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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN MALAYA

by

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PREFACE

THIS account of the administrative system in the territories of Malaya is a contribution towards a study of the requirements of efficient public administration in the countries of Eastern Asia which has been projected in the international research programme of the Institute of Pacific Relations, and in which Chatham House is collaborating.

The study owes so much to the following books that acknowledgement by the insertion of notes in the text upon every occasion of use would become a disfigurement and a compendious recognition of the debt seems preferable. The books are standard works from which borrowings on a large scale are inevitable. The books are:

British Malaya, 1824–1867, by Professor Lennox A. Mills (in *Journal of the Malayan Branch, Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. III, Part II, November 1925. Singapore, Methodist Publishing House).

British Malaya, by Sir Frank Swettenham (London, Allen & Unwin, 1948).

Malaya and its History, by Sir Richard Winstedt, (London, Hutchinson, 1948).

Treaties and Engagements affecting the Malay States and Borneo, by Sir W. G. Maxwell and W. S. Gibson (London, Truscott, 1924).

The Malays, A Cultural History, by Sir Richard Winstedt, (Singapore, Kelly and Walsh, 1947).

The Chinese in Malaya, by Victor Purcell (London, Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1948).

British Rule in Eastern Asia, a Study of Contemporary Government and Economic Development in British Malaya and Hong Kong, by Professor Lennox A. Mills (London, Oxford University Press, 1942).

Professor Mills's book *British Malaya, 1824–1867* has very recently been reinforced by *Early Penang and the Rise of Singapore, 1805–1832* by C. D. Cowan (in *Journal of the Malayan Branch, Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XXIII, Part II), March 1950.

Other books which have been consulted are Professor R. Emerson's *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, (New York, London, Macmillan, 1937), Professor Raymond Firth's *Malay Fishermen: Their Peasant Economy* (London, Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner, 1946), Mrs Rosemary Firth's *Housekeeping among Malay Peasants* (London, Lund Humphries, 1943), *The Malay Peninsula* by Arnold Wright and Thomas H. Reid, (London, Fisher Unwin, 1912, 2nd edition, 1913), and *Raffles of Singapore* by Sir Reginald Coupland (London, Collins, 3rd edition, 1946).

The information relating to the post-war rehabilitation of Malaya has been gathered from the annual reports for the years 1946–49 of the Governments of Singapore, the Malayan Union and its successor, the Federation of Malaya.

Acknowledgement to all these sources is most gratefully made. Thanks are due also to Mr W. A. Ward, C.M.G., M.C., the Agent for Malaya, who has greatly helped with the loan of official records and extracts therefrom, to Messrs Gerald Hawkins, O.B.E., N. R. Jarrett, C.M.G., and B. R. Pearn, who have very kindly read the study in typescript and made many suggestions for its improvement, and to Miss Margaret Cleeve, O.B.E., for most valuable advice and guidance.

December, 1951. S. W. J.

CHAPTER I

The East India Company and the Transfer to the Colonial Office

In recent times Malaya has been regarded as including the Crown Colony of the Straits Settlements of Singapore, Penang, and Malacca, together with the island of Labuan, Christmas Island, and the Cocos-Keeling Islands; the Federated Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang; the Unfederated Malay States of Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, and Perlis; and the Protected State of Brunei in Borneo. The Straits Settlements were a Crown Colony; the others were Protected States. The Japanese, after their conquest of Malaya in 1942 transferred the States of Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, and Perlis to Siam which had until 1909, when they became British Protectorates, claimed an overlordship over them. On the return of the British after the defeat of Japan in 1945 those four States were again joined to Malaya. In 1946 the British Government reshaped the constitutional arrangements of Malaya, and the four Federated Malay States and the four Unfederated Malay States together with the Settlements of Penang and Malacca became, first, the Malayan Union and then, after disputation, the Federation of Malaya in 1948. Singapore remained a Crown Colony but lost Labuan to the new Crown Colony of North Borneo to which it was adjacent. In 1948 Brunei, while retaining its status of a protected State, passed under the administration of the new Crown Colony of Sarawak. On 22 June 1951 it was announced in the House of Commons that the British Government, after consultation with the Government of Singapore, had accepted a proposal from the Australian Government for the transfer of the Cocos-Keeling Islands to Australia for the development for civil aviation purposes of the airstrip on West Island constructed during the Second World War.

Malaya lies between latitude 7° N. and 1½° N. and, as a mainland, carries the continent of Asia furthest south in a narrow peninsula, some 200 miles at its widest. Singapore and Penang are islands, the former 217 square miles, the latter 108 square miles in extent. The whole area of Malaya is approximately 52,500 square miles, a little larger, therefore, than England without Wales. The Peninsula has one land neighbour, Siam, which lies on its northern frontiers, touching Perlis, Kedah, Perak, and Kelantan. To the west the Straits of Malacca narrow down to an inconsiderable gap to separate Malaya from the great island of Sumatra. Batavia (now called Jakarta), the capital of Java, lies more than 500 miles from Singapore but Singapore looks out on the last stragglers of a string of Indonesian islands.

Kedah, Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan, and west Johore have access to the Straits of Malacca, the waters of which provide for ocean-going steamers the three ports of Singapore, Pĕnang, and Port Swettenham and, for coasting vessels, the ports of Teluk Anson, Port Dickson, and Malacca. On the east, Kelantan, Trengganu, Pahang, and east Johore lie on the shores of the South China Sea but sand-bars reduce their harbours to an accommodation for nothing bigger than coasting vessels.

The average daily temperature seldom rises above 98° Fahrenheit and is generally below 80°, but excessive humidity makes the climate difficult. For very many years malaria was a scourge but health measures expelled it from the towns and many villages and large estates; the other plagues of the East were more easily brought under control.

The mountain ranges running mainly north and south divide the country and occupy much of its centre. Rather more than three-quarters of Malaya remains undeveloped as jungle, mountain, or swamp. Of the cultivated area rubber claims approximately 14 per cent, rice 2·4 per cent, and coconuts and oil-palms 2·1 per cent.

The total population of Malaya in 1947 was 5·8 millions; 4·9 millions in the Federation, ·9 millions in Singapore.

Singapore was overwhelmingly Chinese but the distribution in the Federation was: Malays 49·46 per cent; Chinese 38·4 per cent; Indians 10·81 per cent; and Europeans, Eurasians, and others 1·33 per cent. At the time the East India Company established itself in Penang at the end of the eighteenth century, Malaya was the country of the Malays. They had had predecessors, the aboriginals, but these, the Semang, Sakai, and Jakun, avoided the haunts of other men. So long as there had been trade there had been Chinese and Indian traders, the latter of whom established a cultural and economic dominance which lasted from the first century A.D. until the fifteenth century, when Islam displaced it with the help, later, of the Portuguese control of trade. The Portuguese ruled Malacca from 1511 to 1641 when the Dutch drove them out, themselves to withdraw in favour of the British in 1824. But Malacca had had great days under Malay rulers in the fifteenth century when it thrived exceedingly as a port and had established its power as far north as Patani in Siam and west over some of the coastal regions of Sumatra; by the end of the century, it had become the centre of Islam in the Malay Archipelago and the headquarters of its missionary activity.

The Malays had wandered down the Peninsula and into Sumatra and Java from Yunnan between 2500 and 1500 B.C., and had settled as rice planters in Kedah and Kelantan and as hunters and fishermen, living in villages among cultivation. Malays from Sumatra, the Minangkabaus, moved into Malacca and Negri Sembilan, and Bugis from the Celebes into Selangor. Through the centuries foreign strains, Chinese, Indian, Arab, Siamese, had wrought their influence, but marriage with the infidel faded away before the growing acceptance of Islam. The Babas of Malacca originated in the marriage of Chinese with Balinese or Batak slaves, the Jawi Pekan of Penang are descendants of Indians and Malays, the Eurasians are mainly of Portuguese or Dutch extraction and their origins lie in Malacca.

The Malays have remained small holders during the rapid

development of Malaya, country folk who do not flourish in towns and leave regimented labour to Chinese and Indian immigrants. Commerce and much of industry have always been in the hands of the Chinese and, although the economic progress of Malaya largely owes its direction to the Europeans, the vast body of it has been furnished by the Chinese. The bulk of the Indians come from South India and supply labour to the rubber estates and government departments, but there are many shopkeepers among them and Indians have always been in a great majority as clerks and overseers and in recent times have begun to contribute their share to the professional classes.

Cloves and nutmegs, pepper, gambier and tapioca, coffee and sugar at one time or another have been important crops in Malayan agriculture, and the cultivation of coconuts has been immemorial. Pineapples and oil-palms were introduced between the wars with encouraging results, but the staples of Malaya's great prosperity have been rubber and tin. Tin has its mention in the earliest histories of the country but rubber was cultivated only in the first decade of this century.

Malaya's prosperity has enabled her to provide public amenities in good measure, roads, railways, post and telegraph offices, water-supplies, and electricity. Over six thousand miles of roads have been constructed, two-thirds of them rated as first class. The railway system extends over a thousand miles, from Singapore in the extreme south to the borders of the Malay States in the north west and north east, there to connect with the Siamese railways; on the way it throws off branches to the ports of the west coast. By 1939 postal and telegraphic services were available in all towns and villages of any size, and postal agencies were to be found in the smaller places; there were also nearly two hundred telephone exchanges. Malaya is more fortunate than most countries of the East in the excellence of her water-supplies, and her towns with few exceptions and many of the villages near a distribution main are supplied with electric power. The responsibility for these services rests with the Depart-

ments of Public Works, Railways, Posts and Telegraphs, and the Electrical Department, all of which maintain strong establishments.

The revenue to support this very considerable expenditure has always been subject to uneasy fluctuations in the Colony as well as in the Malay States. The highest revenue collected in the Straits Settlements was just under $55 million in 1929 and that of the Federated Malay States over $105 million in 1927 ($1 = 2s. 4d.)[1]. The average revenue between the two world wars works out at about $37·5 million in the case of the Colony and $69·4 million in that of the Federated Malay States. The revenue of the Colony came largely from import duties on liquors, tobacco, and petroleum and less importantly from stamp duties, land rents and sales, and various fees and licences. Both in the Colony and the Malay States the yield from the opium monopoly has shrunk steadily as the system of rationing the sale of opium has progressed, and is far from being the prominent contributor to revenue it once was. In the Federated Malay States the export duties on tin-ore and rubber, and the import duties on liquors, tobacco, petroleum, and textiles, supply the bulk of the revenue, with land rents and sales, opium licences and fees, and returns from public undertakings such as the postal services and sales of electrical power, as substantial supplementaries. Before 1939 both administrations had amassed handsome surpluses and their burden of public debt was light.

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

Penang, a virtually uninhabited island, became a settlement of the East India Company largely because a

[1] Until paper currency was issued by the Straits Settlements Government in 1899, the Mexican dollar was in use in Malaya as the standard coin and for bank notes issued by exchange banks. In 1903 the Mexican dollar was replaced by the Straits Settlements dollar, the weight and fineness of which was almost identical with the Mexican dollar. In January 1906 a gold value of 2s. 4d. was given to the Straits dollar. The currency of the Straits Settlements became Malayan currency on 1 October 1937 when a Malayan Currency Commission was established. The local dollar is the dollar referred to in this study.

harbour was badly needed where British ships-of-war could refit and revictual, since they could neither remain in the Bay of Bengal during the North East Monsoon nor return there before the coming of the South West Monsoon in March. In 1759, and again in 1782 and 1783, French ships had swept the undefended Bay of Bengal, retiring to Atjeh in Sumatra, or Trincomalee in Ceylon, or even Mergui in Burma, to refit. Other considerations also carried weight. Penang would satisfy the Company's plans for a headquarters from which to launch projects for an increase in trade with the East Indian islands; it could be made a port of call for British merchantmen engaged in commerce with China, and a market for the sale of commodities suited to the China trade. But its nature was to be that of a Company's factory. When in earlier years the East India Company, looking for some such harbour, had sent missions to Kedah and Atjeh, they had given instructions that they were 'not desirous of an extensive territorial possession. As the great object is trade and barter such a district round the factory as may be necessary for its safety and convenience might suffice . . .'[1] This attitude they showed themselves most reluctant to relinquish, consistently opposing any pressure of circumstance or personality to sally forth from their posts on the rim of the Peninsula. Malacca[2] fell into the Company's hands during the course of the French wars but they were planning to evacuate it as profitless until their Secretary in Penang, Stamford Raffles, intervened to prove to them its value. There would have been no occupation of Singapore in 1819 if Raffles had not moved so quickly as to forestall the change of mind of the Governor-General in India who had first authorized it, and only the quick revelation of its potentialities prevented a withdrawal in response to the protests of the Dutch against an encroach-

[1] *The Malay Peninsula*, p. 63.

[2] Malacca first came into the Company's possession in 1795 in the course of the war with France and Holland, was restored to the Dutch in 1818, and was regained finally by the Company in 1824 in pursuance of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of London. The Company withdrew from Sumatra and its settlement at Bencoolen while the Dutch on their side relinquished all their territory and claims in Malaya and India.

ment on their sphere of influence. A patient prudence was shown in the Company's efforts to establish trading relations with Siam, whose true state of weakness had been laid bare by two missions sent by the Company to that country, that of John Crawfurd in 1822–4, and of Captain Harry Burney in 1825–6. The Company had made up its mind that on no account would it meddle in the affairs of the Peninsula, or offer any hindrance to Siamese designs against the Malay States which were the Company's neighbours. This policy involved it in a charge of breach of faith to Kedah to which it was, at the lowest computation, under an obligation. In 1786 Penang had been ceded to the Company by the Sultan of Kedah, and he had sought to make it a condition of the settlement that help against his enemies should be guaranteed to him. The Company evaded a reply. In 1800 the territory on the mainland now known as Province Wellesley was also ceded, the Company agreeing to pay for both concessions a total annual sum of $10,000. In 1821 Kedah was attacked by Siam, laid waste, and subjected to monstrous atrocities but was denied help by the Company; later, on two occasions, the Siamese Government was informed of plots by the Sultan of Kedah to recover the throne and the territory which he had lost. In 1831 the Company went even further; it sent naval forces in support of Siam against Kedah rebels, and seven years later it was blockading the Kedah coast in aid of Siam.

Opportunity for independent action by the Governor and Council of Penang was strictly limited. The Company's machinery of government was highly centralized and sanction from India was required even in matters of small account. Great or small, a decision could only be expected after an interval of many months. Only a Governor of bold character, and fortitude under rebuke, could act with the speed events seemed to require. Robert Fullerton was such a one, and he saw it as his duty to guard the interests of the Company in the Peninsula by preserving the independence of the Malay States as a bulwark against the aggressive pretensions of

Siam. His vigorous action saved Perak and Selangor from subjection to Siam but did not escape a passing censure.

The Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1824 terminated the shadowy Dutch influence in the Malay Peninsula and the East India Company was at great pains to disclaim any intention of succeeding them in the Malay States although their prestige and popularity there would have assured them of a welcome. The policy of the Company was, at almost any price, to steer clear of any entanglements the affairs of the Malay States might threaten.[1] Their power and prestige, firmly but adroitly wielded by Fullerton and his like among the Governors of the Straits Settlements, had saved the Malay States from a conquest which they were too weak and divided to avert by their own efforts. Yet permission so to employ its strength had always been most grudgingly given by the Company, and it was firmly resolved not to resort to any form of pressure in settling the problems which conditions in the neighbouring Malay States were constantly presenting. Proposals at one time or another from the rulers of Perak and Trengganu that the Company should take over those countries had been ignored, and an indifferent eye was turned to the galloping deterioration of the Peninsula as the States fought with and among themselves. In the absence of deterrents piracy prospered, and trade could not support itself against warfare which blocked the rivers and the few roads which were the only trade routes.

An exception to this policy occurred whenever British rights, whether they concerned British territory, British subjects or obligations in law, were infringed. In this spirit the

[1] The Dutch sphere of influence in the Peninsula was confined to Perak, Selangor, and Negri Sembilan. In Perak the Dutch were content with a monopoly of the production of tin, but in Selangor they forced the Sultan to sign a treaty acknowledging Dutch suzerainty in 1796. Of the Negri Sembilan, Rembau was made a dependency of Malacca and the Dutch established a suzerainty over other of the smaller States. In 1832 all rights in Rembau to a monopoly in tin and to the suzerainty of that State, which could be claimed as an inheritance from the Dutch, were renounced. The following year Governor Ibbetson, in handing over to Jehol, another of the Negri Sembilan States, without solicitation, land bearing tin and gold declared that 'accessions of territory and encroachments upon their rights is the furthest from our views and intentions'.

Company had engaged in a war in 1831–2 with Naning, a tiny State about ten miles from Malacca town. The object of the war was to enforce rights which the Company judged had been inherited from the Dutch, without realizing that the Dutch had allowed them to fall into desuetude. The course of the war exposed the Company to the ignominy of defeat and ended in victory, which was largely due to the brisk tactics of a force of Rembau Malays, only after great expenditure. After that the traders protested in vain against the extortions of petty chieftains; the Company refused to interfere either in quarrels between Malay rajas or with the exercise by any of them of claims to squeeze trade passing through their domains.

This tolerance was not extended to Siam and, in the early eighteen-sixties, the Government of India (the East India Company having ceased to exist in 1858) accepted Governor Cavenagh's representations that renewed Siamese intrigues in Kelantan and Trengganu were a serious threat to the growing trade with the east coast, and approved the strong measures Cavenagh felt thus encouraged to take to end these revived pretensions.

The principle of non-discrimination in trade had been established by the prosperity it had brought to Singapore and had been introduced into the other Settlements in the teeth of opposition.[1] Penang had been a financial disappointment, and changes in the political scene after the defeat of France had removed any urgency for a naval base there which

[1] The three Settlements were not governed by the same authority until 1826. Penang was a Residency under Bengal from 1786 to 1805, and from that year until 1830 was a fourth Presidency of India subject to the authority of the Governor-General. Malacca from 1824 to 1826 was a dependency of the Supreme Government of India. Singapore from 1819 to 1823 was controlled from Bencoolen but from 1823 to 1826 was subject to the direction of the Governor-General of India.

In 1826 the three Settlements were united as an enlargement of the Presidency but in 1830 the status of Presidency was abolished and the three Settlements became a Residency under Bengal. In 1832 the capital of the Residency was transferred to Singapore. In 1851 the Governor-General took over the control of the Settlements from Bengal. The East India Company came to an end in 1858 and the Settlements passed under the control of the India Office. The connexion with India was severed in 1867 when the Straits Settlements were transferred to the Colonial Office as a Crown Colony.

might outweigh such shortcomings as the lack of suitable timber for shipbuilding. The reasons for the commercial vicissitudes which dashed the somewhat extravagant hopes for Penang's future lay not so much in Penang itself as in the political uncertainties and disturbances of the time. Owing to the war with France the Company had been shut off from its markets on the Continent of Europe for pepper, spices, and coffee, and the China market which would have taken these things could not be fully supplied for want of ships. The British occupation of Java from 1811 to 1816 put the spices of Amboina and the tin of Banka into British hands and made direct trading with Batavia the natural course, and, at the same time as Penang was suffering from this diversion of trade, disturbed conditions in Atjeh were affecting its market there. Matters were not improved by the restoration of Java to the Dutch, aggressively bent on recovering lost ground, and by Siamese designs against the Malay States which were Penang's neighbours. After 1819 the competition of Singapore began to make itself felt in the trade with the lands to the eastward, in the import trade with Siam and the export trade to China. Penang retained its markets with the Sumatran coast, Burma, and the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, and such well-founded business as that of the distribution of Indian piece-goods and of the export of pepper, tin, and Straits produce to China. To confirm its hold on these sources of trade Penang accepted the principles of free trade to the extent of removing duties on dealings with Siam, Burma, and Sumatra, and the double duties and pilotage fees on foreign ships. But these measures had no success in reducing the heavy annual deficit and rather than make compensating retrenchments Penang was always tempted to strike a balance by increasing revenue through enhanced taxation.

After its promotion to the rank of a Presidency in 1805 Penang was very extravagantly staffed. The establishment included a Governor, three Resident Councillors, secretaries and accountants, and a very large number of civil servants,

and the Settlement never found itself able, in spite of stiff urgings from India, to reduce these numbers.[1] In 1826, when Singapore was joined with Penang, the policy of free trade, under which Singapore was going ahead rapidly and even covering the cost of its administration, was made the common system. The immediate result was to increase rather than to reduce Penang's deficit and its solution of higher taxation, including duties on trade, vanished in the Court of Director's decision in 1830 to effect economy by reducing the status of the Settlements to that of a Residency, and by giving the establishment of the Residency the final shape in 1832 of a Governor with two Assistants in Singapore, a Resident Councillor and two Assistants in Penang, and a Resident Councillor with one Assistant in Malacca. Penang's commercial position did not improve as Indian piece-goods began to be crowded out by British products, ships for the China run grew fewer, and British and European manufactures tended to go direct to Singapore, but the system of free trade remained.

The Company was resolved that there should be no repetition of the prodigal staffing of Penang and the sources of revenue were too slight to support heavy expenditure. Taxes were few, the bulk of the revenue coming from excise duties, which were farmed, on opium and spirits; stamp duties made a reasonably large, land and forests an unreasonably small, contribution. Economy was displayed in the distribution of various duties among the Governor and the Resident Councillors and their Assistants; in Singapore, for example, the Governor and his two Assistants divided between them the functions of Superintendent of Lands, Chief of Police, Superintendent of Convicts, Magistrate and Commissioner of the Court of Requests, Superintendent of Public Works. The Governor and the Resident Councillors retained the right to act as judges and sit with the Recorder. In some

[1] In 1827 the Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, visited Penang and declared he could not see what the island 'was like for the number of cocked hats which shut out the view'. (Swettenham, p. 81.)

departments the economies in staffing were too drastic and the struggle for new appointments was not always barren. A Superintendent of Convicts was appointed at Singapore and at Penang. Government Surveyors for Singapore, Penang and Malacca appeared in 1843, 1846, and 1858. In 1851 the Governor was given a Secretary and an A.D.C., and in 1856 the appointments of Commissioner of Police, Singapore, and Deputy Commissioner, Penang, were created. A Chief Engineer for the Straits Settlements and a Postmaster for Singapore were added to the establishment in 1858.

At the time of the transfer to the Colonial Office the civil service of the Straits Settlements had attained high standards but it had suffered from decades of changing policies and fluctuating values. The extent of recruitment to its ranks had reflected the varying estimates of the importance of the Settlements in the eyes of the East India Company and the Government of India. At one moment it had been extravagantly over-staffed, at another harmfully under strength. Penang from 1786 to 1805 was staffed from the Bengal civil service. When it became a Presidency the East India Company decided to create a Straits Settlements civil service, starting with juniors from the Bengal civil service. Newcomers received a preliminary training at Haileybury, but suffered from a lack of institutions in the Straits at which they could study the local languages, laws, and customs. Knowledge of a language in local use was not compulsory, and the acquisition of familiarity with the native laws and customs was left to the processes of time and the routine of duty. The actual study of these subjects was a matter on which the officer exercised his own initiative and a choice in the employment of his leisure. After 1826 the Governor and his Council at Penang tried to encourage such studies by granting an allowance for a teacher and a bonus for those successful in an examination on those subjects, and extra pay. But upon the extinction of the Presidency in 1830 these regulations disappeared, together with the rewards for successful study of a native language.

The service in its early years was subject to irruptions, as when the officials at Bencoolen had to be placed elsewhere upon the closing of that settlement, or it seemed profitable to appoint an officer of the Madras Army of unusual and appropriate ability. There was a change of policy, too, after the reduction of the Presidency to the status of a Residency under Bengal, and severe retrenchment of staff. More than half the civil servants in the higher grade were removed from their appointments, not to be taken back into the Indian civil service but either to be pensioned or retained as unemployed supernumeraries on small salaries to await re-employment as posts fell vacant. No more junior officers were brought from England and it was decided that, once the supernumeraries had been absorbed, officers were to be recruited from the Bengal civil service.

The employment of Indian civil servants was not wholly successful. Seeing little prospect of promotion comparable with that to be gained in India, they rarely settled down with intent to make a career in the country. Lord Canning, Governor-General of India, recognized this and in 1859 described the existing system as 'a positive evil' on the ground that officers from India, lacking opportunity to learn Malay or Chinese in India had, when they were transferred to the Settlements, everything to learn, and he did not hesitate to express his doubts whether such officers would ever be adequate or suitable. Fortunately the influence of those Penang civil servants who had been encouraged to learn the local languages, and of the officials transferred from Bencoolen, inspired an outlook which expected of the civil service a real knowledge of the country and her people, and the tradition thus created lived on to produce a technique of administration of which Sir Hercules Robinson, sent to report on conditions in the Settlements before the transfer to the Colonial Office, was able to speak in high terms of praise.

THE TRANSFER TO THE COLONIAL OFFICE IN 1867

Dissatisfaction with the Company's policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the Malay States was inevitable among the merchants of the Settlements, especially those of flourishing Singapore. They believed the Peninsula to be rich in natural resources, in gold, tin, and iron, and in soil suitable for rice and sugar, and they resented the Company's firm refusal to protect their trading ventures in the interior. They were angered, too, by the Company's attitude of siding on occasion with the Malay rajas and chiefs of the Malay States whom the merchants charged with obstructing trade or making its terms too onerous. The agitation which was carried on for years with increasing vehemence had its consummation in 1867 when the Settlements were transferred from the Government of India to the Colonial Office. The main grievances were palpable and beyond dispute. India took little interest in the affairs of the Settlements and, because its own problems were widely dissimilar from those of the Settlements, lacked the experience and understanding necessary to deal with the troubles which beset them or to promote their ambitions and enterprises. Singapore was now much more than a fragment of a remote and unimportant Residency; it was a strongpoint and centre of Far Eastern trade, and it could serve the Malay hinterland as it served the trade of China and the Archipelago, Siam, and Cochin China. While Dutch and French and Spanish were penetrating further and further into the countries of the Far East and denying trade to the British in the process, India obstructed rather than encouraged an advance into the mainland of the Malay States. Other ingredients, such as objection to the dumping of Indian convicts and to a very large military establishment maintained at the local expense, resentment over the official monopoly of government, resistance to projects for taxing the ports and to other alleged restraints on the freedom of trade, were stirred in to produce an active ferment which frothed over at an attempt to introduce the Indian cur-

rency. When the question was put to the Governor-General of India, Lord Canning, he concurred with the main contentions of the protests from Singapore, agreeing that India's dissociation from China and the Settlements' commercial trend to the Far East had together created a disparity of interests and conditions which the Government of India in its remoteness found it difficult to bridge. Not only did the absenteeism of the highest officials, who could not spare the time to visit the Settlements, prevent an adequate study of the march of affairs there but India found an insuperable difficulty in providing the senior officers who could bring to the administration of the Settlements a thorough understanding of its people. A suitable training could not be given in India and in any case few officers of the Indian civil service wanted to serve in an outlying dependency where prospects of promotion were far from bright.

The Company had given the Settlements an able and honest administration, and had made of empty places busy marts where immigrants pouring in from neighbouring lands had found the requisite conditions for a peaceful happiness and prosperity. On the borders, a wall of prestige had contained the aggressive ambitions of the Siamese. But the Company's true monument was the confirmation of the Settlements' existence. It had steadfastly remained 'not desirous of an extensive territorial possession', yet it had borne at a very great cost the burden of administering the three Settlements, even though the taxation levied on them yielded no compensating reimbursement and any profits which accrued from the commercial expansion of these Malay dependencies had flowed into the Company's treasury only indirectly, if at all.

The Company had naturally enough never shown interest in the creation of democratic institutions. At the demand of the inhabitants a municipal committee had come into being in Penang, in Singapore and, later, in Malacca, but it is doubtful whether those bodies achieved importance until in Singapore in 1856 a real municipality was created. It was

left to the first blooming of Crown Colony government to produce a Legislative Council, consisting of 11 official and 6 unofficial members, but the latter were nominated. Another change was appointment to the civil service of the Straits Settlements by competitive examination and the requirement that officers recruited to that service should set to work on arrival to learn Malay or Chinese and study the local conditions. This has been the system ever since and in due season it was extended to the civil service of the Malay States.

CHAPTER II

Entry into the Malay States

In some eighty years' pursuit of a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the Malay States the East India Company had worn a deep rut and for a long time the Colonial Office seemed content to stay in it. The refusal of the Company to clear the channels of trade in the interior, which the conditions there had choked, had been one of the most agonizing discontents which led to the transfer. But so far from including any remedies in their programme, the British Government had, to complaints of inaction, made this tart reply:

> If persons, knowing the risks they run, owing to the disturbed state of these countries, choose to hazard their lives and properties for the sake of the large profits which accompany successful trading, they must not expect the British Government to be answerable if their speculation proves unsuccessful.[1]

It was not an attitude which a good conscience or a proper sense of responsibility could support for long. The States of the interior were rotting away in anarchy. Civil war wracked the countryside and piracy paralysed the traffic of the sea. The misery of the Malay States was progressing beyond the tolerance of a civilized community and, although the old reluctance to interfere and dislike of accepting a load of responsibility seemed to be felt as acutely by the British Government as by the East India Company, the need for some kind of action to establish peace and order inland was too insistent to be denied. The Malay quarrels may not have produced long death-rolls, but in the mining district of Larut where rival factions of Chinese were at one another's throats killing was on a very large scale indeed. In Selangor everybody seemed to be fighting everybody else and in Negri Sembilan there was constant bickering of some sort. Johore

[1] Swettenham, p. 113.

with its small population was quiet in the shadow of Singapore, but there was significance in the ability of Pahang to send 3,000 men to fight on the side of one of Selangor's warring factions.

For their own peace and quiet the British Government had to act and these Instructions were sent to the Governor, Sir Andrew Clarke, in September 1873:

> Her Majesty's Government have, it need hardly be said, no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of the Malay States. But looking to the long and intimate connexion between them and the British Government, and to the well-being of the British Settlements themselves, Her Majesty's Government find it incumbent upon them to employ such influence as they possess with the Native Princes to rescue, if possible, those fertile and productive countries from the ruin which must befall them if the present disorders continue unchecked.
>
> I have to request that you will carefully ascertain, as far as you are able, the actual condition of affairs in each State, and that you will report to me whether there are, in your opinion, any steps which can properly be taken by the Colonial Government to promote the restoration of peace and order, and to secure protection to trade and commerce with the native territories. I should wish you specially to consider whether it would be advisable to appoint a British Officer to reside in any of the States. Such an appointment could, of course, only be made with the full consent of the Native Government, and the expenses connected with it would have to be defrayed by the Government of the Straits Settlements.[1]

With a majestic latitude of interpretation the Governor set about his task. Of the three claimants to the throne of Perak one, Abdullah, presented himself at a meeting with the Governor at Pangkor island off the Perak coast together with those chiefs who backed him, certain of the Perak major Officers of State and the heads of the embattled factions of Chinese. On 20 January 1874 the Treaty of Pangkor was signed.

The preamble of the 'Engagement entered into by the Chiefs of Perak'[2] makes the diagnosis, thus:

[1] ibid. p. 174.
[2] *Treaties and Engagements affecting the Malay States and Borneo*, p. 28.

Whereas, a state of anarchy exists in the Kingdom of Perak owing to the want of settled government in the country, and no efficient power exists for the protection of the people and for securing to them the fruits of their industry, and,
Whereas, large numbers of Chinese are employed and large sums of money invested in Tin mining in Perak by British subjects and others residing in Her Majesty's Possessions, and the said mines and property are not adequately protected, and piracy, murder and arson are rife in the said country, whereby British trade and interests greatly suffer, and the peace and good order of the neighbouring British Settlements are sometimes menaced, and,
Whereas, certain Chiefs for the time being of the said Kingdom of Perak have stated their inability to cope with the present difficulties, and together with those interested in the industry of the country have requested assistance, and,
Whereas, Her Majesty's Government is bound by Treaty Stipulations to protect the said Kingdom and to assist its rulers. . . .

Action was to be taken to remedy these evils and to satisfy the treaty obligations and, to this end, the treaty provided that the Sultan should 'receive and provide a suitable residence for a British Officer to be called Resident, who shall be accredited to his Court, and whose advice must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay religion and custom' (Clause VI). An Assistant Resident was to be attached to the Governor of Larut, acting under the Resident with similar powers and subordinate to him alone. The collection and control of all revenues and the general administration of the country were to be regulated under the advice of the Resident. The cost of these two officers and their establishments were to be a first charge upon the revenue, and the next charge was to be a civil list regulating the income to be received by the Sultan and his chief Officers of State.

On 1 October of the same year the aged Sultan of Selangor wrote to the Governor:

As to my friend's request that I will enter into an agreement with my friend in order that my friend may collect all the taxes of my country, I should be very glad if my friend would set my country to right and collect all its taxes. This letter of mine with my chop

on it can be token to my friend that I trust in my friend's assistance and that I hand over to my friend all arrangements for opening my country and collecting its revenue. . . .[1]

An invitation to the chiefs of Sungei Ujong and Rembau to meet the Governor was not accepted by the chief of Rembau, but notice was served, by the destruction of an important stockade and the visit of two men-of-war, that further misrule was not to be endured. A dose of force was also necessary in Sungei Ujong. In November of the same year, 1874, Sir Andrew Clarke was, however, able to publish a declaration announcing the confirmation by the Secretary of State for the Colonies of the arrangements entered into with the States of Perak, Selangor, and Sungei Ujong, and the appointments of Residents and Assistant Residents to Perak and Selangor, and an Assistant Resident to Sungei Ujong, were formally made. A good many years were to pass before Pahang came under the wing of Great Britain, and before the States of Negri Sembilan could be kneaded into a confederation and, as such, accept the assistance of a British Resident in the administration of the government; in between had come one of the few tragedies attending British intervention in the Malay States.

The immediate task of settling the disorder at Larut had been accomplished swiftly and the Resident had turned his attention to deeper evils, arbitrary and excoriating taxation by all and every Malay minister and chief who felt he had the power to exact it, harsh oppression of the poor and helpless, habitual squeezing of traders and the abominable system of debt-slavery. Perhaps an even harder problem was presented by the nature of the Malay potentates with whom he had to deal—the Sultan Abdullah and the Mentri (Chief Minister) and others who had most faults of character and ideas to condemn and few graces to commend them. The Resident, J. W. Birch, had been tireless in his investigation of the ills which had been brought to his notice, and his generosity had flowed over in the succour of the poor and oppressed. Yet for

[1] ibid, p. 35–6.

all his efforts to make the acquaintance of the chiefs, his examination of the conditions of the country, the thought he must have given plans for reform, he seemed not to have understood the Malay character, to have conceived no sympathy or even feeling of toleration for Malay customs and traditional ways; nor did he possess the knowledge of the Malay language which might have helped him towards a better understanding of the local conditions. The evils he saw filled his mind and he judged it his duty to end them but, however grateful the poor and lowly in whose interests he struggled may have shown themselves, it should have been obvious to him that he was incurring the hostility of powerful men whose position and privileges he was attacking. The situation was one which seemed to call for wary approach and gradual advance, and a sincere attempt to mollify the resentment of those who stood to lose by his policies, and to devise for them some form of compensation.

A new Governor, Sir William Jervois, arrived just in time to receive formal complaint from the Sultan and, after an interval to take his bearings, he visited Perak. He was told that the Pangkor Treaty was unworkable on the basis of an intervention which could advise but not act. Such was the state of Perak that advice was bound to be unpalatable. Nobody would pay heed to it without compulsion and the giver of advice had no power to compel. Either the Treaty and with it the complaints could fade away or the Treaty be enforced and the complaints rejected. A decision was taken; the British officers were to be appointed 'Queen's Commissioners' with powers to carry on the administration in the name of the Sultan. In 1826 a treaty with the Sultan of Perak ceded to the East India Company the Dindings, a strip of territory on the coast of Perak, and Pangkor Island, lying off it, because they were the stronghold of pirates whom the Sultan felt himself powerless to expel. The Pangkor Treaty carried a rectification of the boundaries of the Dindings and also a rectification of the southern boundary of Province Wellesley which added the southern watershed of the Krian

River to Penang territory. These changes had no great significance in themselves but they served to lend colour to the story the enemies of Birch were putting about that the true object of the British intervention was the annexation of Perak. The new arrangements could reasonably be construed as another step towards that end and a strong reaction should have been expected. A few weeks later while distributing the proclamations of the new arrangements Birch was murdered by Malay chiefs with the Sultan's connivance. Troops were dispatched from India and Hong Kong and in due course the murderers and their accessories or such of them as survived a long pursuit, were brought to justice. What the East India Company had always sought to avoid had come about.

Sir Frank Swettenham, who as a principal actor had most narrowly escaped a similar fate, while giving as an explanation of Birch's murder, 'he did not speak Malay, or understand the customs and prejudices of the people, and to this cause more than any other his death must be attributed', passes judgement thus:

> Intimately associated with all the details from the beginning, I am convinced that twenty years of advice—could it ever have continued so long—would not have accomplished, for peace and order and good government, what was done in six months by force of arms. Mr Birch did not die in vain; his death freed the country from an abominable thraldom, and was indirectly the means of bringing independence, justice, and comfort to tens of thousands of sorely oppressed people.[1]

The incident pointed a moral, too, and the acceptance of the lesson—that successful government even of a gentle and docile people like the Malays demanded persuasion and not coercion along the road of progress—made a pattern of British administration in Malaya which was not seriously disturbed until 1946, and even then was hurriedly rearranged in its former design.

The Colonial Office was naturally greatly upset by the tragedy. It cannot be denied that the gap between a sugges-

[1] Swettenham, p. 215.

tion that the Governor should 'consider whether it would be advisable to appoint a British Officer to reside in any of the States' and Sir William Jervois's decision to make that British Officer a 'Queen's Commissioner' to carry on government in the Sultan's name was cavernous. But whether that excused the unreasonable instructions which flowed from the Colonial Secretary's disapproval is another matter. The Resident's function was defined in a despatch dated 1 June 1876 to be 'the giving influential and responsible advice to the ruler, a position the duties of which are well understood in the East'. Detailed instructions followed:

> The Residents are not to interfere more frequently or to greater extent than is necessary with the minor details of government; but their special objects should be, the maintenance of peace and law, the initiation of a sound system of taxation, with the consequent development of the resources of the country, and the supervision of the collection of the revenue, so as to ensure the receipt of funds necessary to carry out the principal engagements of the Government, and to pay for the cost of the British officers, and whatever establishments may be necessary to support them.[1]

As such a programme involved changes of a most radical nature, some agency more powerful than advice would be essential, and to be content to call the instructions disingenuous involves much restraint. The wonderful progress the States made under the Residential system is all the more creditable to the Residents responsible in that it was achieved in the cold shadow of the pains and penalties which threatened those who in their zeal preferred acts to words. Still, not all the odds were against them. Working in their favour were the slow and meagre communications and the acceptance of a daily journal of doings good and bad which was to be submitted to the Governor in Singapore when opportunity offered; the customary annual report and annual estimates of revenue and expenditure could speak loudly of results and say little of methods.

[1] ibid. p. 217.

THE MALAY STATES UNDER THE RESIDENTIAL SYSTEM

In 1847 the Resident Councillor of Malacca, E. A. Blundell, dared to look over his fence at the adjoining States of Negri Sembilan, and wrote about them:

> The petty States surrounding (Malacca) are all of them in a sad state of anarchy and disorder, without any settled government, and enjoying no protection of either person or property. The chiefs . . . are needy and rapacious . . . and the people are wretchedly poor and enjoy no means of bettering their condition, for though the countries are as fertile as Malacca, and some, if not all of them, still more abounding in mineral products, yet such is the state of insecurity and lawlessness among them that but very little can be done to benefit by such resources. . . . They [the States] are fast becoming little more than the receptacles of the lawless and evil disposed, whose sole means of livelihood will be plunder and robbing. . . .[1]

Two years later Governor Butterworth wrote a report on the Negri Sembilan which was equally gloomy. They can both be taken as political portraits of the Malay States thirty years later. Sir Frank Swettenham in *British Malaya* describes the economic conditions in Perak, Selangor, and Negri Sembilan as he saw them when travelling about the country in the course of duty. The population was scanty: it congregated in villages on the banks of one of the big rivers with many miles of jungle separating them or in the upper reaches where rapids often barricaded narrower and shallow waters. The villages were sprawling, ramshackle affairs of wooden, thatched buildings where cultivation rarely had anything better to show than a few fruit trees and food-yielding palms. Some rice was grown in the swamps where the high river banks sloped inland and, as hydraulic engineering was left to nature, which dealt out flood or drought or the proper supply of water on no discernible system, the cultivation of what was the staple food entailed precarious, heartbreaking toil which can have been accepted because only thus could men live. If running water made irrigation possible the necessary co-operation of all the rice planters

[1] *British Malaya, 1824–67*, p. 172.

was often absent. Where tin produced adequate wealth, shops and the means of reaching them existed to give the appearance of a small town, and there were even a few cart-tracks connecting mining-camps. Otherwise the rivers were the highways. The Chinese on the mines made money, and so long as there was anything to squeeze out of the common folk, rajas and chiefs did not lack. For the rest the average lot was poverty and the miseries of a life which was 'solitary, nasty, poor, brutish and short'. The advance from poverty to wealth demanded a quality of mind which there was no system of education to give, a bodily stamina which a fecund variety of tropical diseases denied, and an incentive which the extortion and oppression of those with power quickly removed. Even where signs or at least promise of better things emerged, as in Negri Sembilan where the soil was fertile and well cultivated, the misrule and quarrels of chiefs prevented their fulfilment. Swettenham declared that the leading characteristic of the Malay of every class was a disinclination to work, and that the Malay had no stomach for really hard and continuous tasks. That could well be so, for the Malay had come to the Peninsula as a nomad and fisherman and had not yet evolved a system of government, or had one imposed upon him as had the Javanese, which would discipline him in the ways of hard and dutiful effort. In Perak there was a symmetrical device of chiefs and ministers under the Sultan, but they do not seem by precept and example to have urged their charges to higher things or, on the other hand, to have scourged them into greater endeavours which would have increased their own takings. In Selangor, likewise, the Sultan could truly say that the State was himself, but in fact that heedless and humorous ancient rarely chose to exert his authority and here, as in Perak, the average peasant with the average low standard of living could easily escape notice, and so harm. The Chinese for the most part had come to try their fortune in the minefields and left when they were sufficiently enriched. They held to their own language, customs, and ideas, sinned and struggled

among themselves, and made no impact on the structure of the society around them, concerning themselves only with the problem of when to bully and when to buy.

