely unknown.

During the controversy the Colonial Office, the FMS Rulers and 'enlightened' members of the MCS rallied behind the banner of decentralization. The last formed a small minority with several members personally advising the High Commissioner on his scheme. But even among these activists support was neither unanimous nor consistent; Peel, for instance, eventually came down on the side struggling to preserve the Chief Secretaryship. The support of the Malay Rulers was more consistent and derived its impact from the British decision to delegate a higher level of responsibility to Malays and from the general policy of strengthening indirect rule in the FMS. But the instincts for corporate action among the Malays were weak and no Malay leader was able, even if he

desired to do so, to convene a public meeting in support of the Guillemard policy. It follows that the bedrock of Guillemard's support was the Colonial Office. But hamstrung by distance, and shackled by inability to tackle day-to-day developments, Whitehall had perforce to leave the implementation of the Guillemard policy almost entirely to its agents on the spot. Nonetheless, the Colonial Office offered the High Commissioner steadfast support to the very end of the controversy even when it had begun, by then, to change its mind about the Guillemard scheme. Except for committing Guillemard to giving Maxwell a hearing in a conference with the Residents and the Federal Council unofficials in March 1926, Whitehall did not negate or circumvent any of Guillemard's decisions on policy implementation.

Arrayed against the Guillemard scheme were Maxwell, the majority of the MCS officers, commercial interests in both London and Malaya, and the Malayan English-language newspapers. In London the arch-opponent was the Association of British Malaya whose opposition sprang from the fact that those of its members, who were retired civil servants, wished to preserve the FMS administration they had painstakingly helped to build, and that it had forged close ties with British capitalist interests with vast investment in the Malayan tin and rubber industries. In fact, the views of the association were chiefly moulded and shaped by Frank Swettenham, the architect of the FMS system and a director of numerous Malayan companies after retirement. Useful to the association's self-assigned role as watchdog of British political and economic interests in Malaya were its influential contacts with British politicians and Whitehall officials. By virtue of their past service and their experience and knowledge of Malaya, its leaders won the ear of Whitehall officials more easily than others. Despite these advantages however, the association did not contribute substantially to the failure of the Guillemard policy. The Colonial Office anticipated and withstood, with some ease, the not unduly strong pressure of the association. Above all, the final outcome of the Guille-

mard scheme was determined in Malaya, not London, by authorities over which the association exercised much less influence.

Maxwell made a more important contribution than the Association of British Malaya to the defeat of the Guillemard policy. His opposition gave a vital boost to the resistance of FMS commercial interests whose idol he was. It was probable that Maxwell's ideas even moulded the attitude of a considerable section of the MCS officials towards the Guillemard policy. But Maxwell was completely isolated from, and exercised hardly any influence on, the decentralization committees Guillemard appointed. It is not to be expected that these committees, which consisted virtually of the same men who had earlier obstructed decentralization when Maxwell himself was in charge, would allow themselves to be browbeaten by him now that he was clearly on the way out. Maxwell however, vitally influenced the Colonial Office, especially Walter Ellis and Ormsby-Gore. He enabled Whitehall better to appreciate the magnitude of the issues involved and the caution and care needed to avert any severe loss of efficiency arising from decentralization, both of which considerations had been grossly underrated by Collins. Overall, Maxwell was a serious disruptive factor against the Guillemard policy.

Even more important was the opposition of the FMS commercial interests to the Guillemard policy. This stemmed from the fear that the drastic decentralization envisaged by Guillemard would jeopardize efficiency and from the proposed abolition of the Chief Secretaryship. What the commercial interests conceded was a moderate measure of decentralization (which was consistent with their stand since 1922) and counter-demanded that the Federation be preserved intact and headed by a strong *executive* officer carrying a status at least equal to that of the Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlements. The effectiveness of their opposition may partly be traced to the British *modus operandi* in Malaya which always sought to have policy accepted through discussion,

conciliation, and co-operation with interested parties who mattered. This was effected through private consultation with leaders in the confidence of the government and through public discussions in the various legislatures and Malayan newspapers. It offered European commercial interests, the best organized and most articulate lobby in the FMS, considerable scope to influence official policy. Their demands were voiced through many commercial organizations such as the Rubber Planters' Association of Malaya, through their representatives in the Federal Council, through the Malayan English newspapers, and through the Association of British Malaya. In this connection their close social ties with the British administration and their political ties with the British Parliament proved highly useful. It was, for example, through George Penny, a former Malayan businessman and currently a luminary among Conservative Party members of Parliament, that they secured a hearing for Maxwell before he retired from Malaya. In all this the commercial interests gained a receptive ear from British officials because upon them depended the realization of the government's central goal of economic development in Malaya. They certainly played a highly significant, but not *the* key, role in defeating the Guillemard scheme.

