

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SARAWAK ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE

FROM ITS INCEPTION(1840s) TO 1963

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by

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To the memory of my mother

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GLOSSARY

<i>adat</i>	customary law/tradition
<i>bilek</i>	Iban family/household unit
<i>datu</i>	non-royal Malay chief
<i>istana</i>	palace, Rajah's/Governor's residence
<i>kampong</i>	Malay/Melanau village
<i>kangchew</i>	Chinese leader
<i>kapitan china</i>	Chinese headman
<i>kerajaan</i>	government
<i>masuk Melayu</i>	the adoption of the Islamic religion and Malay way of life
<i>pengarah</i>	equivalent of <i>penghulu</i>
<i>penghulu</i>	Iban leader
<i>perabangan</i>	Malay aristocratic class
<i>pintu</i>	family/household (lit. 'door')
<i>tuai rumah</i>	Iban/Dayak longhouse headman
<i>tua kampong</i>	Malay/Melanau village headman

ABBREVIATIONS

B.B.C.A.U.	British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit
B.M.A.	British Military Administration
B.P.U.	British Planning Unit
C.O.	Colonial Office
D.O.	District Officer
50 C.A.U.	50 Civil Affairs Unit
H.M.O.C.S.	Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service
I.G.C.	Inter-Governmental Commission
M.A.S.	Malay Administrative Service
M.C.S.	Malayan Civil Service
N.O.	Native Officer
P.S.C.	Public Service Commission
S.A.O.	Sarawak Administrative Officer, equivalent in rank to N.O.
S.R.D.	Services Reconnaissance Department
W.O.	War Office

INTRODUCTION

The creation of a common pattern of administration among the territories constituting the Empire was one of the legacies of the British colonial experience.¹ An important feature was the evolution of a system of Colonial Service concerned with the control and government of the various colonial dependencies. This developed in consonance with the aims and objectives of the extension of British rule. According to R.Heussler, the Colonial Service may be seen as "Britain's organisational response to increased government responsibilities resulting from her acquisitions" during the Victorian period.²

The Colonial Service, therefore, emerged as a result of the practical needs of governing a newly-acquired territory. Once a country was colonised there arose the problem of evolving a system of administration best suited to the local environment. Through a system of trial and error, a common strategy became evident. The country would be divided into manageable governing units, each under a Resident. These early Residents wielded enormous power and control over the territory assigned to them. Once rule over the colony was stabilized, there developed the need to consolidate

¹H.Tinker, 'Structure of the British Imperial Heritage', in R.Braibanti, ed., *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition*, Durham, 1966. p.23.

²R.Heussler, *Yesterday's Rulers, The Making of the British Colonial Service*, London, 1963, p.6.

government. As more administrators became available, government expanded and the colonial territory was carved up into even smaller units for administration. A colony was therefore commonly divided into residencies which, in turn, had authority over several districts under the control of District Officers or their equivalent. These administrators essentially comprised British expatriates and they were aided in their tasks by the native component of government, which formed the lower levels of administration. The different residencies were controlled by a central authority and this later developed into a Secretariat. These various personnel constituted what was commonly known in British colonial terminology as the Administrative Service. The specialist and technical officers, such as engineers, doctors, surveyors and customs officers, formed the other branches of the Colonial Service. However, owing to the wider authority and power held by the general administrators, the Administrative Service, rather than these other branches, enjoyed an unrivalled position of prestige and prominence in the government of any colony.³

The Administrative Service forms the focus of this thesis not only because of the importance attached to it, but also because an examination of its characteristics and evolution provides a greater understanding of colonial rule. Heussler, who has written extensively on administrators in British colonial territories, asserted that the study of the men who

³See introduction by M.Perham in *ibid.*, p.xix.

dedicated their lives to a career in administration has enormous academic value. He argued;

..that colonialism as one of history's integral systems of power can be studied usefully by looking at its men and institutions..