The task, then, to which the first British officials appointed as a consequence of the Pangkor Treaty of 1874 had to set their hands was to introduce the elements of good government, to put an end to civil war and establish law and order, to raise a backward, ill-governed people to standards of living which would bear some relation to the progress human kind had made elsewhere, and in so doing to provide some measure of justification for an armed intervention in their affairs. The most prickly political problem was the abolition of debt-slavery; the most difficult administrative problem, that of making ends meet. From the solution of the latter flowed the roads, railways, harbours, the post offices, hospitals and schools, the creation of a police force and the organization of land offices, the establishment of courts of law that turn the prosaic records of the annual reports of those days into golden legends and send the mind back to the phrase in a famous minute by Raffles, 'Let it still be the boast of Britain to write her name in characters of light.'

Money had to be found to pay the cost of the British intervention in Perak and Sungei Ujong and repay the advances made to carry on the administration of the States. Allowances had to be provided in replacement of the loss sustained by the chiefs when their plunderings had to give way to a systematic collection of revenue by and for the Government. The expenditure attendant upon the creation and operation of an orderly scheme of administration was a growing charge. The order to initiate 'a sound system of taxation' was obeyed by abolishing the previous method of taxing every article that moved in and out of the country and limiting the sources of revenue to an import duty on opium and spirits, the farming of public gaming houses for Chinese, and pawnshop licences. The import duty on tobacco was actually removed after a few years and, as internal revenue in the form of sales of land, quit-rents, court fines and fees, and various licences made

only a modest contribution, some rich vein of taxation had to be sought. A very high export duty was levied on tin and each year revenue leaped ahead. The war debts were paid off, the chiefs mollified and a reign of sound Victorian finance inaugurated. Surpluses were steadily accumulated to relieve lean years or used to create the physical assets of roads, railways, water supplies and so on, which took form so rapidly.

After Birch's murder the attack upon debt-slavery was carried out more cautiously but with no less determination. It was a vicious institution which advertised a most unhealthy social condition. By it a debt which could not be otherwise paid delivered the debtor into the bondage of his creditor. The debt might be genuine or it might be the invention of one whose position in society gave rein to such inventiveness. It might have been contracted by non-payment of a fine lawfully imposed or of a penalty entirely without factual or legal justification. The sole judge of the liquidation of a debt was the creditor, and in this way the origin of the state of indebtedness was so remote in time as to be untraceable. The yoke was fastened on wife and children as well as the debtor and also upon anyone who married a debt-slave. Like any other chattel a debt-slave could be sold and the punishment for running away could be death. Debt-slavery was obviously a much cherished privilege, not to be surrendered without a struggle, and its abolition within ten years in Perak and sooner elsewhere was a remarkable achievement.

A revolutionary change which did much to produce political stability was the institution of a State Council in Perak. Its immediate and lasting success secured its introduction into the other States. The membership comprised the Ruler, the principal chiefs, two of the leading Chinese, and the British Resident and Assistant Resident. Its functions were mainly legislative but the annual estimates were presented for its information and important matters of State for discussion. The opportunities thus offered were taken with alacrity and the ventilation of differing opinions must have

provided a valuable political education. The prestige which attached to membership of the Council, too, had important political effects. Ruler and chiefs had consulted together in the past, but a great advance was to be seen in the element of regulation and rule which the formal composition of the Council and its fixed dates of meeting introduced, in the freedom to express differences of opinion which might even clash with the views of the Ruler, and above all in the very idea that Chinese could be admitted to such a company and have their say. It is difficult to believe that such a conception, as well as other radical innovations affecting the administration of the law and the alienation of land, could have come from the Ruler without the tuition of the Resident.

Certainly, the new ideas about the alienation of land did not at first find favour; payment of rent on a holding of land was hard to reconcile with the common practice of shifting cultivation, which paid no heed to titles. It took years of the development which enhances land values, such as the making of roads, the growth of villages, to teach the Malays to prize a title to their land or give a meaning to the payment of quit-rent. In the meantime the task was undertaken of demarcating land with sufficient accuracy to establish ownership and enable the issue of some kind of document of title. The sweeping changes in the administration of justice were accepted; litigation did not touch the Malays as nearly as did the intervention of the land offices. Courts were set up in which all were equal, whatever their race or rank. The law administered was that of the Straits Settlements, which was itself an adaptation of the law of India. Each State was divided into districts; each district had its court, presided over by a European magistrate, usually assisted by a Malay magistrate. A further development created sub-divisions of a district, each called a *mukim*, and each *mukim* had its head, a Penghulu, who was entrusted with powers which gave him his part in keeping the peace and assisting in the processes of orderly government.

Beginnings were made of a system of education for the

Malay children, who hitherto might or might not have learnt the Arabic alphabet and the sounds of the Koran, but now were to be taught to read, write, and figure in their own language. The construction of hospitals was started at an early date and in them medical attention was given free. But communications seem to have been the darling of each Resident's heart and all funds which could be squeezed out of revenue as a surplus were spent on roads and postal and telegraphic services. In the first years when budgets were tenuous, bridle-paths had to suffice; greater affluence helped the paths to grow into cart tracks; the final transformation was as good a metalled road as would be found anywhere in the world. Backed by every form of encouragement, towns began to come into existence with shops and markets and a steady accession of amenities—water supplies, systems of sanitation, public lighting, a post office. Councils to administer them were established with the title of Sanitary Boards from which later generations flinched, so that in the States which later adopted the idea and had time to reflect, the name 'Town Board' was preferred. Within ten years the beginnings of a railway system had appeared.

These were wide as well as sound foundations and it would be idle even to try to believe that they arose only from the tendering of good advice by a Resident. What was being created was the outline of an efficient, rapidly progressive administration, of something new and strange in these Malay States. The Residents had not taken over a system of government and improved on it. While punctiliously careful to observe the stipulations of the treaties that there should be no interference with Malay religion and customs, they had in every respect assumed the whole burden of administration. In his letter to the Governor in 1874, the Sultan of Selangor had said he would be very glad if his friend would set his country 'to right and collect all its taxes' and he had certainly been taken at his word. Not only in Selangor and Perak but also, since 1888 in Pahang, and since 1889 in Negri Sembilan, the British had intervened to set the country to right. The

States which comprised the latter had agreed to place themselves under the protection of the British Government, to constitute their countries a confederation of States to be known as the Negri Sembilan, and to have the assistance of a Resident in its government. In the same year the Sultan of Pahang, the cruel ruler of an iniquitous regime, had been led into the fold, after misbehaviour which rendered him susceptible to the advice of the Sultan of Johore that the safest course would be to ask for a British officer to assist him in the manner of those assisting his neighbours and with the same limitations.

The creation of a police force illustrates the penetration of British influence and authority, not merely in its introduction of a completely novel idea but in the inclusion of Sikhs in its ranks. Within a few years of the signing of the Pangkor Treaty, 1874, the confidence inspired by a new-found security, and the initiative and industry which enterprising administration had encouraged, had carried the country forward in great strides. The men responsible were finding the going much easier; they no longer needed to look over their shoulder at Whitehall. Apart from a change in political thought which had begun to take place in Great Britain in the eighteen-seventies, whereby an Empire found favour in the eyes of a large section of English public opinion, the rulers of the country in the mid-eighteen-eighties had to make a decision which concerned the colonial empire; the question to be answered was whether Great Britain was to retain her footing in Africa and the Far East or to let herself be edged out by other great Powers. She found herself being shut out of spheres wherein hitherto she had been free to trade. Germany was looking for colonial possessions, and France was active in Indo-China. Unless she was ready to acquiesce in their loss, Great Britain must act to ward off threats to her own interests in those parts. British North Borneo and Sarawak under Raja Brooke were given British protection, and Brunei's external policy was placed under British control.

In this new climate, kinder to their expansive enterprise

than the shrinking cautiousness of the East India Company, or the aversion from any appearance of intrusion upon the affairs of the neighbours which marked the policy of the Colonial Office for some time after the transfer, the British administration in the Malay States blossomed. Its officers lacked neither the inclination nor the ability to exploit this change. Few in number, they had to discharge many of the duties which later were apportioned among many hands, to be at once policeman and magistrate and gaoler, engineer, surveyor, collector and treasurer, here inspector of mines, there harbourmaster and customs officer. They were always on the road dealing with the problems of the large tracts of territory under their charge, travelling by track and bridle-path, in dugouts on the rivers, and rafts on the rapids. Confidence in them struck so strong a root that everything was expected of them and a sense of duty saw to it that everything was attempted and a great deal done. Maybe that was just as well, for hard work gave no time to brood over the loneliness, the certainty of ill-health, the entire lack of comfort and amenities which made up their lot. Swettenham (p. 242) wrote of them:

> The curious thing is that the men who held these posts, though they had passed no competitive examination and had no special training for the work, somehow managed to do what was required of them and in most cases did it exceedingly well. The Malay States were certainly very fortunate in their earliest servants, and it is extremely probable that the work would not have been done so successfully by others with greater intellectual gifts or higher training; just as it is certain that the men who did so well then would not succeed now that everything has been systematized, and the work of every department and every office is of a different and far higher quality.

CHAPTER III

Federation of the Malay States

THE achievement which was required of the Residents was to create the framework of a Government which would strive successfully to attain the highest standards of the day in law and order and peaceful living and, in addition, to fabricate at speed material conditions of comfort, hygiene, and means of communication. Initiative, enterprise, courage and fortitude were demanded on the one hand and tact, patience, and tolerance on the other, all welded into a body of practical ability. The success of the Residents in their task would have justified uncompromising confidence in their ability to continue their work without external assistance or co-operation. Judged by their works the Residents must have been men of a strong type of character which would be likely to show itself in an independence of mind and an impatience of interference. It is a tribute to their sagacity and devotion that the Residents welcomed a proposal for federating the four States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang.

Although certain principles of administration as well as details, such as land rents and the duty on tin ore, had been prescribed, the conditions were present for differences in policy. They arose, or could arise, from the isolation of the Residents, their freedom from control, the very momentum of the growth of their administrations which drove them along the road of progress, demanding swift decisions and acceptance of ever growing responsibility. It was the very success of the Residents in stimulating and guiding the development of their States which ended this separatism. The country was advancing towards prosperity too quickly to tolerate much longer any regional idiosyncrasy which unreasonably got in the way.

On 1 July 1895, the four States were federated as one

administration of which the Resident-General was the head. Each Resident remained in charge of the State administration and each department thereof had its State head answerable to the Resident. But for every important department there was a Federal head and he was responsible to the Resident-General. Intentionally or not, the Treaty of Federation of 1895 proved something more than a concentration of administrative powers. It contained the seeds of a regime of excessive bureaucratic centralization which was to disturb the consciences of later Governors and excite the discontent of the Rulers.

The wording of the Treaty of Federation states that the four Rulers 'agree to accept a British Officer, to be styled the Resident-General, as the agent and representative of the British Government under the Governor of the Straits Settlements' and to follow his advice in all matters other than those touching the Muhammadan religion (Art. 4).[1] Today the meaning of the phrase 'agent and representative' is a matter for speculation. No manner of doubt existed in the mind of the Federation's begetter and main architect. Writing eleven years later Sir Frank Swettenham uses these words '. . . it was for the first time plainly stated that he [the Resident-General] should have executive *control*, under the direction of the Governor . . .'.[2] And as the first Resident-General he would have special knowledge.

Further evidence to show how by this treaty the four States were swept into the sphere of British influence is to be found in Article 5 of the Treaty whereby the Rulers undertook, 'should war break out between Her Majesty's Government and that of any other Power, to send, on the requisition of the Governor, a body of armed and equipped Indian troops for service in the Straits Settlements'. Yet another provision by which the Rulers agreed to give to those States in the Federation requiring it such assistance in men, money, or other respects as the British Government, through its duly

[1] *Treaties and Engagements affecting the Malay States and Borneo*, p. 71.
[2] Swettenham, p. 273.

appointed officers, might advise, indicates the considerable political advance the Rulers had made under British tuition. The conception that the richer States of Perak and Selangor should aid and comfort the poorer Negri Sembilan and Pahang seemed a revolution of heart and mind in the light of their previous history.

In all other respects the Treaty suggests a commercial combine, the amalgamation of four business firms and, just as such an operation usually involves the squeezing out of other interests, so here something had to go to the wall: it was the State Councils. Legislation was still to be passed by the State Councils, since the administrative concentration called the Federation was not clothed with legislative functions; but the law was to be drafted by a Federal Officer, the Legal Adviser, and passed in each State Council in practically identical form. The State Councils had had no part in discussing the proposal for a federation; the Treaty was not put before them. The Councils had, in fact, fallen away a good deal in importance from their early promise. Successful and busy officials, developing material progress at a remarkable rate, could not spare the time to meet them, and as time went on they met less frequently and with less significance. The system of government had receded some distance from government by the Ruler assisted by the advice of the Resident upon which the Colonial Office had tried to insist. Now, openly, it was administration by British officials with the concurrence of the Rulers in all such matters as did not touch upon Malay religion and custom.

The new machine created by the Federation drove ahead with ever increasing power. There was much reorganization which involved, of course, enlargement as well as alteration. The appointment of a Judicial Commissioner and two Assistant Judicial Commissioners proclaimed a wide development of the rule of law, and reorganization of the police force and the appearance of a Public Prosecutor announced that the arm of the law was to be longer. The Public Works Department was centralized and reinforced. The bits and

pieces of railway systems began to fall into line and were developed to connect Prai, on the mainland opposite Penang, with Seremban, the chief town of Negri Sembilan in the south and, on the way, to collect the rich traffic of Perak and Selangor. A Forest Department was established which set to work to create forest reserves and to regulate the extraction of forest products. The Survey Department was steadily built up to produce results which would be accounted first class at any time anywhere, nor was it expected that fees would meet the cost. A Director of Agriculture and a Government Geologist were appointed, and an Institute of Medical Research founded. It is not surprising that a contemporaneous development was the appointment of a Financial Commissioner and a reorganization of the financial system. The land and mining codes which were drawn up suggest a real genius for administration in their bold originality and aptness. The land code turned its back on the gnarled complexities of English land law and looked to the Torrens system of registration of title in force in Australia. The mining laws went straight to the root of the matter by enacting that every stream and watercourse in the country should remain under the absolute control of the Government and should be inalienable. Water is the lifeblood of open-cast mining and no alternative to a fair share in it could be admitted.

These were the 'eighties and 'nineties of the nineteenth century and yet the striking feature of this structure of government, erected in so short a space as thirty years, is its expression of the view that in the public interest what the State did not own it should control. The roads, railways, water supplies and, later, electrical supplies, the health services, the land and minerals in the lands, and the forests, were in State ownership. Private enterprise was free to cultivate or mine the soil and to take from the jungle its products, and was given fair titles and licences to do so; but the State in the name of the Ruler never parted with the ownership of the land.

The growing centralization did not undermine the district administration as the foundation of the whole system. On the

contrary, the enhanced prosperity of the four States made it possible to provide an establishment which might include a District and Assistant District Officer, a Medical Officer, a Public Works Department Engineer, and a Surveyor and, where appropriate, an Inspector of Mines or a Forest Officer. The range and quality of administration were now exacting standards beyond the capacity of the Malays, and the executive government of the country rested in the hands of a British bureaucracy. The concurrence of the Ruler in larger matters of policy was always sought, and the opinions of the chiefs still carried weight, but this rushing progress was leaving them behind.

The main sources of revenue were the duty on tin ore and the yield from the opium and gambling farms. It was the Chinese who dug out the ore by arduous toil, consoled their weariness with opium and lightened the tedium of their exile with simple-minded wagers. They were the main contributors to revenue and they were the largest beneficiaries. The Government, which their taxes were building up and maintaining, was now strong enough to throttle the secret societies which had turned the tin-lands of Perak into battlefields at the time of the British interventions and, for years afterwards, had satisfied their appetite for money and power by means of blackmail, assassination, and the other weapons of terrorism. In a country which enjoyed peace and good order and was purged of this evil the Chinese were free to prosper and pursue unmolested the hopes of gain which had drawn them to these shores. They suffered no interference in the practice of their religion, the observance of their customs, and the use of their language. The new communications naturally served the centres of industry, and so the Chinese. The strange ideas of Western medicine did not discourage them from using the hospitals, whose existence, indeed, they more than any other community justified by their use. The impersonal, impartial conduct of the courts where justice was not sold nor substantially delayed does not seem to have repelled them by its unfamiliarity. In short, of all the good things that were offered they took what they wanted, and that was increasingly much.

The Malays whose contributions to revenue were much smaller were not so responsive. To this day they avoid hospitals and are not eager to learn hygienic ways. The excellence of British laws and their administration meant little to them for they rarely exposed themselves to their influence. They waged their little legal battles in the court of the Penghulu or fought their claims to ownership of land in the Land Offices where all was informal and at ease. It was just as well for, if a Malay did appear in a magistrate's court it was as the non-battling defendant in a suit on a promissory note. The new roads and railways did not serve many of them; their homes were far from the areas which demanded and used them.

Great punctiliousness was shown in avoiding trespass on their religions and customs, and their language became the lingua franca of the four States. But modification of many of their old circumstances was inevitable. The Rulers undoubtedly had gained by Federation. Their incomes were fixed and secure, and their allowances which provided for a not unreasonable number of hangers-on had to recognize limits which introduced a far greater measure of respectability into the conduct of a Ruler's court. The new order can only have seemed inferior when the question arose of how best to liquidate the debts which an over-slow adjustment to Western ideas of domestic budgeting within one's income failed to avoid. But a state of debt was nothing new, and experience was to show that in the end the Protecting Power would agree to pay the debts amid stately rebukes. The Rulers were secure, too, from the plots of pretenders and the intrigues and usurpations of powerful chiefs. As the country grew in prosperity and became the goal of immigrants from China, India, and the Netherlands East Indies, and as power passed more and more into the hands of the British officials the position of the chiefs[1] deteriorated. The Rulers still took counsel with

[1] In Perak and Pahang the chiefs formed a somewhat elaborate hierarchy. In Perak there were under the Sultan four great chiefs; next to them eight lesser chiefs and below them again sixteen minor chiefs and finally thirty-two chiefs. The chiefs might be officers of State, territorial magnates, or Court officials or, in the case of the minor chiefs, their assistants.

them but no longer saw much need to conciliate them. The British officials paid heed to their opinion and never failed to accord them the proper courtesies, and many of them were members of the State Councils. But the country was leaving behind the old feudal system at such a pace that the knowledge and experience of the chiefs were fast becoming outmoded. The rules for the succession of chiefs were zealously observed and even when, many years later, there was interference with the customs governing the choice of a new Ruler, the motives which underlay the Selangor succession dispute had regard purely to the prestige of the throne and its effect upon the future of the Malays.

The social system was heavily breached by the abolition of slavery—as well as debt-slaves there had been slaves in the customary sense, victims of war, Abyssinians acquired during the pilgrimage to Mecca, captured aboriginals—but otherwise was but slightly affected. The class distinctions between royalty and commoner remained. Even the duty of service to rajas and chiefs did not disappear at once and forced labour (*kerah*) lingered on for some years because of its usefulness to an administration which was hard put to it to find the labour for its public works. The matriarchal system which obtained in Negri Sembilan was left severely alone, partly maybe because it had aspects of a democratic system which would appeal to a Victorian Briton, partly because it seemed free of the grosser political and social abuses, and, partly, it is not difficult to believe, because it presented, as well as a certain toughness, enough subtlety and novelty to intimidate bluff reformers.

The drastic onslaught on the legal system on the whole brought gain. The criminal law was tossed overboard and not much of the civil law survived. The Malay had never been addicted to litigation and the cases in which he appeared rarely presented knotty points of law, centring as they usually did around his inability to repay a loan. The exception to this rule occurred in connexion with disputes over land, its boundaries or ownership, rights or liabilities attaching to it,

complexities of succession. In cases where the *hukum shara* (Muhammadan law) resolved the issue the Collector trying the case would refer the question to the proper authority in Islamic law, and record his findings as the decision in the suit. Where the Malay parties were agreed that Malay custom governed the issue, the Collector would apply himself to discovering and examining that custom and its bearing upon the facts. As most of these trials—in the early days at least—were taken under conditions of considerable informality, on a house-boat, under coconut palms, or in the local building chosen as most suitable for the collection of rents, the parties were not frightened or ill at ease. Furthermore as the young white judge, though perhaps at sea among the old ways and traditions, was palpably impartial and honest and laboriously earnest about arriving at the truth, the Malay litigant, aware of the very different character and methods of the ousted Malay courts, had no fault to find with the new system. In Negri Sembilan where the law of property was matriarchal, and therefore a perennial source of joy to the scholar-administrator, it was accepted with very few modifications within the framework of the new land laws, partly upon its merits and partly from a shy feeling of reverence in the presence of a fascinating ancient monument.

The boon the cultivation of rubber was to be to the Malays as a cash crop in the future was not discernible, and the creation of a big irrigation area for rice at Krian was still in the planning stage; for the moment the impact of the new order upon the Malay economic system was only a glancing blow. It still left him a fisherman, one might say a casual labourer in his own vineyard, an unenterprising middleman. But the conditions which had discouraged industry, the arrogant thieving, the destructive exactions of the rajas and chiefs had gone. Peace ruled the land and a Malay was no longer dragged away to fight in miserable little local wars. There was order and discipline under the rule of law so that a man could grow and make things in the certainty they would be his to enjoy. His own weakness, whereby he wasted his substance in cock-

fighting, gaming, and even sometimes opium-smoking, were held in check not merely by putting them outside the law but by giving them an odour of disreputability. The new roads might not yet serve the kampongs on the river banks to which the Malays still clung but there were bridle-paths, and the rivers themselves were cleared and made more easily navigable. The obligation to pay land-rent and the prohibition of shifting cultivation irked the Malays a good deal at first, but their effect in but a short time was to set a premium upon their holdings, untidy medleys though they might be. Later there would be such a growth of the Agricultural Department as would allow special advice and guidance for the smallholder, and co-operative societies would come into being to help him buy and sell. The immediate and direct gift was that of freedom from molestation of himself and his dependants and security to profit by his own labours.

In 1897 the four Rulers attended a conference at Kuala Kangsar in Perak to consult together with the assistance of their British advisers. This conference was in itself a triumph for the British advisers in that the four Rulers were gathered together in one place, very far from home indeed for three of them. The Sultan of Perak then spoke neither in sorrow nor in anger of the form of British protection as control. At a second conference six years later, this time at Kuala Lumpur in Selangor whither three of the Rulers were able to travel by train, he paid tribute to the benefits British protection had brought to the Malays and their country, and testified to the manner in which suspicion and distrust of the British officials had been dispelled. They deserved some praise. The conditions under which they worked were a constant menace to bodily and mental health, but more searching qualities than those of physical endurance were required of them, too. At first when Malay reactions to the newcomers was at best uncertain, at worst sulky, even hostile, courage was an essential; the proper discharge of their duties demanded ability to converse with Malays and Chinese, to understand their outlook, their motives, their prejudices, their codes of

good manners; and, further, the patience, indestructible tact, and sympathy which would win confidence and esteem, and even affection. In the matter of easy friendship with all races of all classes, of complete indifference to diversities of colour, creed, and customs, the early years of British administration were a golden age. Certainly they smoothed the path for their successors. The assumption of the whole burden of the administration by the white folk quickly came to be accepted as a perfectly natural process by the people. The preservation of the dignity of the Ruler, the respect paid to the customs and ideas of the people, the open door of the District Officer through which all and sundry could and did pass at their will, combined with a recognition of the benefits of the white man's rule, had brought about an atmosphere of utter confidence and trust.

But that was not the whole tale of alien intrusion in the administration. Although the employment of Malays in government service whenever possible was at all times the Government's aim, not many of them were qualified for technical or even clerical work. The station and post office staffs, the hospital and Public Works Department subordinates, and the clerical staffs, were Eurasians from the Colony and Tamils from Jaffna in Ceylon. Malays were recruited for the police and found a place in the growing Survey and Forest Departments, but the next century was well on its way before Malays began to figure substantially among the senior subordinates of government service. It could not be expected that the new administration would look beyond the immediate task of introducing order and encouraging progress along modern lines in a country which was rottenly stagnant, amid wretched conditions of civil strife and oppressive, cruel, and extortionate ill-government. It was left to a later generation to ask the question whether British protection had achieved the two main objects of its intervention, the good government of the Malay States and the education of the Malays in the art of government.

AFTER FEDERATION

For many years the principle underlying the government of the States was that of British administration for and on behalf of the Rulers. No democratic theories were entertained. The agreement for a Federation took heed only of the practical matter of control. Legislation was still left to the State Councils and they were in a state of steady decline. And, although that was not the intention, the establishment in 1909 of a Federal Council reduced the importance of the State Council almost to nothing. They were no longer even asked to put a rubber stamp of approval on the legislation which the Federal Government had drafted. Only a law of very local and restricted application or universal insignificance henceforth would be entrusted to the State Councils. In financial matters the Federal Government told the State Government what they could spend. As the Federal Council included, as well as the High Commissioner and the Resident-General, the four Rulers and the four Residents, together with four unofficial members nominated by the High Commissioner,[1] it might be said that the affairs of each State had not passed out of the control of those who had the most say in the State Councils. But this argument lost force steadily as the Resident-General's Secretariat, the Federal Secretariat, more and more took over control. The encroachment may not have been so significant when the country's finances drew their chief nourishment from tin, and progress was sure if not breath-taking. But with the development of the rubber industry and the accumulation of great riches, the 'country cousins' were forgotten.

No forms of cultivation had been successful for long in Malaya. Pepper did well in Penang until prices fell. Blight destroyed the promise of permanent prosperity which cloves and nutmegs offered to that island. Sugar then became the important crop. In Singapore, pepper and gambier paid

[1] After the Treaty of Federation the Governor of the Straits Settlements was entitled the High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States.

until the methods of shifting cultivation to produce quick profits exhausted the soil. The Chinese growers then moved in to Johore and wrought the same havoc there. In the Federated Malay States a few sugar estates made a living and government experiments had shown that coffee and tea and rubber could be grown. The efforts of planters from Ceylon to cultivate coffee were approaching success when prices fell beyond recovery and disease attacked the bushes. There was nothing for it but to try some other crop. Para rubber was chosen, and from cautious beginnings its cultivation became an industry which was to develop into one of the two largest rubber producers in the world. The revenue derived from the export duty on rubber began to assume a size which suggested a change in financial policy; the prudent measures for keeping expenditure down and building up a surplus which had been the rule hitherto seemed no longer the ultimate wisdom. The sharp lessons on the extreme vulnerability of primary products during the whole course of a trade depression had yet to be learnt.

At the end of the 1914–18 war Malaya was considered by the Colonial Office to be a country of arrears and a new Governor, Sir Laurence Guillemard, came out with instructions to overtake them. Communications received very handsome treatment. Railways and roads were old favourites; they were good servants of industry which footed the bill. But the Medical and Educational Departments were also most generously endowed. The former had never suffered from a cheese-paring policy but the pace of growth of the latter had been more sedate. The check caused by the post-war depression of 1920–2 was only a recoil for a greater leap forward. The desolating slump of the early nineteen-thirties was, however, a different matter. Misgivings had begun to arise before that over the ever-mounting costs of salaries and pensions, and other forms of annually recurrent expenditure were no less expensive; by 1930 such charges were nearly 80 per cent of the revenue. The axe of economy fell most trenchantly, as it had to, and when recovery began a few

years later and the various services dared to lift up their heads again, ideas had become much less ambitious.

These severe and over frequent changes of fortune have had a political as well as an economic significance in the country's history. It would not be altogether right to say that the lack of, or even deliberate abstention from, political ideas which marked the reign of the East India Company had continued into the next. In 1893, a Governor, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, had told the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the policy of educating the Malays for employment in the administration had been 'kept steadily in view as a cardinal feature in the government of the States'. He went on:

> Throughout the States there is an increasing number of Malays who, with 'hereditary or customary claims to office' are being trained and are helping to educate themselves to take an active and responsible share in the Government. The importance of the policy referred to, whether as regards our simple duty towards the Protected States or as regards the expediency of doing all that is feasible to make the natives have the greatest interest in the welfare of their own country, cannot be overrated.[1]

Evidence to support such a claim is hard to find during those years. The policy was certainly not abandoned but it was not pursued with burning zeal. What would have been the track of development if the rubber industry had not come to create not only wealth but a hunger for it that demanded immediate concentration on that sole object can only be a subject of speculation. But political ideas wilted in the heat caused by the friction of financial and economic problems which the ebb and flow of riches produced. The adjustment of the national economy to a succession of booms and slumps in the main exports of the country, tin and rubber, was a constant problem which left little margin of opportunity for deep thoughts about political progress. From the start the Government had accepted as a paramount duty the task of improving the standards of living of the people. A predictable

[1] Swettenham, p. 259.

stability of income might have permitted a measured pace of progress which even if slow would have won a steady advance. But terrific spurts suddenly checked by frantic braking tended to upset all the ongoing traffic. The solid growth achieved under these conditions by the Departments administering what would now be called the social services is therefore all the more creditable. Of political education and development the history of British government in Malaya may have little to record, but it can dwell upon its administrative achievements with praise.

CHAPTER IV

Administrative Development

HEALTH

THE Medical Department was faced with the formidable task of preserving good health in one of the climates most inimical to good health in the world. In the first stages it had to confine itself largely to curative work, but when the foundations of a medical service had been well and truly laid and more money became available, it developed a strong preventive side. The high rainfall of Malaya, a friend in so far as it facilitated the creation of excellent water supplies and swift drainage, with a consequent avoidance of water-borne diseases, was yet a most powerful enemy. The copious breeding grounds it provided for mosquitos have never ceased to tax the resources of medical skill and technique to the utmost in an eternal struggle with that frightful scourge and destroyer, malaria. The success of the government and estate doctors in the contest has won world-wide fame but only an administration with the money and the will to fight the battle could have helped them to achieve that success. They were prompt to seize upon Ross's discovery of the mosquito as the source of malaria, swift to follow it up with a classification of the various types of malaria-carrying mosquitos, and intelligent and thorough in finding the best way to destroy them. After some years the campaign became systematized. A Malaria Advisory Board was formed to plan anti-malarial work, to supervise it in the districts, and to co-ordinate all efforts. Besides medical specialists and State medical heads of department, the Board included private practitioners, the General Manager of the Railways, and a Public Works Department Engineer. For research an Institute of Medical Research was established, while actual anti-malarial work was carried out by Malaria Destruction

Boards in each district which were manned by private practitioners and individuals as well as by the District Health Officer, the District Officer, and the District Engineer. Big undertakings such as subsoil drainage were the province of the Public Works Department; the Board's own staff carried out ditch digging and oiling. Every hollow in the ground, every empty tin and bottle, coconut-shells, open tanks, even bamboo hedges and the hoof marks of cattle are the potential breeding places of the mosquito, and it was the Board's duty to see to it that they did not exist. Other precautions were the controlled clearing of ravines, streams, and drains by flushing and weeding and, where these were not effective, the sealing of pools and dead water with a surface of crude oil. The European estates used the same methods and, so far as the Government could compel them to do so, the large estates owned by non-Europeans did likewise. On the curative side, apart from hospital treatment, the free distribution of quinine at dispensaries, schools, police-stations, by travelling dispensaries, and local government servants was employed. Success in ridding the towns, villages, and large estates of malaria has been remarkable; it is only by sheer mishap that it returns. But the cost is huge, and the task of extending anti-malarial work to the small villages and kampongs and small estates in any substantial measure is beyond the public purse. Under closer supervision, aided by instruction in the schools, a greater care in the upkeep of small estates and holdings has reduced the incidence of the disease but in such places it still takes a grim toll. It is a remarkable dispensation of providence that in the rice-growing areas which at the proper season are vast sheets of water, the swarming mosquitos are not carriers of malaria.

Other diseases which grievously undermine the health of the country folk are hookworm and yaws. The egg of the hookworm develops in the soil and a population which is ignorant or careless in its methods of sanitation, or goes barefooted, falls an easy prey. The ultimate consequence of the disease is debility and enfeebled resistance to disease. The

cure is easy but disagreeable and loses value if the sufferer returns heedlessly to infected surroundings. By the middle of the nineteen-twenties the lesson of prevention by the wearing of footwear and a nice care in the siting, maintenance, and use of latrines was being increasingly learnt, as its need was dinned in by lectures and demonstrations, posters, advertisements, and pamphlets, by the reiterated warnings of perambulating officials and, perhaps most effectually of all, through the schools. As an appreciation of cause and cure spread, the examples offered in the schools, and at the many agricultural shows, of cheap and durable latrines invented by the Health Department were duly noted and, as more and more villages were declared Sanitary or Town Board areas, control over both water supplies and sanitation was extended. The campaign against yaws, a disfiguring and painful eruption of sores, employed the same methods, was equally intensive, equally successful in its first attack, and equally subject to disappointment because of a want of persistence in taking the whole cure. The Malays who avoid hospitals because, among other reasons, they fear surgery, submitted to injections not merely because of the relief they brought but because they were obviously an aid to beauty in the eyes of the Malay youth, a born Don Juan and coxcomb.

Efficient hygienic control has rescued the towns from malaria but into the balance has been thrown tuberculosis. In the districts of Singapore fringing the river and sea front which were the first to be built up, laxness of the authorities in the second half of the last century allowed a shocking condition of things to come into being. Houses were built back to back with frontage on very narrow streets without back lanes to facilitate proper sanitary arrangements or provision for light and ventilation. These dim warrens were further subdivided into cubicles, each of which might be the home of a whole family. In 1919 some $3 million were lent by the Straits Government to the Singapore and Penang Municipalities for housing betterment, including the installation of drains and sewers, and in 1925 the Government provided another $10

million to finance an Improvement Trust. The construction of model buildings in place of blocks of insanitary houses proving too expensive, the Trust has resorted to the method of driving a fifteen-foot lane through these unwholesome coagulations, without payment of compensation, and rebuilding at its own cost the exposed backs, endowing them with bathroom, water-closet, kitchen, and an open space, and making the necessary connexions with a newly laid sewer along the lane. A further opportunity for improvement will come when the many ninety-five year leases which are nearly mature fall in, and it becomes practicable to insist upon the construction of better houses and the reservation of an adequate open area. It can justly be said of the Colony Government that they have shown courage and enlightenment in these endeavours to remove one source of tuberculosis, bad housing and insanitary congestion. In the Malay States building bye-laws which prescribe a certain proportion of open space in every structure have been enforced for many decades. The problem there, as in the towns of the Colony, is to prevent overcrowding when love of family life requires the presence under one roof of a Chinese family in its entirety, or poverty finds it difficult to pay the rent of more than a portion of a room. Only in the kampongs and on the estates and mines where habitations are, whether by accident or design, well ventilated, can these deleterious conditions of overcrowding be disregarded as a source of the disease. The struggle with tuberculosis is long-drawn-out and a business of narrow gains. Spitting is perhaps not what it was, but the period of cure is too long to be borne by most consumptives; too often the hospital history of a case is, too late an entry, too early a departure. There has not been much encouragement for the medical authorities in their attempts at cure; there is far more promise of success by preventive measures upon which the Straits Government have shown themselves nobly spendthrift.

Another medical development which demanded both patience and determination was that of Infant Welfare and Maternity work. To replace the lethal operations of Asian

midwives much time and mental courage were expended in attacking old customs, traditions, and superstitions. Infant Welfare Centres became numerous and the training of midwives went steadily on throughout the country. A Centre usually had for its complement a Lady Medical Officer, European nursing sisters trained in health work, a dresser and a dispenser, Asian nurses and health sisters. Patients were brought in from outlying districts for treatment and instruction, films and lectures drew the countryside, and baby shows and infant welfare exhibitions were staged at every opportunity. The Lady Medical Officers, a pertinacious class, would pop up far from home, tackling the physical difficulties of their country rambles with the stout spirit of prospectors. Trained midwives followed in their trail and slowly but surely the kampong midwife lost ground. But she has much to lose and the vital statistics for the villages will disfigure the annual returns for many a long day.

Smallpox, cholera, and plague are not among the problems which vex the medical authorities, and in consequence the skilful vigilance of the medical and port authorities who have excluded them by preventive work within the gates, and anxious scrutiny of those essaying to pass through them, is often overlooked. The institutions for the care of lepers and lunatics have always been served and maintained with that particular devotion and special knowledge which the medical profession seems always able to supply.

One of the most hopeful features in the attack upon the conditions which are the main sources of diseases in Malaya was the attention which was given to the school-children in both medical and dental treatment. The aversion of the common folk from Western medicine may fade away among generations which have become accustomed to it at an impressionable age.

For many years Malaya has enjoyed the benefit of the King Edward VII College of Medicine whose medical degrees are recognized by the British General Medical Council as qualifying a holder to practise anywhere in the British Empire. Its

output of qualified doctors and dentists who are of the country and familiar with local conditions, and find employment in government service, on estates, and private practice has been a boon in more respects than one. It tends to make the country independent of an occasionally erratic supply of doctors from the United Kingdom; it is creating a medical service, both public and private, which has its own special familiarity with the ideas and feelings of the various races of the country; and, by its existence, it creates that confidence in the ability to produce professional men from among its own sons which is one of the processes by which a people grows to political maturity.

As a means of removing the reproach that Malaya was 'a land of arrears' new, large and well-equipped hospitals were built in Singapore, Penang, and Malacca in the 'twenties, and these, with two new separate maternity hospitals, did more than wipe out the reproach; they justified the Colony in claiming that it was more than ordinarily well supplied with hospitals. The Malay States, shaken on the see-saw of slump and boom, and in any case possessing hospitals of more recent construction than those of the Colony, has still to carry out the plans for more modern buildings which were accepted in 1938. The average Asian patient will not altogether regret the delay, for he much prefers the single-storey wards set among cool lawns and shaded by fine old trees to the stark, many-storied masses of the new order.

The Governments of both Colony and Malay States have always resisted as strongly as they could in difficult circumstances demands for retrenchment in medical services, great and ever-increasing though their cost has been. But the question of cost may, if the Governments' efforts to dispel the distrust of Western medicine is ever substantially successful, become one of great perplexity and anxiety. Were the population of Malaya to accept en masse the value of treatment in hospitals, dispensaries, clinics, welfare centres, and outpatients' departments, either there would have to be substantial entrenchment on the system of free treatment or

treatment at nominal rates which has obtained hitherto, or else a by no means trifling addition to current taxation would have to be sought. The treatment offered in government institutions, in estate hospitals and estate group hospitals is on very generous lines for a small country of which the vast majority of the people cannot be expected to contribute by taxation a large aggregate of revenue.

It is a matter for future enquiry whether the Malayan system of concentrating curative work in the large hospitals of the towns is as well suited to the character of the people and the geography of the country as, say, the methods pursued by the French in their African colonies. There a special type of medical servant is produced, one who receives special medical training for three years and is then put in charge of dispensaries or small hospitals far from the beaten track. Some such arrangement might offer better service to the shy Malays in remote places than the present system. But this question apart, the people of Malaya have been well served in the matter of medical treatment and, by any judgement, the administrations must be held to have discharged their duty in good measure.

EDUCATION

There was no injustice in ascribing a state of arrears to education. The zeal for progress which paid handsome tribute to ideals of good order and peaceful living, and doted on engineering feats, approached the subject of education more in a dutiful than an enthusiastic spirit. The impression gained is that until the turn of the century it was thought of in terms of village schools at summer-time in England. Swettenham makes this plain enough. 'To the Malay,' he writes, 'the principal value of school attendance is to teach him habits of order, punctuality, and obedience. Reading, writing, and arithmetic will always be useful to him; but beyond that, what the Government have tried to introduce are agricultural and technical schools and classes where a boy may learn the principles and practice of a useful industry.'[1]

[1] Swettenham, p. 258.

The argument would have been more persuasive if the trace to be found of such schools and classes had had any substance.

Until the early years of this century much of the instruction in English was left to missionary schools, and even in Singapore and Penang where English schools were beginning to take on the patina of old foundations, an urge to develop and expand seemed lacking. The teaching staffs were underpaid and underprivileged, and the school curricula carried no seeds of growth. The fault lay as much with the circumstances of the time as with the authorities. The extension of government and commercial enterprises created a demand for clerks which was satisfied by low standards of education the higher branches of which were in consequence starved of encouragement. Not only the educational system but also the social and political order were to pay a price for this check upon natural development.

When the Education Department was judged to be one of the arrears and the brake of the 1914–18 war released, progress took on a brisk pace. Malay vernacular education was rapidly put on a very satisfactory basis. It sought, and with success, to implement two basic principles: to give a good general elementary education with a practical bent which could be made a firm foundation for more advanced instruction in English. Attendance was compulsory for Malay children between 7 and 11 years of age where there was a school within reasonable distance, and no fees were charged. The usual course covered four or five years and took in the three Rs, geography, Malay history, drawing, and hygiene. The cultivation of school gardens was undertaken and one form or other of handwork. Most schools had playing-fields and physical training was a universal subject. The Boy Scout Movement flourished. The education of girls had beaten down religious disapproval and begun to come on apace; no one felt disposed to grumble at a curriculum which included domestic science and needlework and handcrafts. Good pay and prospects attracted a good type of Malay teacher, who received a very thorough training at the Tanjong Malim

Training College and by virtue of these accomplishments became a very influential figure in kampong life. The good work of producing suitable text-books which had been begun many years before and laid aside was resumed with excellent results. A strong structure of supervision was erected with an Assistant Director of Malay Vernacular Education and a Lady Supervisor of Malay Girls' Schools, operating a team of Malay Assistant Inspectors, Visiting Teachers, and Group Teachers. The bright boys moved on to an English school, and scholarships were provided offering exemption from payment of fees with free board and lodging. As no English was taught in the Malay schools (the educational experts insisting that a child can best learn in his own language), a Malay boy moving up to an English school received there an intensive training in English. Much ability and devotion had been spent in devising and erecting this system of Malay education and the rewards were great. As an example of enlightened care for the youth of a country the development of Malay vernacular education was one which could hardly be surpassed.