There has been a tendency completely to overlook the role of the MCS in the decentralization movement during the 1920s. In fact, as has been shown in this study, MCS opposition was *the* key factor behind the defeat of both the Maxwell experiment and the Guillemard policy. The furore created by the FMS commercial interests over the Guillemard policy was, in fact, anticipated by both the High Commissioner and the Colonial Office, although they were somewhat taken aback by its vehemence and vigour. And armed with favourable reports from the decentralization committees Guillemard could still have pushed through the central ideas of his scheme. But no such reports were forthcoming. This was not in the least surprising, for throughout this period, the MCS, to which the committee members belonged, remained remark-

ably consistent in its perception of decentralization as outlined earlier. Hence, hardly had the dust from the departing feet of Guillemard settled when Peel and the Residents, with absolutely no qualms, made a complete volte-face by rallying behind Clifford in support of the retention of the Chief Secretaryship. That Guillemard should have entrusted his entire scheme to the MCS men constituting the committees turned out to be the Achilles' heel of his strategy. The adverse reports of the committees, in effect, delivered him to his Waterloo.

There was, in fact, a relentless logic in this development. Obviously, no High Commissioner (or Chief Secretary) could single-handedly formulate a complete scheme of decentralization for the FMS. Much of the planning as well as the implementation of the policy would have to fall on the MCS. In this connection the British Malayan way of resolving important questions through committees, on which the administrators invariably sat, armed the MCS with a deadly weapon to axe those aspects of decentralization it opposed. The familiar scenario was that decentralization, a high policy, was accepted by the highest authorities on political grounds and then handed over to official committees for implementation. Ignoring the political dimension almost completely, the committees invariably watered down the policy in the interests of administrative efficiency and economic development, both of which could be best promoted by a centralized administration in a compact country the size of the FMS (or even Malaya). It was rarely possible for a High Commissioner to reject the major recommendations of such supposedly impartial inquiries. No attempt therefore, was ever made by Guillemard to challenge the recommendations of the Pountney, Legal, Residents, and Co-ordination Committees which collectively reduced his policy to cypher.

Since financial considerations permeated almost every major measure of decentralization, the financial experts wielded a crucially important influence. In this respect, Pountney, the Financial Adviser and an MCS man, played

an extremely circumscribing role in decentralization. His enormous influence was derived from the fact that he was appointed by Guillemard to revamp the FMS treasury system and guide the country out of the economic crisis of the early 1920s. Pountney was also the personal financial adviser to the High Commissioner, and his views were generally assumed to have gubernatorial backing. He was singularly unable to sympathize with decentralization and was implacably opposed to any change that might hamper his task of restoring and maintaining financial health in the FMS. Whether it was during the slump of the early 1920s or the boom of the mid-1920s, the safeguarding of the credit and financial stability of the Federation remained his overriding objective in any scheme of decentralization. Both Pountney and Alexander (the FMS Treasurer) were most reluctant to make any change in the FMS financial system. True to colour, Pountney advanced recommendations that stymied not only part of the Maxwell experiment, but the Guillemard policy as well.

In a nutshell then, this study of decentralization re-affirms the axiom that British policy in a colonial dependency sought first and foremost to safeguard and promote British political and economic interests. The British were prepared to implement the decentralization policy only on two conditions. To members of the MCS its implementation should not result in a transfer of any significant degree of their power to other hands or a drastic overturn of the federal system; to the British in general it should not cause any major sacrifice of administrative efficiency. Even Whitehall's approval was given on the assumption that the larger Malayan federation it had in mind would promote efficiency, a consideration important to the realization of the central goal of British colonialism in Malaya which remained one of economic development and which had, in fact, been enhanced by a post-war policy of developing the resources of the Empire to the utmost. But the decentralization and Malay employment policy threatened to lower the efficiency of the federal administration, thereby coming into conflict with British interests. The result was

that the British allowed the policy to be effected only to a moderate extent.

What then were the results and effects of the decentralization movement in the 1920s? The most impressive achievements of Maxwell occurred not in decentralization but its complement, namely, the training of Malays for the government service. Together with Brockman and Guillemard, Maxwell formulated and ordered a framework within which the MAS developed right to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1941. He started the movement to build a Malay-dominated subordinate service in the FMS. Although he did not alter the ethnic configuration of the FMS administration, he did vitally help to create a new consciousness to employ more Malays at all levels of the government service. In decentralization proper he managed to transfer a fair measure of power to the Residents, and bring about more consultation between British officials and the Rulers-in-Council and between the Residents and federal departmental heads. Guillemard's achievements were a shadowy reflection of his own scheme. His most significant contribution was the financial devolution scheme under which lump sums were voted by the Federal Council and allocated to twelve state services by the state legislatures. In fact, the lump-sum procedure was first advocated by Maxwell and could have been implemented earlier had Maxwell secured the support of Hose, then acting High Commissioner. The other important reform of Guillemard was the reconstitution of the Federal Council which however, failed to devolve any power to the state councils; rather it strengthened and increased the efficiency of the central legislature through the appointment of five new federal departmental heads as official members. Overall, the FMS administration in 1929 was essentially as centralized as in 1920.