Colonial administrators have not been civil servants in the usual sense..they themselves were the Government. Spread thinly over the ground, relying on their wits, personalities and physical stamina, they have embodied in their own persons virtually all the stuff and substance of rule. In the absence of indigenous leaders strong enough or even inclined to challenge them, they performed alone the functions which in modern times are undertaken by highly organised local and central bureaucracies. The ethos of government which they have been bequeathing to new states must be approached, therefore, through the study of administrative cadres themselves.⁴

Heussler maintained that these officers were agents of central government responsible for translating government policy into practice. They also formed the most common point of contact between the colonial government and the local population. It was mainly through these government servants that the indigenous people were introduced to the ideas of a western form of organised administration. In Heussler's two books on Malaya, he concentrated on the "spirit,..values and the working posture"⁵ of the Malayan Civil Service and also focused on the "officers themselves, on their background and education, on the work they did in Malaya and on the moral

⁴Heussler, 'Why Study the Colonial Service?', *Corona*, May 1961, p.166. The late Prof. Heussler had done exhaustive research on the Colonial Service in various parts of the British Empire. His books include *British Rule in Malaya. The Malayan Civil Service and its Predecessors, 1867-1942*, Oxford, 1981, *British Tanganyika, An Essay and Documents on District Administration*, Durham, 1971 and *Completing a Stewardship: The Malayan Civil Service, 1941-1957*, Connecticut, 1983. See also his research papers deposited at Rhodes House Library, Oxford, Mss Brit Emp s 480.

⁵Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya, 1942-1957*, Singapore, 1985(reprint of *Completing a Stewardship*), pp.3.

and professional precepts that developed in the course of the Service's life".⁶

This thesis takes Heussler's exhortations one step further. It is not only concerned with the educational background of Administrative Officers in Sarawak but also concentrates on their service conditions, the functions and roles of the field officers as well as the structure and composition of the Service. It is a systematic study of the changes experienced by the Sarawak Administrative Service through time, from its early beginnings in the 1840s to its transformation into a formal colonial bureaucracy on the eve of independence in 1963.

This approach is instructive because firstly, it deals with the growth of a bureaucracy in one country grappling with the manifold problems of administration. This experience was not unique to Sarawak but was also evident in other British colonies whether in Africa or South-East Asia. Secondly, it is hoped that a thesis of this kind will not only contribute to the existing wealth of literature on colonial administration in general and the Colonial Administrative Service in particular, but will also help to fill the many gaps in information about Sarawak's administrative history and more specifically about the post-war colonial period.⁷

⁶Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya, 1867-1942*, p.xiii.

⁷There are a number of secondary sources on the history of Sarawak under Brooke rule dealing with a particular aspect or aspects of Brooke administration such as R.Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: the Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Colonial Rule, 1841-1941*, London, 1970, C.Crisswell, *Rajah Charles Brooke: Monarch of All He Surveyed*, Kuala

The choice of Sarawak as the focus of this study is in itself important because of the peculiar circumstances of its history. It was founded in 1841 by a British adventurer, Rajah James Brooke, and for the first one hundred years of its history, was governed by three generations of the Brooke family without any intervention from a western power. Britain only accorded recognition to Sarawak in 1863 and it became a British Protectorate from 1888 until the Japanese occupation in December 1941. Its position then, within the context of the British Empire, remained unique because Sarawak was one of the few Protectorates to enjoy complete autonomy in the running of its internal government.

Thus, until 1946, Sarawak was not a British colony. But this thesis attempts to show that, although it developed in relative isolation from the rest of the Empire, Sarawak's Administrative Service followed, in the main, the precedents and examples of the neighbouring British colonies. Even then, the early years must have been enormously difficult because the nearest British presence was in Labuan, which was no more than a coaling station, and in the Straits Settlements of

Lumpur, 1978, C.P.Cotter, 'Some Aspects of the Administrative Development of Sarawak', M.P.A.thesis, Cornell University, 1955 and R.H.W.Reece, *The Name of Brooke. The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur, 1982. These sources, however, do not focus on the Administrative Service and tend to approach the subject in an incidental manner. There is an unfortunate lack of any major study on the administrative history of Sarawak under British colonial rule. One book which concentrates on this period, Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Singapore, 1985, is mainly concerned with the cession controversy and Malay political participation.