English education was given in government or missionary schools whose standards satisfied the Government that they deserved the help of a grant-in-aid. Moderate fees were charged, but there was a generous provision of free education through scholarships and remission of charges in favour of promising but poor pupils. Instruction was given up to the Cambridge School Certificate standard which was generally taken at the age of 17 or 18, after the Junior Cambridge examination had been passed. The Overseas Committee of the Cambridge Board of Examiners had been very successful in adapting the examination to local conditions and suitable text-books were steadily being evolved. The curriculum was literary and only a few schools were equipped to teach science. Manual training was given in a few schools. All schools had Boy Scout troops and some had Cadet Corps, and good playing-fields were universal. The highest form of education was to be found in the King Edward VII College of Medicine, already men-

tioned, and the Raffles College which was established in 1928 by public and private subscription. The college offered a three-year course leading to a diploma; the subjects taught were history, English, mathematics, chemistry, physics, geography, and economics. For those intending to teach there was a post-graduate course of one year in education. The college was supported mainly by grants from the various Malayan Governments and endowments by private benefactors. Non-scholarship students paid fees. The enrolment before the Second World War had reached 200.

An institution which stood by itself was the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar in Perak where the offspring of the Malay ruling classes, and latterly boys who seemed to possess the requisites for a career in the administrative service, received an education on English public school lines.

The course which English education has followed supports the theory that a child learns best in its mother tongue. The hard struggle to go forward which the education authorities have unrelaxingly had to pursue is illustrated in the age at which School Certificate is taken, at 17 or 18, that is, considerably later than is the rule in Great Britain. English is the native tongue of only a small minority of the children and the teachers. It is rarely the language spoken in the home and it is doubtful whether among the pupils it is more than a lingua franca. Another fence the Department has had to take has been the parents' sole conception of the purpose of education as being a means to a white-coated job. These two factors have combined to create in the mind of a student an anxiety to pass, a lack of a sense of being at ease with his studies, and an absence of the true scholar's enjoyment in learning, so that the common method of study was to memorize and not to think or reason. A Commission of Inquiry dispatched by the Secretary of State to inquire into higher education in Malaya reported in 1939 that the standards of the students entering Raffles College were much too low to entitle the college to believe it deserved university status. In fact it recommended a preparatory year of further education

for entrants to the college who would then be required to show a mental capacity and usage adequate to a university career. It is extremely disagreeable to consider the intellectual state of Malaya's youth when they were suddenly switched from an English to a Japanese medium of education.

Provision was made for the odds and ends of instruction. Some schools had commercial classes, and commercial subjects as well as engineering, surveying, building construction, telegraphy and telephony could be studied at evening classes. Private enterprise was also a source of instruction in commercial subjects.

Technical education began to acquire importance when in 1926 the Federated Malay States Government tried the experiment of a Trade School at Kuala Lumpur. The Agricultural and Forest Departments already had schools to train their subordinates and there existed in Kuala Lumpur a Technical School to instruct the subordinate staff of the Railway, Survey, Public Works, and Post and Telegraphs Departments. Of four committees appointed at various times to examine the desirability of technical education only one had reported in favour and the latest, in 1926, advised against Trade Schools. Their reasons were good. Parents and children alike regarded a clerical job as the true ascent to glory. Hard manual labour was regarded as the proper sphere of unskilled immigrants. And the bursts of great prosperity from the tin and rubber industries, with their showers of easy money, left an impression on the minds of Malaya's inhabitants which excluded toil and sweat from plans for a career. In any case most skilled workmen were to be found in the Chinese guilds and those were very much a 'closed shop'. Opinions changed when the market for clerks began to become saturated and employment had to be sought in other fields; so the day came when the Trade Schools of Kuala Lumpur (for fitters, motor mechanics, and tailors), Ipoh (fitters and motor mechanics), Bagan Serai (carpentry and cabinet-making), Singapore and Penang (plumbers, electrical mechanics, blacksmiths, and motor

mechanics), Malacca and Johore Bahru (carpenters and tailors) could not meet the demand for admission. Most of the products of these schools found employment with government and European firms, but the attitude of the Chinese firms was blighting; in total they could have employed large numbers of these youths but refused to do so, preferring less efficient but cheap and malleable immigrants. The Malays, too, faced a well-nigh hopeless future if they had to look to their countrymen for work, for there was little or no Malay trade enterprise offering opportunities for mechanics, carpenters, and tailors.

The Technical School in Kuala Lumpur had for some years accomplished good work under most disadvantageous conditions and plans for a new school with far larger scope for its activities were under consideration when war came in 1939. The Agricultural School at Serdang gave a two-year course for those whose parents owned small estates to which they wished the best methods of agriculture to be applied, and for those hoping for employment in the big European and Chinese estates.

With the exception of a few Tamil schools for children of government employees of the labouring class, Chinese and Tamil vernacular education was not provided by the Government, though considerable help was given by means of grants-in-aid to schools complying with certain requirements. Tamil vernacular education was seldom satisfactory. Some of it was undertaken by missionary institutions or Tamil religious bodies, and there were private schools. Most of the Tamil schools were on the big estates and, because the estates were unwilling to pay the salaries of good teachers and because, too, many of the children did not stay long enough to finish the course, their standards were low. In their turn they received the attention of the Government and, in 1937, a European Inspector of Tamil Schools and three Assistant Tamil Inspectors were appointed, but the progress which was beginning to manifest itself cannot have survived the Japanese occupation.

The Chinese supplied their own vernacular education as a safeguard for the preservation of their own language, customs, habits, and ideas. They were ready to grasp any offer of English education, and the English schools were filled with Chinese whose parents could afford to pay the fees, but any proposal for instruction in the Malay language was scorned. Until 1923 they maintained their own schools without government aid and free from government supervision; the instruction given was for the most part in primary Mandarin, but there were secondary schools in the large towns. In 1920 legislation was passed for the registration of schools and the Government began to keep a watchful eye on the Chinese schools. The need for it arose from the behaviour of the Kuomintang in using the schools as instruments in its anti-British policy. The class for training Chinese teachers which the Government of the Federated Malay States instituted in 1924 could only cope with a small proportion of the teachers, and the bulk of them were brought from China. Many came with Kuomintang political views and displayed considerable missionary zeal in stimulating Chinese patriotism and attacking British rule. The general average of academic instruction covered a wide area of sedition and the patience the Government showed was perhaps misunderstood. It abstained from interfering with education which was purified of politics, while insisting upon certain standards of sanitary and safe building construction and ability to teach, but it detailed from the Chinese Secretariat two Assistant Directors of Chinese education and used the system of grants-in-aid for rewards or punishment. In the end, however, direct and drastic action could no longer be postponed and Government's stern measures quickly reduced the schools to order. As the Kuomintang Government, faced with threats of Japanese aggression, sought to turn targets into defences and the anti-British policy was switched off, overt misbehaviour by the Chinese schools faded away into something controllable. Text-books published in Shanghai specially for use in Malaya and overseas were accepted as suitable by the Edu-

cation Department and adopted for use in the Chinese schools of Malaya. But the Government were never entirely happy about the conduct of some of the senior Chinese schools in the big towns.

An attempt to rationalize the principles guiding the provision of government education by Sir Cecil Clementi had only a passing effect on the educational system, but in the realm of politics produced a convulsion which gradually moderated but never entirely died away. The ideas behind Clementi's policy had much to commend them, force of logic, economy, a long look into the future, but nothing tough enough to withstand the opposition of one fact. The proposals fell into two parts, the first of which stated that, while it was admittedly the duty of the Government to provide primary education free or at negligible cost to the parents, there was not the same compulsion to make secondary education cheap. The second part postulated a need for a political process by which the various races in the Peninsula might be moulded to be a Malayan people with a common will and a common loyalty. To an already existing common conception of the rule of law and the purpose of government should be added education from the earliest years in a common language, which obviously must be Malay. This policy would be given body and shape by an increase in secondary school fees and in the withdrawal of government aid from all units of vernacular education which did not give instruction in Malay. No doubt the Governor was influenced by the financial effects of the great depression of the nineteen-thirties and by anxiety regarding the future of the students who were receiving English education, as well as by a determination to come to grips with the problem of a 'plural society' which Malaya presented. The weakness of his position was that his policy was anathema to the Chinese, who could demand in equity that as their contribution to the expenditure on education was vastly greater than that of any other of the Asian communities, they were justified in asking for a diversion of some of it to their own schools. In time this view prevailed and the

grants-in-aid to the Chinese vernacular schools were restored; but the problem of a surplus of English-educated boys in excess of possibilities of suitable employment could not be shelved, and, in the years just before the war, a policy had been accepted for the creation of junior technical schools into which, at the proper age or stage, the children best fitted for a technical education would be diverted.

AGRICULTURE

In 1906 a work which had been begun many years before was completed and the Krian Irrigation Area converted 50,000 acres of swamp into a rice-growing district which has flourished ever since. Attention was given, too, to the other main form of cultivation, coconuts. Then rubber took country and Government in thrall. The alienation of land for rubber very often led to soil erosion which ruined old, prosperous rice-fields, and Malays who had shirked the labour of making drains for the planting of rice dug hard at their rice-lands to dry them up for the cultivation of rubber. In the nineteen-twenties the failure of the supply of rice from Siam and Burma through the ordinary commercial channels cost the Malayan Governments colossal sums as they themselves bought from those countries in aid of their peoples, and good resolutions for the future were plentiful and did indeed take shape in research into pedigree strains of rice which conferred a great benefit on the rice-growers. There has been a good deal of nagging at the Malay for deserting or ignoring rice, a most chancy crop won (or almost as often lost) after much painful toil, in favour of the rubber tree which practically grows itself to the satisfaction of Malay standards, without care or tending. But the great rice areas of Kedah and Kelantan in the north at which the critics looked meaningly went far back into history; the Malays of the Federated Malay States had never planted on that scale. Nor did it seem reasonable to scold them for a position which arose entirely from the *bouches inutiles* (as far as the production of rice was concerned) of the Chinese and Indian labourers on

estate and mine and the Chinese populations of the towns. For all that, self-sufficiency was made a target in the nineteen-thirties and a Commission of Inquiry, although its estimate of potential rice areas was unscientifically optimistic, really attacked the problem. As a result of its findings the Hydraulics Branch of the Public Works Department took on an increased stature as a Drainage and Irrigation Department and was voted a good deal of money and treated seriously; in no great period of time it had considerable achievements to record. In addition to the freeing of silted rivers and the rescue of mining towns which were sinking out of sight in the quicksands of mine-tailings, the Department dug and slashed out of vast jungle swamps on the west coast substantial rice-fields, 10,000 acres here, 25,000 acres there, 17,000 acres elsewhere, all settled by Malays of the Peninsula and from Sumatra. Many of the old fields which were in process of being abandoned were restored and extended by drainage and irrigation and new areas of less advertisable size created. Drainage was brought to the help of coconut holdings along the coast.

Coconut cultivation received other attentions, too. The growers were informed of the lessons learnt at the Coconut Experiment Station, were shown how to make a cheap but effective kiln, and on other points found the advice and demonstrations of the Field Branch of the Agricultural Department freely available. The quality of the copra produced on small holdings steadily improved and it was unfortunate that prices between 1928 and 1934 began to fall as improvements mounted. The Government came to the rescue with remission of duty and reduction of quit-rent, and the producers thus were able to tide over the bad times; all in all the industry was in a healthier condition than ever before and better able to face world depressions. By the middle nineteen-thirties the small-holders had only themselves to blame if they lacked precept and example in the cultivation of their various crops. The Agricultural Department had been enlarged to meet such needs. There were many rice experimental stations and test-plots and even more

experimental stations for other forms of cultivation. A big European staff was supplemented by two hundred Asian assistants. Seeds were distributed, insecticides and the like were sold at cost price when money was short, pamphlets in Malay and Chinese were showered upon the small-holders, and demonstrations at experimental stations and test plots were arranged for their leaders. Help was given to destroy rats and the crabs which ate rice and tunnelled through the dykes of drainage areas. By motor caravan or houseboat, lecturers went about giving instruction in the school gardens, the elders went in parties to the agricultural college courses. The Rubber Research Institute collaborated heartily through a staff of Asian instructors, and at the Institute an inexpensive smokehouse was evolved. Very little was left undone that could be done to help and advise the cultivators great and small; but great as was the trouble taken to instruct the leaders it is doubtful whether much of this instruction was in turn communicated effectively to the common folk. The District Officers certainly entertained this doubt and placed more faith in a scheme whereby, in each kampong, a chosen small-holder would cultivate a piece of land himself according to the instructions of the agricultural experts with whom he could argue to his heart's content, even mutinying when the backing of the rest of the kampong offered sufficient encouragement. The Agricultural Department rejected the scheme but was never able to give any satisfactory rejoinder to the criticism that its stations and plots were too artificial and far away to persuade the average small-holder that its methods could be practised or were even better than his own, or his father's and grandfather's before him.

The Chinese, too self-reliant and too self-satisfied to present even an appearance of attention to all this advice, missed very little all the same and, reinforcing all they learnt with their great practical ability and appetite for unrelaxing toil, produced all the fruits of good husbandry. They were the pig-breeders and poultry farmers of the country, and there was present to advise them a Veterinary Department which

had built up strength and experience in its early struggles with epidemics of rinderpest, which had cost Malay rice-planters dear. By control at the frontier and the ports it had reduced the danger of cattle disease on the extensive scale of the past, and had found the skill to deal effectively with the much smaller outbreaks which occurred from time to time. Probably from lack of adequate staff, the Department had no great success in stimulating interest in or improving the methods of animal husbandry.

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

The gradual but steady improvement in the cultivation of Malay holdings promised even better things, but there was one bar to progress, more obstructive even than their customary mood of *laisser aller* and their complete lack of ambition, that gave no encouragement to optimism. It was their general state of indebtedness. The prevalence of debt-slavery bears witness to a hereditary weakness, and the hopelessness of thrusting out of the ruck in the days when rajas and chiefs preyed upon the newly prosperous seemed to have stamped itself indelibly on their outlook. It could be said of almost every Malay of the Peninsula that he was devoid of any ambition for wealth or rank or power. He paid little attention to the successful efforts of immigrants to grow rich; he neither envied nor admired them. Many a Collector of Land Revenue at field collections of rent would note a very different attitude from his own towards the industrious Malay who came forward to pay rent on a plurality of holdings; an atmosphere of disapproval hung heavily over what had been a lively, jovial gathering, as if all had become unwilling witnesses of a disturbing solecism. With such a mentality the Malay did not mount any very strenuous struggle against the circumstances which led to debt. Initial debts could be excused; cash or credit was necessary while crops were growing. But the advancers were either Indian moneylenders or the Chinese village shopkeeper. The chettiar lent at 24 to 36 per cent on the security of the land. The shopkeeper did

even better. Whether he supplied cash or goods he did so at a profit, and repayment was made from the crop but at a valuation much lower than the market rates at which the shopkeeper disposed of it. All this built a sufficiently heavy load of debt, but the Malay was never reluctant to add to it by rash borrowings for weddings or funerals or festivals. The Government had received very little encouragement in their attempts at rescue by playing the part of a good-intentioned but firm lender, and in 1921 decided to try co-operation. The decision might have been taken earlier but for doubts over the attitude of Islam, which had to travel as far as Mecca itself to be resolved.

As the essential qualities for success in co-operative enterprise are habits of thrift and industry, desire for self-improvement, readiness and capacity to combine, the chances seemed slender. Yet the movement had victories to record as well as defeats. Both the clerical worker and the Indian estate labourer have gained by it, the former using its aid to slip out of the clutches of the moneylender, the latter, under the firm supervision of the estate management, to accumulate sizeable savings. Some success was achieved, too, in co-operation among rice-planters, but bold ventures into the unknown such as co-operative stores and rubber factories crashed to the ground with sad speed. But a disappointment which brought much discouragement was the decline, almost the fall, of the Malay rural credit societies. The Department refused to cosset them in any way. Every society had to provide its own capital and when, as happened in the terrible nineteen-thirties, the societies became insolvent, their members had to bear the loss without resort to seizure of defaulters' property. There was much joy over the societies which did survive because they not only justified faith but supplied the foundation for rebuilding. By now, too, the Department itself was much stronger by virtue of better training, increased knowledge and understanding of the movement and the strengthened stamina which time and changing fortune had brought. It had become very tough in its refusal to popularize the

co-operative system by a distribution of easy money and was steadfast in its purpose of achieving the delivery of the peasant from his plight of chronic indebtedness by bringing out, training and fortifying the traits of character which would lead him on his own feet out of that slough of despond. Hence the formation of general purposes societies which would teach the Malays to work together for some common purpose of benefit to the community. Hence, too, the better-living societies whose aim was to abolish extravagance at marriages, funerals, and other ceremonial occasions.

The Department went to the root of the matter in another way when it set out to improve the methods by which the Malay gained his livelihood and enlisted the help of other Departments, particularly the Agricultural, Veterinary, and Medical Departments in that task. Progress was as painful as slow but progress there was, and, moving as it did along fundamentally correct lines, progress seemed certain to continue. The Co-operative Department deserved a good deal more encouragement than it got. The Government's attitude, polite, tepidly appreciative but aloof, suggested they had not grasped all the aspects of the problem which in many other ways they were vigorously attacking, the failure of the small cultivators to advance in prosperity at an equal pace with the European companies and the big Chinese landowners. Some of the reasons for this had been appreciated as the large expenditure on preventive and curative medicine, primary education, and the provision of expert agricultural and veterinary advice and help had shown. The creation of Malay reservations of land with the purpose of excluding all but Malays from ownership, and the laws limiting the profits of usury were attempts to deal with the disastrous consequences of borrowing by smallholders. Notwithstanding, the Malay smallholder continued to remain bogged down in debt, and the cynics were tempted to ask what profit there was in abolishing the old Malay institution of debt-slavery and then making Malaya a country fit for Indian moneylenders and ruthless village shopkeepers to live in. Experience

had had by now a long enough tenure to show that the laws and advice and example of a benevolent administration had not proved strong enough to shift the burden of debt which denied the cultivators fair returns for their labour and threw a dark shadow upon their toil for all time to come. The Co-operative Department, on the other hand, a very small manifestation of Government's good will and interest, had demonstrated that there were thousands of peasants and labourers who had been able to free themselves of debt and to work together in an efficiently run organization the object of which was to raise the standards of prosperity and welfare of its members. Each society was a small democracy, and each society could display to those who doubted an innate ability to manage its affairs well and honestly, which was a proof of a growing capacity for self-government in a wider sphere. But the movement had only traversed the edges of the problem of debt and poverty; the untouched areas were so vast that not only had it become imperative that the co-operative movement should receive far greater support but also that the whole problem should be given priority of attention.

LABOUR

The demand for labour to serve the plantations and mines could not be satisfied within the country. Even if there had been enough of them, the Malays were averse from the regimentation of a daily round. Labour for the mines was supplied by the Chinese, the only race possessing the requisite strength and stamina. Southern Indians had worked on the old sugar estates and Public Works Department and railway gangs, and it was to this source the rubber estates looked for their labour forces. At first the Tamils, Telegus, and Malayalis had come from southern India as indentured labourers, later as the recruits of Kanganies, who were men sent over by individual estates to India for that purpose. By 1907 the numbers coming from south India indicated a need for an organization which would be more systematic and more reliable in protecting the interests of the unsophisticated

Indian villager. The Indian Immigration Committee was established, comprising officials, planters, two Indians and a non-planting unofficial, to control recruitment of Indian labour. The officials were officers of the Malayan civil service who had studied one of the south Indian languages in India and been attached to the Labour Department. The Committee was empowered to impose a levy on all employers of Indian labour and these moneys composed the Indian Immigration Fund which, under the control of the Committee, met the cost of recruitment. In the great depression of the nineteen-thirties the fund was drawn upon to assist the repatriation of unemployed labourers. Two camps were maintained in south India by the Malayan Governments for the reception of recruits in the charge of an officer of the Labour Department, and there they were fed and housed and given medical attention until such time as their boat for Malaya was ready. The fund paid their fares to the camp, the cost of their food and medical treatment there, their fare to Malaya and their maintenance during quarantine in the Malayan port, and finally their fares to the estate of their choice. When the rubber industry's reputation as a just employer, offering pay and amenities far better than anything their village life could offer, became the best recruiters, able to dispense with government intervention, the fund was used to encourage this welcome development. On application at one of the Malayan Government camps an Indian seeking employment in Malaya could receive steamer and railway tickets to a chosen destination without incurring any liability to work on any particular estate. The cost of repatriating decrepits and of maintaining in Kuala Lumpur a home for decrepits was also defrayed by the fund. The Kangany system went in 1938. By then the vast majority of immigrant labourers were not directly recruited; the estates had now formed their own connexions with the recruiting grounds.

More than one attempt to bring Chinese immigrants under control had fallen back, defeated by a Chinese immigrant's

refusal to believe that the intentions of a white man could be disinterested and by his satisfaction with things as he and his countrymen had made them. The indenture system prevailed through the nineteenth century, petered out as the country grew up and was abolished in 1914. A labourer, who had been recruited in China, consigned at a profit to a broker in the Straits, and by him disposed of at a profit to a mine-owner, contracted to work for 360 days in return for board and lodging, occasional grants of small sums of money and a right to earn more money by overtime. This system was replaced by one where an 'advancer' would advance all their requirements to the labour force ready to work on his mine and agree to divide the profits in graduated shares. In the event of failure he lost all, and they lost such of the fruits of their work as earned a surplus over the cost of food and lodging and small cash advanced. The indenture system had gone, it is true, but not the recruiters who contined to pay a coolie's passage and give him a cash advance to be recouped later. But, whether the coolie knew it or not, or cared, his interests, once he was in the country, were closely guarded by the Chinese Protectorate, and on estates his welfare was as well tended by government control as that of an Indian labourer. It may be doubted whether the miners received so much attention. They were a self-reliant lot, by nature and experience hard to impose upon and quick to learn their way about, so that a dour reception awaited those officials who seemed to be poking their noses into what was not their business; but they were not hesitant at all about invoking the aid of those same officials when the redress of suspected wrongs was accepted as their province.

The Labour Code gave to the Labour Department the duty of overseeing the welfare of Indian and Chinese labourers on estate and mine. The Code had grown into a fine old sheltering tree for ever thrusting out new growth. It concerned itself with the wages, conditions of work, the housing, sanitation, and medical treatment of all estate and

mine labourers. It was administered by the Controller of Labour who had under him Deputy and Assistant Controllers in the Settlements, States, and principal towns of the country. These were officers of the civil service who spoke one or more of the languages of southern India. These Indians were also appointed as Extra Assistant Controllers of Labour, some of whom obtained promotion to the higher ranks. Aiding in matters of health was a separate Health Branch of the Medical Department. Chinese Labour was the province of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, the head of the Chinese Protectorate, whose officers, also of the civil service, speaking a Chinese dialect learnt laboriously in a three years' sojourn in China, were Deputy or Assistant Controllers of Labour where the labour was Chinese. Their powers were derived from the Labour Code and they were not exercised independently of the Controller of Labour. The Indian labourer had another guardian and sympathizer too, an officer seconded by the Government of India with the title, Agent of the Government of India, whose duty it was to draw attention to anything he might think amiss in the treatment of Indian labourers. Among the many blessings this formidable organization had secured for the labourer were maternity allowances and a two months' holiday for female labourers in a condition to claim them, a creche with food and attendants for all children under three, payment of all hospital expenses of a labourer and his dependants, provision of estate schools, double rates for overtime, and a standard wage. Workmen's compensation on English lines was provided for under separate laws.

Utopian conditions would not have satisfied the Indian politicians of Congress in the attack against British rule in the East, and a proposal of the Government of India to send an Indian to examine the treatment of Indian labourers fell gratefully on the ears of the Malayan Governments who resented the spiteful fantasies of some Indian politicians. The Indian Government showed a welcome sense of responsibility by appointing Mr Srinivasa Sastri in 1936 to conduct

the inquiry. Mr Sastri was held in wide esteem for his qualities of just, liberal-minded statesmanship and a previous mission of investigation in South Africa had given him the requisite experience and technique. His report was a vindication of the Malayan Governments' labour policy. His approval covered the camps in India, the voyage to Malaya, the reception there, the work of the Labour Department, treatment on the estates, and the high qualities of the management. He did not think much of the estate schools and, although the toddy-shops on the estates were rigorously controlled by the Government and conscientiously managed, he could not bring himself to approve of them, in spite of ample proof that in the absence of opportunity of indulging in the mild dissipation of toddy-drinking, the Indian labourer was prone to have his night out with the potent brew illicitly distilled by Chinese, or the purse-emptying beer or stout of the European. The housing policies and the medical and preventive measures of the larger estates won his praise but not conditions on many of the smaller, Asian-owned plantations. His argument that standard wages should be restored to the 1927 level was accepted, but not his view that the standard wages should be the same throughout the country.

The Malayan Governments had reason to be pleased with the report but it did not silence the Indian critics who returned to the attack in a mood of unreason which in 1938 stopped further recruitment in India of labour for Malaya. In what way they thought they were serving the interests of a poor community which had travelled to Malaya to enjoy greater prosperity and happier conditions is not clear.

The conditions which had satisfied Mr Sastri, the excellent relations between management and labour on estates with Indian labour, the policy of repatriating at the time of the great depression those who were threatened with the miseries of unemployment in an alien land, and the prosperity when trade was normal on all counts of all types of labour, the open concern for their welfare shown by the Malayan Governments, secured a long season of placid contentment among

the immigrant labourers. Peace in the land was so universal, so secure, that nobody noticed it. The first disturbances occurred among Chinese labourers as the depression moved off and prices began to rise. In 1936 there was a serious strike among the miners, in 1937 even more extensive strikes broke out among Chinese estate labourers in Selangor, and further strikes in 1938 and 1939 confirmed the habit. The generalization that at the outset the strikers were in the right but finished up in the wrong is safe and true. Wages were too slow in catching up with increasing profits, and managers dragging the fetters of direct control by London directors moved too late to anticipate trouble. That gave the agitators, Communists of the Russian school, the chance to intervene and for days the ordinary traffic of negotiation could not flow. In the 1937 strikes, which were the biggest known, involving thousands of Chinese rubber-tappers, the agitators grew so emboldened by success that they challenged the Government and, most reluctantly, the Government had to fight it out with them. The battle was brief and overwhelmingly to the strong, but the situation had been grave and called for serious examination. Unlike the simple system of direct employment, standard wages, and fixed rates for extra work which prevailed on the European estates using Indian labour, the Chinese wage schedules were multifarious and teemed with variety, complexity, and near-breaches of anti-truck laws. Much time had been lost by the patient, persistent negotiators of the Chinese Protectorate in investigating and clarifying these arrangements. Two deductions were to be drawn; first, that much more attention must be devoted to Chinese labour, and the prevailing intricacies mastered and rationalized into a system if not into uniformity. Secondly, machinery must be set up for bargaining between employer and labour. An unwelcome experience had been that a bargain struck one day had been repudiated the next, that the Chinese parties to it had gone off to lick their wounds, and new and more exigent representatives had taken their place. The unreliable attitude of a certain type of Chinese employer,

too, had created difficulties. If one of them was making large profits from a contract in hand at the time, he was ready to yield to the strikers until the contract was completed and then get rid of them. Other Chinese employers offered as a solution the flooding of the labour market with fresh immigrants. The obvious remedies seemed to be trade unions, and machinery for negotiation and arbitration. Over the first of these the Government hesitated. The establishment of trade unions predicated a sturdy good sense, a tact in affairs, and some measure of patient statesmanship which had been evolved from years of industrial argument; it not only seemed fantastic to expect these qualities in the Chinese labourers of Malaya but it could be taken for granted that the Malayan General Labour Union would take command of the trade union movement and inject into it their own brand of revolutionary, Communistic politics.

The consummation of the task of investigating the conditions and terms of Chinese labour confirmed the necessity for both machinery of negotiation and arbitration and the organization of labour to use it. But Government still shied off this radical experiment, unwisely rejected a suggestion from the Colonial Office that a trained trade union official should examine the situation and advise, and when war broke out had got no further than enacting trade union legislation. The Government would probably argue that the behaviour of labour, particularly Chinese labour in Singapore, in the first year of the war, vindicated their attitude of doubt. Malaya having been assigned the role of supplying those munitions and sinews of war—rubber, tin, and American dollars—strikes which aimed at stopping or reducing the flow of those essentials were especially deplorable. At one period in 1940 they became a serious menace and little doubt was left that they were instigated by Communists with Russian sympathies; after Germany attacked Russia they ceased. The difficulty had always been to identify the Communists who were tough and daring in action and drilled and disciplined in the secret ways which preceded action. The strikers in the mass

were not Communists; they were simple, greedy souls who could easily be persuaded that there was profit in a strike; at the same time they were realists who, when their strike took a violent turn, decided that life was more precious than a few dollars. But they were only the body of the strike. The brains were the Communists, working hidden and undetectable. If the institution of trade unions had brought these Communist influences into the open, even at the price of a temporary domination of the unions, two certain advantages would have flowed; the strike could have been recognized at once as politically subversive, something far more dangerous than a struggle to redress economic grievances, real or imagined; and its promoters, being the officials of the trade union, would immediately have been identifiable, either to negotiate with or to suppress.

The Government had always been able to wear an air of calm patience in dealing with the many strikes of those years, listening so long as there was anything to hear and perhaps for some time after, reacting vigorously to violence on the part of the strikers. They owed their ability to ride these storms so easily to the good-humoured tenacity of the negotiators of the Chinese Protectorate or Labour Department and, even more, to the excellent behaviour of the police, who were now at the peak of their authority. The peak was quite a considerable eminence. The ordinary policemen were Malays and Sikhs; the detective branch was largely Chinese with a few Indians. The constabulary was well trained and equipped, and the Criminal Investigation Department and 'Special Branch' produced good results in difficult circumstances. The criminal registry was able to give wrinkles to other police forces and to serve as a model for the New York police. But the quality which earned the highest respect was the good-tempered courage with which the police, usually swamped if the numbers against them counted, met the very awkward situations which arose during the strikes. The inspiration of this was good leadership, and this in its turn had flowed from the strong sense of responsibility and the high degree of morale

and *esprit de corps* which had been many years in the making. As in all Asian countries the police had to contend with the odds of public disfavour. The police force as a large, disciplined, and powerful organization was nothing new to the Indian community but to the Malay in his kampong and the Chinese immigrant it had no lineage or tradition to commend it. The Malays, who seldom found or made it necessary to call a policeman, judged the whole idea of a police force as distasteful and, while admitting with some resentment the necessity for one in the conditions which had grown up, were never completely reconciled to it. As the criminal classes were mainly of their own race, the Chinese in their crowded circumstances could hardly escape the sight of police activities at their most painful and, having very little civic sense, took heed of nothing else. The fact that the peace and security which enfolded them and their money-making were largely derived from the vigilance and strong measures of the police seemed to count for very little, and their refusal to assist the law in action put a heavy strain on the patience and goodwill of the Government. As against this, the police enjoyed the great respect and frequently the open admiration of the more responsible and thoughtful elements of the public and certainly its gratitude had been earned in many ways. For an Asian force in enjoyment of an authority the generality of the police used their powers with notable restraint and honesty, by this conduct rewarding their European superiors not only for their hard discipline along the ways of integrity and fair treatment but also for the statesmanlike sympathy, even devotion, they accorded to all their men. The police heads were never tardy in rewarding outstanding merit by promotion to commissioned rank and in so doing fortified their organization with an uncommon cohesion and spirit of mutual pride and esteem.

FORESTRY

Forest reservations cover about 19 per cent of the area of the Peninsula. The present value of many of them does not go

beyond the conservation of rainfall and climatic conditions; their remote inaccessibility will defer their exploitation for a long time to come. Others serve the double purpose of supplying forest produce and preventing erosion. So much timber has been wasted in the past by random cutting to furnish fuel for the mines, and by the burning of felled trees which is the practice in clearing land to plant rubber, that large areas of jungle have been withheld from alienation without being formally reserved. The idea has been to extract the valuable timber and other forest produce such as rotans and gums from the land before permitting alienation.

The general policy of the Department has been to combine extraction with conservation by selective felling. Part only of the stand would be removed and enough trees left to fill the gaps by natural seeding. In forests where the timber is not sufficiently valuable to attract private enterprise the Department carries out its own silviculture, creating the space for growth and the admission of sun and air by girdling and poisoning selected trees. An experiment in extracting timber in the American fashion by the greater use of machinery satisfied the Department that the Chinese methods which used cheap manual labour were more successful and economical.

An effort to establish an export trade with the United Kingdom has necessitated great improvements in the operations of the Chinese sawmills. The task of persuading the sawmillers to instal better machinery and give more attention to seasoning and grading is the work of a Forest Engineer. Although the amount of timber which will satisfy the requirements of the English market is not large, the beginnings of an export trade other than that which already existed for softwoods have been founded.

To carry out these policies a strong department was required which would include a Research Institute and a school for the instruction of the subordinate staff. In the years before the Second World War the senior establishment had settled down at nearly forty Europeans whose qualifica-

tions were a degree in Forestry and a post-graduate year at the Imperial Forestry Institute at Oxford. The subordinate staff consisted largely of Malays who found in the Department a job after their own hearts. The head of the Department was Director of Forestry in the Straits Settlements and Adviser in the Malay States but he was also Chief Forest Officer in each of the Federated Malay States and was thus able to co-ordinate policy in the Federation. Uniformity with the Unfederated Malay States was secured by the fact that the Forest Officers there were seconded officers of the Department.

MINING

Although applications for mining land were made to the Land Offices, decisions regarding alienation of land for mining were largely guided by the recommendations of the Mines Department, made on technical grounds. The need for the greatest caution in giving out land for mining, and for a close control over the mining operations, is evidenced by many a ruined rice field and silted river. Whether the earth containing the tin-ore is dug out in open-cast mining, or by dredging or shafting, or whether it is washed out by water under pressure by gravel-pumping or by hydraulicking, the methods of disposing of the overburden and tailings must be subjected to the strictest supervision if great damage to the surrounding country and nearby rivers is to be avoided. Works to retain the tailings must be constructed and these may be of great magnitude, and in the hills where sites for dumping the tailings are not to be found it may be necessary to build a dam to enclose the whole river in the valley which is being mined. Underground workings present another range of problems. Approval of such works is the function of the officials of the Mines Department who have also such other duties as the scrutinising and passing of rules for the working of any particular mine and the holding of inquiries into mining accidents. Employment in the Mines Department is, therefore, only for qualified men and the qualifications required are degree or diploma in approved Schools of Mines

and experience of work on a mine. Officers with such qualifications constitute the Mines Department, which consists of a Senior Warden of Mines as head and Wardens and Assistant Wardens and Inspectors in each State where tin is mined. The examination of the machinery used on the mines is conducted by inspectors under the Machinery Enactment and an inspector having powers under the Mineral Ores Enactment controls the ore-buying business. Much of the work of the Government Geologists is concerned with mining and advisory work in connexion with prospecting.

CHAPTER V

Constitutional History

THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS

THE Crown Colony of the Straits Settlements was governed by a Governor, appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who was advised by an Executive and a Legislative Council. In the former the officials were in a substantial majority; in the Legislative Council officials and unofficials had become equal in number in 1924, but the Governor as President possessed both an ordinary and a casting vote to secure an official majority. For many decades Singapore had been one of the great ports and marts of the world and its continued submission to a Crown Colony form of government must arouse curiosity.

The circumstances of the Colony were seldom such as to arouse political activity or even questioning. The impress of the East India Company's view that the paramount interests of government were those fostering trade had never altogether disappeared. Trade had flourished, bringing great individual wealth to leading citizens, and even its moments of interruption or decline had been of too short a duration to resemble a crisis. The Colony had become set in its ways even before the Malay States, advancing with furious strides to come abreast of their great neighbour, had taken the limelight on the stage of history, yet it was still a very young country, too young certainly to have produced a wealthy, influential class which regarded the Colony as its home. The leading men were to be found mainly among those of European or Chinese origin who looked forward to retiring to their country of origin as the culmination of a successful career overseas, and it was not to be expected of them that they would entertain the advanced opinions which demanded a more representative form of government or be moved to

strong action towards achieving it. In 1920 a Select Committee of the Legislative Council considered the matter and made the following points: (*a*) the vast majority of the population of the Colony had no roots of loyalty towards the country; Malays, Eurasians, and those of the Straits-born Chinese who took pride in calling themselves 'the King's Chinese' claimed the Colony as their home, but none had any heritage and few any experience of self-government, and fewer still possessed the degree of political education which was desirable before adopting that form of government; (*b*) it would be difficult to assess how far racial, religious, social, and economic differences would obstruct the proper exercise of self-government; (*c*) the existing form of administration served well the paramount desire of all, i.e. the opportunity in circumstances of peace and good order to acquire wealth, as the vast tides of population which surged into the country testified. The Select Committee found very little ambition for self-government and a good deal of opposition to it among responsible opinion. It did, however, recommend a small majority of unofficial members in the Legislative Council, but this view was not accepted by the Government. Ten years later a proposal for an equal number of official and unofficial members (the latter to be elected) for both Executive and Legislative Councils, the Governor to have an ordinary and casting vote in order to secure an official majority, failed to stir public opinion. The unofficials in the Legislative Council had been put on a numerical parity with the officials in 1924 and their representation given a communal cast—7 Europeans, 3 Chinese, 1 Indian, 1 Malay, 1 Eurasian. Never at any time was there any substantial feeling in favour of a change to some degree of elective government, or any serious dissatisfaction with the existing form of government. For the moment 'good government' was preferred to 'self-government'. The good government was not a concentration of purely autocratic or bureaucratic government. The influence exercised by the unofficial members combined with the instinctively democratic outlook of the official

members made the Government one of decision by discussion.

One of the three unofficial members of the Executive Council was Chinese, and all three were appointed by the Governor with the approval of the Secretary of State. The Governor was in duty bound to consult the Executive Council in all matters save those in which His Majesty's Government would sustain material prejudice by such a course, or those which were too trivial. The Governor alone had the right to put forward questions but a refusal to present any question submitted by a member of the Council had to be justified in writing. If he exercised his right of acting in opposition to the advice of the Council, his duty was to report and give reasons for his action to the Secretary of State. Members were entitled to have recorded at length in the minutes any adverse opinion they chose to express. All matters of major policy, all vital legislation or legislation introducing new policies, were submitted to the Council. The public interest in its widest span was the sole arbiter in the choice of subjects for discussion by the Council.

The strength of the unofficial members of the Legislative Council lay in their close grip on finance. The annual draft estimates of revenue and expenditure were submitted to a Select Committee of the Council, on which there was an overwhelmingly large unofficial majority, before their introduction into the Legislative Council at the Budget session. These estimates were very much the affair of the unofficials, and it was usual for heads of departments to appear before the Committee to present the case for their estimates. Yet another control rested in the operations of the Finance Committee which considered applications for supplements to the sums voted in the budget before submission to the Council; this Committee consisted of the Financial Secretary and three unofficial members. Nor was that other aspect of control absent which appears in so many parliaments and councils by which what is enacted in the publicity of a meeting is very often a culmination or exposition of private

transactions between officials and unofficials. It was the practice of unofficial members to discuss any controversial topic with its author and supporters, but if they could not be persuaded out of their views the battle would be renewed in open council. An important Bill was certain of a good airing. Very often it would be the fruit of the cogitations of a committee containing an unofficial majority and, before reaching the Legislative Council, it would be subject to challenge by the unofficial members of the Executive Council.

Influential opinions on particular religious or racial problems were sought from various advisory boards and the Chambers of Commerce often had valuable views or comments to put forward on matters within their range. There were, too, various associations, all organized on a racial basis except the Singapore Association which admitted all races, but, with the exception of the latter, they rarely seemed to be able to match themselves with the obvious opportunities offered for constructive criticism. Perhaps it would be too much to expect that a large centre of population as heterogenous as Singapore would breed powerful political organizations whence could spring constructive ideas for the stimulation of a bureaucratic administration. Singapore and Penang must be imagined as widely-spread towns populated by all the races of the East. There were Bugis from the Celebes, Sundanese, Madurese and Javanese from Java, the Minangkabaus, Korinchis and other Malays from Sumatra. Most of the tribes of south China were represented, Hokkiens, Cantonese, Tiu Chiu, Hakka, Hailam, Hok Chia, and Hok Chiu, and there were Formosans, too. Southern India sent Tamils, Telegus, and Malayalams and there were many northern Indians speaking Punjabi, Hindustani, and Pushtu. Japanese were there, of course, but few Burmese and not many Thais. The settlement of Arabs from the Hadramaut was wealthy and influential, and the Ceylonese were a small but respected band.

A strong spirit of independence was shown by the Municipal Commissioners of the Settlements. Their staffs were

municipal and not government servants, the President was an officer of the Malayan civil service but the Commissioners were all unofficials, either nominated by the Governor or elected by various public bodies or associations. Their responsibilities were great and admirably discharged, and justifiable self-pride may have accounted for the fact that, although government control was light-handed and confined mainly to legislation, land purchase and borrowing, the Commissioners were as imaginative in suspecting as they were belligerent in resisting government interference. Other highly important undertakings, which enjoyed a large degree of independence of the Government and were most circumspectly handled by them, were the Singapore and Penang Harbour Boards on which unofficials sat. Rural boards administered those parts of the Settlements which were not covered by the authority of the Municipal Commissions and they, too, carried a large unofficial representation. In sum, the opportunities these bodies and associations offered for public service and training in local government were large enough to educate a considerable number of citizens to the standards required by the Executive and Legislative Councils, and strong pressure for further progress along the road to self-government would have been irresistible. The creation of an unofficial majority in the Legislative Council which would be partly nominated and partly elected by such bodies as Chambers of Commerce would not, however, in itself have been an advance. It might, indeed, have been the contrary. The history of the Colony had shown that in most branches of administration the Government had been in advance of public opinion and had very often found themselves embattled in a struggle for some social reform. The influence of an oligarchy with a plutocratic trend might very easily have been conservative and parsimonious in questions of reform to a degree which would cause stagnation or actual recession. Only an elected element chosen by the popular vote would have ensured proper consideration of the interests of the poorer and less influential sections of the community.