During the period under study the battles over decentralization were fought chiefly by Europeans in the bureaucracy, Malayan English newspapers, and the Federal Council in the FMS. The non-Malay Asians and even the Malay community

(excluding the Rulers) were not deeply embroiled in the fray. Nor did decentralization manifest an anti-non-Malay orientation, or intend to utilize the Malay sultanates as bulwarks against possible non-Malay encroachment on the near British monopoly of political power in the country. Naturally, it did not instigate any organized political agitation among the non-Malay Asians; at most, it only impinged on non-Malay political attitudes to a slight extent. Chinese demand for entry into the MCS late in the 1920s owed, at least, as much to the emergence of a Western-educated domiciled Chinese community as to the decentralization movement. It was not until the 1930s that decentralization significantly helped to shape the political attitudes of both the Malay and non-Malay Asian communities.

During the 1920s the constitutional position of the Malay Rulers and of the FMS as *Malay* states, was enhanced, to a substantial extent, partly by decentralization. British intention to bestow a larger role on the Malay Rulers and élite was publicly justified on the ground that the Malay community had a special status in the FMS guaranteed by the various Anglo-Malay treaties. The withdrawal of the Rulers from the Federal Council under the Guillemard scheme also elevated their status and prestige to a certain extent. But this failed to change their constitutional status as they were required, as previously, to sign collectively enactments passed by the Federal Council before these could take effect. More important than decentralization to the constitutional status of the Rulers was a general policy of strengthening indirect rule in the Federation that began after the First World War. Under this policy, Malay traditional institutions were revived and resanctified; Malay customs were more stringently observed; members of the Malay ruling class were 'modernized' through a western education obtained largely at the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar; and the allowances of the Rulers and Chiefs were periodically enlarged. It is pertinent to note that this general policy was related to, but not identical or completely coincidental with, decentralization. For this reason, Clifford,

who shelved decentralization altogether, was also the High Commissioner who made the most categorical pronouncement on the sacrosanct status of the Malay states and Rulers in the Federal Council in 1927; who awarded the Rulers and Chiefs the biggest single increase in allowances in 1928; who, a year later, replaced Tengku Besar Suleiman with the Sultan's son as Heir Apparent to the Pahang throne on the plea that custom dictated that succession should go from father to son. Together however, this general policy and decentralization strengthened the myth that the British were here to teach independent and autonomous Rulers and Malay élite how to govern their own states, thereby reducing possible risks of the FMS being transformed into a British Crown Colony.

Finally, the Guillemard-Maxwell movement defined the aims and charted the paths along which decentralization progressed in the 1930s. Morally, it committed subsequent governments to continue decentralization chiefly as the central strategy towards the attainment of British ultimate goal of a Malayan federation of all the Malay states. Maxwell laid down the approach along which powers from the federal departmental heads could be devolved to the Residents and elements of Advisory rule could be introduced in the FMS. He cut a narrow track for the downward flow of some powers from the federal secretariat, but Collins and Guillemard endeavoured to widen this into an enormous passageway necessitating the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship; in turn, this shifted the direction of decentralization from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore after 1924. Finally both Maxwell and Guillemard indicated the way along which powers could be decentralized from the Federal Council to the State Councils as well as clarified the problems involved therein. Likewise, all interested parties both in London and Malaya now had a better grasp of the immense complexities surrounding decentralization. With the way illuminated before him, Sir Cecil Clementi was enabled to revive decentralization almost immediately on his arrival as Governor-High Commissioner in 1930. Embracing the goals and mechanics of decentralization

outlined above, his scheme was more wide-ranging than either the Maxwell or Guillemard plan and generated a truly Malaya-wide uproar. But as previously, decentralization in the 1930s failed to bring the goal of a larger Malayan federation any nearer to realization.

1. For a review of Ghosh's book, see my paper entitled, 'Twentieth-Century Malaysia: A Review Article', *JSEAS*, Vol. XII, no. 2, September 1981.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 303-7.

3. For discussion, see Yeo Kim Wah, 'The Selangor Succession Dispute, 1933-38', *JSEAS*, Vol. II, no. 2, September 1971.

4. This correct assessment by the Malayan Bureau of Political Intelligence in 1922 was re-affirmed by E. S. Hose in his decentralization scheme submitted to the Colonial Office in December 1924 which stated that there was no 'active discontent, much less disloyalty' among Malays but there was a feeling of distrust and dissatisfaction towards Federation. Hose to Collins 28.12.1924 and enclosure, CO 717/40/1924. Likewise, William Peel justified his own decentralization scheme in September 1925 on the ground that 'the younger Malays, especially those educated in England, will want more share in affairs, and it is most desirable to prepare for this now instead of having it hurled at us later'. Peel to Collins 17.9.1925, CO 717/47/1925.

5. In fact, by 1925 the FMS Under-Secretary, Cochrane, had begun to complain of the scanty information on *kampong* Malay opinion transmitted by British District Officers to the Malayan Bureau of Political Intelligence. Cochrane to Resident of Pahang 7.2.1925, PSF 15/1925. By 1927 this bureau, set up to monitor Malay opinions and watch Muslim politics, could not even justify its existence so that it was disbanded altogether.