Singapore, Penang and Malacca, which were administered from India until 1867. It was only in 1874, after the signing of the Pangkor Treaty in Perak and the gradual extension of British rule in the Malay states that the Brooke Rajahs could witness the methods of British colonial administration at close quarters.

The first ruler of Sarawak, Rajah James, was frequently plagued by the problems of legitimising and consolidating his power over an alien people. He was also troubled by the lack of financial support and recognition from Britain and the constant local challenges to his rule. Thus, during his administration, government was minimal and it was left to his nephew, Rajah Charles Brooke, who succeeded as Rajah in 1868, to stabilize the government. Rajah Charles followed his uncle's policy of expanding Sarawak's borders and, under him, the country grew in size and embraced many of the former territories formerly under Brunei suzerainty. The Administrative Service gradually expanded and service conditions became regularised towards the end of the nineteenth century.

The country continued on an even keel under Rajah Charles's son, Vyner, who became Rajah in 1917 and governed until 1941, when his rule was interrupted by the Japanese invasion and occupation of Sarawak. Rajah Vyner essentially followed his father's direction in government, but his personality differed from the austere disposition of his father; Vyner

was at times reluctant or perhaps unable to exert a strong influence over his officials. Following the disruption of administration during three and a half years of Japanese occupation, Sarawak was ceded to Britain, and thus began seventeen years of colonial rule.

This brief span of administration under Britain saw many political changes taking place, and economic and social development was also expedited after the long years of relative neglect under the Brooke Rajahs. Much of the groundwork and infrastructure for future progress had also been laid so that when Sarawak was granted independence within Malaysia in 1963, it had a well-organised system of administration and a stable economy. We see the Administrative Service making the necessary changes and adjustments in response to Sarawak's new colonial status. It was also during this brief colonial period that the Administrative Service reached maturity and, in preparation for independence, saw its ranks speedily localised towards the end of the 1950s and early 1960s.

Throughout the thesis, I will highlight such themes as changes in the recruitment patterns and composition of the Service, and review the various adjustments in the terms of employment for the Administrative Service and the duties and roles of Administrative Officers. The supporting native element in administration will also be discussed, as well as the efforts made by the colonial government to open up the

Service, which had previously been dominated by expatriates, to local officers. This thesis will also examine the impact on the Administrative Service, of the transition of Sarawak from a Rajahdom to a colony in the British Empire and then the process of colonial disengagement.

CHAPTER 1

RAJAH JAMES BROOKE AND THE BEGINNING OF ADMINISTRATION,

1841 - 1868

The first Rajah, who ruled Sarawak from 1841 to 1868, was a spirited innovator. He laid down the structures of government despite the many limitations imposed upon him as a result of the meagre economy of Sarawak, various local challenges to his rule and the lack of support from any major western power. He reigned as an absolute monarch and his thinking and attitudes inevitably influenced the nature of his administration. This chapter surveys the main features of Rajah James's government. The first section provides an insight into the personality and background of James Brooke, the circumstances leading to the founding of Sarawak, as well as early developments in its history. The latter half of this chapter is concerned with an examination of the pioneering officers of Sarawak, who formed the mainstay of administration in the outstations, which were, in turn, important in the maintenance and extension of Brooke rule.