But the political demands which would have made these live issues were never advanced, perhaps, in the argument of Plutarch, not because the kings knew how to govern but because the citizens knew how to be governed, but more likely because the citizens, pursuing wealth and enjoying the liberties of a free trade system in their trade and much easy toleration in their other affairs, were ready to cry with Pope 'For forms of government let fools contest'.

FEDERATED MALAY STATES

The Federation had a Federal Council. In addition there were the four State Councils and two other conferences which played an important part in framing policy—the Residents' Conference, held as often as meetings of the Federal Council brought the High Commissioner and the four Residents to Kuala Lumpur, the capital, and the Durbar of Rulers. The Federal Council had an official majority, 16 to 12, and transacted much the same sort of business, with the same procedure, as the Legislative Council of the Colony; it differed, however, in that the legislation enacted in the Federal Council was not the whole corpus of the law of the Federated Malay States and its budget contained provision for the four States in the form of a lump sum in each case. Each State Council appropriated at its own Budget Council the expenditure for purely State services up to the sum allocated by the Federal Council and, just as the Federal Council had its Finance Committee, composed of the Financial Secretary, the four Residents and all the unofficial members, for the purpose of scrutinizing and approving the annual estimates, so the State budgets were examined by a committee of the State Council which was overwhelmingly unofficial in composition. The unofficials of both Federal and State Councils were nominated by the High Commissioner but their influence was just as potent in the Federation, and in the same ways and for the same reasons as in the Colony, but in the former the influence enjoyed a wider distribution because of the greater number of Councils. It was true that duplica-

tion occurred, since unofficial Federal Councillors were also State Councillors in the State of their abode, but on the State Councils sat Malays, Europeans, Chinese, and Indians who were not Federal Councillors, and it was seldom that the three latter groups at least drew back from the exercise of their right of addressing the Council. The State Councils gave further scope to the unofficials by the existence of various Standing Committees to which were delegated certain functions of the Council.

Between them, the Residents' Conference and the Durbar performed some of the functions of an executive council. The purpose of the former was to advise the High Commissioner on such matters of high policy as he or any Resident wished to have decided. They were of great value and responsible for the more momentous administrative policies of the Federation but, being so infrequent, could not alone meet requirements. They were supplemented by a system of circulating official files on which discussion could be carried out until the High Commissioner found himself able to reach a decision. The Durbar, at which the High Commissioner presided over the four Rulers and their Residents and the Federal Secretary, offered the Rulers opportunity to bring forward any suggestion or problem of policy to which they wished the administration to give its attention. It was on such occasions that they expressed unequivocally their dissatisfaction with the situation which was being created by the mounting inundations of the Chinese, and displayed a spirit of independence and a political sense which made nonsense of any talk of 'puppets'.

UNFEDERATED MALAY STATES

The written Constitution of Johore provided for an Executive and a State Council. Both contained a strong unofficial element and that of the State Council behaved as a political opposition. In the Executive Council, over which the Sultan presided and which in its deliberations covered the whole field of administration, they made their own contribu-

tion to an impartial survey of the administrative policies at issue. The other Unfederated States, Kedah, Kelantan, and Trengganu arranged their affairs differently. Each had one Council which combined the legislative and financial powers of the Councils already described with the executive functions of the Executive Councils of the Colony and Johore. Their language was Malay, not English as in the the Colony or the Federal Council, or English or Malay as in the State Councils of the Federation and Johore. The Kedah Council consisted of four Malays and the British Adviser; there were no unofficials. The Kelantan Council numbered 15, comprising major Malay chiefs, senior Malay officials and unofficials, the Adviser, Legal Adviser and Assistant Adviser, the three latter being seconded British officials. In Trengganu the Prime Minister presided over a Council of 19 composed as in Kedah, except that no British official was a member; the Adviser attended all meetings and his advice was sought before any resolution was passed.

It was left to one of the Federated States to provide a radical variant of this conciliar pattern, the significance of which was perhaps more prospective than actual. Negri Sembilan had two chambers. The supreme authority rested in the Yang-di-pertuan ('He who is made lord') and the Undang (in the other Malay States the Ruler was called the Sultan; in Negri Sembilan there was no person so absolute in authority as was the Sultan in the other States. The supreme authority was divided as above but one person, the Yang-di-pertuan, was regarded as possessing sufficiently more power than the others to justify his being regarded as the Head of the State). The Undang are territorial chiefs and they, with another Malay potentate and the Resident, formed the upper chamber over which the Yang-di-pertuan presided. The Lower Chamber, or State Council, was composed of the Resident (presiding) and 8 official and 7 unofficial members. In legislation the Upper Chamber's powers were those of confirmation or amendment, it had certain executive powers which had been vested in the former State Council and it

dealt with matters concerning Malay religion and custom. This constitutional medley was new and unique in the history of Malaya and its existence must be regarded as a *douceur* accompanying the reforms of Sir Cecil Clementi in the early nineteen-thirties, which were the final chapter in the chronicle of attempts to break the Federal Government's excessive usurpation of power.

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

The Federal Council had been instituted in 1900 and its constitution had been amended in 1927 and again in 1933, on both occasions amid cries of battle. Creation and change alike were dictated by conscience protesting that the Rulers had been unfairly treated. The Treaty of Federation had declared that it was not its purpose to weaken the power or authority of the Rulers, but, even before the establishment of the rubber industry, the development of the Federated Malay States had moved at a pace which shut out the Rulers from participation in much of the administration and demanded too much of the attention and energies of the Residents to allow them to turn aside and carry the Rulers with them. In due course as the Federal administration gathered strength the Residents themselves began to fall out of the race. The State Councils and Governments ceased to count for much, the Federal Council and Government were absolutely successful usurpers. When in 1907 the Governor and High Commissioner, Sir John Anderson, wished to do right by the Rulers by bringing them back into the government of the Federation he chose the Federal Council as the agency. As he constituted it, the four Rulers sat with the High Commissioner, the Resident-General, the four Residents and four unofficials nominated by the High Commissioner. The language was English which none of the Rulers spoke and they had no privileges to balance their inability to debate. Their own particular Councils, over which they presided and exercised majestic influence, were robbed of their last pretence of importance. However good

were Sir John Anderson's intentions his plans further sapped the Rulers' actual power. They may have been brought into the limelight, playing in the centre of the stage, but they were not given the chief parts. Another change made the Resident-General Chief Secretary, and its purpose was to exalt the High Commissioner and put the Resident-General in his place, which was lower down.

Sir Laurence Guillemard in 1925 was prepared to go even further in his attempt to arrest the all-devouring centralization; he proposed to abolish the appointment of Chief Secretary and secure a gradual devolution of his powers to the States and Federal Departments. The business interests, European and Chinese, were opposed to the plan. They feared for the credit of the Federation, foresaw hindrance and complexity in the transaction of their business so far as it was controlled by four Governments instead of one, and scented a danger of the subordination of the Federated Malay States to the Colony, where the High Commissioner as Governor spent most of his time. The projects came to very little except to produce the disappearance of the Rulers from the Federal Council. They were to discuss the agenda of the Council before the meeting with their Residents, who would later give a report of the proceedings. From an administrative point of view the change was a sensible reform. Politically it was a further lessening of the majesty of the Rulers which not even the institution of an annual Durbar could counterbalance, for that was a conference only, with no power to enforce any conclusion which might be arrived at in discussion. Many good arguments could be advanced to support this partial dethroning of the Rulers. In truth, until a new generation of Rulers should arise, with ability to join in the English debates and with understanding, and perhaps experience, of the problems of administration, the changes so far as they centred round the Federal Council were politic. Those who, by their opposition, wrecked the scheme for decentralization failed to take into account the needs of healthy political growth which could be fostered by associating more and more people with

the administration of public affairs as a means of instructing them in the art of self-government.

In 1927 and the following year two very important political announcements were made. Sir Hugh Clifford, returning after many years to Malaya as its Governor and High Commissioner, declared that for all the changes, 'phenomenal and radical' though they were, the status of the Malay States had been in no wise modified. They were Malay States and Muhammadan monarchies still and no mandate had ever been 'extended to us by rajas, chiefs, or people to vary the system of government'. And he emphasized '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 submersion of the indigenous population'. Any such situation would amount, he said, to a betrayal of the trust which the Malays of those States had been taught to repose in the British Government. Next year, Mr Ormsby-Gore (now Lord Harlech), Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, visited Malaya and repeated Sir Hugh Clifford's pronouncements, adding, too, that 'the mere fact of federation, the great economic development that has taken place, and the recent immigration of so many non-Malays, have all tended to make British administration appear, to say the least of it, to be more direct than in the Unfederated States', and expressing the view that the spirit and intention of British policy in Malaya had been carried out both more simply and more completely in the Unfederated Malay States. The criticism, if not actual rebuke in his words 'To me the maintenance of the position, authority, and prestige of the Malay rulers is a cardinal point of policy' was severe in all its implications.

It was not surprising, therefore, that in 1931 Sir Cecil Clementi tried again. But his purpose was twofold. He wanted to guide the Unfederated States into the Federation by reproducing in the Federated Malay States a good measure of the independence and self-sufficiency which the

Unfederated States enjoyed. The iron grip of the Federation would have to be broken. Federal departments would pass under the control of the States, their heads would lose executive control and become Advisers, the Chief Secretary would dwindle into a Federal Secretary, junior in rank to the Residents. The Federal Council was not to escape; it was to retain its hold over certain branches of the Government which indubitably transcended individual State control, such as railways and labour, and although revenue was to be divided between Federal and State Councils the former remained the supreme authority in financial matters. But the number of subjects to be transferred to the State Councils was very great. This common pattern for the Malay States having been accomplished, the whole of Malaya was to be embraced in a common customs union and ultimately in a Pan-Malayan Union. Opposition was vehement. The Colony objected strongly to a proposal which swept away its foundation of free trade; the Unfederated refused to lie down with the Federated States. Business interests in the Federated Malay States were better suited, in their own opinion, by the Federation; they dreaded the concession to the Colony of any chance to interfere with the affairs of the Federated Malay States and saw no advantage in becoming the rich relations of struggling economies such as Kelantan and Trengganu. The uproar was sufficiently strident and sustained to bring out an Under Secretary of State from the Colonial Office in 1932. In view of a later attitude of the Colonial Office it is worth while recording his opinion that a purely economic view would emphasize the desirability of one central government administering the whole of Malaya, but that a political view suggested a need for decentralization and in support of this latter opinion he repeated the arguments of Mr Ormsby-Gore. His backing was enough to set the machine moving and the transfer of departments to State control, the abolition of the Chief Secretaryship, and the change in role of the departmental heads by which they became Advisers went ahead. The financial proposals were modified at the expense

of the States which were not to enjoy specified sources of revenue but to receive an annual block grant from the Federal Council.

Other changes were the acceleration of promotion from the Malay Administrative Service (which had been established in 1910 and had served to staff junior posts in district administration), and the creation of a separate clerical service open to candidates of all nationalities born and educated in the Federated Malay States with preference for Malays. The latter innovation had a passing value in reviving the morale of the State Governments, and the sharp revision of the standing of Federal Heads was all to the good, since it checked the strongest influence at work in smothering under a purely British organization political systems which the British Government had been instructed only to advise. But by far the most valuable reform of all, one which not merely served to correct a fault but seemed likely at long last to shape the right course for the goal of self-government, was the rehabilitation of the State Councils. The readjustment of the relations between Federal and State Councils was skilfully made. While surrendering to the State Councils' powers which gave them body and spirit, the Federal Council yielded little of its position as the supreme authority, under the High Commissioner, in the Federation. The State authorities happily busied themselves over their budget proposals but it was the Federal Council which disposed of them. The central body of law was enacted by the Federal Council in the names of the Rulers, and the State Councils legislated for matters of purely local significance. A wise move was the appointment of unofficial Federal Councillors to be State Councillors. At one and the same time it benefited the State Council by the participation of the leading men of the State, and it profited the Councillors themselves, especially if they were lawyers or business men, by introducing them to the world of the Malayan countryside into which their affairs seldom led them.

CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE FEDERATED AND UNFEDERATED STATES

Yet these radical and fruitful changes did not identify the States of the Federation with the Unfederated States. Only an act of force to one or the other party could have encompassed that.

Johore's story differs considerably from that of the Unfederated States in the north. An empty land when Raffles founded Singapore, its geographical position, lying between Singapore, with its merchant adventurers, and the Federated Malay States, which were overflowing with capital seeking profit in the rubber found in the western States of the Federation, ensured development along the same economic lines as in those States but under quite different political direction, i.e. under personal rule, a system much more congenial to Malay ideas, rather than under a foreign bureaucracy. The Sultan of Johore accepted the need for skill and experience in the administration of his State which was progressing at what could be breakneck speed, and he filled all the vital posts with British officers who were for the most part seconded from the services of the Colony or Federated Malay States. The 1914 Treaty with the Sultan expressly provided that the collection and control of all revenue should 'be regulated under the advice of the General Adviser'. But the theory was never relinquished that the administration was carried out by the Mentri Besar (Chief Minister) and the State Secretariat assisted by other Malay officials, though subject both in policy and action to the scrutiny and approval of the General Adviser who was in turn aided by British officials. The Financial Commissioner would be a British official, the State Treasure and District Treasurers, Malays; the charge of a district was divided between a Malay State Commissioner and a British Assistant Adviser. And so forth throughout the administration except in matters touching upon Malay religion and custom. The greater part of the burden of work and responsibility fell upon and was meant to fall upon the

British officers but the existence of a Malay partnership, which made neither for efficiency nor economy, gave notice that Johore was a Malay State, that there was no intention to allow enveloping British dominance in its administration, and that the arrangement had no permanency beyond the building of a solid foundation for the government of the country. There was nothing obscure or doubtful in the situation. Johore was a Malay State and the Sultan was its ruler. The General Adviser's powers in practice went beyond advice but they were never likely to rival these of a Chief Secretary or a British Resident in the Federated Malay States. The indigenous Malays were a small minority in Johore. The opening up of the rubber industry had brought in Chinese and Indian labour under European and Chinese management; immigrants from Sumatra and Java had formed solid settlements on the west coast; discovery of tin on the east coast had introduced a rush of Chinese which, when the tin had been worked out, left a deposit of Chinese shopkeepers, vegetable gardeners, and labourers of the countryside. Chinese representatives sat on the Councils and the Town and other Boards of the State, as in the Colony and Federated Malay States, but not enough of them were of sufficient political and economic substance to start any question of close identification with the government of the State. It was a Malay State administered with the aid and advice of British officials.

No such proclamation was necessary in respect of the other Unfederated Malay States, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, and Perlis in the north, and Brunei in Borneo. Malays predominated there overwhelmingly and Chinese and other Asian races counted for little. Only Kedah, it is true, had much to offer, and after a while, its Government protected its attractions with a geographical cordon. Of all the Malay States Kedah seemed to have the clearest perception of the policies it judged best for a Malay State within the British sphere of influence. It employed far fewer British officials than the States to the south and none at all in the district

administration, the Customs, and the Co-operative Department. The subordinate staffs were almost entirely Malay, the few Chinese and Indians in government service being either survivals of a phase when the outlook was less nationalistic or irreplaceable in the conduct of such offices as those of the Protector of Chinese or the Deputy Controller of Labour. Many of the senior appointments, especially in the technical departments, were beyond the capacity of the Malays but for some years the Government had been sending their most promising youths abroad for an education which would, it was hoped, set them on the way towards filling those appointments. The ambition of the Government was as sensible as it was definite; it was to set up a Malay State which should be a model in its purely Malay administration and in its promotion of the well-being of its Malay population along the historic lines of Malay economy. That part of Kedah which had not been taken over by alien enterprise was to be a land of Malay smallholders who would attain a comfortable prosperity by the ricegrowing at which they had always been successful and a better care of their orchards and coconut-holdings, and would enlarge it by the cultivation of rubber or other cash crops, and by their long established cattle-breeding. The consideration that much of the State revenue was contributed by the foreign rubber estates of South Kedah was not allowed to weigh overmuch. Of late years government policy had tended to regard with disfavour foreign ventures outside the area in south Kedah already given up to large-scale rubber planting. The Malay Government seemed to have made the choice that their State should seek its own salvation without foreign intervention, even at the cost of sacrificing lucrative development. With their own eyes they had seen the advance of Siam, a country with which they were connected by history and blood and the presence of Siamese settlements in their midst, and they were not prepared to concede to the Siamese any superiority in wisdom or skill of administration. Although they had felt insulted by the manner of the transfer of their country from the Siamese to

the British sphere of influence, they were not ill at ease within the British Empire. But they wished to manage their own affairs according to their own lights. The history of their dealings with the East India Company a century before had disclosed in them a strain of tough obstinacy which had not died out, and for all their graciousness and courtesy, which enabled them to live in happy concord with the British authorities without and the British officials within their State, they were adamant in resisting any further extension of British control. They had contrived to evolve, too, a climate of independence and proud individuality in which non-Malays might be treated as friends and their participation in the life of the country accepted, but on terms devised by themselves. Advisers had to remain content to advise and eschew executive action, departmental heads submissively to put up with Malay labour however well or ill they esteemed it, planters to practise a cautious diplomacy. And the success of the officials and planters in the roles thus cast for them—and most creditably successful they were—was as much a tribute to the finesse and determination which created this dominant atmosphere as to the good faith and sympathy which accepted it.

There was much the same outlook in Kelantan, although it was less positive and less outspoken. The State was not so prosperous as Kedah; like the other east coast States, Trengganu and Pahang, it had not offered a magnetic field to foreign enterprise, long hauls finding no set-off in the form of good harbours and helpful communications. The British participation in the administration was less extensive than in Kedah but tighter in control, practically every one of the departments having a British head. The small number of British assistants in the departments reflected a lack of need for more ambitious staffing rather than any political intent. The preponderance of Malay labour, which was more marked than in any other State, illustrated clearly the pre-Malay nature of Kelantan's economy. Kelantan was an undiluted Malay country and happy as such, although all the

better for its stiffening of British officials. Trengganu had advanced some distance in providing the rudimentary requirements of good government, peace within its borders and an end to the cruelty, oppression, and injustice of earlier regimes, but its economic progress had been too slight to demand in any quantity the technical assistance of British experts. Where oil was worked in the district of Brunei there was prosperity in that little State, but elsewhere and otherwise it had remained a jungle-bound, undeveloped land with few inhabitants and little achievement; but it was at peace under the British wing and respectable, its chronicle of piracy and slave-marketing forgotten.

The Unfederated Malay States of the north had given no invitation, and Kedah alone had offered temptation to British intervention. By 1910 the British urge to paint the globe red had faded away; there seemed no inclination even to apply a fresh coat to what existed. Domestic rows absorbed public attention in Great Britain, and the tiny few who were conscious of the existence of the Straits Settlements and the Malay States, and did not picture them as fringes of China, were vexed at their failure to track them down on their maps of India. In Malaya herself attention was feverishly attracted by rubber booms, and nobody looked very closely at the States in the north which in any case seemed, in terms of yield to investment, little better than marginal land. Their happy fate, therefore, had been to receive only a scaffolding of British administration and to be left otherwise to live their own Malay lives, with Friday the weekly day of rest, work on a part-time basis during the fasting month, Malay the language of the country, using the arabic and not the romanized script, with the Sultan in Council the undoubted ruler of the State, and the Council itself carrying a heavy bias towards aristocratic government. If these were gains, there were potential losses to be entered. The administration of the Federated Malay States far excelled that of the Unfederated Malay States in efficiency and probity, and showed much greater concern for the kampong Malay whether as a politi-

cal or economic man. The Unfederated States invested the Penghulu system with much less of the administrative importance given it by the British in the Federation for the purpose of granting the Malay villagers some say in the management of the affairs which most visibly concerned them. Only by heavy borrowing from the Federation and the Colony of ideas and examples in administration had the Unfederated Malay States advanced as far as they had, and their debt on this score to the seconded officers was great indeed. And what was gained by obscurity was lost in prestige as the world increasingly took note of the States whence came the bulk of tin and rubber which supplied its needs. The contrasts were too radical, however, to permit of the Unfederated Malay States being coaxed into the same fold as the States of the Federation, and it was too late for the latter to rid themselves of the characteristics which repelled the strong nationalism of Kedah and Kelantan. So long as those States and those who guided them had power to determine their own destinies, they would refuse to join the Federation in any political combination which might reduce their status to that of the Federated States, where so much of Malay individuality had been lost and the Rulers had parted with so many of their former powers. Sir Cecil Clementi's scheme had succeeded as far as any such scheme could hope to succeed except under duress. The acceptance by the Unfederated Malay States of common technical advisers was a considerable administrative gain, and the restoration of the State Councils and their endowment with a stature they had never attained before were substantial contributions towards political education and progress.

CHAPTER VI

The Administration of the Law

IN the Straits Settlements the Courts administering the law were the Supreme Court, the District Courts, the Magistrates' Courts and the Coroner's Court. The Supreme Court comprised a Court of Appeal and the Courts of the Chief Justice and the Puisne Judges. The law officers were the Attorney-General, who sat *ex officio* on the Executive and and Legislative Councils, the Solicitor-General, and a number of Crown Counsel.

In the Federated Malay States the Courts were the Supreme Court, the Courts of the Magistrates of the First Class, and of the Magistrates of the Second Class. The Supreme Court comprised a Court of Appeal and the Courts of the Chief Justice and the judges. There were two judges in Kuala Lumpur, the Chief Justice and another, a judge sat at Ipoh in Perak and another at Seremban in Negri Sembilan. Pahang had no resident judge but regular Assizes. The law officers were the Legal Adviser, who was a member *ex officio* of the Federal Council and of the four State Councils, and a number of Deputy Public Prosecutors.

Only the Magistrates in the towns of Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, and Seremban resembled the District Judges and Magistrates of the Colony in that they had none but legal duties; other magistrates were the District Officers and Assistant District Officers.

Trengganu and Perlis were the only Unfederated States which did not have a European judge, although Kedah also had a Malay judge with limited powers. Johore and Kedah had Legal Advisers, but in Kelantan the judge was also Legal Adviser without being Public Prosecutor. The magisterial system in the Unfederated States resembled that of the Federated States.

The Appeal Courts of the Colony, the Federated Malay States, Johore and Kedah were constituted from the judges of those administrations and heard appeals from the decisions of a judge. An appeal from the findings of an Appeal Court could be carried to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. The Court of a judge heard appeals from the District and Magistrates' Courts. In Trengganu the Legal Adviser sat with the Malay judge as a Court of Appeal. In Kelantan the Civil Procedure Code provided for the revision of Court decrees by the Sultan in consultation with the Adviser. Such a provision did not extend to criminal cases, but the Ruler would use his prerogative, with the advice of the Adviser, to examine any case on appeal and make an order.

Death sentences required the confirmation of the Governor in Executive Council in the Colony and the Rulers in Council in the Malay States. In the Colony capital charges were heard by a jury, in the Malay States by two assessors.

Throughout the country where the subdivision of districts into *mukims* obtained, under the charge of Penghulus (or Penggawas in the State of Kelantan), Penghulu's Courts existed to hear disputes of a minor nature. In addition, Muhammadan law was administered in the Court of a Kathi or Assistant Kathi.

Much of the early law of the Colony and the Federated Malay States was taken from Indian Acts, for example the Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes, the law of evidence and of contract. The Civil Procedure is based on the English Judicature Acts. Otherwise the law of the country is contained in the local ordinances (Colony) or enactments (Malay States). But it has been the practice in the Malay States for a Land Officer, hearing claims for succession to ownership of land, to refer the manner of distribution among the heirs of a Muhammadan owner to a local Kathi and the Muhammadan law under this head is such that the Malay ownership of land is increasingly subjected to excessive fragmentation. A social problem is thus being fashioned which before long, in spite of its delicacy, will have to be tackled.

CHAPTER VII

Emergence of Political Problems

A PLURAL SOCIETY

THE motive of Sir Cecil Clementi's proposals in the early nineteen-thirties, whether for decentralization, a new policy in vernacular education, tighter control of immigration, or the scotching of Kuomintang intrigues, would seem to have been to announce with emphasis that the Malay States were still the country of the Malays, administered as a wardship by the British, and neither a British possession nor a new province of China. They had certainly made the sparks fly and in their angry reaction the Straits Chinese had been guilty of utterances which could not but strike the Malays as offensive and presumptuous. Hitherto the two peoples had contrived to live amicably together, mainly because the *pax britannica* allowed of nothing else, but also because their paths seldom crossed. There was no personal friendliness, no sympathy or understanding, no participation in common ideas or purposes. On the surface there was complete indifference towards one another; the Malay was not impressed by the achievements of the Chinese, the Chinese was not surprised by the Malay's lack of achievements. But the many Malays who had been maturing in government service were developing a political consciousness which was certain to take offence at any suggestion of arrogance on the part of the Chinese. To the Europeans they trusted they argued thus. The criminal elements in the country, they said, were almost all Chinese. Political unrest and lawlessness which, in the activities of the secret societies, and latterly of the Communists, amounted to defiance of the Government, were to be found only among the Chinese. The assiduous theft of State land by Chinese squatters made them a constant nuisance to the administrator and the most alert of land offices was sorely taxed to

hold in check their encroachments; if there was any relaxation a scandal, such as the discovery in central Johore of thousands of acres of well established rubber without leave or title, was to be expected. This was all true enough and to it could be added the charge that the Chinese were capable of undermining whole branches of administration and tainting public life by what looked like a natural predilection for corruption and graft.

But there were massive arguments on the other side which the Malays were in no mood to consider. The contribution of the Chinese to the phenomenal growth of Malaya had been decisive and vast. As pioneers they had worked almost alone to build her foundations, launching out in mining and trading enterprises for which no other races possessed the courage. From the beginning their industry, and even their failings, had supplied a large part of the revenue from which had flowed the many amenities of the land. Their capacity for creating wealth had carried them much further than the other Asian races towards standards of education and well-being that are the hall-marks of a progressive people. Their independent spirit and self-reliance might annoy by degenerating into conceit and self-satisfaction, but these were outweighed by their noble generosity and friendliness and their brave, patient acceptance of the chances and changes of life. One of the most satisfactory achievements of British rule had been the building up, from material which seemed naturally void of civic virtues, with little sense of duty towards the State, and no great capacity for public affairs, of a class of Chinese who could be trusted to supply valuable members of public bodies and trustworthy leaders of Chinese opinion. The Malay rejoinder was to ask how these contributions to material growth and social advancement had profited themselves—the people whose country had supplied the means and opportunity for progress. The increase in capital wealth represented by roads, railways, water supplies, and electric power, etc., had benefited the industries in which the Chinese were active. The amenities made life pleasant for the urban

populations who were largely Chinese. In short, the Chinese were getting their money back. The Malays seemed strangely blind to the fact that all these advantages were open to them, that in education, medical services, agricultural advice and aid, in the Co-operative Movement, the Government, using funds of which they themselves were not a major source of supply, had striven earnestly to help them along the road to their own betterment.

The Rulers were uncompromising in their views. They had never been oblivious of the dangers of Chinese penetration, as the non-existence of Chinese companies in the F.M.S. Volunteer Corps witnessed, but so long as the Chinese seemed a floating population, coming and going in their thousands every year, they had not been vigilantly on their guard. But the picture was altered when the immigrant Chinese began to bring over their womenfolk, a movement which the Japanese attacks on China after 1937 intensified, and the towns and villages bore ample testimony to the awesome fecundity of the Chinese. The Rulers took fright and proposed the stoppage of this steady encroachment which threatened engulfment. Let further immigration cease, they argued, let the departure be accelerated of those who had no roots in the country and their place filled by Javanese who were Muhammadans and with whom the Malays could claim kinship. They were content that the administration of the country should be carried on under British control until such time as the Malays had been trained to function alone. They were not prepared to quarrel with individual fortuitous appointments of Chinese or Indians to non-political posts. But they would not swallow any proposal to make such appointments a matter of fixed policy, and the idea that Chinese and Indians should hold offices of high political importance filled them with dismay.

So long as labour was required for the mines—and with very few exceptions mining labour was Chinese, and had been long before British intervention—the practical objections to these views would certainly delay their realization. The

world wanting tin versus a few Malay rajas wanting a Muhammadan country without tin-miners would be an uneven match. When they referred to labour for rubber estates the proposals were more plausible; the surplus Javanese population looking to emigration as an outlet might be diverted to Malaya—there was nothing new in the importation of Javanese to work on rubber estates—and in any case Java might well have to be considered as a source of supply if the Government of India persisted in the policy which in 1938 stopped the flow of Indian labour to Malaya. But the crucial question was not the future of immigration but the status of those Chinese, now in the second and third generation, who had made Malaya their home. No help towards a settlement seemed likely to come from either side. Few of the Chinese were prepared to turn their backs on China, especially when the inducement was nothing more attractive than the status of the subject of a Malay Ruler who himself shrank from the idea. A committee had reported on the employment of non-Malays in subordinate government service, and their findings favoured such employment as a fixed policy in proportions which preserved a substantial preference for Malays. Malay opinion opposed even this, which was in effect even more favourable than the actual practice at the time. The reason was that the Malays, having taken note of the expansion and changing nature of Chinese settlement, were alarmed, and any suggestion of Chinese participation as of right came as a shock. A sufficient number of them had attained positions in the government service which made Chinese behaviour one of their cares and were well versed in the history and methods of keeping order among them; an unmistakable feature of those methods was the stamp they bore of a control over an alien community which from time to time threatened the peace of the country.

A whole department of the Malayan civil service, the Chinese Protectorate, was devoted to the administration of Chinese affairs, whereas the ordinary machinery of government coped easily enough with the business of other nationali-

ties. The problems of Chinese labour, vernacular education, local and foreign politics, were the province of the Protectorate and law courts, and lawyers were by-passed as the poorer Chinese practised a preference for the local Protectorate officials as arbiters in their disputes. The head of the Protectorate, the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, sat on the Executive and Legislative Councils of the Colony and the Federal Council; and he and his officers, all of whom had struggled successfully through the briars and thickets which beset the student of a Chinese dialect, had the benefit of the views of leading Chinese on Chinese Advisory Boards or consultative committees. These Chinese owed their position to the nomination of the Governor or the Chinese Chambers of Commerce, but were fully accepted as representatives of trade, industry, and agriculture and of the Chinese tribes who pursued them. The Department needed every scrap of advice and assistance it could get, for not only did Chinese affairs frequently assume all the aspects of an empire within an empire but also of anarchy within that empire. With few exceptions, mainly in the older families in the Colony, the Chinese of whatever tribe they might belong to, Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka, Hailam, and the rest, preserved their language, customs, and ideas while maintaining their suspicion of such foreigners as seemed important enough to earn it, and indifference to the others. The vast majority allowed nothing to divert them from the struggle against poverty from which they had fled to these shores. They maintained their ties with China and fertilized it with their remittances, but Malaya they found a happy land where their labour was well rewarded and they could enjoy peace and plenty under the shelter of good, impartial government; thus, although none of them regarded Malaya as his own country, the majority were glad to live there and let their lives have the even tenor of the contented. But not all.

Among them was a sufficient number of those who had left China for China's good to call into being controls which were directed almost entirely against the Chinese. Succeeding generations of effort had mastered to a large extent the

associations of murderers, blackmailers, and extortioners known as secret societies but never completely, and it had been necessary for the Government to use against them two weapons besides the ordinary processes of law; the control of societies, and the expulsion of undesirables. The law of the registration of societies which is administered by the Chinese Protectorate made unregistered societies illegal bodies. To secure registration a society must disclose fully its objects and management and at each annual re-registration report any changes. Exemption from the provisions of this law was granted to genuine charitable associations. History has shown that Chinese lawlessness is only restrained by a strong police force and a well staffed Chinese Protectorate, who must expect to work without much assistance from the Chinese population, whose meagre stock of public spirit never outweighed a natural fear of the consequences of exercising it. It was this lack of any wish to co-operate with the authorities, and the consequent difficulty in obtaining witnesses of riots and murder and in protecting such witnesses, if forthcoming, from intimidation, that inspired the use of the weapon of banishment. Banishment could be ordered as the result of a criminal conviction, or by the Governor upon evidence which had satisfied an ascending scale of authorities that, although no crime could be proved in court proceedings, the continued ill-behaviour of an alien justified his forcible return to his own country. It was not a weapon that was much used at ordinary times. The task of establishing a high degree of probability acceptable to the sceptical minds of law officers and Residents who were reluctant to resort to this procedure tested the police so considerably as to neutralize the temptation to abuse it. When the Kuomintang's behaviour towards Malaya became so outrageous that the extreme step of declaring it an illegal society was taken, and when, later, the mischief wrought by Chinese Communists grew serious, the corrective of banishment was used with comparative freedom, but in the calm interludes it was not a significant feature of the administration.

A third weapon was forged when a law restricting immigration was expanded to give the Government power to control the entrance of all adult male aliens. Those who were considered undesirable could be refused admission to the country, and other provisions facilitated the discovery of undesirables already in the country. Unpopular in all quarters at its inception, the new law gradually found favour as it proved its strength in defeating the importunity of the Kuomintang, or the later lawlessness of the Communists, or in correcting the balance between employment and immigration.

The number of Chinese who occasioned and were chastised by these measures may have been a tiny minority but their misdeeds were conspicuous, and, when their unlawful activities drove at the roots of the system of government with which the other nationalities seemed well content, the horrified and resentful reluctance of the Malays to cede them any right to attempt dictation as to the principles and forms of government did not seem altogether unreasonable. A deeper motive came into play, too, in the apprehensive realization that, in an equal struggle for power between Malay and Chinese such as might arise from the removal of the preferential political treatment accorded to the Malays in the Malay States by the Protecting Power, and even more so from the actual withdrawal of that Power, the Malays would be overwhelmed in a brief space of time. From that standpoint the Malays opposed any such extension of higher education as the promotion of the Raffles College and the School of Medicine to the status of a university college, and resisted the gain by Chinese and Indians of an established footing in even the subordinate government services. In so doing the Malays inevitably drew attention to the dimensions of their own contribution to the country's advancement.

The charge against the Malay that he has every grace and charm but few of the solid virtues, being lazy and thriftless almost to the point of uselessness, has been overdone; to some extent it arises from a comparison with the awe-inspiring

industry and power of concentration on money-making of the Chinese which, if it were to be accounted a measure of man's worthiness, would put to shame Malays, Indians, and Europeans alike. The excuses for this lethargy and stagnation of the Malay, which are ill-health, a long history of spoliatory rule, an enervating climate, and natural surroundings which make it easy to exist, are not perhaps relevant. To the point are those characteristics which in total compose an outlook on life which can easily, and not altogether unfairly, be stigmatized as laziness and thriftlessness. It would be difficult to persuade anyone who has been a witness of the Malay on the job, whether as rice planter, boatman, fisherman, that he is lazy. He works willingly, cheerfully, and loyally. But he is totally lacking in ambition either for wealth or rank or power. He has, too, a dislike of routine, of fixed tasks and hours of work, that disqualifies him for steady duties as an employee in industry or agriculture. A state of industrious endeavour is not essential to his feeling of well-being, and a mood of idle contemplation induced by the beauty of brilliant light and rich shadow in his surroundings brings no sense of sin. He dislikes towns and does not thrive in them, and is content to be an independent smallholder, free from want by virtue of his ricefields, his coconuts and fruit trees, making enough from his unscientifically tended rubber to supply the simple needs of a countryman. Within this narrow sphere of activity his intelligence, experience, skill, and local knowledge deserve respect. But, because he has no taste for shopkeeping, no organizing power to resist the hard bargaining of the middleman, because for his labours as cultivator and fisherman he is, in comparison with alien miners, rubbertappers, and shopkeepers badly paid, he has never accumulated capital to enter business and, if he did, would stand little chance, unprotected, against that master of trading, the Chinese.

Once it could be said of the Malay that his view of money was frivolous, since he did not regard its acquisition as sufficient recompense for the toil, sacrifices and austerities

entailed, but many years' proximity to the more thrifty outlook of alien neighbours and exposure to official exhortations worked to modify the truth of this indictment. Unfortunately, it did not give him the sense to realize the value of the form of capital ownership he understood, the possession of land. With praiseworthy foresight the Malay Reservations Enactment (1913) reserved large areas of land from alienation to non-Malays. The mistake had been made, however, of not prohibiting mortgages and, through this gap, control over reserved land was passing at a disturbing pace to the money-lenders. An amendment of the law in 1933 stopped the disposal of reserved land by charge, lease, or any other means to a non-Malay and decreed that such land might not be taken by the creditor in discharge of a debt. Preservation of nominal ownership was thus ensured but it would be surprising if this or any other law would safeguard *de facto* ownership if a creditor thought it paid to take the fruits and let the title go. The need to save the Malay from himself and his folly was desperate, for the Malay was accustomed to invest his savings in land, and land represented his credit. The Reservations Enactment had much deterrent effect but there can be no truly satisfactory restraint upon spendthrift borrowing until the Malay has learnt that the present can control the future—in money matters at any rate. One consequence of the enactment was to depreciate the value of the land as a basis of credit and to render even more destructive the pawning of it. Usually it is unproductive expenditure which leads to the Malay's borrowings and he exists on too narrow a cash margin and too uncertain a capacity for earning to be able to afford the risk of pledging his credit; the consequent burden of debt always threatens to bring him low. The same stringency of circumstances made borrowing for the purpose of expansion a dangerous exercise, and he remained a small-holder rarely anything more than comfortably off.

The Chinese, on the other hand, had seized every opportunity Malaya had offered them, copying the methods of Western enterprise as well as extending their own. Miners,

traders, planters from the beginning, they were now bankers, newspaper proprietors, manufacturers, professional men. Every town in Malaya was a solid Chinese settlement. In the northern and eastern States of Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, and to a great extent Pahang, the Malays overwhelmed the Chinese in numbers. Chinese predominance lay in the rich States of the west, Perak, Selangor, Johore, Negri Sembilan, but here the position was not clearly defined. The floating population of Chinese, travelling each way between Malaya and China, was so large that when deducted from the total it reduced appreciably the massive Chinese element in those States. While the Malays, whether indigenous or immigrants from the Netherlands East Indies, were permanent settlers, there was no equal certainty about the Chinese. What was beyond dispute was that an increasing number of the Chinese registered at each census seemed to have made Malaya their home. In the view of the Rulers there were now enough of them to justify the formulation of a policy to determine their future. The ebb no longer balanced the flow of this tide of alien humanity and, looking to the British to preserve the Malay States as Malay territory, the Rulers had no doubt of their right to demand that the invasion of Chinese should be checked and any plan to place them on a parity with the Malays firmly resisted.

Already, but most belatedly, the British administration had begun to realize that not enough had been done to train the Malays in the government of their country. The reforms of Sir Cecil Clementi had pumped some political health into a system which had become arrested in a bureaucratic rigour, and the civil service and the police had for many years been taking Malays into their higher grades. The technical departments, such as the Public Works Department and Railways could only open their ranks to men with adequate technical qualifications; their own performance had reached too high a level and public expectations had become too exacting to permit of any relaxation of their standards. No such reasons argued against the employment of Malays in the senior posts

of the Customs and Post Office Departments which made far less demands upon their officers than did the civil service and the police and in which the Unfederated States were well served by Malays even in the highest branches. It stands as a criticism of the administration of the Federated Malay States that no such appointments were made. Reference has already been made to the manner in which Kedah and Kelantan were already showing the way to open up the administration to Malays. Johore, for some years, had been sending its prospective officers of the civil service to the Raffles College as a first step in the process of selecting the most promising for yet higher education abroad. It is true that the Federated Malay States sent their Queen's scholars to universities or educational institutions in Great Britain, but not with any purpose of educating them specifically for government service or direction of their studies to that end. One or two royal youths had been sent to acquire experience of the art of living in the higher walks of English society but the democratic and practical ideas of Kedah were peculiar to that State.

The policy in the Federated Malay States had not travelled far from that expounded by Governor Sir Cecil Clementi Smith in 1893 which contemplated the training of Malays 'with hereditary or customary claims to office' to take part in the government of their country. It was along these lines that the Government, in so far as they raised their heads at all from the increasingly onerous and difficult problems of everyday administration to gaze into the future, imagined development would take place—in the preservation of Malay rule through constitutional Malay Rulers and through a government service manned chiefly by Malays if the Malays so willed it, or by Malays, Chinese, and Indians of indisputable Malay domicile and undivided loyalty to Malaya if the Malays could be so persuaded. British officialdom would fade out by stages, first by reducing their executive to advisory powers as in the Unfederated States, next by their withdrawal until there remained only departmental advisers such as had helped Siam along the road to complete inde-

pendence and then an orderly surrender of all local authority as in Ceylon. But this was unbuttoned talk and referred comfortably to a future from which these political philosophers were absent.

It is not reasonable to expect too much in the way of self-destruction from a successful bureaucracy. The Malays had not complained of the Government's tardiness in training more of them for higher appointments nor shown any impatience with the pace of their absorption into the civil service and police. They were not sufficiently interested in medicine or engineering to criticize a school curriculum which largely ignored science. As for the Chinese in the Federated Malay States, they had as yet made no claims to higher appointments in government service. Many of the small company of educated Indians had put themselves out of court by adopting the political outlook of the Indian Congress and refusing to serve on public bodies. There was no pressure upon the government to alter their ways. In the Colony a committee had pronounced against any need for a change in the form of government, in the Federated Malay States the question had never been raised and in the Unfederated Malay States there was nobody to raise it. Employment in government service had not enough attraction for the capable and ambitious Chinese to make worth while the political quarrelling which would follow any claim to it. The Chinese had shown themselves ready to resist changes in the policies and forms of government which would damage their commercial interests but, whatever they may have said among themselves, they made no public representations on the subject.