6. Hose to Collins 28.12.1914 and enclosure, CO 717/40/1924.

7. For discussion, see sources cited in footnote 48, Chapter 1.

8. R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study of Direct and Indirect Rule*, Kuala Lumpur (Reprint), 1964, pp. 155-8.

9. K. K. Ghosh, p. 299.

10. R. Emerson, p. 155.

11. K. K. Ghosh, p. 178.

Glossary

<i>Alam</i>	the State
<i>anak baik</i> ²	children of good birth
<i>Bab-ud-Darajat</i>	Gate to High Positions
<i>Bendahara</i>	'Prime Minister'
<i>Buapak</i>	'father' (head of the <i>perut</i>)
<i>habu kasut</i>	dirt
<i>hari raya</i>	holiday
<i>Hari Raya Puasa</i>	feast-day celebrating the end of Ramadhan
<i>hormat</i>	respect
<i>kampong</i>	village
<i>kathi</i>	religious judge who also acts as registrar of marriages
<i>luak</i>	district
<i>lembaga</i>	head of a <i>suku</i> (clan)
<i>mentri</i>	minister
<i>mukim</i>	'parish'
<i>orang besar</i>	chief
<i>padi</i>	rice-plant
<i>penghulu</i>	head of a village
<i>Penghulu Bendahari</i>	Treasurer
<i>perut</i>	the smallest socio-political unit in Negri Sembilan
<i>rakyat</i>	common people
<i>Shahbandar</i>	Harbour Master and Collector of Customs

<i>suku</i>	clan
<i>surat kuasa</i>	letter of authorization
<i>Temenggong</i>	Commander of Troops and Police
<i>Tengku</i>	a royal title
<i>ulu</i>	remote hinterland
<i>Undang</i>	chief of a district in Negri Sembilan
<i>Ungku</i>	title of high rank, normally used as a term of address to members of the Royal House other than the Sultan
<i>wakaf</i>	religious endowment
<i>waris Negri</i>	heirs of the district in Negri Sembilan

Appendix: Biographical Notes

- Adams, Theodore Samuel; b. 1885-d. 1961; edu. Oxford; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1908; various DO posts, FMS, till 1914; Acting DO, Kelantan, 1914-17; Superintendent of Lands, Kelantan; Acting 1st Assistant Secretary, Federal Secretariat, 1920; various DO posts, FMS, 1920-8; Acting Adviser, Lands, Kedah, 1929-30; Acting Under-Secretary, FMS, 1930-2; British Resident, Selangor, 1932-6; Chief Commissioner, Northern Nigeria, 1937-43; War Cabinet, 1943-5; Private Adviser to Rulers, 1946.
- Alexander, Charles Shuldham; b. 1877-d. 1941; edu. Cambridge; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1900-3; various district treasury posts, FMS, 1904-13; Acting Treasurer, FMS, 1914; Financial Commissioner, Johor, 1914-19; Financial Commissioner and Auditor-General, Johor, 1919-21; Treasurer, FMS, 1922-6; Financial Adviser, SS and FMS, 1926-7; retired 1927.
- Amery, Leopold Charles Maurice Stennett; b. 1875-d. 1955; edu. Oxford; Parliamentary Secretary, Colonial Office, 1919-21; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1924-9; Secretary of State for the Dominions, 1925-9; Secretary of State for India, 1940-5.
- Birch, Sir Ernest Woodford; b. 1857-d. 1929; edu. Harrow; Colonial Office, 1876-8; Cadet, MCS, SS, 1879-92; Secretary, Resident of Perak, 1893; Acting Resident, Perak, 1895-6; Resident, Negri Sembilan, 1897-1900; Governor,

- Labuan and British North Borneo, 1901-3; Resident, Perak, 1904-11; retired 1911; Leader, Association of British Malaya; director of many companies with investments in Malaya.
- Bradney, George Preston; b. 1877-d. 1959; edu. Cambridge; Joined Exchequer and Audit Department, London, 1901; Assistant Auditor, British Central Africa Protectorate, 1902-4; Assistant Auditor, British East Africa Protectorate, 1904-7; Assistant Auditor, Uganda Protectorate, 1907-9; Local Auditor, Fiji and Western Pacific Protectorate, 1909-14; Director of External Audit, SS and FMS, 1914-16; Acting Auditor-General, SS, 1916-19; Auditor-General, FMS, 1919-32; Auditor-General, SS and FMS, 1933-5; Comptroller and Auditor-General, Newfoundland, 1940-6.
- Brockman, Sir Edward Lewis, b. 1865-d. 1943; edu. Ipswich Grammar School; MCS Cadet, SS, 1886; 2nd Assistant Colonial Secretary, SS, 1896-1908; Assistant Colonial Secretary, SS, 1903-5; Acting Colonial Secretary, SS, 1905-6; Acting Resident-General, FMS, 1907; Resident, Pahang, 1908-10; Resident, Negri Sembilan, 1910; Colonial Secretary, SS, 1911; Chief Secretary, FMS, 1911-20; Agent, Malay States Information Agency, 1920-5.
- Chulan, Raja Sir; b. 1869-d. 1933; edu. Malacca High School; attached Kuala Kangsar Secretariat, 1886; Settlement Officer, Larut, 1890-1904; Settlement Officer, Krian, 1894; Acting Collector of Land Revenue, Kuala Kangsar, 1896; Acting DO, Selama; DO, Upper Perak, 1902; member, Perak State Council, after 1907; retired from MCS, 1911; Raja-di-Hilir, Perak, 1920-33; 1st Malay Unofficial, Federal Council, 1924-33.
- Churchill, Sir Winston Spencer; b. 1874-d. 1965; edu. Harrow and Sandhurst; 1st Lord of Admiralty, 1911-15; Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster, 1915; Minister of Munitions, 1917-19; Secretary of War and Air, 1920-1; Secretary of State for Colonies, 1921-2; Conservative Member of Parliament, 1924-64; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1924-9;