The Founding of Sarawak and Early Developments

James Brooke was born in 1803 in India where his father worked as a judge with the East India Company. At the age of 17, Brooke joined the East India Company serving as a regimental officer. He fought in the First Anglo-Burmese war

and was wounded in 1825. It was while convalescing in England that Brooke first showed a keen interest in the Far East. In 1835, with an inheritance of £30,000 secured following his father's death, Brooke purchased a 142-ton schooner, the *Royalist*, and made an expedition to the East Indies with the intention of making scientific surveys.¹ James Brooke then had little inclination towards engaging in any commercial activities and had the firm belief that native inhabitants in the East Indies should not be exposed to the undesirable influences of European commerce. He felt that the aim of European colonisation should ideally be the protection of the interests of the natives.

Brooke was also inspired by the writings of Sir Stamford Raffles, the founder of Singapore, who became Governor of Java during the Napoleonic wars when Dutch possessions in the East Indies were temporarily brought under British control. Raffles attempted to interest the British in establishing a presence in the East Indies and it was only owing to his persistent pleas that Singapore was acquired in 1819. Perhaps it was to James Brooke's advantage that in the early nineteenth century, the Dutch had not consolidated their control in the outer islands and that the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824, which demarcated Dutch and British possessions in the East Indies, was not clear as to the status of the island of Borneo.²

¹C. Crisswell, *Rajah Charles Brooke. Monarch of All He Surveyed*, Kuala Lumpur, 1978, p.4.

²G. Irwin, *Nineteenth Century Borneo. A Study in Diplomatic Rivalry*, The Hague, 1955, p.6.

The ideas of nineteenth^{century} liberalism prevalent in England also had an effect on Brooke, who thought that liberal government should benefit both natives and the colonial rulers. He also formed the view that the native system of government was naturally oppressive and "corrupt" and thus required European guidance or "enlightened tutelage".³ Brooke subscribed to Raffles's idea that the Malay world had been "distorted and impoverished" by three centuries of Portuguese and later Dutch colonial control, and what was required was the "civilising spirit" of the British.⁴ He noted that in their present states, the natives were being exploited and squeezed by corrupt and "piratical" rulers, and European intervention was imperative to free the natives from the economic control of their unscrupulous leaders. Indeed, Brooke's reading or analysis of the situation in early nineteenth century Borneo could be taken to serve as a convenient rationale for legitimising his actions in Sarawak, particularly the circumstances surrounding his installation as Rajah and his subsequent encroachment on land belonging to the Brunei Sultanate.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the power and influence of the Brunei Sultanate had reached a low ebb. At its height, the Sultanate's power had been dependent on its ability to

³O.C.Doering, 'The Institutionalization of Personal Rule in Sarawak', M.Sc. thesis, London School of Economics, 1965, pp.16-17.

⁴D.K.Bassett, *British Attitudes to Indigenous States in South-East Asia in the Nineteenth Century*, Centre for South-East Asian Studies, Occasional Paper no.1, University of Hull, 1980, p.22.

control and tax coastal trade as well as acquire tribute from the local residents living along the Bornean coast. The Sultan relied on semi-independent Malay chiefs to collect the tribute and the latter, in turn, extorted from the local inhabitants. The decline of trade in Borneo at the turn of the nineteenth century resulted in the Malay chiefs looking increasingly towards "piracy"⁵ as a means of supplementing their income. These chiefs depended on the warlike Ibans, particularly from the Skrang and Saribas areas, to raid coastal towns and settlements. The Ibans were generally content with collecting human heads while the plunder was left to the Malays. By the 1830s, these coastal raiding activities had become rampant along the northern Bornean coasts. However, it is important to note that the raids did not pose a threat to European shipping in the area as the raiding expeditions were directed inland towards native coastal settlements and were unlike Illanun piracy originating in the Philippines. Crisswell has stated that coastal raiding benefitted their participants; to the Malays it was a welcome supplement or alternative to their traditional income, and the Ibans were allowed the opportunity to pursue their love for adventure and travel.⁶

In the early nineteenth century, Sarawak comprised a small region surrounding the Sarawak river and was an appanage of

⁵There were differing perceptions of "piracy" in the early nineteenth century. To the native chiefs of Borneo, "piracy" or coastal raiding was a traditional and legitimate source of income.