All the same just below the surface of men's minds the question stirred: What was to be the civil status of those Chinese and Indians who could justly claim that Malaya was their home and possessed their loyalty? Yet without denying the existence of the problem, the government servants whom it touched could in good faith decline to start a crusade about it. A solution would involve an examination,

with a view to revision, of the treaties with the Malay Rulers and that was a matter for His Majesty's Government. Their own duty was to carry out the provisions of the treaties in the spirit as well as the letter, and those treaties did not contemplate a system of government other than that of administration for and ultimately through the Malays. Whatever proposals for political changes had already been put forward had aimed at restoring the ideas underlying the treaties and those ideas found no place for an equality between Malays and foreigners. A solution which would satisfy Chinese and Indian claims to equality of status would have involved a revolution, and revolutions are for politicians, not administrators. Furthermore, the problem was painfully complicated. It concerned itself with a most difficult question of nationality in the case of the Chinese and of loyalty in the case of the Indians. The Chinese law of nationality declared that a Chinese was for ever a Chinese in all and every circumstance and he could not owe allegiance to any other country. As for the Indians, their fellow-countrymen in Congress in India were anti-British and were plaguing Malaya with their anti-British policy in respect of immigration. Insistence that this was a Malay country barred any claims by Indians on the ground that they were British subjects and in any case it was doubtful whether either Indians or Chinese would be interested in such rights as an independent, purely Malay State could grant.

Their ambition would be for parity between all races in a country which could guarantee the good order and the spacious opportunities to prosper enjoyed in the Malay States when a British administration was dominant. And if so, the problem bore another feature of complexity. How could a plural society of Malay, Chinese, and Indians hope to attain self-government? The differences between the three peoples are the fundamental differences between races with no common characteristics. Here is no fount of a common will which will bind people together as a nation which can govern itself. As things were, the various races in Malaya

accepted the authority of a British administration and that administration in turn accepted a responsibility to the peoples in Malaya. But, in the event of a withdrawal of the British protection leaving behind it a combination of races which enjoyed equal rights, where would be the homogeneous body to which a Government could be made responsible? The solution would seem to be that equal rights should be granted while the British administration was in the saddle and that it should be the duty of that administration to accomplish the political integration, the creation of a common will which would make of the Malays, Chinese, and Indians in Malaya one nation. So far, so good. The next fence would be the British treaties with the Malay Rulers of the day which provided that British help and advice in administration would establish a sorelyneeded regime of law and order in States which were indisputably Malay without loss of their Malay character.

The creation of a political structure where Malays could be brought down to a mere equality with other races in status and civil rights was a development of which not even a seed could be found in the treaties. An immediate conversion of the Malays to the view that no other course could be right in the circumstances which had developed was not to be expected. The initial embarrassment of acknowledging responsibility for the evolution of those circumstances would certainly affect the flow and force of any argument, and a bad quarter of an hour would be reached when failure to prepare the Malays for such a change of their political circumstances, and to safeguard their position in the government of their own country, had to be explained.

DUAL MANDATE

In effect, the discussion would become an examination of the dual mandate and the degree of success with which the British administration had met the undertaking to develop the natural resources of the country for the good of the rest of the world and, at the same time, had fulfilled its duty to the

people in whose affairs it had intervened. In the former case, the argument might enter controversy over a detail here and there but any denial of a claim that the obligation had been successfully carried out could not be sustained at all. Malaya as a source of rubber and tin had become a key country in the world's economy. The flaw lay in the difficulty which had been encountered of reconciling the process of building those great industries with the purpose of improving the condition of the Malays. The purpose and the intention to pursue it, had always been there, and if the Malays had been able or willing to play the part in the development of those industries which would joyfully have been allotted them, the grave jeopardy in which they were now placed might not have occurred. As it was, China and India supplied what Malaya herself could not provide and the great tides of immigrants deposited in Malaya a mass of settlers who were fast establishing a claim to an equal footing with her people. An account has been given of the Government's conscientious solicitude for the Malays in the Malay States. The constant stream of reforms and developments throughout the British stay—which, be it noted, had only spanned a couple of generations—was projected for the Malays, and the fact that the other races were quick where the Malays were slow to turn them to their own benefit was no fault of the administration. Notwithstanding the conservatism and inertia which held back the Malays from the full use of the help and opportunity which were thrust at them, there were many benefits they could not turn their backs on, a good vernacular education, an admirable system of land tenure, improved communications, and the unchanging background of security and peace and conscientious government. Almost in spite of themselves, they had grown more prosperous, with greater self-pride, and a good deal more to be proud of in their new-found literacy and firmer possession of both happiness and wordly goods, in their freedom from fear and want. By steady if not racking labour they had advanced far from the miserable state of their forefathers and the dwindling paternalism of the local

administration was not, in small things at least, the misfortune it could have been.

DECLINE OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

A gap between the district administration and the central Government, which had started as one of the effects of the First World War on recruitment, had been steadily widening. The days when a little colony of district officer and assistant district officer, policeman, doctor, engineer, surveyor, and forest officer lived close to the lives of the people were gone. Then, touring the district, whether on foot or with the aid of horse, boat, or bicycle, was a lengthy business which entailed absences from headquarters or rests by the wayside. This meant much friendly gossip with all sorts and conditions of men, much learnt and much imparted, the officer known to many, many known to the officer. Conditions such as these survived in a few districts, but elsewhere motor transport had transformed them. A district official could reach in a few hours a destination which before had taken him long stretches of time to arrive at, and his whole life and gradually his outlook was shaped accordingly. He fell into a hurry to get on or back, and began to feel that he had not the time, and, after a while, that he had not the inclination to chat or potter about the kampongs. The immediate task was done well enough but nothing else besides. The habit of going to see for himself gradually faded away, and then the officer would spend little time out of his office where indeed more and more paper work excused this confinement. Improved leave conditions made long stays in a district unlikely; matrimony put hobbles on many a vigorous perambulator of earlier days; as a road to promotion, service in a district seemed slow, dull, and comfortless to young men making a career.

Not only was the young British officer losing contact with the life of his district, he was also losing the opportunity to work in a district at all. He was being replaced in district administration by Malays. The old order under which a

young British officer would learn his trade thoroughly by many years' service as an assistant district officer before gaining promotion had expired. Most assistant district officers and many district officers were Malays. British officers became district officers without adequate training and lacked the old traditions and touch, as well as the special knowledge and technique, which came from long experience. In most cases the Malays were very good indeed but had not the initiative, imagination, and even the physical energy of their British forerunners; the independent mind, complete self-reliance, the proper animosity towards secretariats, the fertilizing idiosyncrasies, and the insistent local loyalty which marked a noteworthy district officer were seldom encountered, and the whole administration of the Federation was so much the poorer, beggared in spirit, infertile in fancy. The district administration was losing its salt and savour and the oracles were in the secretariats and the technical departments.

This was a serious loss in itself and it had consequences no less unfortunate. Progress was forgetting the man in the kampongs and, for that matter, larger enterprises remote from towns and the main flow of traffic. Money was voted for radio services and the Post Office beamed with pride over its ability to telephone to London. But in far too many kampongs the villagers still drew their water from the wells their forefathers had dug, or bought it in tinfuls during a season of drought, and some of the diseases which smote the countryside and spared the towns arose from unsatisfactory water supplies. Little impression had been made on malaria except in so far as it incommoded the towns. To devote attention to the concentration of humanity in towns first of all was good administration, but by now it was the turn of the countryside and there was great need for a drive to improve the conditions of the countryfolk, to take medical care to their doors, to carry the best methods of agriculture and animal husbandry into the heart of the kampongs, and to appreciate the value of the Co-operative Movement as the only hope for the

redemption of the small man from his sad state of indebtedness.

A CONSTITUTIONAL WEAKNESS IN THE FEDERATION

A cardinal fault in the constitutional machinery of the Federation was gradually coming to light and that was the absence of a central body to direct government policy. In the past hard-driving men like Sir Frank Swettenham and Sir George Maxwell had supplied ideas and momentum for new developments. But the task had grown beyond the capacity of a single man, however able and tireless, and political notions had travelled far from the concept of one-superman-power engines of government. The defects of the administrative system of the Federated Malay States were excessive concentration of control and motive power in the hands of a bureaucratic administration, lack of continuity, a certain impotency in driving home constructive criticism. Crises were resolved, reforms instituted, developments initiated purely by the Government in the sense that, though unofficial opinion might be consulted and unofficial advice taken, they were not employed as of right as part of the machinery of government. A Resident or head of department might stay long enough in office to introduce the first instalments of some new measure of progress and then depart without any certainty that his policy would survive. In the Colony there was the Executive Council to suggest to a Governor that he might possibly be mistaken, but nothing of the sort in the Federation, the Residents' Conference being a purely official body trammelled by service loyalty and discipline and wanting the liberty for effective dissent which an unofficial element enjoys. In one State certain ideas, projects, classes even, might be favoured, but not in others. In the Councils a temporizing promise that the Government would carefully consider some criticism of shortcomings or some suggestion for improvement was an imperfect guarantee of results, and insistent repetition would be likely to create the uneasy atmosphere surrounding a solecism. The need was for a

central council possessing the qualities and powers to deal with the major problems common to the Federation. A strong unofficial element would be imperative to assure continuity and confer the benefit of a crystallization of the opinions of the unofficials who sat on the various Boards and Committees of Government.

This weakness was not lost upon the Governor and High Commissioner, Sir Shenton Thomas,[1] who naturally let his mind play upon an equivalent of the Executive Council of the Colony. The geographical obstacles in the way of frequent meetings blocked an immediate decision and the arrival of war in 1939 shelved the matter. It was by no means certain that an exact copy of the Executive Council of the Colony would have sufficed; the problems of the Federated Malay States possessed a greater variety than those of the Straits Settlements, which were so much of an urban nature that Malacca and Province Wellesley rarely received more than the courteous but distrait attention accorded to a country cousin. The constitutional questions arising from the existence of a plural society of which the position of two of the main constitituents was undefined, and indeed only slowly moving into sight as a problem, did not vex the Colony with its British foundation and overwhelmingly Chinese character as much as they threatened to disturb the Federated Malay States, nor had account to be taken of the prerogatives of Malay Rulers or the pride of State Governments. But the Executive Council of the Colony seemed to move among its problems with an ease and certainty which may have come from long usage and the advantage of a tried and trusted philosophy of government, engendered by an economic system of free trade and a consequent habit of resisting attempted restrictions upon free behaviour within the law. In itself that seemed to be a very good reason for taking it as an exemplar.

[1] Governor and High Commissioner from 1934 until the Japanese capture of Malaya in 1942.

ECONOMIC POLICIES AND A FAVOURED POSITION

Naturally, the British did not go unrewarded for the efforts which had led Malaya into prosperity. Trade may have indicated where the flag should go but it followed it faithfully enough and, although exclusion of other nations was neither policy nor practice and there were large estates and mines in American, French, Italian, and Danish ownership, the vast majority of the major productive enterprises belonged to British companies. They, in turn, tended to look to British sources for their supplies, just as the Crown Agents for the Colonies, buying for the Government, favoured British manufactures. The Chinese, taking their ideas of Western industry from the British majority were inclined to copy them in their buying. The trend was emphasized when the Ottawa Conference of 1932 led to the imposition in the Federated Malay States of preferential duties favouring British and Empire goods. The preferences were not substantial enough to make much change in the shopping habits of the Americans and non-British Europeans but they served to confirm the buyers of British and Empire goods in their ways.

In Singapore and Penang, which were small islands with no room for estates of any size or for mines, matters took a different course. They were natural trading centres and they lived by the entrepôt trade. Singapore had become one of the great ports and marts of the world. Its greatness had been founded on free trade, and only free trade, its merchants argued, would sustain it. Since the early days when it had spread its business over vast areas, over China, Indo-China, Siam, the Netherlands East Indies, the Malay Archipelago, India, and Japan, its trade had suffered much shrinkage in its range. Hong Kong had intercepted its China trade, the French conquerors of Indo-China had thrown up barricades against competing nations, and the Open Door of Dutch policy had swung ajar. Everywhere, too, traders had increasingly adopted direct dealing with the manufacturers whose products they had previously imported via Singapore. But

the skill, experience, and reputation of its merchants were still unrivalled, trade travelled more smoothly than elsewhere along the grooves cut by time and use, currency was stable, the Singapore Harbour Board provided an unsurpassed service, and the port's free trade policy kept the movement of goods easy, simple, and free from friction, uncertainty, and graft of tariff-bound ports elsewhere. Trade was bound to be lost but Singapore's efficiency retained much which in the course of nature might have been deflected elsewhere and, in any case, the balance was restored by the abounding prosperity of a hinterland which lived on its exports. Singapore felt that free trade had served it so well that it never wasted a moment in plunging into battle to preserve it. The policies to which the Ottawa Conference gave anxious birth offered Malaya a bitter pill, for they imposed discrimination against the United States, easily Malaya's best customer. The Malay States were prevailed upon to accept it; the Colony swallowed the discrimination against American cars, but in the form not of a duty but an enhanced registration fee, and rejected the rest.

The Colony was consistent in its policy of granting freedom to trade. So much so, that among European firms non-British outnumbered British, much trade which had hitherto been in British hands was captured by Chinese between the wars and an increasing number of Chinese, Indian, and Japanese concerns became direct importers. It could in truth be said of the whole Malayan market that, the Ottawa duties notwithstanding, it conferred little preference on British importers and left trade to the working of a competition wherein no attention was paid to the nationality of the throat to be cut. In those lines of goods where cheapness was everything to the Asian customers, who constituted all but a very small fraction of the consumers' market and few of whom had a large spending margin, European trade was growing at the expense of British interests. The exception to this policy of the open door occurred in the nineteen-thirties and the occasion for it was the undeniable certainty that, unless halted or

hobbled, the Japanese would win a monopoly of the bazaar trade. Even here the Singapore traders who favoured a proposal to fix a quota for the imports of cotton and artificial silk goods of foreign origin were a minority composed of those whose main concern was with Lancashire goods, and in the Legislative Council the unofficial vote was cast solidly (but unsuccessfully) against the Bill introducing such a quota. The principal argument against the measure denounced its interference with the freedom of trade, but some criticism was directed against its effect upon the lean purses of the Asian consumers. In the result, they were not as seriously affected as might have been feared; the quota sufficed for essential purchases, even if more lavish buying suffered a check, and Indian and Chinese products were there to satisfy the needs of the poorer folk. The commerce of the United Kingdom was helped by the quota system but other nations competed for and shared its benefits.

Persistence in the free trade policy created a habit of mind which resented and resisted restrictions upon trade, and the habit found its way over the Colony's frontiers; but in spite of the presence in the Federated Malay States of branches of the principal Singapore firms it was never the fighting force there which it was in the Colony. The planters and miners and lawyers in the Federal Council were not well equipped to discuss economic theories and offered little resistance to policies which met with defeat in the Colony. In consequence the Federated Malay States were saddled with the duties agreed on at Ottawa and an import duty on rice which, inasmuch as they fell most heavily on the people who planned their budgets in cents, were to be deplored. The most objectionable of them were later repealed, the unwisest of all, the rice tax which was imposed in the hope that rice production would thereby be stimulated, and with the intention of spending the proceeds on measures for increasing the area under rice, having a very short life. The duties which survived were those which yielded too considerable a revenue to be easily foregone, whatever their effectiveness in forcing trade into British channels.

The British used their favoured position in Malaya with the utmost moderation. To a very large extent this policy was due to the free trade principles which governed the outlook of the Colony from the foundation of Singapore and were accepted as essential to the preservation of the prosperity of that port and Penang. They had stamped themselves so strongly on the economic system of the country that they were accepted as applicable when British interests advanced beyond the Colony's borders. A second reason was that the intervention of other nations had never been sufficiently threatening in extent to inspire reconsideration of the policy. When the Japanese trade invasion assumed the proportions of a mortal menace, the policy *was* reconsidered. How far the system would have been modified if it could have been shown to be inflicting hardship on the public cannot be determined. Formidable opposition had always been shown to any suggestion of trade restrictions by British individuals both within and outside the Government, and it is certain that policies which favoured British trading interests at a permanent and appreciable cost to the people would have been heavily attacked. The assault, however, would be likely to falter and break if the issue were to become that of saving British interests from complete submergence under a foreign trade invasion. The prosperity of the country was the achievement of British enterprise and leadership; the Chinese and others had merely come under the British wing. And that achievement had only been possible because Britain was a great Power with all the qualities and resources, the might and the influence, to create the conditions which encouraged and ensured the development of Malaya's potentialities. No nation becomes and remains a great Power on shoe-string expenditure and Britain's outgoings on this score were immense. Some return could naturally be expected and had it been good business to monopolize Malayan trade such a policy would not have been without excuse. But the question had never arisen. Taxation had always been light and the door never closed on any trader even if in the matter of textiles he had to pass through a turnstile.

ON THE EVE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

In 1939, on the eve of the war which was destined to topple it over, the British administration of Malaya presented an effective façade to the world. Most of the physical features of a modern progressive State were present and for a small, lightly-taxed country they were of creditable quality. Behind the façade devotion to the well-being of the people had evolved a system of government which served all races equally well. The codes of law neither offended nor mystified the people; the simple, lucid, and effective form of land tenure provided cheaply titles which were surveyed with expert accuracy; the help and advice of specialists were available for the settled cultivators, the interests of immigrant labour carefully safeguarded. Everywhere people could live peacefully and safely in the way they chose. Offering these things as a measure of its success was an administration which was perhaps unimaginative and conventional, certainly conscientious and incorruptible. The weaknesses which were coming to light had references mainly to political development. In the Colony the surrender of a considerable portion of their political power by the Government to representatives of the people seemed overdue; in the Federated Malay States the problem of the status of the Chinese and Indians of local domicile and loyalties *vis-à-vis* the Malays was becoming a political issue and here, too, though not so palpably as in the Colony, growth and change were shaping a need to modify the existing form of government so as to confer a much greater degree of representation upon the people whose industry and good will had made of Malaya a country vital to the world's prosperity. The Federated Malay States, again, had lost time to make up in the matter of introducing Malays into all branches of government and, in common with the Colony, must accept the urgency of devising machinery for the control of relations between employers and labour. In the realm of practical administration plans for further developments must stoop a little to regard more closely the wants of humble folk.

There was no sign that these shortcomings had begun to stir the public mind. Superior persons ascribe this to political apathy and wring their hands. A much more probable explanation is that all races found Malaya a singularly happy land and were content to leave what they considered well alone. There were still plenty of Malay grandfathers to tell tales of the old days, and the Chinese had come to it in flight from the miseries and poverty of their own land. It is hard on the administration that an age which demands an audit of Malaya's books is one which will not pass the creation of happiness as an item on the credit side. Malaya was in truth a happy land and this happiness was the achievement of the British. Certainly, there was good material to work on, the Malay with his charming graces, Chinese generosity and fortitude under adverse fate, the gentle Tamil, the dignified friendliness of the Ceylonese and, most dependable of all, the Eurasians. But beyond question, left to themselves with no one to enforce peaceful behaviour, these races would have been in frequent conflict; Malay pride, Chinese cunning, Tamil excitability spilling over in wild unreason, would have furnished the fuel for fierce combustions. But the law's insistence on the keeping of the peace had ruled long enough to mould and harden into habit the exercise of the milder qualities and, though little sympathy or liking existed between the Asian races in Malaya, this factitious code of tolerant restraint governed their mutual relations. A contribution almost as effective as the law was the high standard of behaviour of the Europeans. In the larger towns where, except when merchants spoke unto merchants and rotarians unto rotarians, the contacts between Europeans who were not government servants and Asians were few and fleeting, the exchanges called only for a display of the national code of good manners. But in the districts government officers and planters who passed their lives surrounded by and in constant touch with the Asians of the neighbourhood established much closer relations, and the British capacity for good-humoured, friendly approach to native peoples fell on fertile

soil. There is no easier job in the world of men than that of getting on friendly terms with the Malay. The reason for it may lie in his religion, the equalitarian, democratic Islam, or in his tradition and liking of personal rule, or it may just be that such is his nature; without any trace of presumption the Malay approach or response is that of man to man. The Chinese self-respect and independent spirit impose good manners on all dealings with him; the Tamil at the other extreme brings out the gentleness accorded to a likeable, gay-spirited child. In the countryside government servants come and go but the planter may be employed on the same estate for years on end and his contribution to the good feeling which existed between the European and Asian populations was a most valuable asset of British influence in Malaya. He was not a political philosopher and it would not occur to him to regard the brown, yellow, and black folk round him as men and brothers. He knew and observed the rules of good conduct towards Asians formulated through the years of British dominance but he hardly needed their guidance. A friendly, tolerant outlook, and a well-developed sense of responsibility, were the foundations of his good relations with all races round about him. Malaya is no earthly paradise for the white man; excessive heat and glare and the discomforts of a trying climate might well excuse frayed tempers and overbearing manners. That it was not so must have been due to something more than restraint and discipline; the quiet, courteous dignity of the East and the just-minded, easy friendliness of the British under such circumstances seemed to interact in perfect gearing, and the result was a happy little world of good manners and friendly understanding.

There were exceptions, of course, to this rule of general happiness. The curse of the East is the conception that a position of authority must in its very nature carry with it the right to extort tribute, and Europeans were wont to worry endlessly over the corruption of their subordinates. But in comparison with the same practices in the New World and parts of the Old, the extent of this evil was nothing out of the

way, and it stopped short at the subordinate's desk. In the meaner streets of Singapore extremes of poverty were to be found. The masses of Chinese who poured in each year left a sediment of the weak or incompetent who could not encompass a decent living. The potential miseries of the *mui tsai* had been ended by the outlawing of the system, and the employment of women and girls and children was closely supervised. But regulations and government intervention and private benevolence here as elsewhere in the world were not all-sufficing, and the oppression of hardship and poverty persisted.

In Western eyes a main source of unhappiness would be the chronic state of indebtedness in which so many of the Malays and Indians, particularly among the clerical classes in the towns, live from the time they attain the age of consent to loans until the day when their funerals impose a similar burden on their next of kin. Unrequited debts in the West carry a stigma of disreputability; in the East they seem to be a natural condition which as the debts fall due brings disagreeable consequences but no sense of shame. Until the Western view is adopted, there is little hope of improvement. Experience does not teach, and escape from debt—probably with government assistance—is treated as a basis of credit for further borrowings. If the Chinese fall into debt, it is largely because of some unsuccessful business venture and they are as likely to struggle to get out of it as any honest European. The Malay and Indian incur debt from a sudden blaze of extravagance over a wedding or funeral or high day, or from the relentless pressure of relations. Investigation of these latter cases can be a saddening experience. Appointment to government service or to an established business house is the signal for a descent of relations and the wretched clerk, himself having no taste for extravagance, finds himself struggling with a budget which has to enfold his and maybe his wife's relations. It is a custom as old as time and with immortal roots; only a convulsion of nature can destroy it. The schools teach thrift and the co-operative movement is steadily

building up a saner outlook, and by these agencies habits of extravagance may be pruned. But the only remedy for squatting relations is the evolution of relations who neither need nor want to squat. The successful advance of the co-operative movement over a wide field might achieve this in the course of not many generations while education is establishing a sense of personal dignity and pride. The evil is so dire that it demands a special campaign or at least some form of action more intense and continuous than past measures.

CHAPTER VIII

Conquest and Re-Conquest of Malaya

MALAYA'S part in the Second World War was assigned to her in clear terms; she was to produce as fast and fully as she could those vital munitions of war, rubber, and tin. To that object she must devote all her skilled manpower; men of military age considered essential to that form of war effort would not be accepted for military service. In the face of serious labour troubles inspired by Communists while Russia was out of the war and formidable shipping difficulties, the task was accomplished; to the very end ships struggled out laden with rubber and tin under skies dominated by the Japanese air forces. After the French capitulation and the revelation of ever mounting Japanese plans of aggression, the order came to reinforce Malaya's inadequate defences by conscripting and giving an intensified military training to British residents of military age, and they were gathered up in each of the years 1940 and 1941 into camps for three months' instruction. Most of the younger men were already Volunteers and with them into the camps went the Malay, Chinese, and Eurasian Volunteers of the Colony and Malay States. The British residents who were not so directed were enrolled in the many branches of the Civil Defence where in the large towns, particularly Singapore, the chief and final objective of the Japanese, they were joined by thousands of Asian Volunteers, mainly Chinese. Compulsion for Asians was only applied to the duty of fire-watching. The number of the British women in Singapore, where their services were particularly needed for war work, who were not directly engaged in duties connected with the war was small.

Many other defence measures had been required of the civil Government and were prepared or planned. Some of them had to be transformed at record speed in 1941–2 to

meet the change in the general defence plan, from one which concerned itself only with an attack on Singapore from the sea to one which recognized that the invasion was coming from the north down the peninsula. The same considerations robbed some of the schemes of their significance and others had to give way to last-minute changes in military plans. Many things were expected at the eleventh hour which had not been thought of before, and some which had in earlier days been judged unnecessary were now demanded. All suffered much from the changes, contradictions, and confusion which are the mushroom crops of military disaster.

No plans for the defence of the country had ever included the local population among the combatants save that small fraction which had been fully trained in the Malay Regiment and the Johore Military Forces, and the Volunteers, who were in the Colony, British, Chinese, and Eurasians (and for a while Indians, until discarded as unsatisfactory) and in the Federation, Johore, and Kelantan British and Malay. As a Crown Colony, the Straits Settlements had always made a defence contribution to the British Government, argument regarding its size being from time to time an enjoyable indulgence of the Unofficial Members of Council as well as a trial of strength. The latest figure had been $4 million in 1941, plus a special war contribution of $2 million. The Federated Malay States had presented a battleship, flying boats, and sites for military undertakings and had in the early years of British intervention in the Malay States maintained, first, a battalion of Malay States Guides (who were northern Indians) and, after their disbandment in the years following the First World War, had supported in their place a battalion of Burma Rifles or an Indian regiment. In addition, and with a view to ending this resort to Indian troops, the Federated Malay States had founded the Malay Regiment of Malay regulars with British and Malay officers.[1]

[1] British Malaya contributed over $100 million towards the cost of Imperial defence between the two World Wars (see *British Rule in Eastern Asia*, p. 90).

The provision of military forces on a larger scale from the local peoples of the Federation had never been contemplated. Such a conception would not only have violated long-established theories and practice of British colonial rule, and entailed a social and financial revolution in Malaya, but it would have been a most unwelcome innovation for the Malays and so rude a disruption of their customs and ideas as to provoke acute discontent and almost certainly resistance. The Rulers and the Malays themselves had always challenged any idea of giving the Chinese and Indians in their States even the military training which Volunteers underwent. As regards the outer world the promise of British protection was assumed to mean the reality of protection and if, as the British had undertaken, they some day withdrew, making their bow to the principle of self-government, the Malays were not prepared to trust their fate to other races, trained in and equipped with arms. The Chinese were not then a warlike race and their contempt for the profession of soldiering had been a long tradition. But they also were a most adaptable race, and capable of conversion to other judgements: long familiarity with the Western view that a military career was an honourable profession might easily expel the traditions of another land and race and age. The Chinese Volunteers of the Colony took pride not only in their smart efficiency but in the honourable standing which their enrolment as Volunteers conferred on them. They were, it is true, British subjects by birth—'the King's Chinese' as they liked to call themselves—but in the Federation there were Chinese of the second generation of life-long residence whose political and social views were steadily approximating to those of the British Protecting Power. The Malays, therefore, were taking no chances.

To the Malays themselves modern warfare was repugnant and horrifying. As brave as any man in the circumstances of their lives which abounded in the perils of a tropical country, they had in their day showed proficiency in their own method of fighting—a proficiency in jungle warfare which on

more than one occasion had rescued British and Indian troops from a floundering predicament of failure—and they had made themselves feared as pirates. But enforcement of law-abiding ways and long years of peaceful living had extinguished those fires. It may be they would have contrived to go to war again as their forbears had waged it, but the transition from the deep quiet of their lives under British protection to the din and destruction of modern war would be too violent for them to endure. This indeed was shown as the Japanese advanced down the peninsula; the Malay Regiment did much to redeem a bad start, but the disbandment of the Malay Volunteers became desirable. The course of the Japanese attack showed the necessity for the highest degree of training. The British troops who had it fought well, the others not so well. Doubtless it was some such consideration which held back the Volunteers from the brunt of the fighting in most instances, and would explain the failure of the large native armies of the Netherlands East Indies against the Japanese in Java. Few ideas have been so baseless as the theory that arming the local population would have influenced the course of the war.

The smart of overwhelming defeat produced a somewhat hysterical reaction in which talk of fifth column activity and of treachery rose high. Those with a real knowledge of the country and her peoples had always been anxious about the capacity of the native population to withstand the strain of contact with modern warfare unless ultimate victory at not too distant a date could be foreseen, and they could find little in the history of the races of South East Asia to give a favourable answer. Only a very obtuse complacency could expect that sympathy and admiration for the achievements of another Eastern race would produce no double-dealings, or could overlook the probability that in Malaya as elsewhere there were men who had their price. That help was given to the Japanese in their advance by Malays, Chinese, and Indians was not surprising—Japanese response to non-co-operation was so swift and violent that an alternative

choice was only for heroes to assert. But such evidence of deliberate treachery as came to hand involved a very small minority; they acted from motives to be expected in such circumstances, grudges against past punishments or hopes or maybe promises of rank and power under a Japanese regime. It is of considerable significance that where British rule had been brought into closest contact with the people and had thereby found opportunity to establish friendly relations, evidence of premeditated disloyalty was slight in extent and unimportant in incidence. The Chinese, whose bitter hatred of the Japanese rendered unthinkable any inclination to help them, were misjudged because of the presence in the country of Formosans with whom they could easily be confused.

Events proved that there was a large fund of courage and loyalty upon which the administration could draw, whether of government servants, of the thousands who manned and stayed with the Civil Defence forces, of responsible citizens of all races and the heads of communities, or of influential Malays and Chinese up-country who urged the British officials to leave, arguing that the lot of those who continued to co-operate with or serve the administration, or who gave visible signs of the constancy of their friendship, would indeed be hard. The feelings of the humbler folk were harder to discern. But apathy was not one of them. It is more likely that shock and fear governed their emotions. The Malays were frightened out of their senses. They had believed in the invincibility of British arms, and the destruction of that belief and the sight of British soldiers and civilians always falling back before the enemy shattered their trust and confidence. A people of martial instincts and fighting spirit might not have lost their courage, but whatever lack these ordinary people of Malaya revealed they would seem to have shared with the inhabitants of the European countries overrun by the Nazis.

It is possible the Malays responded less acutely to the disastrous course of events because they felt that the war was

being fought over their heads. Theirs was the attitude of men who had always been taught to expect a special care. And the inevitable artificiality of the relationship between an alien rule and the native ruled was shown to have an inherent brittleness. In spite of signs that among the better-educated classes the attachment of the Malay to his sovereign was weakening, it was for them, as well as in the Malay masses, a stronger political sentiment than anything felt for British officialdom. For his Sultan the Malay had a deep instinctive feeling of hereditary allegiance, for the British administrator respect, trust, and even gratitude arising out of recognition of his integrity, his evenhanded justice, his obvious concern for the welfare of the Malay. But the approach of the Malay to the Ruler and to the British official were fundamentally different. The authority of the raja had roots in heredity, custom, and in a commonalty of race, religion and sustaining soil. The British official might win the highest esteem in the performance of his duties, and personal affection in his social contacts, but he remained an alien official for all that. And now for the Malay the regime with which he had been well content was in ruins, and he was left wondering what the new order of things portended. For the moment there remained above the flood of disaster the old marks of his history through the centuries, his religion, his customs and his Rulers and, anchored in that survival of tradition and usage, he could fall back upon his personality as a Malay and perhaps ride out the storm.

The case of the Chinese was very different. The Japanese behaviour in China had taught them what to expect and the consequences of defeat were so terrifying that, even though they put on the armour of stoic fortitude which they seem always to be able to assume under adversity, resentment, disappointment mounting in many instances to something more severely critical, even a sense of betrayal, were but natural emotions. The gifts of the Chinese to war charities had been on an impressive scale and tendered as a vote of confidence, and their response to official requests for co-oper-

ation, although slow and lumbering because of their tribal separatism, had been valuable in both substance and spirit; their young people in their thousands had displayed both courage and stamina in the civil defence of a city all but helpless under aerial and artillery battering. But they had not the Malay's consolation that at least his country, his way of life, and his hereditary attachments were left to him. In the hearts of most of the Chinese in Malaya China was the homeland, and what suffering was coming to them they must endure in a land which there was no instinct to regard as their own and which offered, therefore, no comfort of old associations and memories, no sense of a vast neighbourliness in tribulation. There was little to soften the hard feelings which not reasonably, but quite naturally, must have arisen as the world they had built in compensation for a sojourn in a strange land fell apart. Three and a half years later the British were welcomed back with an overwhelming enthusiasm of gladness; it could have been otherwise if the Japanese in that long period had played adroitly upon the forlorn and sore feelings which had mastered all the Asians when Singapore fell to Japan in February 1942.

RETURN TO MALAYA

During the three and a half years of the Japanese occupation there was much planning of new policies for a liberated Malaya, and much speculation as to the nature of the Government's plans. It was appreciated that the problems which had been taking shape in the years before the war now called for a greater urgency of attack and that for some of them only radical solutions would satisfy. At the same time an obligation was felt to accord the domiciled people of the country a generosity of treatment which would confess contrition that, through adverse fortunes of war, they should have been left exposed to the sufferings from which protection had always been promised and would, too, admit a debt for past loyalties and submissions. The Government's statement of policy, made in October 1945 and published as a

White Paper in January 1946,[1] was not a reflection of those views.

It had the aspect, whatever the underlying intention, of an attack upon the Malays and seemed to be planning a Malaya in which the Malay Rulers would suffer belittlement and the Malay people would exchange their favoured position as the people of the country for one in which they must either sink or swim. His Majesty's Government announced their objects to be (*a*) to create a Malayan Union for all the separate Governments of Malaya while excluding Singapore, (*b*) to invent a Malayan Union citizenship which would enfold on an equal footing all—Malays, Chinese, Indians, etc., alike—who could claim to belong to the country by birth or by a suitable period of residence, and (*c*) in order to bring about these changes to give to His Majesty the King what His Majesty had not possessed before, jurisdiction in the Malay States. A special representative of the British Government was sent to Malaya to conclude new treaties and, at the same time, to examine the behaviour of the Rulers during the Japanese occupation and, where any one of them had 'so compromised himself in relations with the enemy as to be no longer prima facie worthy of being recognised as Ruler by His Majesty's Government',[2] to recommend a substitute. It was an unhappy combination of duties and the Government had only themselves to blame for the uncharitable construction which was put upon them. The methods of approach used by the Special Representative were shielded by legality but nobody who had held high office in Malaya, or had worked in the service of the Rulers, would regard them as the proper way of securing the Rulers' consent to a revolutionary policy which would destroy their old proud standing and force acceptance of measures which, because they were so injurious to the Malays, must bring upon them the anger and scorn of their

[1] *Malayan Union and Singapore.* London, H.M.S.O. Cmd. 6724 (1946). *Malayan Union and Singapore, Summary of Proposed Constitutional Arrangements* London, H.M.S.O. Cmd. 6749 (1946).

[2] *Report on a Mission to Malaya.* By Sir Harold MacMichael. London, H.M.S.O. Colonial no. 194 (1946), p. 4.

own people. Their position, too, was attacked from within as well as without. Not only must they surrender their supreme authority to the King but they were no longer to preside over their State Council or even to attend it. They were to be allowed to preside over a Malay Advisory Council which would offer advice on matters concerning the Malay religion, and they would enjoy the dignity of membership of a Council of Sultans presided over by the Governor and attended also by the Chief Secretary, Attorney-General, and Financial Secretary, the functions of which were to consider legislation relating solely to matters of Muhammadan religion and to advise the Governor on any subject which he might refer to the Council or any which he would permit a Sultan to propose for discussion. The Bills were to be passed by the Legislative Council, that is to say, the main body of law no longer required the assent of the Rulers; assent became the Governor's province. The extent of the knowledge and understanding of Malaya's problems can well be gauged by the provision that the Governor should preside over discussions affecting Malay religion! The proposal not only offended the Muhammadans but destroyed the essence of the former relations between the British Government and the Malay sovereigns which left undisturbed the royal authority in matters relating to the Malay religion and custom.

Similar insensibility marred the presentation of the case for a Union. The local administrative conveniences which would arise from a Union were mentioned with the appearance of greater emphasis and priority than the need for such an arrangement dictated by international developments, actual or discernible. The advantages of the Union would be there, certainly, but neither in extent nor importance sufficient to compensate for the political wounds it would inflict. The independence of the Unfederated Malay States would be ended and, with it before long, the preservation of a Malay character and way of life and the struggle to govern by and for Malays. If the true reason for dissolving the old order could be shown to be first, an overwhelming need, occasioned

by the trend of international affairs, to create a national entity which could speak as and for Malaya in any assembly and, secondly, the requirement of an organization which could drive towards self-government at full speed, a salve for offended pride might have been offered where there would be none in the contemplation of fewer customs barriers or uniformity in motor taxation.

But the principal cause of offence was the invention of the Malayan Union citizenship which His Majesty's Government intended to create by Order in Council along the following lines: Malayan Union citizenship would be acquired by

(*a*) persons born in the territory of the Union or of the Colony of Singapore before the date on which the Order came into force, who were ordinarily resident in the Union or Singapore on that date;

(*b*) persons who at the date on which the Order in Council became operative would have been ordinarily resident in those territories for ten years during the fifteen years preceding 15 February 1942 (the period of the Japanese occupation being disregarded).

It would also be possible for persons to be granted certificates of naturalization as Malayan Union citizens provided they had resided in those territiories for one year before making application and for a further period of four years during the previous eight years. Those acquiring the new citizenship otherwise than by birth would be required to affirm allegiance to the Malayan Union; British subjects acquiring the new citizenship would not thereby lose their British nationality; and only with the consent of the Governor could any person who was not a Malayan Union citizen be admitted to public office or membership of central and local councils.

In this way the old political status of the Malays which preferred them above all others in the matter of civil rights and privileges was to be destroyed, drowned in the deep waters of the new citizenship. Hitherto the British Govern-

ment had been firm in its insistence that the Malay States formed the country of the Malays and had maintained that position, consciously, sub-consciously, and unconsciously, by preferential treatment. Its policy had been dictated by a conscientious regard for the binding quality of treaties, a recognition that its economic policies had flooded the country with aliens, and a realization that without protection Malaya would soon cease to be the country of the Malays and would in fact become, what casual observation had mockingly called it, another province of China. There was the rub. Of the two million Chinese in Malaya it was quite certain that only a few thousand would put loyalty to Malaya and her Government before loyalty to China. So, too, the Indians. The Malays, therefore, were to find themselves on a political parity with Chinese and Indians whose allegiance was owed to China or India and whose aspiration was to retire enriched to those countries. The argument that the Malays, as soon as they fell into a numerical minority, could no longer claim to retain their favoured position[1] had much force, but its morality would always look queer if that position were to be undermined or destroyed without a considerable effort to educate the Malays to hold their own against any competition for supremacy, and without long notice that they must consider their inherited rights under challenge.

The gravamen of the charge against His Majesty's Government's policy lay as much in this hasty, overriding treatment of complex problems as in behaviour which seemed to carry a threat of virtual annexation of the Protected States. The plan to usurp the Rulers' jurisdiction and to subordinate

[1] In the House of Lords during a debate on these new constitutional proposals Lord Elibank asked: '. . . Will it [the status of citizenship] permit the Chinese, if they become more numerous, virtually to take over the Malay State? Is there anything to secure the Malayans themselves in their own heritage? I foresee that the Chinese, prolific and numerous as they are, may in time subordinate the Malays to themselves as a race'. Speaking for the Government, Viscount Addison replied 'I think the noble Viscount knows enough about British ideals and methods of government to understand that it is not our policy to establish privileged minorities. We do not go in for that sort of thing . . .' *Hansard: Lords* 19 December 1945, col. 940.

them firmly to the Governor and, in addition, to impose a revolutionary policy threatening the political existence of the Malays, without opportunity for argument, was naturally shocking to a people who in the seventy years of their relationship with the British Crown had never been given reason to fear such treatment. But, strangely enough, it was the proposals for a common citizenship, which indubitably had much to commend them, that aroused immediate concern and hostility. The question was why the Government had displayed so much haste. The problem was only just coming over the horizon in the years immediately preceding the Japanese attack and it had never been the subject of any protest or representation by the Chinese. It was not a burning question demanding immediate solution and it was not a simple, uncomplicated matter which could be settled by a quick, easy answer.

For the few thousands whose claim to greater political privileges could hardly be denied there were hundreds of thousands whose claim would fail under the test of allegiance or even interest, and a similar number who would not be concerned to make any claim at all. Here was a question which called for ventilation but which had so many varied aspects, and was so full of contradictions and doubt, that it seemed to cry out for anxious, impartial examination by an authoritative body, dissociated from Colonial Office, from Malays, Chinese or other interested parties, whose findings would carry sufficient weight to overawe all but the most sincere and substantial objections.

The best that could be said for the proposals of the Colonial Office was that at a later date they might be proved right. As it was, their mistakes of comprehension and timing sapped their strength to stand up to fire. In Malaya the proposal provoked the fierce hostility of the Malays, who—man, woman and child—put on the white band of mourning, burst into a political activity, and displayed a capacity for political demonstrations and oratory of which they had given no sign before in all their long history. The Malay women

staggered all conversant with Malay conventions by coming out of their shy seclusion to lead processions and address public meetings. The warm, excited enthusiasm with which the Malays had recently celebrated the return of the British was quenched, and an angry mood of resentment, with reproaches of perfidy, flared up. In the House of Commons such a storm of criticism beat about the heads of the Government as to make shipwreck of the new policy certain.[1] Months later a much modified set of proposals emerged which are now the new constitution of Malay Federation.