- 1st Lord of Admiralty and Member, War Cabinet, 1939-40; Prime Minister, 1940-5 and 1951-5.
- Clifford, Sir Hugh Charles; b. 1866-d. 1941; edu. Woburn Park and Sandhurst; Joined Perak Civil Service, 1883; British Agent, Pahang, 1887-8; Superintendent, Ulu Pahang, 1889; British Resident, Pahang, 1896-9; Governor, British North Borneo, 1900; Colonial Secretary, Trinidad and Tobago, 1903; Colonial Secretary, Ceylon, 1907; Governor, Gold Coast, 1912; Governor, Nigeria, 1919; Governor, Ceylon, 1925; Governor-High Commissioner, Malaya, 1927-9; retired 1929.
- Cochrane, Charles Walter Hamilton; b. 1876-d. 1932; edu. Oxford; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1899; 2nd Assistant Secretary to Resident-General, FMS, 1903; Acting ADO, Kuala Kangsar, 1904-6; Acting Assistant Secretary to Resident, Perak, 1906-8; various District Office postings in FMS, 1909-12; Acting Resident, Negri Sembilan, 1914-15; 2nd Class Clerk, Colonial Office, 1915-16; Chief ADO, Kinta, 1917-19; Secretary to Resident, Perak, 1919-21; Under-Secretary, FMS, 1921-5; General Adviser, Johor, 1925-7; Acting Resident, Perak, 1927-8; Acting Resident, Selangor, 1928; Resident, Pahang, 1929-30; Chief Secretary, FMS, 1931; retired 1931.
- Coe, Thomas Perowne, Captain; b. 1887; edu. Oxford; joined MCS, FMS, 1910; 2nd Assistant Secretary to Chief Secretary, FMS, 1913-15; Temporary Lieutenant, 7th Battalion, Norfolk Regiment, 1915-17; Brigade Major, 1918; 2nd Assistant Secretary to Chief Secretary, FMS, 1919-24; DO, Batang Padang, 1924-7; Acting Secretary to Resident, Perak, 1927; Assistant Adviser, Kelantan, 1928; Acting Commissioner of Lands and Mines, Johor, 1929-30; Acting General Adviser, Johor, 1930; Acting British Adviser, Kelantan, 1931-2; Acting Secretary for Postal Affairs, SS and FMS, 1933-6; Director, Posts and Telegraphs, Malaya, 1936-41.
- Collins, Arthur Ernest; b. 1871; edu. Cambridge; Clerk, Colonial Office, 1894; Assistant Private Secretary to Joseph

- Chamberlain, 1898; Secretary to Straits Settlements Currency Committee, 1902-3; Principal Clerk, Far Eastern Department since 1907; Head, Far Eastern Department, till retirement in 1926.
- Conlay, William Lance; b. 1869; 2nd Class Inspector, Perak Sikhs Regiment, 1893; Acting DO in Pahang, 1898-1902; Assistant Commissioner of Police, Selangor, 1902-3; Assistant Commissioner of Police, Negri Sembilan, 1903-5; British Agent, Trengganu, 1909; Deputy Commissioner of Police, Perak, 1910-13; Acting Commissioner of Police, FMS, 1914-15; Commissioner of Police, FMS, 1916-24; retired 1924.
- Cubitt, George Eaton Stannard; b. 1874; Assistant Conservator of Forests, Burma, 1896-1902; Deputy Conservator of Forests, Burma, 1903-11; Assistant Inspector-General of Forests, Simla, 1912-14; Conservator of Forests, SS and FMS, 1915-29; retired 1929.
- Dowden, Richard; b. 1873-d. 1928; edu. Trinity College, Dublin; Medical Officer, Jamaica, 1900; District Surgeon, Perak, 1903-8; Medical Officer, Grade I, FMS, 1911-16; Acting Senior Medical Officer, Perak, 1920; Principal Medical Officer, FMS, 1921-8; retired 1928.
- Ellis, Walter Devonshire; b. 1871; edu. Oxford; Clerk, Colonial Office, 1895; Private Secretary to Lord Selborne, 1897; 1st Class Clerk, 1899; Principal Clerk, 1909; Member, Indian Immigration Committee, 1910; Assistant Secretary, Colonial Office, 1920; Head, Far Eastern Department, 1926-29; Assistant Principal Under-Secretary, 1929-31; Assistant Permanent Under-Secretary, Colonial Office, 1931; retired 1931.
- Fiddes, Sir George Vandeleur; b. 1858; edu. Oxford; Clerk, Colonial Office, 1881; Private Secretary to Sir R. Meade, 1896; 1st Class Clerk, 1896; Imperial Secretary and Accountant to A. Milner, High Commissioner, South Africa, 1897; Secretary to Transvaal Administration, 1900; Assistant Under-Secretary of State, 1909; Chairman, West African Currency Board, 1912-16; Permanent Under-

- Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1916-21; retired 1921.
- Frost, Meadows (Captain); b. 1875-d. 1954; edu. Oxford; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1898; ADO, Kuala Pilah, 1901; DO, Temerloh, 1902-3; District Treasurer, Seremban, 1905; Consul, Saiburi and Puket, 1905-8; Acting Adviser, Perlis, 1909; Adviser, Perlis, 1910; Acting Adviser, Kedah, 1911-12; Acting Registrar of Titles, Perak, 1913-15; Captain, Cheshire Regiment, 1916-19; First Magistrate, Kuala Lumpur, 1920; Acting DO, Kinta, 1920-2; Commissioner of Lands and Mines, Johor, 1923-4; Resident Councillor, Malacca, 1926-8; Resident Councillor, Penang, 1928-30; retired 1930.
- Grindle, Sir Gilbert, b. 1869-d. 1934; edu. Oxford; joined Local Government Board, 1893; entered Colonial Office, 1896; Assistant Private Secretary to Joseph Chamberlain, 1898; 1st Class Clerk, 1900; Principal Clerk, 1909-16; Assistant Principal Under-Secretary, 1916-25; Assistant Permanent Under-Secretary, Colonial Office, 1925-31; retired 1931.
- Guillemard, Sir Laurence Nunns; b. 1862-d. 1952; edu. Cambridge; Joined Home Office, 1886-8; Treasury, 1888-91; Private Secretary to W. Harcourt, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1892-1902; Deputy Chairman, Board of Inland Revenue, 1902-8; Chairman, Customs and Excise, 1908-19; Governor-High Commissioner, Malaya, 1919-27.
- Hall, Julian Dudley; b. 1887-d. 1961; edu. Oxford; MCS Cadet, SS, 1910-13; Assistant Adviser, Batu Pahat, 1914-19; Acting 2nd Assistant Colonial Secretary, SS, 1920-2; Private Secretary to Guillemard, 1922-5; Acting Secretary to High Commissioner, 1926-9; Secretary to High Commissioner, 1930; British Adviser, Kedah, 1932-41; Internee in Singapore, 1942-5.
- Harrison, Cuthbert Woodville; b. 1874-d. 1946; edu. Oxford; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1897; various District Office posts in FMS, 1899-1904; Acting Secretary to Resident, Negri Sembilan, 1905-7; DO, Larut, 1908-11; Acting Secretary to Resident, Perak, 1912-13; Acting Resident, Negri Sem-

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- Hill, Valentine; b. 1886-d. 1940; MCS Cadet, SS, 1885-8; Financial Assistant, Kinta, 1888; various Magistrate posts, FMS, 1890-9; various District Office posts, FMS, 1900-9; Officer-in-Charge of Pahang, 1910-11; various District Office posts, FMS, 1911-18; Registrar of Titles, Perak, 1918-19; Commissioner of Lands, FMS, 1920; Resident, Negri Sembilan, 1921-2; retired 1922.
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- Perak, 1912-13; Commissioned in the Royal Sussex Regiment, retiring as Lieutenant-Colonel, 1915-19; Acting Resident, Negri Sembilan, 1919; Resident, Perak, 1920-1; retired 1921.
- Iskandar Shah, Sultan; b. 1881-d. 1938; edu. Oxford; 2nd Assistant Secretary, Perak, 1902-5; Assistant Commissioner of Police, 1905-16; Raja Bendahara, Perak, 1916-18; Sultan of Perak, 1918-38; Member, Federal Council, 1918-27.
- James, Sir Frederick Seton; b. 1870-d. 1934; edu. Charterhouse; Assistant District Commissioner, Niger, 1896; Provincial Commissioner, Niger, 1906; Administrator, Nigeria, 1914-15; Colonial Secretary, SS, 1916-18; Officer Administering the Government, Malaya, 1919; Acting Chief Secretary, FMS, 1920; Colonial Secretary, SS, 1920-3; Governor, Windward Islands, 1924-30; retired 1930.
- Lemon, Arthur Henry; b. 1864-d. 1933; edu. Oxford and Lincoln's Inn; MCS Cadet, SS, 1888; 2nd Assistant Colonial Secretary, SS, 1902; Assistant Colonial Secretary, SS, 1907-9; Acting Legal Adviser, FMS, 1910; Under-Secretary, FMS, 1911; Resident, Negri Sembilan, 1912-19; Resident, Selangor, 1919-20.
- Lowinger, Victor Alexander; b. 1879; Surveyor, South Africa, 1895-1904; Surveyor, FMS, 1906-10; Assistant Superintendent, Survey, 1911-12; Superintendent, Survey, 1913-17; Acting Assistant Surveyor-General, 1918-21; Acting Surveyor-General, FMS and SS, 1921-2; Surveyor-General, FMS and SS, 1922-32; retired 1933.
- Masterton-Smith, Sir James Edward; b. 1878; edu. Oxford; Home Civil Service, 1901; Private Secretary to Sea Lord, 1902-17; Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Munitions, 1917-19; Assistant Secretary, War Office and Air Ministry, 1919-20; Permanent Under-Secretary for Colonies, 1921-3.
- Maxwell, Sir William George; b. 1871-d. 1959; edu. Clifton and Inner Temple; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1891-1902; Acting