⁶Crisswell, p.5.

the Sultan of Brunei.⁷ The thriving antimony trade mentioned by J. Crawford in 1825, appeared to have been the reason for the Sultan's resumption of control of an area which had come under the influence of the Sultan of Sambas, on Borneo's west coast. Seeing the rising potential of Sarawak, the Brunei Sultan despatched Pengiran Makhota to administer the country. According to early European accounts,⁸ Makhota's rule was "oppressive" and "singularly sadistic". The Siniawan Malays and the Land Dayaks apparently resented the harsh measures imposed by Makhota and they revolted in the 1830s against the Brunei leader and his representatives. The Sultan was warned that the situation was getting out of hand and decided to send Pengiran Muda Hassim, who was the uncle of the Sultan and his heir, as well as Hassim's brother, Budrud'in, to put the government in order.

James Brooke arrived in Singapore in 1839 and was asked by some traders to deliver a gift to Pengiran Muda Hassim, who had earlier assisted a group of ship-wrecked British sailors. Brooke had also heard of the profitable antimony trade between Sarawak and Singapore and thus set sail for Sarawak hoping that his ambition of persuading the British to establish some sort of presence in Borneo would be realised.

⁷D.E.Brown, 'Brunei: the Structure and History of a Bornean Malay Sultanate', *Brunei Museum Journal*, vol.II, no.2, 1970, p.81. See also N. Tarling, *Britain, the Brookes and Brunei*, Kuala Lumpur, 1971, p.36.

⁸See for example, S.Baring-Gould and C.A.Bampfylde, *Sarawak under the Two White Rajahs, 1839-1908*, London, 1908, p.64.

It is significant that during Brooke's first visit in 1839, he observed that the government administered by the Brunei nobles was rather tolerant and he failed to see any evidence of "cruelty" or "undue harshness". He also viewed both Pengiran Muda Hassim and Makhota favourably.⁹ However, on his second visit to Sarawak in August 1840, Brooke gave a startlingly different impression of the rule of the Brunei nobles. He wrote that the "prince and his chiefs rob all classes of Malays to the utmost of their power; the Malays rob the Dyaks"¹⁰ and added that "injustice and tyranny now stalk throughout the land" and the "Dyaks are slaughtered without mercy".¹¹ Furthermore, Brooke by then had characterised the revolt by Sarawak Malays as an "open rebellion", although Muda Hassim dismissed it as merely "some child's play".¹²

It is difficult to ascertain whether Pengiran Makhota was indeed sadistic or the administration of the Brunei noblemen oppressive. But these questions do assume significance because James Brooke claimed that he was asked by Muda Hassim to put down the revolt in 1839 and 1840 and, if successful, he would be rewarded with the governorship of Sarawak. Hence, it may be the case that Brooke was painting a picture of alarm and bad government in order to provide justification for his assumption of power in Sarawak in 1841. Furthermore,

⁹Bassett, pp.41-42.

¹⁰R. Mundy, *Narrative of Events in Borneo and Celebes down to the Occupation of Labuan*, vol.I, London, 1848, p.189.

¹¹Ibid., p.196.

¹²Bassett, p.41.

his allegations that Muda Hassim encouraged the Saribas Iban raids on the upper Sarawak river also strengthened his case that a change of government was necessary. After Brooke had managed to suppress the revolt in November 1840, Muda Hassim appeared reluctant to hand over Sarawak.¹³ It was ten months later that Muda Hassim eventually gave in following a show of force by Brooke with Royal Navy support near Kuching. Brooke was awarded the governorship of Sarawak, which was under Brunei overlordship, and had to pay an annual sum of \$2,500 to the Sultan. This grant was confirmed by Sultan Omar Ali in 1842.