This abortive attempt at a new order has been treated at length because of two important developments which flowed out of it. The first was altogether unhappy, the emergence of frank hostility between Malays and Chinese, a feeling which the Japanese had assiduously cultivated without, however, reaching the time of harvest. The other might properly inspire a feeling of gratitude to the Colonial Office, even though that Department can scarcely have been conscious of its well-doing. The attack upon their ancient rights had made the Malays politically conscious, had set them talking politics on platforms, had given them political ideas for which they were ready to fight, and stirred in them an interest in governmental policies which would be bound to transform them from sleepy beneficiaries of a privileged position into champions of their rights and critics of those who tried to destroy them. Perhaps in journeying along this road they might come to learn that rights often go with obligations, and that privilege sooner or later will be challenged and must be deserved.

The next move of the Secretary of State for the Colonies did much to retrieve a dangerous situation and recover lost ground. While refusing to abandon the two main objects of its policy—the establishment of a strong central government and the creation of a common citizenship for all who regarded Malaya as their homeland—the British Government was willing now to do what it would have been well

[1] See *Hansard: Commons*, 8 March 1946.

advised to do in the first place, consult Malay opinion with a view to resolving the difficulties which the Malays found in accepting the new ideas. A Working Committee was appointed which consisted of representatives of the Government on the one hand, and the Rulers and the largest Malay political party, the United Malay Nationalist Organization as representing moderate Malay opinion on the other. Their findings were presented for examination to a Consultative Committee composed of representatives of non-Malay communities. The suggestions for amendments made by the Consultative Committee went back to the Working Committee for study, and their recommendations in turn were considered by a Plenary Conference of the Government and the Rulers and other Malay representatives. The scheme which finally emerged from these processes was accepted by the British Government in the conviction that it would 'meet the present needs of the people' and 'provide that stable basis for further political development which the country so urgently requires'.[1] The new proposals were based on:

(*a*) the requirement of a strong central government for Malaya so as to ensure the economical and effective administration of all matters of importance to the welfare and progress of the country as a whole;
(*b*) the need for maintaining the individuality of each of the Malay States and of the Settlements;
(*c*) the provision, on a long view, of the means and prospects of development in the direction of ultimate self-government;
(*d*) the need for a common form of citizenship which would enable political rights to be extended to all those persons who regard Malaya as their real home and as the object of their loyalty;
(*e*) the necessity for safeguarding the special position and rights of the Malays.

They provided for a Federation Agreement between His Majesty and the Rulers, each of whom would also make an Agreement with His Majesty relating to his own State. Subsequently each State would ratify both the Federation and the State Agreements. Under the Agreements His Majesty

[1] *Federation of Malaya, Summary of Revised Constitutional Proposals*, Cmd. 7171, (London, H.M.S.O. 1947), p. 4.

would retain complete control of the defence and external affairs of the Federation, and the Rulers would preserve the prerogatives, powers, and jurisdiction enjoyed prior to the Japanese occupation. The State Agreements also provided that 'the Rulers desire, and His Majesty agrees, that it shall be a particular charge upon the Government of the State to provide for and encourage the education and training of the Malay inhabitants of the State so as to fit them to take a full share in the economic progress, social welfare and Government of the State and of the Federation.' Among the special responsibilities attached to the executive authority of the High Commissioner were those of protecting the rights of any Malay State or any Settlement and the rights, powers, and dignity of the Rulers, and of safe-guarding the special position of the Malays and 'the legitimate interests of other communities.'

The main features of the provisions for Federal citizenship were:

(1) *Automatic Acquisition of Federal Citizenship*

From and after the appointed day the following persons would automatically be Federal citizens:

(*a*) any subject, whenever born, of His Highness the Ruler of any State;
(*b*) any British subject born at any time in either of the Settlements, who is permanently resident, (that is to say, has completed a continuous period of 15 years' residence) anywhere in the territories to be comprised in the Federation;
(*c*) any British subject born at any time, in any of the territories now to be comprised in the Federation whose father, either
  (*i*) was himself born in any of these territories; or
  (*ii*) has resided therein for a continuous period of not less than 15 years;
(*d*) any person born at any time in any of the territories now to be comprised in the Federation, who habitually speaks the Malay language and conforms to Malay custom;
(*e*) any person born in any of these territories at any time, both of whose parents were born in and have been resident in any of such territories for a continuous period of not less than 15 years; and

(*f*) any person whose father is, at the date of that person's birth, a Federal citizen.

The expression 'subject of His Highness the Ruler' of any State here means any person who belongs to an aboriginal tribe resident in that State or any Malay born in that State or born elsewhere of a father who was at the time of the birth of such person a subject of the Ruler of that State; or any person naturalized as a subject of that Ruler.

The word 'Malay' here means a person who habitually speaks the Malay language; and professes the Muslim religion; and conforms to Malay custom.

(2) *Acquisition of Federal Citizenship by Application*

The High Commissioner might grant a certificate conferring the status of a Federal citizen on any person who applied therefor and satisfied the High Commissioner that either:

(*i*) he was born in any of the territories now to be comprised in the Federation and had been resident in any one or more of such territories for not less than 8 out of the 12 years preceding his application; or

(*ii*) he had been resident in any one or more of those territories for not less than 15 out of the 20 years immediately preceding his application;

and that 'he is of good character, possesses an adequate knowledge of the Malay or English language, has made a declaration of permanent settlement in the prescribed form, and if his application is approved, that he is willing to take the citizenship oath.'[1]

The Federation Agreement established, under the protection of Great Britain, a Federation consisting of the nine Malay States and the Settlements of Penang and Malacca, and a Federal Government comprising a High Commissioner, a Federal Executive Council to aid and advise him, and a Federal Legislative Council. It recorded the desire of His Majesty and the Rulers that political development should follow a road leading to self-government, a first step to that end being the introduction of legislation for the election of members to the various legislatures.

The executive authority of the Federal Government would extend to the matters on which it was empowered to

[1] ibid, p. 11.

legislate and would be exercised by the High Commissioner, either directly or by delegation to the proper authorities. It would be within his province to delegate Federal executive functions to the Governments of States, the Ruler concerned consenting, or to Settlement Governments, and within his power to give directions to those Governments.

The Federal Executive Council was to consist of the High Commissioner as President with three *ex officio* members, not less than four official members and not less than five or more than seven unofficial members, of whom not less than two in the former event and three in the latter would be Malays.

The Federal Legislative Council would consist of the High Commissioner as President, three *ex officio* members, eleven official members, the nine Presidents of the State Councils in the Malay States and one representative from each Settlement Council who would count as unofficial members, and fifty other unofficial members, allocated thus: Labour 6; Planting, rubber and oil-palms, 6 (Public companies 3, proprietary estates and small holdings 3); Mining 4; Commerce 6; Agriculture and Husbandry (excluding rubber and oil-palms) 8; Professional, Educational and Cultural 4; Settlements 2; States 9; Eurasians 1; Ceylonese 1; Indian 1; Chinese 2. It was estimated that this allocation, made mainly on a non-racial basis, would be likely to give Malays 22 seats, Chinese 14, Indians 5, Europeans 7, Ceylonese 1, Eurasians 1. The nine Presidents of the State Councils would be Malays; the two representatives of the Settlement Councils might be members of any community. The official languages would be English and Malay. The High Commissioner would have power reserved to give effect to any Bill or motion which the Council failed to pass.

It would be the duty of the High Commissioner to cause to be sent to each of the Rulers, before publication in the Gazette, every Bill to be presented to the Legislative Council, other than those making formal amendments of Federal law. Every new draft salary scheme for Federal establishments, and every draft scheme for the creation or substantial

reorganization of a Federal department, must also be sent to the Rulers and might be discussed in the Conference of Rulers. This latter body, consisting of all the Rulers of the Malay States, is provided for in the Federation Agreement. It would meet whenever necessary under the chairmanship of the Ruler chosen by the Conference, and would meet the High Commissioner at least three times a year. A special provision of great importance, apart from the general duty of the High Commissioner to explain to the Rulers matters of importance to their States and to ascertain their views, was that the High Commissioner should consult the Conference of Rulers from time to time upon the immigration policy of the Federal Government, more especially if any major change were contemplated. Should the majority of Rulers oppose such a change, the proposal was to be referred to the Legislative Council, for confirmation or rejection on a resolution on which only unofficials could vote, though all might speak.

The States were to set up constitutional machinery similar to that of the Federal Government, a State Executive Council and a Council of State, the second of which would be empowered to make laws which did not encroach upon the legislative powers of the Federal Government, or in respect of which the Federal Legislative Council had delegated law-making powers. The State Councils could legislate on matters relating to the Muhammadan religion and Malay custom. Bills passed by the Council would require the assent of the Ruler and he would possess reserved power to pass any Bill which the Council of State failed to pass. The Ruler, too, would exercise the executive authority in the State, directly or through State officers in his name.

As regards finance, the States and Settlements would be enabled to meet their commitments by block grants voted by the Federal Legislative Council.

These Agreements, for which the Malays were largely responsible, display considerable skill of statesmanship. While consulting their own interests, the Malays kept to the course marked out by the Colonial Office. The Rulers'

position of authority was restored to them, writ large. The Union was rejected but the Federation which replaced it was shaped to provide the strong central government the British Government required. Non-Malays were to be taken into a Federal citizenship on terms which in the circumstances were not ungenerous. Those provisions of the British Government's policy which had not been contested, the proposals for a more democratic form of government, were carried further to build a much broader base of unofficial influence.

The case for a Federation was that it fell more easily into the line of succession of previous attempts to bring about a concentration of the Malay States and undoubtedly preserved in some measure the individuality of each State which a Union would have strangled. The strong protest of Penang against inclusion in the original Union, and later in the Federation, and the subsequent movement to secede are supported, if only Penang island is in question, by the identity of its condition with Singapore. But some form of combination with the Malay States offers the best future for Malacca and Province Wellesley. They are both agricultural areas, filling the role of producers, and the interest taken in them by the authorities of the great distribution centres of Singapore and Penang, at all times spasmodic and *distrait*, arose more from the pricks of conscience than from the understanding which flows from natural association.

The attitude adopted towards the admission of non-Malays to a common citizenship disclosed a revolution of thought. Only a few years before any suggestion of such a concession would have been anathema to the Malays, and it probably was so still, but real statesmanship had faced the facts and evolved what was undoubtedly a magnanimous settlement. It opened a door equally to the minority who could truthfully affirm that Malaya was their real home and the object of their loyalty and to the many who could make no such claim. The key for the latter was an ingenious provision which must be unique in international law. It declared the new form of citizenship to be not a nationality in itself. It

was an addition to, not a subtraction from, nationality. It would give a man a vote, even admit him to a Council while in Malaya but would also free him on his return for good to China or India from any feeling of embarrassment arising from a life-long identity as a Malayan citizen. Better evidence of a determination to overcome such difficulties as the Chinese law of 'Once Chinese, always Chinese' cannot be imagined.

The reaction of the Chinese did not show good political sense. Instead of accepting these concessions as the fruits of victory in the first battle of a campaign which might be long but which, through their power to dispose of immense reserves, they would certainly win, they launched protests, organized a hartal, and announced an intention of boycotting the Councils. The Chinese mind is not at home in demonstrations of this sort. Fanaticism is not a trait of the Chinese in Malaya and good sense is always breaking in. The wiser heads won the day and the Chinese fell back upon one of their greatest assets, the capacity for patient waiting which has seldom failed to get what it wants.

CHAPTER IX

Rehabilitation

ALTHOUGH Malaya had not suffered such havoc of war as had shattered many of the battlefields of the Second World War, there was a considerable task of restoration to be undertaken as the result of the Japanese occupation. Some of the neglect which had reduced Malaya's public services to a broken-down machine was the consequence of the tight Anglo-American economic blockade, but more was due to the general inadequacy of the Japanese regime. The returning British administration, using its inherited skills and long experience, has made remarkable progress in repairing and in many cases rebuilding a collapsing structure, but giving new health to a sick soul is a long business, and deeply depressing in so far as it is a task of recreating a moral atmosphere which had been the cumulative product of generations of discipline. Conquest of the obstacles encountered in the first two years made stiff demands on both patience and determination. Inability to satisfy the hunger for all the good things of the past carried the country in a rebound from demonstrative joy at liberation from the Japanese towards unfavourable comparisons with the Japanese regime. The phase was not long-lived, but it tried the patience of the administration. Although the Chinese and Indians had shown no excitement over the British Government's first proposals for a common citizenship, their resentment over the withdrawal of that policy, following the anger it had provoked among Malays, lessened hopes of a harmony of spirit and co-operative effort in the work of restoration. All communities were upset by the contrast between the treatment of Burma (which had crowned a lively history of disloyalty during the war by a decision, only made possible by the victory of British arms, to leave the Commonwealth) with that

of Malaya which entertained no such unfriendly ideas. While Burma was given a handsome gift and a substantial loan, Malaya had to show temper to induce a thin, grudging flow of financial help. The peoples of Malaya might have accepted the very meagre ration of their staple food, rice, with better grace if they had not discovered that the ration for the Japanese was much greater than theirs, and if they had not resented the incursion by the Indian Government into the Siamese rice market which had always been a main source of supply for Malaya but not India. The reasons for these allocations were too remote and mysterious to win the concurrence of the Malayan peoples, especially as there seemed to be nobody in authority who could explain them.

But these grievances faded away with better times, and it was political ills which had made roots or had developed during the Japanese occupation which survived to give trouble. The Japanese had treated the Malays with favour as the true owners of the country and had encouraged the Indians, responsive to the spells of Subha Chandra Bhose, to enlist in the Indian National Army, which was to fight for the liberation of India from British domination. They had viciously persecuted the Chinese as enemies wherever met. The Chinese who had taken to the jungle and there trained themselves in Communist doctrines and discipline regarded the Malays as collaborators and informers and, in the interval between the Japanese surrender and the general establishment of control by the British Army, murderously attacked Malays in their kampongs. All through the occupation Chinese bandits had used the Resistance movement as a cloak to murder and rob. The Malays in many cases retaliated and, by the time of the return of the British administration, relations between the Malay and Chinese communities were bad. Feelings were further embittered by argument over the treatment by the Colonial Office of the problem of citizenship.

Another evil legacy from the Japanese occupation was the jungle growth of all forms of corruption. Bribery and cheating

had been commonplaces of business with the Japanese Government and every government department nurtured some variety or other of racketeering. The old gambling instincts of the Chinese had flared out again in organized lotteries and public gaming places, and prostitution was a flourishing business. The Japanese victory in 1942 and surrender in 1945 offered opportunities for looting which did much to undermine conceptions of honesty, and the bridge back to good administration which the British Army of liberation offered had many rotten places.

The British administration found itself faced with debased standards of morality such as had never troubled any of its predecessors and was hampered in its heavy tasks by an inability to count on honest, disinterested co-operation by the people. Prolonged difficulties in obtaining materials, tools, and equipment slowed down the reconstruction which the Railways and Public Works Departments had to undertake, and every important department was crippled by lack of staff.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

The Medical Department returned to comparatively undamaged buildings but found a serious shortage of their essential furniture, fittings, and equipment. The local output of doctors, nurses, and dressers upon which the Department had always been able to rely before the war had dried up under Japanese management, and the available staffs, far from encouraging plans for expansion, were inadequate for replacements. Thus handicapped, the Medical Department had to attend to a vastly greater amount of ill-health than it had encountered in its previous history. The poor, restricted diet and other privations, and the abandonment of many health measures under the Japanese regime had affected the health of the people most injuriously. Anti-malarial work and even quinine treatment had been badly neglected or even dropped, and new breeding-grounds for mosquitos had been created by uncontrolled opening up of land for the growing of

foodstuffs. The careful conservancy and street-cleaning systems which the British had built up had ceased to exist; even the excellent water supplies of the past had deteriorated for want of proper treatment. The concentration of labour demanded by the Japanese military authorities had not been attended by health precautions and had led to a heavy mortality among the labourers. Typhoid and enteric had increased, venereal disease was almost a plague, the remarkable effects of the campaigns against yaws had been wiped out, and diseases which, before the Japanese occupation, had been largely mastered, such as smallpox, cholera, beri-beri, and tropical typhus had returned in strength. The ravages of malaria had reduced Malaya to the unhappy state from which decades of diligent health measures and medical treatment by the British had rescued it. The incidence of pulmonary pneumonia was notably high and the extent of tuberculosis was a disturbing feature of the general ill-health. The condition of the children caused grave concern; poor nutrition showed itself among a large proportion of the town children and the physique and development of most of them were deplorable. Malnutrition was universal among estate labourers and indeed it could be said that all classes of the population were suffering from under-nourishment in some degree.

Nevertheless, the task of the Medical Departments of the Colony and the Federation of Malaya goes far beyond the recovery of lost ground. By 1949 that had been largely achieved and, indeed, in its record of good health, 1949 was one of the brightest years in the medical history of both territories. Excellent progress had been made in restoring control over malaria and raising water supplies to their former high standards. Although malnutrition is still a factor which gravely affects the health of the poorer classes, it is still no longer a universal source of anxiety and the tuberculosis which sprang from it with a widespread incidence unknown before the Japanese occupation is now a special concern of medical authorities. The 200 beds in Singapore devoted to

the treatment of the disease in 1946, which were many more than those found necessary before the war, have been increased to 500, and a domiciliary feeding scheme supplements in an effective manner the hospital treatment. The other diseases over which control had been lost through Japanese neglect are steadily diminishing, only leprosy showing an increase. In both Singapore and the Federation the school dental service has been reinstituted and in Singapore immunization against diphtheria is now accepted as a precaution by a steadily increasing proportion of the population. The only exception to the satisfactory state of medical supplies is the shortage of radiological equipment in the Federation. The gap between demand and supply in hospital treatment had been lessened by reorganization.

But, remarkable as this process of recovery has been, the growing public demand for medical treatment shows very plainly that it is far from being enough. Singapore furnishes figures which illustrate the new tasks. Where some 88,000 out-patients had been treated in 1938, the numbers are now approaching 400,000. Three thousand more cases than in 1938 have been admitted to hospitals, and maternity work had doubled. The Federation is faced with increased demands of like proportions. The voluntary organizations and committees composed of members of the public which have come into existence to aid and advise on such subjects as nutrition, venereal disease, tuberculosis, leper welfare, and blood transfusion not only express a growing appreciation of Western medicine but probably stimulate it. Certainly, plans for greatly extended medical services have become necessary and both administrations are making them.

Singapore has a ten-year plan which aims at doubling the accommodation in the existing hospitals and building a sanatorium for tubercular cases, a home for mental defectives and a leper asylum. Dispensaries, both static and mobile, are to be increased in number to meet the needs which now proclaim themselves, and the improvements in the water supplies in the rural areas already made are to be multiplied

until all the villages enjoy a supply of municipal water. The Federation puts first an extension of rural health and medical services through the agencies of rural health centres. It proposes to tackle the growth of tuberculosis by establishing first of all clinics and dispensaries for out-patients; the erection of institutions for treatment and isolation homes will follow. The need for the the development of specialized medical services in the general hospitals, especially maternity hospitals, is recognized, as well as for the resumption of the plans for building new hospitals at Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, and Seremban which were in hand just before the war.

Lack of accommodation is not, however, the only brake upon progress. Shortage of staff is an equal obstruction. The march of events since the return to Malaya has disclosed the necessity to look for recruits to the medical staff within the country and less than hitherto to the United Kingdom. But no appreciable flow of local graduates can be expected until 1953 and a sufficient supply to fill all vacancies until much later. Financial considerations are likely to weigh heavily in the future, too, for large capital expenditure will breed costs of annual maintenance which the Governments may not be able to sustain alone. Even now the dental services supply an illustration of these financial problems. Where Singapore requires some thirty dental surgeons for the school dental services, now there are only two; in the Federation a system of Dental Public Health Sisters has been initiated in an attempt to meet needs with which only a large staff of dental surgeons such as the country cannot hope to afford could properly cope.

EDUCATION

Another public service which the Japanese had allowed to run down was that of education. Town schools had been used for purposes other than education, loss of equipment had crippled the trade schools, Raffles College was a military headquarters, and the technical school in Kuala Lumpur gave little technical instruction. When they remained open,

Malay and Indian vernacular schools had continued very much as before and the rural schools, apart from a period of abeyance, were left untouched. No Chinese schools at all were allowed, and Chinese and English had been banned as languages of instruction. Many teachers had forfeited their lives in Japanese purges of surviving loyalty to the British regime and the training of new teachers had ceased. This grave shortage of teachers arrested the work of reconstruction more than any other deficiency, more even than damaged buildings and the destruction of text-books and school libraries.

Truancy had been extensive and unchecked, and one of the most distressing obstacles encountered by the restored Education Department was the loss of the habit of attendance at school, of interest in the school, and the comfort of familiarity with the daily round of school-life. Luckily, the parents did not share this attitude and there was a rush to re-enrol once the British were in control of education again. Many parents, particularly among the Malays, displayed great anxiety lest their children should not enjoy the opportunity of education which had been lost or rejected during the Japanese administration. The acute shortage of teachers made excessively large classes inevitable, and the replacement of text-books and equipment in a war-impoverished world was perforce slow at first. Afternoon sessions attempted to solve the problem of overcrowding but the desire for education continued to outstrip any feasible provision. Although by a slowly cumulative process equipment was replaced and buildings restored, signs were manifest that only large building schemes could meet the demand for accommodation and that staffing troubles would not moderate for years.

Developments with an important political content occurred in 1947 when grants-in-aid for Chinese schools were introduced in the former Unfederated Malay States and the Government assumed responsibility for the payment of teachers and the running expenses of all Tamil schools. In the same year an interesting feature in the growth of Malay

education was a great increase in the number of schools which had been built in the kampongs and maintained by the kampong folk; in 1940 there were 44, in 1947 nearly 200. The awakening interest in education received encouragement by the adoption of a system whereby every government Malay school had a committee of the kampong people under the chairmanship of the Penghulu or headman whose functions were to assist the school in every way short of interference in the management. The year 1948 saw the publication of the report of the Carr-Saunders Commission on Higher Education which recommended the early establishment of a University of Malaya by amalgamating the Medical and Raffles Colleges with full powers to grant degrees in the faculties of Arts, Science, and Medicine. But the year also witnessed the setback of the Communist rising. The call upon the staffs in the Federation for work in connexion with the measures taken to suppress the insurrection, and the need actually to close some of the estate Tamil schools were present troubles. Far more serious were those affecting the future, the interruptions in the schemes for building new schools and the general extension of educational services for want of the money which the cost of fighting the Communists was draining away.

If the task of the Education Department had been merely to provide the measure of education which obtained before the war, it could claim a considerable degree of success. The equipment which has been renewed, the staff which has been trained, and the buildings which have been restored in the few years since the return to Malaya would have gone near to satisfying the requirements of pre-war days. Schools, other than a few in bandit-infested areas which had to be closed, were quickly restored to their old activity, training in the departmental colleges, the trade schools (now called Junior Technical Schools) and the technical schools was resumed, day commercial schools and adult education started again. The Colony has even been catering in government afternoon schools for over-age pupils.

Construction of new schools has been accelerated by a

decision of both administrations to forego the old standards of school building, which aimed at permanent erections with architectural pretensions, in favour of plainer, simpler, and therefore cheaper schools. The ten-year plan which the Singapore Government has adopted for the extension of their educational services provides for the building of many new schools according to a programme which the Government seem confident they can carry out. In both administrations every possible device is employed to bring into use every inch of existing buildings. The Federation has been assisted by a grant from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund of nearly $5 million to build a sorely-needed new technical school, and Chinese munificence has supplied some fine new schools for Chinese pupils. The Government has resumed their old policy of building new schools every year, but the doubling and trebling of the old rate of construction which would be necessary to meet the greatly enlarged demands for education are not, for the present at least, within the Federation's financial capacity.

The Education Departments in both Singapore and the Federation of Malaya have shown vigour, courage and resourcefulness, but their achievements, meritorious as they are, fall far short of present requirements. The number of children seeking education is much more than double that of the past and public interest is livelier and more expectant. The Colony now has an Education Committee, which, working through sub-committees, advises the Government on the multifarious educational problems of Singapore's highly mixed population. In the Federation, a Central Advisory Committee on Education, which is composed of representatives of the Legislative Council, the Government, the teachers, and educational bodies, is consulted on educational matters of common policy and broad principles. Public attention was drawn to the subject of education by the foundation of the University of Malaya in October 1949. A new and insistent demand for more local appointments to senior government posts, combined with a growing realization that,

for lack of suitable candidates from the United Kingdom, resort must increasingly be made to local sources of recruitment, has served to focus public interest more closely than ever on the potentialities of local education.

Another factor has been introduced into the formulation of educational policy. Education is now expected to play a part transcending that of any other agency in achieving certain political ends. In the Colony these are stated modestly to be the fostering of a capacity for self-government and the encouragement of ideals of loyalty and responsibility towards the State. In the Federation reliance is placed on education to achieve the political and social unity of the country and to build the foundations of Malayan loyalty and patriotism. The more placid aspirations of the Colony have enabled it to avoid the controversies which have pursued the Federation's proposals to achieve its more ambitious and exacting aims. To secure political and social unity a common language is an obvious means, and the choice of that language would preferably fall on one which facilitates contact with the outside world. It is accepted that the language which answers these requirements is English but, at the same time, it is felt that the cost of acquiring a common language which is alien to a vast majority of the population might be very high in terms of the desirability of preserving what is valuable in the cultures of the races composing the population of Malaya. And education in a common language which is not the mother tongue of the pupil offends against the belief of educationists that the mother tongue is the language in which a child is best taught.

The educational policy of the Colony was settled by the adoption in the Advisory Council on 7 August 1947 of a ten-year programme which is taking shape under energetic and incisive administration. The policy seeks to establish equal educational opportunity for all children of all races by free primary education for children between the ages of six and twelve over a six-year course, to be followed in suitable cases by instruction under a post-primary system. The intention of

the Education Department was to implement the theory that a child is best taught in its mother tongue by giving primary education in the mother tongue in English, Chinese, Malay, and Indian schools. The introduction of the subject of English in the third year in the Chinese, Malay, and Indian vernacular schools was designed to serve the double purpose of opening the way to the higher education given in the post-primary schools and forging a bond of social and political unity by means of a common language. The English primary schools were to be open only to those whose mother tongue was English or in whose homes English was spoken. But a Select Committee of the Advisory Council, which considered the Education Department's proposals, recommended that the English primary schools should also be open to children with English school associations. The Advisory Council at a meeting on 7 August 1947 swept away the restrictions proposed by the Education Department and forced the acceptance of the principle that any parent might, if he so wished, elect to send his child to an English primary school. For financial reasons the possibility of putting this principle into practice is not even within sight; but an additional mode of access to a higher study of English than can be afforded by the vernacular schools will be provided by a generous selection of meritorious pupils of those schools for free training in a special intensive course in the English primary schools. By this means these pupils may, after two or three years, be enabled to join the main stream of the school and qualify themselves for careers requiring an English education.

As a sequel to this primary education a post-primary system has been established giving instruction in English schools and junior technical schools and also in vernacular schools. Fees are payable and entrants must reach a prescribed standard of attainment; free places are provided on grounds of merit to children from the vernacular primary schools. After a two-year course pupils who are so fitted either move on to a three-year course culminating in the School Certificate examination or are transferred to junior technical

schools. Children, however, may enter the latter type of school direct. Success in the School Certificate examination may be followed by a special course extending over one year or eighteen months which will prepare pupils for further study in the higher places of education.

Time will be required to find the staff, text books, and equipment for post-primary education in the vernacular schools; when they come into being, it is proposed that there shall be a first period of instruction extending over three years and, to follow it, another three years of higher studies in general, practical, and vocational subjects.

By 1949 the physical details of the developments contemplated under the ten-year plan had been settled and their execution was under way. One hundred and fifty primary schools, 9 post-primary schools and 3 schools for handicapped children will add accommodation for 82,000 children to the existing 120,000 places (and for very many more if afternoon as well as morning schools are held). Moreover, a supplementary five-year plan has been approved, and the money for it provided, to build 18 new primary schools annually for five years which will provide another 90,000 places. When these schemes are completed Singapore expects to have free universal and compulsory education for all its children of school age.[1] In the meantime the free education given in government and aided primary schools, is balanced by a payment of $2·50 per pupil in respect of children in private schools, a sum which represents the value of the remission of fees granted in the government and aided schools.

There has been far less promise of progress in the Federation. Recommendations of the Central Advisory Committee on Education for a new educational policy in the Federation were discussed in a meeting of the Legislative Council on 27

[1] In Legislative Council on 24 April 1951 the Colonial Secretary gave a warning that because of inflation the Singapore Government might interrupt their building programme and wait until more reasonable tenders for their various building projects were submitted. Tenders had risen by 80 or 100 per cent in some cases. Any such decision must slow down the programme for building schools, houses, and medical undertakings.

July 1950, but resentment over certain expressions of opinion in the Committee's report brought about an adjournment of the debate on the proposals for a new policy. The recommendations for post-primary education, which is to be on much the same lines as the system in the Colony, except that post-primary vernacular education will be given only in Malay schools, encountered no opposition: nor did the proposals for the admission of Chinese and Indians as well as Malay children to the English primary schools for an intensive course in English, similar to that of the Colony. Further recommendations proposed that the primary system of education should aim at the provision of free primary education for all children between the ages of six and twelve over a six-year course in either (*a*) a school where the teaching is in English and Malay is an obligatory subject or (*b*) in a school where the medium of instruction is Malay and English is an obligatory subject. In both types of schools it is proposed that Chinese and Tamil should be taught at the desire of parents. The Government should not, it was considered, repudiate the grants-in-aid system in respect of existing Chinese and Indian vernacular schools but it was recommended that no grants should be made unless such schools introduced the teaching of English and Malay, the cost of which would be borne by Government. It was further recommended that no grants should be made in respect of classes in new Chinese and Indian vernacular schools above the second year unless English was taught, or above the third year unless both Malay and English were taught. These latter provisions seem a not unreasonable way of extending the decision taken in the Legislative Council on 28 November 1949 that Malay and English shall be taught in all primary schools maintained or aided from government funds. Certainly no objections of substance were taken to them at this meeting of the Council. A debate, which might have been stormy, on a finding of the Committee that the ultimate desirable objective should be universal free primary education in the medium of English, was evaded by a government amendment excluding accept-

ance of the offending paragraphs of the report. But Malay sensibilities were not altogether appeased and some of the Malays fastened on another part of the report which, advancing the argument that a common language is desirable and that such a language is English, conceded that 'Malay will continue to be necessary both for the Malays as their "home" tongue and for other races as a second language for citizenship purposes'. The Malay members attacked it as derogatory and 'a gratuitous insult to the Malays and the Malay language' and saw in these opinions of the Committee a danger of making the Malay language 'extinct to be just as useful or useless as Latin or Greek or any other ancient languages'.[1] These expressions of resentment led to the adjournment of further consideration of the report until the Council had had the opportunity of considering the report of a Committee whose appointment had been recommended to examine the whole subject of Malay education.

When the Council resumes its examination of the problem it will have more than one set of views on vernacular education to consider, for during 1951 the Government Press has issued reports by Committees on Malay and Chinese education and a comment on them by the Central Advisory Committee on Education. The Committee on Malay education, seeking in the vernacular schools an instrument for creating a Malayan nationality, advocates a system of primary schools of a single type for all races to be staffed by teachers of all races and to be called National schools. Each race should be asked to give up its vernacular schools and all government provision should be withdrawn from such schools. The National schools would charge no fee and the system would be administered and financed in part by local educational authorities. National schools would aim at producing bi-lingualists in Malay and English by the age of twelve plus.

[1] The debate is reported in *Report of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council*, 27 July 1950 (The Government Press, Kuala Lumpur), pp. 56–79.

The report on Chinese education considers that a Malayan culture should develop from an acceptance of what is good in all cultures in the country ; cultural differences should be allowed to continue and understanding and appreciation of such differences taught in the schools. Any attempt to compel fusion of the differing cultures should be rejected. Holding this view, the authors of this report assume that the Chinese vernacular schools will continue to exist and their recommendations aim at improving the standards of these schools with substantial increased aid from the Government. They accept, however, the need for Chinese to learn and use Malay and English and become trilingual. Chinese would be taught in the first two years, Chinese and English in the next two years, and Chinese, English, and Malay in the fifth and sixth years.

The Malays accept, the Chinese oppose the proposals for National schools. The Central Advisory Committee on Education supports the idea of National schools but proposes that, while all pupils should learn Malay and English throughout the six years of their primary course, provision should also be made in all primary classes for the instruction of Chinese and Indians in their respective languages. It suggests that it should be made clear that government assistance to vernacular schools will not be withdrawn until they can be replaced by National schools.

Such are the conflicting recommendations the Legislative Council will have to weigh. Doubtless the opinion of a visiting Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr Oliver Lyttelton) that increased provision for compulsory primary education must be accelerated (*The Times*, 12 December 1951) will count for much in the balance. Even a Secretary of State cannot command the magic words which will conjure away such difficulties as lack of staff and largely inflated building costs, but he can give a momentous instruction. It is plain that Mr Lyttelton had in mind the need to teach better ideas than those of Communism. Those most requiring such instruction are the Chinese and

the strengthening of their scholastic system may well appear a more urgent necessity than the political object underlying the scheme for National schools.

A consideration which cannot be discounted is, that free, primary education in English for all children can only be attained under conditions of national wealth which it would be optimistic to anticipate. What demands, and is receiving, urgent attention is the need to recruit and train teaching staffs to deal with the present difficult situation of a greatly increased school population, and with the even more taxing position which will arise from the decision to extend the teaching of Malay and English in primary schools.

The men's Training College at Tanjong Malim and the women's Training College at Malacca which concern themselves with the training of Malay teachers are fully active again but it is appreciated that they are no longer adequate in size. In the meantime temporary measures are in operation for training teachers for the Malay, Chinese, and Indian vernacular schools. Weekly training classes for Malay teachers have been organized in every State and Settlement of the Federation, and provision is also made to train those who are to teach English in Malay schools. Teachers in Chinese and Indian schools attend classes similar in nature to the weekly training classes and the classes for instruction in teaching English described above; special classes instruct Chinese teachers in physical training and handicrafts. Singapore is using much the same methods but still relies to some extent on the Malay training colleges of the Federation for the training of its Malay teachers. But in the preparation of English teachers the Colony has gone ahead of the Federation and has opened a training college for English teachers of whom already several hundreds are on its roll. The Federation has been relying on the method of Normal Classes for the training of its English teachers but the Member for Education announced in June 1951 that a Teachers' Training College is to be built in Penang. At the same time he stated that, in 1951, 150 student teachers would be sent to take a two-year

course for primary and elementary teachers at Kirkby, near Liverpool, and that a further 150 would be sent there in 1952.[1]

In the matter of shaping and organizing educational policy, Singapore has many advantages over the Federation. The political problems which beset the Education Department are not whipped up by the emotionalism of blind nationalistic feelings. The field of its work is compact within the narrow limits of a small island. The standards of its government schools vary, if at all, by small accidental margins. The Federation is troubled by the new political sensitiveness of the Malays and by a feeling of embarrassment *vis-à-vis* the Chinese who pay so much to the piper but cannot call the tune. The Education Department has to operate over a scattered and not over well-tracked territory and somehow or other has to bring into line standards of education that fluctuate between the well-organized systems of the richer States and the old-established Settlements and the weak growths of the poorer States.

SOCIAL WELFARE

With foresight the British Government had planned that special attention should be given to the problems of the welfare of the various communities which, it was thought, would be certain to present themselves at the end of the Japanese occupation. It was estimated that such problems would go far beyond the alleviative measures which before the war had been the responsibility of such government departments as the Labour Department, the Chinese Protectorate, and the Medical Department. The immediate troubles were easy to visualize, the plight of the dependants of those whose lives the Japanese had taken in one way or another, the return to Malaya of and the provision of relief for the survivors of the thousands of labourers who had been forcibly removed to build the Siam-Burma railway. Widespread destitution was expected and found, and anxiety justified about the con-

[1] The course will include instruction in Malay as well as in English. (*Manchester Guardian* 9 January 1952.)

dition of the aged and infirm who had previously been the care of a government institution, a charitable body, or an estate management. These latter were sent to the decrepit wards of the hospitals or to the former Homes which were enlarged and increased in number. Those who were brought back from Siam and the dependants of those who had died were supported on the estates where they had previously lived. Public restaurants were opened to feed the poor.

From the temporary organization which had first undertaken the work developed a Department of Social Welfare in both Singapore and the Federation and, in the latter, there came into being a Central Welfare Council, an unofficial body representing States and Settlements. This Council advised the Government in matters of social welfare, started and co-ordinated welfare organizations, and had power to spend money voted by the Government or privately subscribed.

By 1947 both Departments of Social Welfare were well established with staffs trained to direct and administer relief schemes and to deal with emergencies arising from natural disasters. They had taken under their care the poor and infirm, had duties to perform under such laws as these dealing with children and young persons, Juvenile Courts, Women and Girls Protection Ordinances, were responsible for the management of approved schools and charitable institutions, undertook welfare work among the dependants of those isolated from the world by diseases such as tuberculosis, leprosy, or insanity.

Juvenile crime, before the war unimportant in extent and character, had become a serious evil. In the large towns the Departments of Social Welfare accepted the search for a remedy as one of their duties. Working with the existing voluntary organizations, the attempt is made to bring reforming influences to bear on the juvenile delinquents who are sent to them by the courts and to lead children away from undesirable associations by the counter-attractions of boys' clubs, childrens' clubs, and the like, and by establishing

social centres for children who have been unable to gain admittance to a school, where they are fed, receive simple medical attention, and take part in activities having an educational trend.

Each Department has spent vast sums but under circumstances which were agreed to be exceptional, and the danger of uncontrolled charity in a country like Malaya which has always attracted immigrants in thousands is realized. It is the aim of these Departments to replace assistance in cash by some form or degree of rehabilitation which will lead to better hope of economic independence, and to achieve this policy by establishing working centres and encouraging local industries. The claim that the Departments have already built up a rudimentary system of social security for those who have not the capacity to help themselves may not long go unchallenged if the costs of the Departments grow so large as to bear really heavily on the public purse. Already criticism is being expressed of charitable assistance which might appropriately be left to relatives as it was before the war. But the social ills which are now being attacked bear no resemblance in size and potentialities to the minor ailments of those days, and until Malaya attains a more stable prosperity and recovers the old standards of morality, the activities of the Departments must continue on a large scale. They will become really vulnerable to criticism whenever it can be proved that public assistance is subsidizing indigent immigration at the expense of those people locally born.

HOUSING

In Singapore before the war the problem of housing the population in the city itself was such that it was doubtful whether the very costly remedial action was keeping pace with the problem's annual growth. Any falling away in progress might easily let the task of tackling the shortage of accommodation get entirely out of hand. So far from progress being maintained during the Japanese occupation new difficulties were allowed to develop. In undeveloped areas and

outside military camps hovels had been permitted to spring up which were unprovided with any system of roads, drainage, or even primitive sanitation, and which were by force of their site and layout not amenable to scavenging or drainage. In the city itself the supervision which the Municipality had been accustomed to exercise had ceased, the slum clearance work which the Improvement Trust had been carrying out had stopped, and its schemes for building housing estates on the outskirts of the town discontinued. Other factors have greatly enlarged the problem. The population is now very much larger than before the war; the accommodation, as the result of war damage, the normal processes of decay, and shortage of the materials as well as of the will to repair, much less. Rooms contain several families, densities of population of 300 to 500 to the acre are common and in places rise to 1,000. There may be one tap and one bucket-latrine for one of these congested buildings and, underneath stairs or in cubicles which admit neither light nor air, thousands live who cannot rent a room. It is estimated that even this accommodation is denied to another 130,000 who live in unauthorized hovels without light, water, or sanitation.

Private enterprise is unlikely to solve this gigantic problem. It is natural that the owners should prefer the high profits obtained from the over-crowding of the existing houses to an outlay on new buildings which is further discouraged by difficulty in obtaining materials and labour at reasonable prices, if at all. One solution may be the building of satellite towns by the Improvement Trust or the Government, and the compulsory transfer to them of industries and their labour forces. But, as such an undertaking would cost several hundreds of millions of dollars a solution of this kind can only offer relief over a very long stretch of time.

The Government of the Colony are undertaking a survey of the resources and the needs of the Colony for the purpose of planning future development, and legislation has been prepared for the creation of a Development Board which will control all development of the Colony and take over the

duties and commitments of the Singapore Improvement Trust. By the planned development controlled by the Board it is hoped to remove the discouragement to forward action, which at present arises from the lack of certain legal powers and the paralysing uncertainty caused by want of knowledge of the sum total of all requirements and of the repercussions of any separate undertaking. To produce some immediate improvement the Government produced a three-year housing programme to cover the years 1948-50 which would house 36,000 people at a cost of $32 million. The programme was to be financed mainly from government loans and executed by the Improvement Trust.

Although a very great part of the work has been done, it is not expected that the programme will be completed before the end of 1951. The Trust has erected three types of buildings. The cheapest is an artisans' quarters which costs with water, light, and sewerage $2,600 and is meant to be let at a rent of $20 a month to persons whose incomes do not exceed $200 a month. In the congested areas tenements have been erected to house people who have been displaced by slum clearances at a rent of $21 a month. For the classes whose incomes range from $200 to $600 a month flats are being built at a cost of $8,000 to $10,000 for renting at sums between $35 and $82 a month.

Although there is no problem of this immensity in the Federation, a housing shortage was making itself felt before the war and in Kuala Lumpur the situation was serious. During the Japanese occupation squatters built hovels in hundreds, no building was carried out, and there was no control of overcrowding and the kind of structural alteration which facilitates overcrowding. Building was too difficult and costly a business after the war for anybody to wish to undertake it, and it became plain that nothing was to be hoped for from private enterprise. A Committee recommended the creation of a building Trust to be supported by the Government by a gift of $5 million to constitute a trust capital; the grant of power to the Trust to raise further money up to four

times the ordinary capital subscribed by the Government by issuing debentures, and the alienation to the Trust of land to be held on forty-two-year leases free of premium and rent. The debentures would be secured on the property of the Trust and the money raised on them would be used to make advances to private builders up to two-thirds of the capital cost at about 4 per cent. A preference would be given to builders of the smaller kinds of buildings. The debenture money would also be used to build houses directly through Municipalities and Town Boards for letting, and to buy land where no State land was available. The necessary financial provision has now been sanctioned and plans are being prepared. The Trust has not yet been set up but $3 million have been provided to build urgently needed private houses in the towns. Even so, this sum is estimated to be only 3 per cent of the amount necessary to satisfy urgent demands for houses, and, although some private building is taking place and municipal housing estates and private housing schemes are being planned, the progress made in housing the population does not seem adequate. The shortage of houses of all types is estimated at a total of 30,000.