- Secretary to Resident, Perak, 1904; Solicitor-General, SS, 1906-7; British Adviser, Kedah, 1909-14; Acting Colonial Secretary, SS, 1914; Acting Secretary to High Commissioner, 1917; General Adviser, Johor, 1919; Acting Colonial Secretary, SS, 1918; Resident, Perak, 1919-20; Chief Secretary, 1920-6; retired 1926.
- McClelland, Francis Alexander Steward; b. 1874-d. 1948; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1896-1901; various District Office posts, FMS, 1901-7; Deputy Public Prosecutor, FMS, 1908; DO, Batang Padang, 1912; Acting Auditor-General, FMS, 1912-14; Assistant Treasurer, FMS, 1917-18; Auditor-General, SS, 1919; Acting Treasurer, FMS, 1920; Acting Resident, Pahang, 1921; Acting Commissioner of Lands, FMS, 1922; Auditor-General, SS, 1923; Registrar of Companies and Official Assignee, SS, 1925; retired 1925.
- Milner, Alfred Lord; b. 1854-d. 1925; edu. Oxford; Private Secretary to Chancellor of Exchequer, 1887-1901; Chairman, Board of Inland Revenue, 1892-7; High Commissioner, South Africa, 1897-1905; Minister without Portfolio in Lloyd George's War Cabinet, 1916-18; Secretary of State for War, 1918; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1919-21.
- Ormsby-Gore, William George Arthur; b. 1885; edu. Oxford; Intelligence Officer, Arab Bureau, 1916-17; Assistant Secretary, War Cabinet, 1917-18; British Member, Permanent Mandate Commission, 1921-2; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Colonies 1921-9; Secretary of State for Colonies, 1936-7.
- Parr, Cecil William Chase; b. 1871-d. 1943; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1889; various Land Office posts, FMS, 1892-5; DO, Tampin, 1897-1903; various District Office posts in Perak, 1904-9; Acting Commissioner, Trade and Customs, FMS, 1909-11; Acting Resident, Negri Sembilan, 1911-12; Under-Secretary, FMS, 1912; Governor, British North Borneo, 1913-15; Resident, Pahang, 1916; military service in Europe, 1916-19; Major, Malayan Volunteer Infantry, 1920-1; Resident, Perak, 1921-6; retired 1926.

- Peel, Sir William; b. 1875-d. 1945; edu. Cambridge; MCS Cadet, SS, 1897-9; DO, Province Wellesley, 1902; DO, Tampin, 1908; President, Penang Municipal Commission, 1914; Acting Resident Councillor, Penang, 1917; Food Controller, Malaya, 1920; Controller of Labour, Malaya, 1921-2; British Adviser, Kedah, 1922-4; Resident Councillor, Penang, 1924-5; Chief Secretary, FMS, 1926-9; Governor, Hong Kong, 1930-5.
- Pountney, Arthur Meek; b. 1873-d. 1941; edu. Oxford; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1896-1900; Acting Protector of Chinese, Singapore, 1903-4; Commissioner of Currency, 1905; 2nd Assistant Colonial Secretary, SS, 1906; Assistant Protector of Chinese, Singapore, 1907-9; Superintendent of Census, FMS, 1910-11; Treasurer, SS, 55, 1913-21; Financial Adviser, SS and FMS, 1921-6; retired 1926.
- Richards, Sir Arthur Frederick; b. 1885; edu. Oxford; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1908; various District Office posts, FMS, 1910-15; Magistrate, Central Court, Kelantan, 1915; Acting Adviser Land, Kedah, 1916-18; Acting 2nd Assistant Secretary, SS, 1920-1; Acting 1st Assistant Secretary, SS, 1921; Acting Secretary to High Commissioner, 1923-6; Under Secretary, FMS, 1927-30; Governor, British North Borneo, 1930-3; Governor, Gambia, 1934-6; Governor, Fiji and High Commissioner, Western Pacific, 1936-8; Governor, Jamaica, 1938.
- Robson, John Henry Matthews; b. 1870-d. 1944; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1889-96; Founder, Malay Mail, 1896; Financial Adviser to Loke Yew; Unofficial, Federal Council, 1909; Reappointed 1921-8; Manager Director, Malay Mail Press, 1896-1942.
- Scott, Ralph; b. 1874-d. 1963; edu. London; MCS Cadet, SS, 1895-7; various District Office, Magistrate, and Land Revenue posts, SS, 1897-1908; Municipal Commissioner, Malacca, 1908-10; Acting District Judge, Singapore, 1911-12; various Magistrate posts, SS, 1913-19; Senior DO, Province Wellesley, 1919-20; Acting Resident Councillor, Malacca, 1920-1; Acting Resident Councillor,