One of James Brooke's immediate concerns was to build and consolidate a secure power base in Kuching among the local Malay elite, which had been displaced after Brunei resumed control over Sarawak soon after the revival of the antimony trade. The Brunei nobles then assumed the power and prestige of the Sarawak Malay elite and were perceived as a potential challenge to Brooke rule. Thus, Brooke attempted to erode the influence of the Brunei nobles on the local population, often discrediting them as "pirates" and "opportunists".¹⁴ In their place, Brooke appointed members of the local Malay elite to important positions in government and, in so doing, ensured their loyalty.

¹³G.Saunders, 'James Brooke and Asian Government', *Brunei Museum Journal*, vol.3, no.1, 1973, p.114. It was probable that Muda Hassim did not have the authority to cede Sarawak to Brooke.

¹⁴Bassett, pp.42-53.

It must be remembered that the so-called "civil war" in Sarawak arose as a result of the misgivings of the local Malays and Land Dayaks against the rule of the Brunei Pengiran Makhota. In suppressing the revolt, Brooke was careful to secure the approval of Muda Hassim to spare the local Malay rebels from the traditional punishment of execution. The rebels, who comprised mainly the local Malay chiefs of Sarawak, not only regained their former positions but also owed their lives to Brooke.¹⁵ Thus, Brooke was assured of the firm loyalty and support of the Sarawak Malay elite and this, in turn, buttressed the legitimacy of a government headed by a subject of Britain.

There were several rulers or *datus* in Sarawak in the early 1840s; the more prominent ones being the Datu Patinggi (Supreme Chief), Datu Bandar (Harbour Chief) and the Datu Temenggong (Commander-in-Chief).¹⁶ Apart from having authority over the Malays, they also held sway over the Land Dayaks, who had to pay them tax, as well as provide a variety of services.¹⁷ Rajah James, as he was then addressed, limited the right of the Sarawak Malay chiefs to exact taxes and services from the Land Dayaks and, as a substitute, they were paid a regular income in the form of rice. With this change,

¹⁵C.A.Lockard, 'The Evolution of Urban Government in Southeast Asian Cities: Kuching under the Brookes', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol.2, no.2, 1978, p.248.

¹⁶Lockard, 'The Southeast Asian Town in Perspective: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970', Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1973, p.28.

¹⁷The Land Dayaks often paid their taxes with goods such as rice and birds' nests. See H.McDougall, *Letters from Sarawak*, London, 1924, pp.140-141.

the Malay chiefs appeared more as employed officials of the Brooke government, losing their real authority but retaining their symbolic power. As a further boost to the prestige of the local Malay chiefs, Brooke revived the long neglected traditional Malay legal code.

Although the Rajah was convinced of the sincerity of Muda Hassim, he concluded that he would be more comfortable without the presence of Hassim in Sarawak. The Rajah wanted Hassim and his followers to leave his domain, indicating that although they did not explicitly interfere in the administration, their presence weakened his legitimate authority.¹⁸ Rajah James had little use for any of Hassim's followers, with the exception of Budrud'in, but it became clear to Brooke that Budrud'in would be better placed in Brunei where he could keep a check on the Sultan. Budrud'in, Hassim and their followers were sent back to Brunei by 1844.

In 1843, Brooke managed to interest Henry Keppel, a Royal Navy Commander, in launching expeditions against piracy on the north Bornean coast. The Rajah alleged that Pengiran Makhota and his Brunei allies, Sharif Mullah and Sharif Sahap abetted and even encouraged the piratical activities of the Saribas and Skrang Ibans. With Royal Navy support, Brooke initiated several expeditions against the strongholds of these Brunei leaders. It must be pointed out that Sharif Sahap had not previously antagonised Brooke and he was

¹⁸S. Runciman, *The White Rajahs. A History of Sarawak from 1841 to 1946*, Cambridge, 1960, p.73.