POLICE

Conditions after the victory of the Japanese in 1942 favoured the growth of crime. To make room for British prisoners the gaols of Singapore were cleared by releasing the criminals serving sentences there for serious crimes. Truancy of school children and the actual closing of schools under the Japanese regime led to a great increase in juvenile delinquency. The looting which followed the defeat of the British and then the surrender of the Japanese, the shortage of supplies which produced a 'black market', the universal bribery and graft, and the opportunities for theft and dishonesty which the corrupt custody of government stores offered, created the circumstances in which it was natural and easy for crime to flourish and breed.

Firearms were easy to obtain, a life under the new regime

did not seem to have its old value and a shocking record of brutal crime made evident the low pitch to which the standards of efficiency of the police forces had fallen during the Japanese occupation. Returning British police officers found that they had to measure against this power of imperfectly controlled crime the dregs of a police force, badly equipped, shabbily dressed, with no morale, and carrying its share of the hatred and contempt which the Japanese system of secret police working through spies and informers had called down upon the whole force. There were few, if any, to take the place of the old personnel who had been trained in investigation; all standards of honesty were gone; the extortion practised by the police was frightful, and the whole force was so rotten with corruption as to require a special branch of the Criminal Investigation Department to attend to its own delinquency.

One grievance which was advanced in extenuation, that of low pay, was gradually removed and, as the old British officers returned to their former duties and many of the old conditions of work and living were restored, improvement became a steady process. New methods of fighting crime were introduced with success. In Singapore a radio patrol car system, mobile patrols in jeeps and weapon-carriers manned by police officers possessing both experience and a good knowledge of Singapore, and organized road blocks, built up power for the police. Special constables were enrolled to cover the severe shortage of regular police and in the early days the fighting services gave considerable help. In the Federation a radio network reduced the handicap of a large area for criminal activity which for some time the police had not sufficient transport to cover.

The British Government had acted precipitately in deciding that the former laws governing the activities of societies were to remain in abeyance. Great numbers of secret societies were thus allowed to rise and proliferate, creating a desperate situation for the police, and it was only when the laws were revived in 1947[1] that the authorities

[1] 1948 in the Federation.

began to regain their grip on the racketeering, blackmailing, murdering gangs which, before the war, they had strictly reduced to order by efforts extending over many years. The police were now armed to fight the protection 'squeeze' which had held much of the country to ransom under the Japanese. Another revival of the old, lawless days, piracy, was almost entirely suppressed, but the control of gaming and betting and prostitution, which had come to abundant life under the Japanese administration, cannot be gained so quickly.

The task set the police was the hardest and the most exacting, because of its urgency, of all the heavy labours the restored British administration had to undertake; and for a long time it had to depend on the poorest instruments. The ascendancy which was being established by the Police Force of the Federation received a bad setback when the Communists declared war on the Government in 1948. In Singapore where the police administration was favoured by a limited terrain, Communists plots were not allowed to interrupt for long the highly successful work of the police in reducing crime to less terrifying proportions. By infiltration into the trade unions, youth movements, and cultural organizations, by intimidation through trained bullies called the Workers' Protection Corps, and finally by achieving leadership by skill in the arts of propaganda and agitation, the Communists in Singapore had attained a position of such power over the masses that in 1948 they were emboldened to attempt an attack on the Government. Their plans were to close the port, paralyse transport and all essential services, and so create general confusion and immobilize all the disciplinary powers. The police administration had so far regained its old strength and restored the old channels of information that it was able to get in the first blow. Raids disclosed facts which led to arrests and banishments, and the Communist organization was so harried and weakened that it lost control and initiative. The training of extra constabulary and special constables to augment the manpower of the police, the help of Emergency Regulations, and the moral and practical

effect of compulsory registration of all residents, as well as the withdrawal of support and the waning of the sympathy of the workers for the Communists, constituted a body of force and opinion in face of which the Communist plans and the Communists themselves faded away, and Singapore had peace.

Since then, the police force has moved steadily, if somewhat slowly back towards the old standards. There has been reorganization of the Traffic Branch and the Criminal Record Office, consolidation of the very successful experiment, the Radio Division. The introduction of women police has been justified and twenty of them were drafted into the regular police force in 1950. In 1949 a striking force of 140 Gurkhas was recruited in India to replace the Sikh contingent employed before the war and has been used to supplement the aid the Singapore police force is giving the Johore police in its struggle with the Communist banditry in that area. An increasing grip on crime has substantially reduced the alarming manifestations of lawlessness which prevailed in 1946 and 1947. Armed robbery cases, for instance, numbered 792 in 1947 and only 74 in 1949; the figures for robbery without arms were 455 in 1947 and 97 in 1949. In 1947 there were 32 murders, in 1949, 15. Cases of theft have been halved. Communism is by no means a spent force and flares up from time to time in acts of violence but the police have maintained control, and criminal outbreaks are sporadic and infrequent. The time has not come when a large Chinese community such as Singapore can be purged entirely of secret societies but those which survive are given little scope for their usual criminal activities and the murders, gang-fighting and extortion which they practise when control is weak have been practically extinguished. Unfortunately the favourable impression this steady process of improvement was creating in the minds of the Singapore public was swiftly and roughly obliterated by the ignominious failure of the police to deal with riots which broke out in Singapore on 11 December 1950 and caused grave loss of life and considerable damage to property. Public indignation was so strong that a public

inquiry was immediately promised and has actually been held by a commission sent out from England at the instance of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Its report did not spare the police in its condemnation, and the growing return of public confidence in the Singapore police force has been destroyed and will not easily be revived.

In the Federation affairs are in too abnormal a state to permit judgement of police efficiency by the ordinary standards. The usual police work goes on, most creditably under the circumstances, but the customary activities of a police force are heavily overshadowed by the duty of waging war with the Communist insurgents. The police of the Federation now operate as a military force, running the risks and enduring the hardships of campaigning soldiers and it is on this task that most attention is concentrated. The force has reached a size which in normal times would appear fantastic and much anxious thought has to be given to the training of the men for jungle fighting and to the planning of what are in essence military operations. In these unusual activities the record of the police is a fine one, displaying the virtues of courage, discipline, and loyalty.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Departments such as those of Agriculture, Forestry, Surveys, Geology, and Mines had for the most part ceased to function either from the indifference of the Japanese regime or lack of skilled supervision. Uncontrolled exploitation had affected the conservancy of forests, and extensive areas of illegally occupied land had set back survey work by years. The Public Works and Electrical Departments found that little had been done to repair war damage, and the need for maintenance had been ignored. Branch lines of the railways and much of the East Coast line had been removed, goods rolling stock had been taken to Siam, and much of the passenger rolling stock was unfit for use. Locomotives were considerably reduced in number and efficiency. Difficulties in finding staffs have protracted the task of restoring these

Departments to their former strength. The shortage of supplies has hampered rebuilding and replacing of roads, bridges, and permanent ways. But perseverance has prevailed over most of these obstacles and the success of the Public Works and Railway Departments in their work of renewal is an outstanding achievement.

LABOUR AND TRADE UNIONS

The behaviour of the labour forces of the country after the liberation administered a shock of disappointment. They had been rescued from treatment which had the aspects of slavery. Throughout the Japanese occupation they had been driven about in herds to suit military plans, whether to Siam to build the Siam-Burma railway or to encampments within Malaya. No precautions were taken to safeguard their health and the mortality rate attending these large movements of labour was high. The old certainties and routines of former days had fallen away and there was no longer any authority, official or unofficial, to ensure that the labourers were properly fed and housed, their water supplies adequate and good, their hygienic conditions a safeguard against disease. They were found to be under-nourished and sickly.

But quiet contentment in their delivery from this cruel treatment was far from being their mood. In a very short time strikes had become a serious nuisance. Inability to restore to the labourers the comfortable conditions of other days may have been one factor in the disturbances, but there were also many signs of Communist tuition in their demands and unreasonable behaviour. It was soon evident that the Labour Department was faced with a difficult task.

An early act of the new administration was to reorganize the Labour Department and to establish trade unions. The Department was reconstructed on more coherent lines and took all matters concerning labour, Chinese as well as Indian, into its care. From the old Labour Department and the Chinese Protectorate were gathered officers who spoke the south Indian languages or Chinese dialects and were prac-

tised from past experience in negotiation. These qualifications were necessary, for the Department was given no compulsory powers to settle disputes. Its procedure was to start conciliatory discussions among the parties to a dispute and only to step in and initiate negotiation if the parties refused to do so themselves or one of them asked for assistance. If negotiations fail, there is provision for submitting disputes to Arbritration Boards or Industrial Courts with the consent of both parties, but so far labour has avoided them as newfangled ideas and has shown its preference for hammering things out with its old friend the Labour Department, helped as often before by the heads of communities.

Legislation to establish trade unions had been passed in the Colony, Federated Malay States, Johore, and Kedah in 1940 but, because of the war, did not take effect until 1946. Its operation was entrusted to a Registrar of Trade Unions and a Trade Union Adviser was appointed both for Singapore and the Federation. In spite of the unstinted efforts of the Trade Union Advisers and their staffs who sent out instructions and model rules in four languages and arranged for instruction of union members through field officers and loud-speaker vans, the trade union movement in its first two years was a perpetual menace to industrial peace and the public welfare. The Communists succeeded in dominating it immediately; and the purpose of their control was to use the trade union movement as an instrument in disrupting the country's economy by reducing industry to a state of turbulent chaos until it ran down to a standstill.

The Communists, who at the time of the surrender of the Japanese enjoyed much prestige as the resistance movement against the Japanese, made the fullest use of the interval between the surrender and the assumption of control by the British and, among other activities, set up what they called trade unions comprising every type of trade and worker but for which a more correct description would be Communist cells. These unions were linked up and controlled by a General Labour Union which, upon trouble arising over its

failure to comply with the Government's regulations, resolved itself into the Singapore Federation of Trade Unions and the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions. There was little inclination among the workers to join a trade union movement but even less to resist the Communist intimidation which directed them to support it. The Communist plan was to establish new unions and gain control over existing unions and so dominate the labour forces of the country as a whole. Unions ready to rely on their own strength and to resist any attempt at Communist mastery were undermined by the fostering of dissension among their members by the Communists, by forcible disruption, or by the encouragement of schismatic action.

Created and controlled in this way by Communist influence, trade unionism failed for the most part to attain the objects of the movement, the promotion of the interests of the workers and the preservation of industrial peace. The Unions of Government and Clerical Workers which were well managed and inaccessible to Communist infiltration were exceptions to this general rule. The majority of the others rarely succeeded in mastering the essentials of trade union organization and objectives. Their officers were not elected according to the accepted methods of democracy, their system of book-keeping was neither expert nor safe, and much of their expenditure repaid the official better than the cause. Very often they refused to bargain through chosen representatives whom the members would support or to accept a chance of peaceful negotiation. Sections of a union would use the name of the whole union and be supported by the Pan-Malayan headquarters which, while abstaining from the dispute, would stir up mischief by recognizing the sections as units of their organization. Strikes were even enforced without reference to the members of the union.

Some of the small unions on individual estates worked smoothly, largely because relations with the management were close and the conditions of employment thoroughly well known to both sides. The same advantages smoothed the

way of the unions formed by the labourers on a group of estates, but a weakness of these larger unions was that their officials came from the new profession of trade union organizers, knew very little of actual working conditions, and usually contrived to create an expensive organization.

Any prospect of real progress towards realizing the merits of trade unionism seemed faint so long as Communist influence controlled a great majority of the unions. Communist activities repeated the pattern of the pre-war years, the strike without warning, the preliminary unreasonable demands, the disruption of negotiations which promised a settlement, the beginnings of violent action, all managed without overt participation of the Communists in the strike. The Government of the Federation bore with all this for two years with what might reasonably be judged as excessive patience, and then resolved to put an end to the mischief. They banned the Communist movement, and used their powers to refuse to accept as lawful unions those which had not been registered, thereby making them unlawful societies, and as such punishable by law. The consequences moved so swiftly as to suggest thorough planning even for such a contingency as this. The Communist leaders immediately took to the jungle and started the campaign of isolated murders which has swelled into a war against the Government and established society.

As the trade union movement developed in Malaya, a need was revealed for different organizations in industries such as rubber-planting, where the unions were scattered, and in the towns, where the workers lived in close concentration. In the rubber industry separate unions for Tamil and Chinese labourers seem advisable; the radical differences between the two races have led to duplication of organization and difficulties in using the authorized machinery of conciliation. In Singapore, on the other hand, the sub-division of unions according to races, tribes, and political ideas has made for conditions of anarchy; action by one union could be thwarted by workers in the same trade but in different unions. In such cases the formation of unions whose members belong to the

same trade would ease the way for larger unions whose greater financial resources could afford better management. And better management could be expected in the peace that followed the departure of the Communists, in which ability, experience of the industry, and a sense of responsibility were able to come to the fore, and to count for more than mere political ideas. There is a likelihood now that managers, who have been sickened by the turmoil which previously surrounded every new claim, may be persuaded that peaceful negotiation is possible. It may be easier, too, for the Adviser to persuade the unions that many claims for increases in pay are unreasonable, not merely because of the size of the amounts demanded but also because of the doubt whether the claimants would, by increasing their low output and improving the quality of their work, actually earn the greater pay.

But there are obstacles in the way of immediate reform. Fear of infringing the regulations framed to deal with Communist lawlessness has retarded the development of the unions which survived the Communist purge. This timidity has now vanished, but in the Federation the consequences of the immobility which the terrorist activities of the Communists has imposed upon the trade union officials, both paid and voluntary, still remain. Conditions in many parts of the country where estates and mines are situated are such that a trade union official, especially a voluntary worker who can only make a journey when his day's work is done, often at night, takes his life in his hands when he sets out to transact trade union business on other mines and estates. Meetings, propaganda, collections, discussions, and instruction have become impossible over wide areas, and development and consolidation are falling far behind the needs of the unions.

Otherwise, the unions have settled down to pursue the proper ends of their movement in a reasonable spirit by acceptable methods. The unions seem actuated by a genuine desire to proceed in a constitutional manner and their ideas embrace no sympathy with Communism. In the Federation a

conference of delegates of the trade unions, the first of its kind, was held in 1949. The conference appointed a Working Committee which has regularly met the trade union representatives on the Legislative Council and the newly appointed Labour Advisory Board, and the discussions which have taken place have shown a sense of responsibility. This growing feeling of unity and consciousness of identity is to be seen, too, in the Colony, where efforts are being made to set up a central organization for the consolidation of union activities and to establish a body representative of all the workers. A greater willingness to negotiate has shown itself and conciliation work has been more successful. To some extent this mood was induced by an increase in unemployment in 1949, a tendency for wages to fall, and the existence of a surplus of labour in some branches of industry. But a greater appreciation of the real values of trade union ideas and methods has also played a part. For some time to come it may remain true to say that interest in the movement is maintained only so long as there is trade union activity in the form of wage demands, but it is a sign of progress that in 1950 a group of trade unions in the rubber industry in the Federation negotiated a wage agreement with the Employers' Association.

In Singapore an ordinance has been passed to provide a weekly holiday for employees of shops, restaurants, and theatres and in the Federation a similar law was enacted in July 1950. Both administrations have drafted Bills to bring the Labour Code up to date. The Federation has also drafted a Bill to revise the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, and the Colony is at work on a scheme for the rehabilitation and re-employment of injured workmen. The Federation has also published a draft Bill to inaugurate a provident fund scheme for certain workers in the lower income groups. An employment exchange has been operating in Singapore since 1945 on a voluntary basis and recourse to it increases steadily.

Many of the ills, too, which inflamed the grievances of

labour in the early days after the expulsion of the Japanese have been cured by the steady restoration of prosperity. Although, as elsewhere, wages have been apt to lag behind the cost of living, hunger and rags and homelessness no longer afflict the worker.[1]

[1] The trade unions were represented at the launching of the new Independence Party in September 1951. The T.U.C. of Great Britain has always refused to become a political party, preferring other ways of exerting political influence. Apart from this significant precedent, there are circumstances surrounding the progress of the Malayan trade unions which would appear to impugn the wisdom of this intervention in purely political affairs. The movement is steadily picking up strength but a weakness is its lack of support from the Chinese in the Federation who prefer their own immemorial system of guilds, and from the Malays of whom only a small part are wage earners. There is a tendency to dismiss the trade unions as a purely Tamil organization, the Malays being particularly prone to this view, and it is open to doubt whether the prestige gained by the invitation to attend the political gathering in September will balance the prejudice against the unions which this political intervention has excited among the Malays. Nor can the movement count upon increased Chinese favour as a reward.

CHAPTER X

Constitutional and Political Development

SINGAPORE

A NEW Executive Council and a new Legislative Council were constituted by a Singapore Order in Council of 27 March 1946. The Executive Council was to consist of eleven members; the Governor as Chairman, four *ex officio* members (the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General, the Financial Secretary and the President of the Municipal Commissioners), two official members and four unofficial members, all appointed by the Governor. The Legislative Council was to comprise the Governor as President, the four *ex officio* members referred to above, five nominated official members, four nominated unofficial members, and nine elected members. Three of the nine elected members were to be elected by the three Chambers of Commerce (European, Chinese, and Indian). Of the remaining six, four were to be elected from two municipal electoral districts each of which was to return two members, and from two rural electoral areas each of which was to return one member.

The elections took place on 20 March 1948. The franchise was limited to British subjects over twenty-one years of age; females as well as males could exercise it, and there were no property or literacy qualifications. Dislike of filling in forms, aversion formed during the Japanese occupation from appearing on any official list, apathy or actual unbelief in democracy, suspicion of something new, were advanced as reasons for the low figure of registration, 22,400. The Chinese and the women hung back, but the Indians, to whom voting was not a novel idea, responded well. There was little political difference between the two parties which offered themselves for election under the labels 'Independent' and 'Progressive'; each campaigned for an elected majority on

the Legislative Council, more government and municipal appointments for local applicants, more social services, and union with the Federation. Judgement as to personality seems to have guided the voter.

As there was every reason to expect, the Legislative Council settled down as a level-headed, hard-working body. The amount of work demanded of the unofficial members and the consequent interference with their private earning capacity very properly led to their payment but, in addition, a lightening of the burden by a wider distribution of duties seemed justified: if leading citizens became unwilling to enter the Council because of the excessive demands of Council work hope of solid progress towards self-government would have been stifled. In 1950 therefore, the Secretary of State for the Colonies approved in principle proposals made by the elected members of the Legislative Council to strengthen the unofficial membership of both Executive and Legislative Councils. Under these proposals the number of elected members of the Legislative Council was to be increased from nine to twelve, and two more unofficial members were to be added to the Executive Council. As a result, an official majority in the Legislative Council would only be possible in the event of the four nominated unofficial members joining forces with the official element. On 10 April 1951 elections took place to elect nine members to the Legislative Council; three members were to continue to be chosen by the three Chambers of Commerce. The number of registrations increased to about 50,000 and a new party, the Labour Party, emerged. The Progressive Party won six seats, the Labour Party two, and one seat was gained by an Indian woman as an Independent.[1]

At the 1948 election only one Chinese had been elected. At the 1951 election three Chinese were successful, together

[1] *The Times*, 10 and 11 April 1951.
The Straits Times of Singapore in its issue of 6 February 1951 estimated that, after deducting those who had no voting rights and those under twenty-one years of age who were ineligible to vote, the potential electorate of Singapore numbered 216,644. Of these some fifty per cent must be discounted as too illiterate to take any interest in the election.

with three Indians, one European, one Eurasian, and one Ceylonese. Leaders of Chinese opinion have not favoured voting on community lines, but the election in 1948 of only one Chinese was unsatisfactory. The cause lay in the failure of the Chinese to register as voters and seemed another example of the bad old Chinese practice of avoiding the direct approach to any problem. Singapore is overwhelmingly Chinese and they are entitled to find a reflection of this majority in the Councils of the Colony. The 1951 Legislative Council elected as Vice-President the senior unofficial member, who was the representative of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. At the Council meeting on 29 May 1951 he presided over part of the proceedings. At this meeting the elected members chose two of their number, both Chinese, to serve on the Executive Council. This addition to the number of unofficial members on the Executive Council made the official and unofficial members of the Council equal in numerical strength.

After the introduction of elected members to the Legislative Council in 1948, steps were taken to provide the Municipality with an elected element, and its constitution was changed in 1948. Its twenty-five nominated Commissioners became nine nominated and eighteen elected Commissioners, returned by six electoral wards. The President continued to be a seconded officer of the Malayan Civil Service.[1] The main qualifications for voting under the new constitution are that a voter must be a British subject, or born in the Federation of Malaya, Borneo, Sarawak, or Brunei, have attained the age of twenty-one years and been resident in the Colony for one year in the preceding two years. An original provision that a voter must own, occupy, or lodge in property in the Municipality was removed in 1949 on the ground that it prejudiced women and members of a family living with their parents, as well as the poorer resi-

[1] *The Straits Times* in its issue of 31 January 1951 reported a proposal of the Municipal Commissioners to introduce a motion that Singapore should have an elected mayor which was likely to be supported by a unanimous vote. It was, however, not intended to press for immediate action on the motion.

dents. In December 1949, in order to introduce a system of annual elections to replace one-third of the membership of the Municipality, six candidates resigned and another election was held. As a result the parties represented on the Municipality are Progressives having a majority over the other parties.

Another change demanded by public opinion was a substantial extension of the policy of appointing local candidates to the higher posts in the government service. At the end of 1949 an ordinance was passed by the Legislative Council, setting up a Public Services Commission with authority to make appointments and approve promotions and, by this means, to ensure consideration of the claims of local candidates to government appointments. Pending the passing of the ordinance, an Appointment Board was established to recommend suitable local candidates for appointment or promotion to government posts, and several appointments of this nature were approved by the Secretary of State. New schemes of service have been drawn up for the purpose of facilitating the entry of local officers into the highest posts, and selected officers have been sent abroad for training to fit them for service in the senior ranks of the government services.

THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA

In the Federation the Executive and Legislative Councils recommended by the Consultative Committee and approved by the Secretary of State have been at work since the early months of 1948. Until the change referred to below, the High Commissioner presided over an Executive Council consisting of three *ex officio* members (the Chief Secretary, the Attorney-General, and the Financial Secretary), not less than four official members and not less than five or more than seven unofficial members, of whom not less than two, when five was the total, and not less than three, when seven was the total, were to be Malays. The Federal Legislative Council consists of the High Commissioner as President, three *ex officio*

members, eleven State and Settlement members (the Presidents of the nine Councils of State and a representative of each of the Settlements Councils chosen from among themselves by the members of each Council), eleven official members. There are fifty unofficial members and their seats are allocated thus: Labour 6; Planting (rubber and oil palms) 6, including three for public companies and three for proprietary estates and small-holdings; Mining 4; Commerce 6; Agriculture and Husbandry (excluding rubber and oil palms) 8; Professional, educational and cultural 4; Settlements 2; States 9; Eurasian community 1; Ceylonese community 1; Indian community 1; Chinese community 2.

The unofficial members were quick to show a realization of their powers. The collision with the Colonial Office in 1946 had brought to life a political consciousness which the bolder spirits were ready to express. It was they who put forward the proposals to introduce into the Federal Government what is in effect a system of Ministers, by making unofficial members, in place of the official departmental heads, the spokesmen in the Legislative Council of certain departments.[1] Eleven appointments, some of officials and some of unofficials, were made to take effect from 9 April 1951. Each of these members is responsible to the High Commissioner for his department, as its political head and as its spokesman in the Legislative Council. A civil servant will continue to serve as the administrative head of department and a civil servant will act as secretary and personal assistant to each member. Unofficial members of the Legislative Council have assumed the following appointments: Member for Home Affairs, Member for Agriculture and Forestry, Member for Health, Member for Education, Member for Lands, Mines and Communications, and Member for Works and Housing. Official members hold the following posts: Member for Economic Affairs, Secretary for Defence, Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Mem-

[1] A proposal has been made that the Legislative Council should be presided over by a Speaker in place of the High Commissioner. (*Report of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council*, 24 January 1951. The Government Press, Kuala Lumpur, p. 17.)

ber for Industrial and Social Relations, Member for Railways and Ports. Of the new unofficial members three are Malays, one is a European, one a Chinese, and one a Ceylonese. These developments have required a reconstitution of the Executive Council which now consists of the High Commissioner and the three *ex officio* members (the Chief Secretary, the Legal Secretary and Attorney-General —a new title to cover additional duties—and the Financial Secretary); the new members, with the exception of the Member for Agriculture and Forestry, the Member for Industrial and Social Relations, and the Member for Railways and Ports; and three unofficials.

The Member for Home Affairs, a Malay, will be in charge of local government; immigration, registration of citizens, national registration, elections, and nationality; public relations, broadcasting, cinemas, and theatres; printing; co-operative development; registration of births, marriages, and deaths; the protection of aborigines; State and Settlement relations; Rural and Industrial Development Association. The Member for Economic Affairs, a British civil servant (M.C.S.), will be concerned with trade and industry; imports and exports, and customs and excise; supplies; patents, trade-marks and inventions; statistics; economic development; relations with the various international financial and economic bodies which have sprung up since the war. The Member for Agriculture and Forestry, a Malay, will have responsibility for agriculture; drainage and irrigation; forestry; veterinary matters; fisheries; wild game. Medical and health services and nutrition will be the care of the Member for Health, a Chinese; and the Member for Education, a Ceylonese, will be in charge of museums, libraries, cultural institutions, and historical monuments, as well as education. Labour, trade unions, social welfare and employees' provident funds have been allotted to the Member for Industrial and Social Relations, a British civil servant (M.C.S.). The Member for Lands, Mines, and Communications, a Malay, will be responsible for posts and tele-

communications; civil aviation; mines and geological survey; meteorological surveys; road transport; land surveys. Public works, town planning, and housing will be the province of the Member for Works and Housing, a European. The Member for Railways and Ports, a British official, will be in charge of railways, ports, and marine affairs.

The duties of the Chief Secretary will now be mainly to co-ordinate the work of the new Departments and to act to some extent as a deputy to the High Commissioner. The Federal Secretariat will disappear, as its functions are absorbed into the new system, and only the Chief Secretary's office will remain. The Federal Secretariat has been roundly criticized for unconscionable delays and over-centralization. These defects have not been altogether without excuse. One cause of delay has been the unpredictable attitude of the unofficial majority of the Legislative Council. The unofficial members have not yet grouped themselves into political parties holding particular views, which would throw some light upon the chances of success of any measure, and it has often been necessary for the Administration to defer action until there was some indication that a proposal would be approved. To some extent it can be expected that the Members who are now political heads will bring to bear upon the administration of the country's affairs the talents and resources of the politician, and so succeed in gauging the opinions of the unofficial members, and indeed the public, as no administrator can be expected—in theory at least—to be able to do.

A second and more potent source of delay and frustration has been the swollen size of the Federal Secretariat which grew to be six or seven times as large as before the war and had diverted to itself a concentration of powers and duties which became too congested for prompt decision and speedy action. The new regime will not only disperse this excessive centralization and put an end to a slow, cumbersome instrument of government, but it will also expose administrative action much more fully than before to the critical examina-

tion of the Executive and Legislative Councils, and offer far greater opportunity for the exercise of public opinion.

The reforms are not a great stride towards representative government but they will be valuable in training unofficial members in the responsibilities and arts of high office, and in introducing the public to the idea that government affairs can be entrusted to other than civil servants. Equally important in view of what is to come, the reforms will assist the civil servant, who has hitherto been responsible for devising and carrying out government policies, to adapt himself to service as the permanent official of a new order of political rule.[1]

The next stage in the movement towards representative government is not far ahead. In Singapore the election of members to the Legislative Council preceded the municipal election; in the Federation the municipal elections will come first. Elections will be held in the newly formed Municipality of Kuala Lumpur and in the Municipalities of Penang and Malacca, which were given Municipal Councils when they formed part of the Straits Settlements. The election in Kuala Lumpur is to be held in December 1951 and, as a result, the Municipal Council will have twelve elected and six nominated Councillors. The qualifications for voting are that the voter is living in Kuala Lumpur at the date of election; is a subject of a Ruler of any Malay State or a Federal citizen, or a citizen of the United Kingdom or of any of the colonies, protectorates, or mandated territories who was born in the Federation or Singapore; has not made a declaration of allegiance to any foreign Power; is over twenty-one years of age; has lived in the Federation for at least three years; either owns premises within the Municipality of which the assessed annual value is not less than $60 a year, or is a tenant or sub-tenant within the Municipality paying rent of not less than $120 a year, or has for at least

[1] The Government of Singapore are studying the advisability of introducing a similar system in the Colony. There appears to be considerable doubt whether it can be squared with the party system under which a portion of the Legislative Council is elected.

one year in the last two years been ordinarily resident in the municipal area.

The citizenship qualifications narrow the voting population somewhat drastically in Kuala Lumpur, and exclude the vast majority of Indians, Ceylonese, Europeans, and a large proportion of the Chinese. In Penang and Malacca, where the electoral rolls have already been opened, the large Straits-born element makes the majority of the population eligible for the vote, and in the predominantly Malay States these qualifications will disenfranchise only a small minority. But in Perak, Selangor, and Negri Sembilan, and to a lesser extent in Johore, the restrictions will deny the vote to large numbers. The creation of ten more municipalities in the Federation is under consideration and, as the majority of the residents in many of the towns which are to receive the new status are Chinese and Indians, the problem will assume proportions which may demand reconsideration. The answer is likely to be, however, that the law of naturalization opens the way to the vote.

The Councils of State have not lost their former vigour but it has not been easy to find suitable candidates for appointment to the Executive Councils of some of the States. The State administration is now almost entirely Malay. The chief executive officer is the Mentri Besar (Prime Minister) who is favoured with a somewhat lavish provision of staff, comprising a State Secretary, three Assistant Secretaries, a Financial Secretary, and a whole-time or part-time Legal Adviser. Under the old order, busy, prosperous States like Perak and Selangor carried on very well with a smaller secretariat, but the new arrangements have perhaps been modelled on those of Johore and Kedah whose separate and largely independent status demanded a full team.

The former British Resident, whose title was changed to Resident Commissioner under the Union, is now the British Adviser. He is a member of the Executive and the Legislative Councils but not of either Federal Council. He is shorn of executive powers and while he retains the old power of

advice in all matters except Malay religion and custom, he is even less likely to exercise it than the Residents of the past. In the former Unfederated States, such as Kedah and Kelantan which have long been accustomed to making use of the administrative knowledge and experience of British Advisers their importance has not diminished. In the former Federated States a tendency has been revealed on the part of the new State Governments, anxious to show their mettle and confident of their own abilities, to exclude the British Adviser from the administration, and it seems inevitable that the office of British Adviser, ground between the mills of such exclusion and the determined usurpation of powers at the centre, has but a short time to live. Indeed there is evidence that this is envisaged in the new Constitution.

In the Settlements of Penang and Malacca the chief executive officer is the Resident Commissioner, answerable to the High Commissioner, and aided by nominated Executive and Legislative Councils.

The Johore Council of State, displaying its customary spirit of independence, was first in the field in preparing the ground for the election of members to the Council. The report of a committee set up by the Council to consider the matter was tabled at a Council meeting on 4 October 1950.[1] The report recommended the formation of sixteen constituencies for each of which a single member should be elected at a general election every three years. It provided that the vote should be confined to: subjects of the Ruler resident in Malaya at the date of registration as an elector; Federal citizens resident in Johore for at least twelve months out of the twenty-four preceding the date of registration as an elector; persons, male and female, over twenty-one years of age. No qualifications of literacy or ownership of property were recommended. British subjects as such would be eligible for the vote only as Federal citizens. The report opposed the introduction of racial or communal representation as a basis of election. It was recommended that the Council of State

[1] *The Straits Times*, 5 October 1950.

should be composed of: the Mentri Besar as *ex-officio* President, five *ex-officio* members including the Deputy Mentri Besar, six official members (at present twelve), sixteen elected members, and six unofficial members to be nominated by the Ruler-in-Council if it is considered that any important interests are inadequately represented or not represented at all. The Committee suggested that members should be at least twenty-one years of age, subjects of the Ruler, or Federal citizens, or British subjects. Elections for town councils in all towns in Johore of 10,000 inhabitants or more were also recommended.

The changes in the lower levels of the district administration are designed to formalize and emphasize developments which were taking place in the years before the war, such as monthly meetings of the Penghulu, his assistants and headmen, presided over by the Penghulu, and monthly meetings of all the Penghulus presided over by the District Officer. The policy is to strengthen the Penghulu's position, particularly in the former Unfederated Malay States where it is most needed. One change of a very radical nature provides that a Penghulu is now elected for life by the votes of his people, cast either by secret ballot or a show of hands. The purpose of this is to give the Penghulu a continuity of office which seems better suited to the requirements of his particular appointment than the liability to transfer which is the lot of other government servants. Many with long experience of the Penghulu system may consider this an extravagant method of securing continuity.

The taste for centralization which was a marked feature of early planning for the post-war Malaya is displayed in the changes in the judicial system of the Federation. The Chief Justice has been given control over a structure which comprises the Court of Appeal, the High Court, the Sessions Courts, and the Courts of the First Class Magistrates. The tribunals which remain outside the system are the small Courts, those of the Second Class Magistrates, and the Penghulus and the Kathi's Courts which administer Muhamma-

dan law. The Sessions Courts are an innovation and in their jurisdiction stand between the High Court and the Courts of the First Class Magistrates. The Presidents of the Sessions Courts are appointed by the High Commissioner; the First Class Magistrates in the States are appointed by the Ruler and in the Settlements by the High Commissioner, in both cases with the advice of the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice and the Judges of the High Court are appointed by the High Commissioner for and on behalf of His Majesty the King and the Rulers by Letters Patent under the Public Seal.

The First Class Magistrates travel on circuit, and although the District Officers and other officers whose duties require the powers of a First Class Magistrate hold that rank *ex officio*, the authority which the District Officer previously exercised in the legal work of his district no longer exists. The change may be expected to improve the legal standards of the Magistrates' Courts but, to the extent that the administration of justice is helped by general and local knowledge of the countryside and of the people, the disappearance of the District Officer from the Bench may be a loss.

The reforms include a provision that a regulated number of First Class Magistrates who show special aptitude may be sent to England to become barristers in order to qualify for higher promotion. Such a policy was successful before the war in the advancement of a number of Malays, and its resumption as a formal part of an accepted scheme may offer encouraging opportunities to Malays and others.

Questions involving the meaning, interpretation, and construction of the Federation Agreement or affecting any of its provisions are to be decided by a tribunal consisting of the Chief Justice as chairman, and two other members who shall be Judges of the High Court or possess similar qualifications, one to be appointed by the High Commissioner and one by the Rulers. A decision of this tribunal, which can be reached by a majority vote, is final and cannot be questioned in any Court.

THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL FOR SOUTH EASTERN ASIA

By 1946 Sarawak and British North Borneo had become British dependencies,[1] Singapore had become a separate Colony, and the Malayan Union, soon to be the Federation of Malaya, had absorbed the other parts of the Straits Settlements, Penang and Malacca and the Federated and Unfederated Malay States. The Colonial Office, discerning the advisability of co-ordinating the activities of these different territories and supervising their progress towards efficient and smooth administration, created the appointment of Governor-General. The title was hardly an accurate description of the nature of the appointment, for the Governor-General did not govern and was not identified with any territorial jurisdiction. He had no administrative functions and was active only within a sphere of influence. The influence, however, was potent, for it was his duty to survey the whole field of policy of these territories and, working in close consultation with their Governments, to ensure that policies which were directed towards common aims should not fail for want of co-ordination and advice. When the appointment of Special Commissioner for South Eastern Asia lapsed, the Governor-General took over many of the duties of the post, which included both diplomatic contacts and the restoration of supplies in the area. He became Commissioner-General for South Eastern Asia, communicating with the Colonial Office on colonial affairs and with the Foreign Office on diplomatic matters.

The changes imposed in Malaya and Borneo were too radical to be accepted without dispute, and the existence

[1] When, by agreement with the Chartered Company, British North Borneo became a Crown Colony after the war, Labuan was detached from the Straits Settlements and made part of North Borneo. In 1948 Brunei, while remaining a protected State, was attached for administrative purposes to Sarawak; the Governor of Sarawak became High Commissioner in place of the High Commissioner of the Malay States, and the advisory officers, seconded to Brunei, became officers of the Sarawak service; before they had been officers of the Malayan Government services. Brunei is part of the island of Borneo and Labuan is a small island separated only narrowly from Borneo.

near by of an authority above the local government, who could be counted on to give a patient hearing to the case of the discontented, helped greatly in smoothing out difficulties. Later, when Communism in the East became a momentous political question with a painful local application, and assurance and guidance were needed, the Commissioner-General was able to use his commanding position to enlighten and fortify troubled minds.

FEDERAL CITIZENSHIP

An important part of the British Government's proposals for the political advancement of the Federation has thus begun to move smoothly towards fulfilment. In view of the political state of the country in 1946, the establishment, only five years later, in 1951, of the ministerial system under which Members of the Legislative Council undertake responsibility for government departments represents remarkable progress. A constitutional development of this importance could only emerge from a feeling of confidence that the experiment would be supported by the peoples of the Federation, and that their support was founded in loyalty to the country. The system could not have been evolved without a great change in public opinion from the animosities aroused by the proposals for a Union. Its adoption implies a widespread acceptance of the proposition that all who can claim—by birth, long residence, and single-minded loyalty to the country—that Malaya is their homeland have the right to participate in her administration. Affairs might easily have taken a different course. Acceptance of a Federation instead of a Union, together with a modification of the qualifications for citizenship, satisfactorily defined the position from which the country should advance, but there was a danger that the Malays would regard the new regime as an end in itself instead of as the offer of a breathing space in which to equip themselves to hold their proper place in the community. There was a possibility, too, that the Chinese and Indians might fail to realize that the status they had lost by the

amendment of the policy of the Colonial Office was something they now had to earn.

At one time, moreover, trouble seemed to be threatened by the political ferment set going by the liberation and a consequent bubbling-up of political parties, with the Communist party predominant. The Communist party had come to the notice of the authorities in the nineteen-twenties, had been declared illegal after a while, and had thereafter kept under cover. As a desperate measure of recruitment, it had been granted recognition on the eve of the fall of Singapore and, during the Japanese occupation, it had gained many adherents and much prestige by its guerilla activities against the Japanese from jungle lairs, to which its members had fled for their lives when Malaya fell. Comforted by help in cash and equipment from Allied headquarters in Ceylon, it grew to be a large body which was trained to be entirely Communist. In the interval between the Japanese surrender and the restoration of British authority it assumed control in towns and villages, claiming military achievements which for a time seem to have impressed the countryside, British soldiers, and journalists alike. British traditions of freedom of speech and assembly gave the party ample scope and it set up offices in both Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

Its members were for the most part young men of the working class, immigrants from China. As for the local-born, some of the Chinese and Indians moved towards a party calling itself the Malayan Democratic Union. The Malays, more particularly those of Sumatran origin, had their own left-wing party, the Malay Nationalist Party. The Malayan Indian Congress held revolutionary views, and the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions had ideas which suggested that only a slight scratching would disclose the Communist. None of these parties had a long life. The Malayan Democratic Union was leavened with a number of members of some intellectual and professional standing, but its sympathy with the extremists and the rancour of its hostility towards the British administration offended the steadier

minds of the community. The great bulk of the local-born residents, Malays, Eurasians, Chinese, Indians, and Ceylonese, entertained dislike and suspicion of the foreign origin of most of the leaders of the parties with advanced views, and their sense of responsibility and of what was practical was offended by the presumptuous pretensions of the extremists. It was less the interference of the Government than flat rejection by the peoples of Malaya which cut down the parties of advanced opinions so early in their careers. The Communists, however, remained in their strength. And the powerful Malay party, the United Malay Nationalist Organization (U.M.N.O. as it came to be called) established itself in growing influence. Brought into being by resentment against the Colonial Office proposals of 1946 for a new constitution, it included in its membership the cream of the Malay community.

The same more solid elements of public opinion which had rejected the revolutionary parties recognized the need to create a Malaya which would be the homeland of all the domiciled communities in the land. When the storms which had beaten about the original and the revised proposals for a new constitution had abated, an attempt was begun to lay the foundations of this new Malaya. A Communities Liaison Committee was formed, consisting of the leaders of the different communities, to study developments deemed essential to political progress. The Committee put first the creation of a common citizenship and admission to the Federal and State Councils by election. It was the view of the Committee that adoption of teaching in English and Malay as the basic languages, and co-operation in public affairs, would best lead towards a common conception of citizenship and that the existing definition of citizenship in the 1948 constitution should be enlarged. The Committee was greatly helped by the publication in the 1947 census of facts which only irreconcilable partisans could afford to ignore, and by the disappearance of the left-wing parties which had sprung up after the liberation. The census, besides showing that in the

Federation there were 2,427,834 Malays, 1,884,534 Chinese and 530,638 Indians, disclosed that 62·5 per cent of the Chinese claimed to have been born in the country, that the ratio of Chinese females to males had changed from 384 to the thousand in 1931 to 833 to the thousand in 1947 of whom a high percentage were in the lowest age groups, that the Chinese rate of increase was higher than that of the Malays, and that there had been a great decrease in the movement of population through immigration and emigration. A Social Survey[1] undertaken in Singapore found good reason to believe that the bulk of the Chinese rarely returned to China, however much their minds may have turned to the homeland. China was becoming less and less the birthplace of the Chinese population of Malaya, less and less the land to which they would return to spend part of their lives, and less and less the land which would call them back by appeals of sentiment and memory.