- Penang, 1922-3; Acting Resident, Negri Sembilan, 1923; Resident Councillor, Penang, 1924-8; retired 1928.
- Stonor, Oswald Francis Gerard; b. 1872; Acting Private Secretary to the Governor, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, 1890; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1890; various District Office posts in Selangor, 1891-7; Magistrate, Kuala Lumpur, 1899; various District Office posts, FMS, 1904-13; Secretary to Resident, Selangor, 1914-18; Acting Resident, Selangor, 1919; Under-Secretary, FMS, 1919-20; Resident, Selangor, 1921-6; Resident, Perak, 1926; retired 1926.
- Swettenham, Sir Frank Athelstane; b. 1851-d. 1946; MCS Cadet, SS, 1870-2; Collector of Land Revenue, Penang, 1873; Assistant Resident, Selangor, 1874; Assistant Colonial Secretary for Native Affairs, 1876; Assistant Colonial Secretary, SS, 1881; Resident, Selangor, 1882; Resident, Perak, 1889; Resident-General, FMS, 1896-1901; Governor-High Commissioner, Malaya, 1901-4; retired 1904; Leader, Association of British Malaya, and director of many companies with investments in Malaya.
- Thomson, Henry Wagstaff; b. 1874-d. 1941; edu. Oxford; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1896-8; various District and Land Office posts, FMS, 1898-1903; seconded to Kelantan, 1903-9; DO, Klang, 1912; Acting Superintendent, Convict Establishment, Taiping, 1915; DO, Larut, 1916; Superintendent, Convict Establishment, 1917; British Adviser, Kelantan, 1919-21; Resident, Pahang, 1921-6; Resident, Perak, 1926-9; retired 1929; Agent, Malay States Information Agency 1929-32; member, International Tin Committee; committee member, Association of British Malaya, 1932-6.
- Wilson, Sir Samuel Herbert; b. 1873; entered Royal Engineers, 1893; Assistant Secretary, Imperial Defence Committee, 1911-14; Secretary, Overseas Defence Committee, 1918-21; Governor, Trinidad and Tobago, 1921-4; Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1925-33; retired 1933.
- Windstedt, Sir Richard Olaf; b. 1878-d. 1966; edu. Oxford; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1902-4; various District Office posts,

- FMS, 1906-12; Secretary, Committee for Malay Studies, 1913; DO, Kuala Pilah, 1913-15; Assistant Director of Education, SS and FMS, 1916-19; Acting Director of Education, SS and FMS, 1920; Principal, Raffles College, Singapore, 1922-30; Acting Director of Education, SS and FMS, 1923; Director of Education, SS and FMS, 1924-30; Acting General Adviser, Johor, 1931-5; retired 1935.
- Wolff, Ernest Charters Holford; b. 1875-d. 1946; edu. Oxford; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1896-1900; Secretary to Resident, Negri Sembilan, 1901-3; Chairman, Sanitary Board, Seremban, 1904; Acting Assistant Secretary to Resident-General, FMS, 1906-7; Acting Private Secretary to Resident-General, FMS, 1908-9; various District Office posts, FMS, 1909-12; Acting Assistant Colonial Secretary, SS, 1915-19; Acting Colonial Secretary, SS, 1921; Director of Education, SS and FMS, 1921-4; Resident, Negri Sembilan, 1924-8; retired 1928.
- Worthington, Arthur Furley; b. 1874-d. 1965; edu. Cambridge; MCS Cadet, FMS, 1897-1900; various District Office and Land Revenue posts, FMS, 1901-17; Acting District Superintendent of Prisons, Lipis, 1917-19; Acting British Adviser, Kelantan, 1920; DO, Ulu Selangor, 1921-2; British Adviser, Kelantan, 1922-5; Acting Resident, Pahang, 1925; Resident, Pahang, 1926-7; Resident, Perak, 1927-9; retired 1929.
- Young, Sir Arthur Henderson; b. 1854; edu. Edinburgh Academy; Commissioner, Paphos, 1878; Director of Survey and Principal Forest Officer, 1892; Member, Legislative Council, Cyprus, 1892; Chief Secretary, Cyprus, 1895; Colonial Secretary, SS, 1906-11; Chief Secretary, FMS, 1911; Governor-High Commissioner, Malaya, 1911-19; retired 1919.
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