implicated by virtue of the fact that he was Mullah's brother. Another local Brunei ruler from the Lingga area was also accused of involvement although "he had never been known to commit piracy" and he had actually provided assistance to Brooke in the 1843 Saribas expedition.¹⁹ As a result of these attacks, Sharif Sahap escaped to Pontianak where he later died as a fugitive, and Sharif Mullah went into exile. Makhota was captured but was allowed to return to Brunei. Thus, Rajah James conveniently dispensed with the Brunei 'piratical' leaders whom he perceived to be a potential threat to his rule.²⁰

In 1846, Rajah James received the disturbing news of the deaths of Hassim and Budrud'in in Brunei and the attacks made on their families. Brooke decided to act immediately to punish those responsible and he gathered several Royal Navy ships and headed for Brunei. James Brooke's fleet, with the assistance of Admiral Cochrane, made an awesome show of force at Muara and bombarded Brunei. Sultan Omar Ali thought it wise to conciliate and he was eventually made to sign a letter of apology and confirm Rajah James as sovereign of Sarawak without the need to pay any annual tribute. The British then had expressed interest in establishing a coaling station along the South China Sea sailing route and began to look towards the possibility of making Labuan, an island off

¹⁹Bassett, p.45, see also H.Keppel, *The Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S.Dido for the Suppression of Piracy*, vol.II, London, 1847, pp.39, 119-120.

²⁰Bassett, pp.45-46. Bassett asserted that it was "easier to accept Brooke's determination to break local Malay government..than to believe in the piratical guilt of the men overthrown".

Brunei Bay, a fuelling point. It was decided that, in view of the suspicious circumstances surrounding Hassim's death, alluding to the complicity of the Sultan himself, the British government would annex Labuan without any compensation to Sultan Omar Ali. In a further supplementary treaty, the Sultan agreed not to cede any of his territory to a non-British power or individual without Britain's approval.

Brooke next sought to obtain official British recognition of Sarawak through his agents in London. Although the Rajah had already been accorded *de facto* recognition by the Royal Navy in the East, he felt that this was hardly adequate. His efforts were not in vain and, in 1846, the British appointed him Consul-General for Borneo and Governor of Labuan. However, these royal appointments were merely symbolic; they had little practical value and Brooke did not receive recognition as Rajah and ruler of a sovereign country until 1863.

During the late 1840s, Rajah James concentrated his attention on the growing menace posed by the Saribas and Skrang Ibans on coastal settlements in north-west Borneo. Between late 1848 and early 1849, the Saribas Dayaks attacked several coastal towns near Sarawak killing more than 400 people. Brooke decided to launch an offensive against these Iban coastal raiders with the assistance provided by the Royal Navy. The Saribas Ibans were engaged by Brooke's fleet at Beting Maru which became the scene of a controversial battle.

At least 500 of the Saribas Ibans lost their lives and Brooke's expedition pursued the Ibans upriver and razed their stronghold at Paku. The campaign was successfully concluded and resulted in the other "piratical" group, the Skrang Ibans, submitting to the Rajah's authority.

The battle of Beting Maru provoked an outcry in Britain; allegations were hurled at Brooke, accusing him of using the Royal Navy to murder innocent tribesmen.²¹ A Royal Commission of Inquiry was called and convened in Singapore in 1854. The conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry were detrimental to the Rajah because, among other things, it confirmed that Sarawak was legally a vassal of the Brunei Sultanate. Although Brooke was exonerated of the charges brought against him of committing atrocities against innocent Dayaks, the controversy resulted in the withdrawal of British naval support. Brooke also relinquished voluntarily his Crown appointments.

The battle of Beting Maru signalled a new period in Sarawak history during which the Rajah was less distracted by "piracy" off the Borneo coast and turned instead to the issues and problems of governing his newly-founded state. The following discussion surveys briefly the first Rajah's ideas and philosophy on government and examines the type of administrative officer employed by Brooke.

²¹Runciman, pp.102-103.