Yet, although the Communities Liaison Committee commanded a good deal of respect from the beginning, its path was not made easy. Early in its career it had to swallow the success of some of the leading Indians in the Federation in causing to be included in the draft Constitution for the Republic of India a provision which would enable them to become Federal citizens without losing Indian nationality. The figures of non-Malays seeking registration as Federal citizens were not encouraging. As recently as 29 February 1951 the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, gave the following estimate of the number of Chinese, Indians, and others who had registered as Federal citizens in Malaya: 'the numbers of non-Malays who are automatically Federal citizens . . . is 350,000 Chinese, 225,000 Indians and 45,000 others, i.e. 1 in 8 of the total population. Approximately 154,000 Chinese and 6,690 Indians and others have been granted certificates

[1] The Singapore Department of Social Welfare, *A Social Survey of Singapore. A Preliminary Study of some aspects of social conditions in the Municipal Area of Singapore, December 1947.* (Singapore, G. H. Kiat.).

of citizenship on application, i.e. 1 in 33 of the population'.[1] But this lack of support seems insignificant compared with the set-back caused by the rising of the local Chinese Communists in July 1948.

Upon the banning of the Communist Party in that month, and the determined action of the Federal Government against Communist influence in the trade unions, the Communist leaders retired to their old jungle haunts. From there they started a campaign of murder and intimidation. Their strategy aimed at the destruction of the regime through terrorism which would bring the rubber and tin industries to a standstill and which would create the impression that the Government were powerless to keep order. Their tactics were to intimidate by assassination planters and miners and any person of importance whose support of the administration and of the tin and rubber industries aided their survival. The Government were slow to act on warnings that the Communists from the beginning meant mischief, and that caches of arms and ammunition and of equipment for military training still existed in the former camps of the resistance movement. But any illusions about the potentialities of a Communist campaign were soon dispelled and, in a very short time, the Government found themselves involved in a military struggle which, three years later, seems no nearer victory.

Success in quelling the insurrection demanded the co-operation of all races of the Federation in active measures, in denying help to the rebels and, most important of all, in providing information. The response of the Malays was wholehearted; they volunteered in large numbers as special constables and guards. The mass of the Chinese hung back. Later, when an Anti-Bandit month was arranged in which the whole community of the Federation was asked to volunteer for duties in a drive against the Communists, the response of the Chinese was disappointing. The Government even found it necessary to take action against Chinese who were

[1] *Hansard, Commons*, 28 February 1951, col. 2071.

supporting the Communists with funds and supplies in surrender to a system of extortion which they did not disclose to the police. Reluctance to help was not shown by many of the leading Chinese, some of whom paid with their lives for their active co-operation with the authorities. But the mass of the Chinese stood aside and failed in this test of their loyalty to the country, and the attitude even of men of substance gave the unhappy impression that they were waiting upon the turn of events before making a decision in the matter of allegiance and support.

It gradually became evident that the Communists were receiving considerable help in their war of assassination from areas outside their jungle fastnesses. One source of manpower was soon revealed as that of workers on outlying rubber estates who, their murders done, would return to their labours as tappers. Another source of supply, more obvious, lay in the areas where Chinese had squatted, but which had not yet been reached by the controls of administration. Squatting (i.e. unlawful occupation of State land) by the Chinese had always existed on a large or small scale according to the vigilance of the Land Office concerned. During the Japanese occupation squatting had assumed vast proportions. Chinese thrown out of employment by the economic vicissitudes of the Japanese regime, Chinese anxious to remove themselves as far as possible from Japanese eyes, and finally Chinese who moved into jungle country with the encouragement of the Japanese in an effort to increase local food supplies, swelled the number of squatters until it was estimated that there were some 400,000 of them. In many cases the holdings of the squatters marched with the main jungle where the Communists had their camps, and it was from them that the Communists obtained their food supplies, and general comfort and aid. From fear or inclination the squatters joined the insurgents as active supporters and their settlements were often just Communist centres.

It became urgently necessary to break up these remote Communist refuges and the action taken to do so became a

source of Malay resentment. Shifting the squatters and preparing new centres for them with huts, drainage, roads, and water supplies, not only entails heavy expenditure but often makes living conditions which Malays and other law-abiding persons might well envy. Money is also being spent in an effort to eradicate Communist ideas by educating young Chinese under conditions of relative comfort. The good sense of these measures is patent to the impartial looker-on, but the Malay who is told that, because of the great cost of these and other kindred steps to fight the Communists, there is less money for his requirements in the shape of schools, hospitals, water supplies, etc., sees them in another and less favourable light. The Malays are tempted to look askance at all members of the same race as these Communist assassins and their sympathizers and accomplices whose ill-doing is draining away the wealth of the country to his own detriment, and to turn away from any proposal to give them equal rights as fellow-citizens.

Another development at the end of 1950 served to support this attitude. On 20 December 1950 the Government issued Emergency Regulations giving the High Commissioner power to appoint a Director of Manpower with authority to 'direct any person in the Federation to perform such services (including military or police service) in the Federation as may be specified by the direction . . .' A Director has been appointed and a first call-up for male persons between the ages of 18 and 24 announced. Upon this announcement there has been a rush of young Chinese to secure 'certificates of admission', a form of permit which would enable them to leave the country and return to Malaya within two years. The youths are China-born and normally this desire to go elsewhere would not occasion comment. But as there has been no concealment of the motive for the journey, which is to evade immediate compulsory service in the hope that the need for it will have ended before the period covered by the certificate of admission expires, criticism by those opposed to or in doubt about the policy of giving Chinese equal rights as fellow-

citizens is only natural. Certainly, it inspires the argument that, if the Chinese are indifferent to the offer of citizenship, there seems little reason why the Malays should officiously press it upon them. A Malay party has already split away from U.M.N.O., with the title of The Peninsular Malays Union, in protest against U.M.N.O's support of the policies of the Communities Liaison Committee and of the proposal of Dato Onn, at that time President of U.M.N.O.,[1] to open the doors of the party to non-Malays. The P.M.U. declares its policy to be that of defending the interests of the Malays. The party exists in no great numerical strength, but it has an importance in that its opposition to U.M.N.O. is based on doubts and misgivings which might easily and naturally assail the supporters of U.M.N.O.

The Chinese members of the Communities Liaison Committee are not free from perplexities. It may well be that the Chinese mind is still not attracted to political thinking, but it is equally likely that it retains its former opinions and feelings of dissatisfaction. The contempt of the busy, thriving Chinese for the Malay's indifference to the proceeds of unremitting toil and shrewd trading certainly exists still; his outlook pictures anyone holding such a view about the purposes of life as idle, worthless, and unfit for responsibility. The Chinese, too, without open demonstration, nurses a sense of unfair treatment when he sees the funds to which he is a substantial, and the Malay a modest, contributor expended preferentially in emphatic favour of the Malays. In the means for achieving power, the possession of productive property and inherent capacity to add to it, in educational attainments, in ambition, industry, and progressive impulses, as well as in ruthless, indomitable purpose, the Chinese are crushingly superior to the other races, and the wise course would seem to be to come to terms with them. The attitude of organizations with a purely communal bias, such as the Peninsular Malays Union, contributes nothing to a solution of the problem which is now a vital one for the Federation—the creation of a Malayan

[1] Dato Onn resigned the Presidency of U.M.N.O. in August 1951.

citizenship as a basis for self-government. In fact, this attitude only shows sense if the ideas underlying it stem from a belief that there is, or should be, no such problem, and that the protective preference which the Malays have enjoyed under British administration will continue indefinitely. A better judgement of the situation is displayed by those Malay leaders who have found it advisable to point out that the Malays are slow in responding to the opportunities for higher education offered to them and that, without considerably greater exertion, the position of inferiority which they feared would be inflicted on them by the Union is liable to come about through their own inertia.

If the political progress of the Federation is designed to lead to a united country which enjoys self-government, having embraced within its citizenship all members of all races who are or have qualified themselves for that status, the Communities Liaison Committee would seem to be taking the only course open to it. The position of the Committee is also strengthened by the fact that it can claim credit for constructive achievement. It has been the moving spirit in the important constitutional developments since the introduction of the 1948 constitution, the creation of the ministerial system of Members responsible for government departments, the acceptance of the electoral principle of representation on the Councils of the Federation, the proposed new laws governing citizenship. It has been fortunate in the sympathetic and wise reception its proposals have received from the Government, and in the active collaboration of the Government, which has brought them to maturity at notable speed. But the ideas of the Committee have displayed such a clear appreciation of the political problems facing the Federation, and their proposals for applying these ideas such a realization of the benefit of evolutionary rather than revolutionary progress, as to ensure the support and aid of any government of good will.

The Government have acknowledged that the new Bills introduced to amend the law governing the grant of Malayan citizenship have been framed on the suggestions of the Com-

munities Liaison Committee and the Bills make it clear that in them the Committee is continuing its drive towards identification of the domiciled peoples of Malaya with the country herself and with the right to participate in her government. The new Bills are a Federal Bill dealing with Federal citizenship[1] and Bills to be enacted by each State which will confer the status of a subject of the State Ruler.[2]

The Federal Bill provides that the following persons shall be citizens of the Federation of Malaya by *operation of law:*

(*a*) any subject of the Ruler of any State;
(*b*) any citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies born in the Federation, one of whose parents was born in the Federation; (the Bill defines a 'citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies' as meaning a person who is a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies under the Imperial Act entitled the British Nationality Act 1948);
(*c*) any person who is a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, wherever born, and
  (*i*) if born before the appointed date (to be prescribed by the High Commissioner), whose father was born in either of the Settlements (Penang and Malacca) and had at the time of such person's birth completed a continuous period of fifteen year residence in the Federation; and
  (*ii*) if born on or after the appointed date whose father was born in either of the Settlements and was, at the time of such person's birth, a Federal citizen or a citizen of Malaya;
(*d*) any person who is a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, wherever born, whose father was, at the time of such person's birth, a Federal citizen or a citizen of the Federation of Malaya by the grant of a certificate of citizenship or a certificate of naturalization, or a citizen of the Federation by registration as provided in the Bill;
(*e*) any person who is already a Federal citizen.

[1] A Bill intituled An Ordinance to re-enact with amendments Part XII of the Federation of Malaya Agreement 1948. *Federation of Malaya Government Gazette*, Third Supplement, 15 March 1951 (Kuala Lumpur, 26 March 1951).

[2] A Bill intituled An Enactment to make provision for the status of a subject of His Highness the Ruler of the State of . . . , for the acquisition and loss of such status and for purposes connected therewith. *Federation of Malaya Government Gazette*, Supplement, 12 April 1951 (Kuala Lumpur, 17 April 1951).

The Bill then goes on to provide as follows for *citizenship by registration:*

a person of full capacity born in the Federation who
(*a*) is not a citizen of the Federation; and
(*b*) is a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, shall on applying to the High Commissioner and taking an oath that he will exercise only the rights, powers, and privileges of a citizen of the Federation or a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies or a subject of a Ruler of any Malay State and none other; and absolutely and entirely renounces and abjures all loyalty to any country, State or sovereign other than loyalty to the Federation of Malaya, His Majesty and the Ruler of any Malay State; and swears to be a true, loyal, and faithful citizen of the Federation and to give due obedience to all lawful authorities constituted in the Federation, be entitled to be registered as a citizen of the Federation of Malaya.

The provision which the Bill makes for acquiring *citizenship by naturalization* is as follows. The High Commissioner may, upon application in the proper form by any person who is a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies and who is of full capacity, grant to such a person certificate of naturalization if he satisfies the High Commissioner that he

(*a*) has within the preceding twelve years
  (*i*) resided in the Federation for a period of not less than ten years; and
  (*ii*) resided in the Federation throughout the two years immediately preceding the date of his application;
(*b*) is of good character;
(*c*) is not likely to become chargeable to the Federation;
(*d*) is able to speak the Malay or English language with reasonable proficiency; and
(*e*) has made a declaration that he intends, in the event of a certificate being granted to him, to settle permanently in the Federation.

Any such person must take an oath in similar terms to that taken by a citizen by registration.

The definition of a subject of a Ruler is enacted in the Bills prepared by the various States. These provide that the following persons shall be subjects of the Ruler (and, as such, nationals of the State) by *operation of law:*

(*a*) any person who belongs to an aboriginal tribe and who is in the State;
(*b*) any Malay born in the State;
(*c*) any person born in the State, one of whose parents was born in the Federation of Malaya;
(*d*) any person who by application in the State has already acquired Federal citizenship and is still a Federal citizen;
(*e*) any person, wherever born, whose father either—
  (*i*) was born in the State and, at the time of the birth of such person, was under the provisions of the Bill, or would have been, had the provisions of the Bill been then in force, a subject of the Ruler; or
  (*ii*) was, at the time of the birth of such person, a subject of the Ruler by registration or naturalization.

The State Bills provide for *registration as a subject* of a Ruler upon application in the prescribed manner but no person shall be entitled to be registered as a subject of the Ruler unless he satisfies the Ruler that he

(*a*) is able to speak the Malay or English language with reasonable proficiency;
(*b*) is of good character; and
(*c*) has taken an oath similar in terms to those required by the Federal Bill.

There is also a provision that a person who has absented himself from the Federation for a continuous period of five years shall not be entitled to be registered as a subject of a Ruler unless he is certified by the Ruler to have maintained substantial connexion with the Federation.

The provisions relating to the acquisition of a *certificate of naturalization* are similar to those of the Federal Bill, except that residence in the State (in place of the Federation) is required throughout the two years immediately preceding the date of application.

The new law of citizenship demands a much closer identification with the State or Federation than the old. In the latter, acquisition of citizenship of the Federation depended on residential qualifications and did not require any renunciation of loyalty to another government. This conception of citizenship was too artificial and conciliatory, too much

lacking in insistence on association, through allegiance, with the Federation to offer anything more than a rickety foundation on which to build Malayan citizenship. The new law insists upon loyalty to the States and Federation and creates a status arising out of nationality. Federal citizenship now derives directly and uncompromisingly from allegiance to a Malay Ruler, or to the King, and allegiance to other governments precludes political rights in the Federation and States; whoever will not put himself in the way of giving undivided loyalty to the Ruler or the King in accepting or acquiring a national status or citizenship of the Federation of Malaya is an alien with the disabilities of an alien.

To offset this are provisions admitting non-Malays to the status of nationality and to citizenship of the Federation which are not inequitable. Second generation non-Malays will have a Malayan nationality or be citizens of the Federation by operation of law; first generation non-Malays will be eligible to acquire a Malayan nationality or citizenship of the Federation by registration. The conditions under which naturalization can be obtained are reasonable. The requisite for naturalization of a knowledge of Malay or English is made easier; literacy in either language is no longer demanded, only an ability to speak one or other of the languages reasonably well. In the circumstances of Malaya the test might be considered stiff, but it is expressly stated that the new law is founded on the proposition that the Malay and English languages and a common way of life are essentials for the mutual understanding and community of ideas and sympathies which knit peoples into nations. The proposition will be easier to accept when the teaching of Malay and English in all the schools is in full swing.

Whether the provisions of these Bills, even if they become law, will ever be put into operation has been threatened by a new policy put forward by Dato Onn, the Member for Home Affairs and Chairman of the Rural and Industrial Development Authority. The Communities Liaison Committee, in which Dato Onn has been a powerful force, played a very

considerable part in suggesting the principles of this new citizenship law. On 5 June 1951, Dato Onn announced his intention of forming a new party, political and non-communal, of which the purpose would be 'to establish an independent State aiming at the well-being and advancement of the people based on the equality of opportunities and of political, social and economic rights'.[1] The time given for the achievement of independence is seven years. Dato Onn said he would work for the merging of Singapore in the new State but would urge the disappearance of the nine States and the Settlements, the word 'State' to be replaced by 'territory'. Regarding the international position of the State, Dato Onn announced 'I would say at this stage that all the indications are that an independent Malaya will seek to remain with the British Commonwealth of Nations. I would put it thus: We do not want British rulers, but we do want British friends. But there is no such thing as independence or self-government if it is strangulated by pre-conditions of what it can or cannot do. . . . If we are treated with honesty and as equals we shall be less inclined to stay out of the Commonwealth of Nations'.

Dato Onn disclosed that he had received enquiries from the leader of the Malayan Chinese Association, Dato Tan Cheng Lock, asking the following questions:

Would it be possible to form a political party in the Federation with membership open to all without distinction of race, class, creed, colour, or nationality?

Could the party's economic policy be the formation of a property-owning democracy or are the masses determined to have nationalization and doctrinaire socialism?

Is it necessary to agree on fixed proportions of seats for each community in the Legislative Council or will candidates be elected purely on their merits by a mixed electorate?

Would the party aim to strengthen the State Governments or to strengthen the forces of centralization?

Dato Onn has answered the first and last question in the announcement of the formation of his new party and his

[1] The references to Dato Onn's proposals for a new party are taken from the issues of *The Straits Times* between 6 and 13 June 1951.

answers, together with his choice of so short a period as seven years in which to achieve independence, are likely to affect powerfully his chances of success.

In his announcement Dato Onn stated that membership of the new party is to be open to anyone who is sixteen years of age or more, who is born in Malaya or has lived in the country for 'some years' (Dato Onn's view is that five years is a suitable period), and who has declared his or her support of the party's objects. The chances of success for the new party turn on three items of Dato Onn's programme; the short limit of time before independence is to be achieved, the wide qualifications for membership, and the obliteration of the States as political organizations. Dato Onn's declaration that he is ready to form a new party suggests that he has a new party ready to be formed. He has said that he hopes to recruit members from the best men in the Councils and municipalities and to attract to the party the students of all races. If his policy had been framed in vaguer terms, omitting the three items mentioned above, there can be little doubt that it would have received ample support among the younger men of the educated classes, among the politically minded in the Chinese and Indian communities, and even among the kampong Malays. The younger men interested would be those who have entered the professions and the government service or who have formed a taste for public affairs in the administration of trade unions, co-operative societies and the like or won success in business by their own abilities. To such as these personal achievement will have given a pride and assurance which will tend to make them rebel against a continuance of political tutelage, however benevolent in intention and efficient in discharge. As for the kampong Malays, Dato Onn, as Chairman of the Rural and Industrial Development Authority created for their benefit, has the opportunity to build up for himself a prestige and trust which can be thrown into the balance against the hereditary and natural regard of the kampong Malay for the Ruler of his State.

A policy of self-government is unlikely to attract the older men of all races who have prospered under the old order. Content with a regime which has been able to establish and maintain the peace, good order, and honest administration which are the conditions they, particularly the Chinese, desire for the pursuit of wealth, they have no feeling of confidence that recent reforms will bring a change for the better, and are not likely to favour so great an extension of them as is contained in Dato Onn's programme. Yet the Chinese are more likely to seek to adapt themselves to change than to oppose it or to clash openly with those of their fellow countrymen who find in the new proposals a fertile ground for their own political ambitions.

The chief opposition is likely to come from the Malays; certainly from the older Malays and almost certainly from many of the younger Malays and the Malays of the kampongs. The reasons for opposition will be found in Dato Onn's wide-flung invitation to membership of his party, in the short time for preparation provided by his proposals before the assumption of self-government, and in his threat to the States. It is difficult to believe that, having received into his party those whose qualifications he has prescribed on such easy terms and having availed himself of their support in establishing a new form of government, Dato Onn could refuse to grant them the political status of citizens under that government. If such a concession is implicit in his proposals for recruiting the new party, then Dato Onn has abandoned the qualifications for citizenship embodied in the new Bills. The new draft citizenship laws accept Malays and non-Malays of the second generation outright as citizens; non-Malays of the first generation and foreign-born persons are required to give proof of assimilation. The British Government's first proposals in 1946 for Malayan Union citizenship required in the case of persons not born and ordinarily resident in Malaya a residential qualification of ten years and an oath of allegiance. Even the most revolutionary of the parties which sprang up after the liberation prescribed eight years'

residence, an oath of allegiance to Malaya and renunciation of any former national allegiance. Dato Onn, who led the Malays in revolt against the plan for a Malayan Union and in opposition to the revolutionary parties, and who, as a member of the Communities Liaison Committee, had his share in drafting the new citizenship laws, finds residence for five years and loyalty to his party a sufficient qualification for intervention in local affairs in support of a revolutionary change in the form of government.

This depreciation of the qualifications for citizenship will not commend itself to the Malays and when they study the possible effects upon their position in the country of a premature plunge into self-government, their feelings may well be those of dismay. The Draft Development Plan[1] in June 1950 produced by the Government of the Federation argues that, in order to preserve the old standards of prosperity, a revolution in the working methods and economic thinking of the Malay community must be accomplished. Unless the unprogressive Malay proves himself capable of change in outlook and effort, he will be easily outstripped by the diligent and adaptable Chinese. Hitherto, the political position of the Malays has been preserved by the favoured treatment accorded to the Malays by successive British administrations. When that preference disappears with the withdrawal of British rule on the attainment of Malayan self-government, the danger will arise that Chinese economic power will gradually and subtly be translated into political supremacy. For the effort required of the Malays to approach the level of Chinese economic achievements, seven years is not enough.

The British influence is not the only support Dato Onn's project will take away from the Malays. If the States are obliterated as political organizations, much of the show and substance of Malay authority will vanish with them. The purpose of the change from the Residential system to the administration of a State's affairs by Malay officials was to

[1] See Chapter XI.

emphasize the importance of the Malays in the government of the country. The new arrangements have been more costly and less efficient than those they superseded but they have restored to the Malays of the former Federated Malay States the place in regional government which they had lost under the centralized regime of the old Federation. At the same time, the right of the Prime Ministers of the Malay States to a seat *ex officio* in the Legislative Council strengthened Malay influence in the Central Government. The sum of Malay authority as State officials, as members of the State Councils, and as representatives of the States on the Legislative Council is considerable and its disappearance will be a most serious loss of power and prestige to the Malays.

The extinction of the States will further undermine the Malay position by diminishing the importance of the Malay Rulers. Deprived of the appearance and the considerable reality of power which the State Councils and the regime of State officials present, their significance reduced to occasional consultations with a mixed government, including Chinese and Indians, and to ceremonial pageantry, the influence of the Malay Rulers will wither and die and with them another symbol of Malay predominance in Malaya, the country of the Malays.

Dato Onn has indicated that he expects Malay opposition. When he first announced his decision to found a new party, he stated that his proposals would be put before U.M.N.O. at its meeting in August 1951 and that if the organization agreed to admit all communities to the party, U.M.N.O. would be given the chance of adopting Dato Onn's proposals as its own programme. A week later he declared his intention of cutting loose from U.M.N.O. on the grounds that a powerful minority would oppose his scheme. A few days before Dato Onn's announcement, the Peninsular Malays Union repeated its insistence that the administration of Malaya should be handed over to the Malays; that Malaya administration should decide whether there should be 'one nationality or none'. 'If there is to be one nationality, it must be

Malay and not Malayan', their president added.[1] P.M.U.'s quarrel with Dato Onn arises from its belief that he has delivered himself over to the Chinese and Indians without any return. Dato Onn's new policy certainly presents them with plenty of ammunition for renewed attacks and this party of extremists may gain unexpected force. But the immediate point is not whether the elimination of these sources of Malay predominance is right or wrong; there are arguments in plenty on either side. It is whether, by arousing the opposition of the Malays to his policy and to the leaders of the other communities who are supporting it, Dato Onn will not destroy the efforts which have been made, slowly and steadily, to bring together all the communities of Malaya into a unit which would offer a firm foundation for self-government. The concerted labours of the Communities Liaison Committee and their supporters and sympathizers to bring about friendship between the communities and to produce constitutional reforms towards which they marched together, the patient labours to evolve a form of citizenship which in reasonable terms would demand and reward loyalty to Malaya and renunciation of all other allegiances, seemed to be carrying forward the community to a common purpose at a surprising speed. The foundation of a non-communal party aimed purely at self-government would have been a natural development of the work already done, a valuable stimulus to the growth of unity, and a timely warning to the Malays that time was passing. Not one of Dato Onn's controversial additions to the simple theme of self-government presents an urgent question. What is pressing is the need to promote a friendly co-operation between the communities which will develop into political unity and a common loyalty to Malaya. Self-government cannot hope to succeed in a divided Malaya.

U.M.N.O. at its meeting in August 1951 did not accept Dato Onn's proposals for the Independence Party. The party was launched, however, in the next month with substantial support from the other races. Malay support was insignifi-

[1] *The Straits Times*, 4 June 1951.

cant and came from the younger Malays of a different type from those who had long been settled in responsible political or administrative posts or those who feared that Dato Onn's proposals would undermine the existing Malay position in the political structure of the Federation. These latter do not seem to be contesting the idea of independence or of independence quickly achieved. What they reject is any plan for getting the new venture afloat by throwing overboard the privileges which secure the present and future of the Malays. In this way Dato Onn has lost the support of the greater part of the body of administrative and political experience which would make a great contribution to the viability of the new independent State. The other races can make no like contribution and the Malay youth of the new party will have to travel far and fast to replace within seven or ten years the elders who oppose them.

A most unhappy feature of the schism is the attitude now taken up by the leaders of U.M.N.O. who maintain that independence must restore to the Malays the political status they enjoyed before British intervention and with it the right to say who shall enjoy citizenship in the new State. The ground gained by the Communities Liaison Committee has thus been lost and for practical purposes the Committee can be considered extinct.

The strongest argument favouring the Malays is that immeasurably more than any other race they have exhibited loyalty to the Federation by their active resistance to the Communist menace. The Independent Party can reply that it commands the support of all other races and that although, as alleged, the origin of the party may have only been an impulse hastily committed to a scrap of paper, some such movement is essential to an advance towards self-government which can hardly be expected to arrive suddenly one morning without warning or preparation.

It should not be difficult for Dato Onn to discard all the irrelevancies he has tagged on to his prime object and bring the whole Federation together in its march forward. And

U.M.N.O. might do well to study the results of the visit of the Secretary of State, Mr Lyttelton, which his determination to bring the Communist insurrection to an end has produced. (*The Times* 12 December 1951.) The Chinese are to be encouraged to train and arm themselves in large numbers as a Home Guard and so acquire a military strength which the Malays have always been anxious should be denied them. The decision to extend and accelerate compulsory primary education must conflict with the scheme for National schools which the Malays support and the Chinese oppose. U.M.N.O. may resent with good reason the course of events which confer concessions on the Chinese as remedies for the evil which is purely a Chinese creation. But it will be good sense to realize that the trend of affairs is working against them and that co-operation with the loyal Chinese is the best policy for themselves and for their country.

CHAPTER XI

The Planning of Economic and Social Development

THE expense of restoring what had been damaged or destroyed during the Japanese occupation, the cost of overtaking the arrears of development which had accumulated in this period and the certainty of heavy burdens in financing the progressive policies which had been promised by the British Government at the end of the war, demanded far-sighted care in the planning of the future of both the Colony and the Federation. Expenditure upon rehabilitation, at inflated prices, almost exhausted the very considerable pre-war reserves held by both Governments and their replenishment out of revenue was accepted as prudent policy. The action of His Majesty's Government during the war in rightly abolishing the opium monopoly affected revenue expectations though the loss under this heading was more easy to bear because of past policy in gradually reducing the sale of opium. The imposition of income tax, after strong resistance by the unofficial members of both Legislative Councils,[1] and increases in indirect taxation were resorted to and these, combined with a vigorous revival of trade, have sufficiently restored the finances of both Governments to afford them a breathing-space in which to continue the work of recovering ground lost since 1940 and to plan for

[1] In 1948 income tax was introduced into both Singapore and the Union (now Federation). The Straits Settlements had paid income tax as a war contribution during both world wars. The Federated Malay States had paid none in the First World War but had been compelled by the weight of official votes in the Federal Council to accept income tax in the Second World War. The income tax introduced in 1948 had been opposed by the unofficial members of the Singapore and the Union Legislative Councils, but in both Councils the Governor had used his powers to pass the Bill authorising the tax. The arguments against the Bill included the complaint that it would be paid in full by those whose incomes could be traced, and largely evaded by the Asians whose earnings could be, and are, easily concealed; and the assertion that administration of the tax would certainly lead to corrupt practices. In the Union strong objection was raised to any additional taxation levied to support what was alleged to be an extravagant administration.

a wise exploitation of the country's resources in the interests of social and economic improvements.

Singapore has the simpler task of the two administrations. A producer only in a small way through secondary industries and essentially an urban centre, Singapore's main duty is to develop her social services, such as education, medicine, a proper organization of labour, and social welfare work, and to tackle the gigantic task of housing her population. Mention has already been made of progress in these tasks: a ten-year plan for building schools to serve a much enlarged educational policy is in full swing, medical services have been restored and expanded, provision is being made for extension of social welfare work, reforms affecting labour have passed into law and others are being studied, and the early instalments of a great scheme for building houses are nearing completion. This progress suffered a check since inflationary prices and scarcity of materials in 1951 raised misgivings about the cost of the Government's building programmes, and a partial withdrawal of the Government from the building market was contemplated as an anti-inflationary measure. Irritation caused by electrical breakdowns and an outgrown water-supply, however, may well induce a frame of mind which will not tolerate serious interruption of the Government's major programmes of development, especially those of medical services and social welfare work.

The Federation, a producer of raw materials of great importance to the world, is unable to command adequate food supplies to meet the needs of its peoples. The Federal Government's Draft Development Plan, published in June 1950,[1] is therefore a very thorough exposition of the requirements for the future development of social services, and also an ambitious prospectus for the cultivation of national resources and utilities and the fostering of trade and industry. A first instalment of the whole scheme is provided in a series of programmes covering the six years 1950–5. They propose

[1] *Draft Development Plan of the Federation of Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1950), paragraphs 53, 55.

certain measures valuable in themselves, which are also steps towards the attainment of long-term objectives; these, too, are set out to show the whole conception. Many of the proposals—for more roads, more bridges, more post and telegraph facilities, more power stations and the like—flow naturally from systematic growth. A large proportion of the ideas for expansion in the Agricultural, Forestry, and Veterinary Departments are a resumption or revival of pre-war plans. But a new feature is the greater concentration on the wants of the rural areas: the Medical Department, for instance, plans an extension of health work in the countryside as well as new or improved hospitals and medical institutions offering specialized services; the Public Works Department programmes include water supplies for the rural districts. The Labour Department is modernizing its ideas for the welfare of labour, and seeks to establish minimum standards for all grades of workers, to extend the workmen's compensation law, to create labour exchanges, to enforce weekly holidays by law, and to introduce a factory law, and many other features of modern labour administration.

Up to this point the main value of the Draft Plan is that it publishes for general information the Government's views on the country's requirements over a long period, thereby improving on the old methods of releasing to the public only so much information about official plans for development as was disclosed in the annual budgets. The importance of the Plan is shown more clearly as it proceeds to examine the development of the country's natural resources. The text of this part of the Plan is this:

> . . . the basis of Malaya's exceptional pre-war prosperity has largely disappeared, in that the value of its exports to the markets of the world has not increased in the same proportion as has the value of the goods it imports. It is by no means certain that this balance will right itself as time goes by: indeed it may never do so . . . what is done or not done in the next ten or twenty years in Malaya will determine for better or worse its position in the world economy . . . of fifty to sixty years ahead.[1]

[1] ibid.

The Draft Plan lays stress on the need to broaden the country's economy and to produce to a much greater degree Malaya's own foodstuffs; to this end the future endeavours of the Agricultural, Fisheries, Veterinary, Geology, Drainage and Irrigation Departments, and of the Co-operative Societies are planned. The weaknesses of Malaya's economy were well known to earlier administrations, and many of the new plans include fresh attempts at enterprises which have failed in the past and which may have little better hope in the future. The important thing is that the Government are taking into their confidence a community which, in so far as it aspires to self-government, will have itself to find a solution to the problems discussed in the Draft Plan. A long process of education is required to lead Asian producers to accept many of the suggested means of improving output, and most of the ideas behind these suggestions, such as trade associations, trade standards, market research, are beyond the ken of the smaller men. Even in the familiar activities of the worker and the small cultivator, the Draft Plan asks for a revolution of habit and thought.

The great weaknesses of the Malayan economy are the low productivity of the soil and the low productivity of the workers. It is proposed to overcome both disadvantages by an increase in the use of mechanical methods and artificial aids and, at the same time, to encourage a source of greater energy, greater powers of concentration, a stronger industrial stamina, and a keener conscientiousness among all workers. The rice planter is to learn to use machinery and fertilizers; the small cultivator is to grow other crops as well as to apply more scientific methods to those with which he is familiar; the fisherman is to abandon the traditional ways of centuries, which bring such poor results, in favour of modern methods of fishing.

While emphasizing the need to reduce imports of foodstuffs and its feasibility, the Draft Plan proves by careful calculations that enough rice to support the population cannot be grown in Malaya, admits that the climate is not suited to

grain crops, and agrees that, although root crops can be produced successfully, they are less nutritious than rice and are not liked by the population. Means of reducing food imports are sought in the further encouragement of industries which are already flourishing or at least established, such as the production of pigs and poultry, tea and coffee, coconuts, palm-oil, pineapples, and Malaya's many fruits, and a diversion of public taste towards milk and palm-oil.

If these new skills and practices are to be introduced successfully, a revolution in mental outlook must be achieved, and the adamant conservatism of the Malay and of the Indian overcome; more adaptable though the Chinese are, even they must be persuaded to discard their self-satisfaction. Close attention to the welfare of the workers will help but education must be the principal means of approach, and here the Government are faced with an intimidating task. The decline of the educational system during the Japanese occupation, the time lost through the requirements of rehabilitation, the large numbers of Chinese, Indian, and, in some of the former Unfederated Malay States, Malay children who have received no education, have combined to produce a situation where, according to the Draft Plan, out of one million children between the ages of 6 and 12 only one-third are receiving education. The provision of free government education along the present lines would require capital expenditure of $180 million and an increase in annually recurrent expenditure of $66 million above the present figure of $33 million. Although the Federation has not settled its educational policy in detail, a decision has been taken in the Legislative Council to teach Malay and English in all vernacular schools, Malay, Chinese, and Indian, at government expense: the cost will be a great addition to the estimated expenditure on the ordinary system of vernacular education for all children referred to earlier. Under the most favourable financial conditions, such expenditure could be found only over a very long period; the best that can be done for some time to come is to prepare a short-term programme to consolidate the

existing services and make good their deficiencies. The desirability of pressing on with higher education emerges clearly from the new planning which demands an increase of highly trained staffs in departments where the shortage of well-qualified men is already acute. The appropriate source of supply will be the university and the technical colleges and the two Governments wisely insist that the university must be in the forefront of all plans for educational progress.

The Draft Plan fully recognizes the financial obstacles in the way of development, which at the time of its preparation were indeed formidable. Since then, the revenue prospects of the Federation have been transformed and the figures given in the Draft Plan are no longer an accurate guide. Briefly, the Draft Plan shows that, even when the cost of the guerilla war and of defence and internal security are left out of account,[1] revenue is barely sufficient to meet recurrent expenditure (personal emoluments, maintenance, and loan charges) and the class of expenditure on small items which might be called the cost of renewals; that for the first time in their history Malaya is receiving financial aid from the British Government through the Colonial Welfare and Development Fund; that the reserves have run down from $221·5 million in April 1946 to $69 million in 1950; and that, if these reserves are restored at the rate of $10 million a year, additional revenue of over $43 million per annum will be required to finance the Draft Plan and rebuild the reserve funds.[2]

The authors of the Draft Plan did not seem stricken by this prospect. They looked to income tax as the main source of additional revenue, with support from increases in customs duties and land rents. As it was obvious before the war that,

[1] Extra expenditure caused by the guerilla war amounted to $24 million in 1948 and $85 million in 1949 and it was estimated at $144 million in 1950. The British Government contributed some $40 million in 1949, $25 million in 1950, and promised $10 million during 1951. In 1949 Singapore made an outright gift of $4 million to the Federation as a contribution to the cost of the war. If squatter re-settlement is included, the Federation is spending more than 45 per cent of its annual revenue on defence and internal security.

[2] *Draft Development Plan of the Federation of Malaya*, Chapter IV, pp. 171–4; Appendix Y, pp. 121–2.

if Malaya was to continue to move with the times in the various branches of development, she must stiffen her very light taxation, there should have been nothing in their views to shock the country. But since these figures were published, the financial outlook of the Federation has taken on a much rosier light. The boom in rubber and tin, caused first by stock-piling by the countries of the world against a need for rearmament and later by the actual requirements of rearmament, caused an increase in the national income in 1950 and 1951 from which the Government, through increased taxation, have been able greatly to augment their revenue. But so long as the mainstays of Malaya's prosperity are tin and rubber, anxiety can never be banished for long. Plantation rubber is not winning its battle with synthetic rubber, and a recovery in the rubber industry of Indonesia might once more lead to over-production. An important reason for doubting the likelihood of over-production does not in itself bring comfort. It is feared that in Malaya (and in Indonesia in her present state there is even more cause for a similar fear) for lack of systematic, or indeed any, re-planting the yield from the small estates and holdings under rubber will be a rapidly diminishing return. Re-planting was so strictly controlled by international agreement before the war at a time of over-production that it was not undertaken to any large extent; in any case the re-planting of small holdings is surrounded with difficulties. A holding of a few acres under rubber is almost invariably fully planted with no reserve for new planting. In the case of many Malay holdings of a good age so many of the trees have suffered from overcrowding, rough treatment in tapping, and poor husbandry, that re-planting would entail the removal of most of the existing trees. Such an operation would deprive the owner of the income on which he has relied for very many years until such time—seven years or more—as his newly planted trees start bearing. Opening up a new area while continuing to enjoy the fruits of the existing holding would not be a satisfactory solution in the well-developed States on the western side of

the Peninsula, for the new area would have to be sought at some distance from the original holding on which the Malay owner has his home and which, very probably, lies adjacent to his rice-field and orchard. The Government realize the need for re-planting, and are approving the alienation of land to suitable applicants who are ready to use the much improved stock which was being evolved before the war. It has also established nurseries from which budwood or clonal seedlings will be sold to the small-holder at nominal cost. But this will only offer a solution where the planter can continue to draw a livelihood from his original holding whilst the new area is being planted.[1]

The character of tin as a wasting asset has been emphasized since the outbreak of the guerilla war. The terrorist activities of the guerillas have much reduced the safety zones of the country and prospecting for tin has been considerably curtailed. The industry finds cause for inquietude, too, in the lifting of the duty on tin ore exported from Malaya. The duty was imposed in 1903 to check a scheme for giving a monopolistic control to American buyers of tin by the erection of smelters in the United States. In 1948, in compliance with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade reached at Geneva, the extra duty of $30 a picul on all tin-ore not destined for smelting in Malaya, the United Kingdom or Australia was removed. American smelters have already injuriously affected the Malayan smelters and, in spite of the advantages of long experience and proximity to supply, the local industry would be placed in jeopardy by the subsidizing of American smelters or the imposition in the United States of an import duty on tin metal. There is thus a possibility that the circumstances which the duty was imposed to

[1] Some help can be expected from a government anti-inflationary scheme for a stabilization fund which would be used for re-planting or supporting prices in a time of slump. The money would be collected through five dollar bonds which it would be obligatory for a rubber dealer to use in part payment for every picul of rubber sold at a price above $100. The bonds would be redeemable one year after the date of issue, provided the holder used the money for re-planting with improved seedlings under proper supervision. (*The Times*, 31 July 1951).

check may arise in the future, and that the Malayan tin industry may come under the control of its principal buyer, the United States.

The Plan shows some doubt about the source of future capital. It assumes that most of the capital for economic development must be raised in the country but questions how in Malaya, where in some communities ideas of saving and investment are expressed in the purchase of gold adornments and jewellery, and where the Chinese think little of the modest returns from savings banks and prefer the risk of lending at usurious rates, the ordinary individual can be persuaded to lend financial support to big programmes of development. Reflecting on the need for a properly organized capital market, the Plan allows itself an *obiter dictum* to the effect that business capacity is less common among the inhabitants of Malaya than is supposed. The existence of business instinct is granted, but not the knowledge of the technique of business and production which is a component of business capacity.

The Draft Plan has great topical value. To the outside world it reveals the limits of what is possible in meeting demands for social services, and to the peoples of Malaya it presents a sober, realistic picture of the very difficult and complex task which lies before those who are, or who may become, responsible for the conduct of the country's affairs. It may persuade them that the need to make peace among themselves is grave and urgent and that only intense effort will produce the ability and wisdom to govern themselves so as to maintain the prosperity and good order of the past.

Anyone studying the Draft Plan must ask this question: which of the races within the Federation is most likely to succeed in the attainment of the Plan's objectives and what will be the reward? It is hard to believe that the Chinese will not leave the other Asian races far behind. Not much can be expected for some time of the Co-operative Movement which had had only moderate success before the war, came to a standstill during the Japanese occupation, and is only being nursed back to life slowly and with difficulty. The Rural and

Industrial Authority was established by the Government to improve the social and economic well-being of the Malays. If it can arouse the Malays to a greater efficiency and diligence in their work, and succeed where an able, conscientious administration of the Co-operative Department and the repeated endeavours of British administrators suffered disappointment, it may preserve for the Malays the position which their historical origins have hitherto secured for them. But this can only be achieved by strenuous effort inspired by a spirit of determination of which the Malays have given little promise in their economic history. In the national economy of the Federation, the Malay is the peasant farmer and the simple fisherman; and even in those spheres the Chinese surpasses him. He is not the banker or the industrialist nor, except in land, does he accumulate capital; those activities he leaves to the European and the Chinese. The Chinese and the Indian are the shopkeepers and small tradesmen, not the Malay. Only a radical change of outlook can make the Malay an important contributor to the economic revolution the Draft Plan prescribes. The strength of the Malays lies in their numbers, and the fact that they are the race with the longest association with Malaya. They are steadily losing the former advantage, and respect of their historical claims has been mainly a British policy. In a self-governing Malaya, the political consequences of economic insignificance will be serious, and may result in gradual eclipse.

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