The Beginnings of Government and Early Brooke Officers

When James Brooke became Rajah of the small state of Sarawak in 1841, he was faced with similar problems confronting other European colonialists. The question that was uppermost in his mind was how to rule a tropical dependency with the slender resources available to him. His predicament was worsened by the fact that Sarawak did not have the financial backing of a major European power. Constrained by these circumstances, Rajah James initiated a system of government which would ensure the continued stability of the country. Indirect rule was perceived to be the most suitable method in that government was administered through native political structures. With this system of rule, the native officials were given little authority, and power resided in the hands of the Europeans.

In the case of Sarawak, Brooke adapted the idea of indirect rule to the resources available to him. It has been stated that Brooke favoured the indigenous Malay chiefs whom he reinstated to their former positions, while the Brunei nobles were removed from Sarawak. The local Malay chiefs were weak politically and thus provided the least challenge to the Rajah's position and authority. In the 1840s, there gradually developed two forces in the political environment, the indigenous subordinate segment and the European officers who wielded greater authority. Brooke ruled by adapting to the

native structure of government as he was not in favour of completely displacing the indigenous elite. He was probably motivated by the belief that the imposition of western concepts of government on the natives would disrupt their traditional way of living. Upon assuming the governorship of Sarawak in October 1841, Brooke wrote,

I hate the idea of Utopian Government with laws cut and dried ready for the natives being introduced. Governments like clothes, will not fit everybody..I am going on slowly and surely, basing everything on their own laws, consulting all the headmen at every step, instilling what I think right, separating the abuses from the customs.²²

The principles which guided Brooke in administering the local residents of Sarawak were first, that native customs should be respected, but modifications were encouraged should these run contrary to the British sense of justice. Second, although Brooke stressed the advantages of the participation of natives in government, he was careful to ensure that they held only symbolic or subordinate positions. Third, he held that any reforms proposed should be introduced gradually.

In 1855, a Council of State, which later became known as the Supreme Council, was formed. Both European and native leaders participated but native members predominated. The Council was intended as a forum to secure native support and approval for any legislation passed, and to test native reactions to any new government policy.²³ During the reign of Rajah James,

²²T.S.Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', *Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law*, 3rd series, vol.XVIII, no.1, 1936, p.60.

²³The Supreme Council usually met once a year to discuss matters concerning the administration and welfare of the natives. It remained in existence until 1946 and had a reputation for being ineffectual;

however, this body was no more than a rubber stamp for any policy initiated by the government; native participation was at best acquiescent and nominal rather than executive or influential.

Rajah James later conceptualised his policy and maintained that his experiment in Sarawak should be seen as a particularly suitable device for native administration. He explained that

..the experiment of developing a country through the residence of a few Europeans and by the assistance of its own native rulers had never been fully tried and it appears to me in some respects more desirable than the actual possession of a foreign nation; for if successful, the native prince finds greater advantages and if a failure, the European government is not committed.²⁴

The presence of European officials, though few in number, was thus central to Brooke administration and the discussion which follows examines the kinds of European officers recruited by Brooke and the role they played in the turbulent early years of government.

Rajah James faced numerous initial difficulties; he had no experience in matters of government and, owing to his limited finance, he could not employ more than a handful of European assistants. Moreover, apart from the crew of his ship, there were not many Europeans who could stay in Sarawak for more than a few months at a time. In 1842, there were four

it existed more for the sake of formality rather than having any practical function. See R.J.Pole-Evans, 'The Supreme Council, Sarawak', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, vol.VII, no.7, 1956, pp.89-108 and Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, p.310.

²⁴Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, p.338.

Europeans and two Malays employed by the Brooke government. Rajah James also managed to acquire the services of Thomas Williamson,²⁵ a Eurasian interpreter from Malacca who served from 1839 to 1846. William Crymble, from Singapore, became Brooke's secretary and stayed in Sarawak for several years. A crew member of the *Royalist*, William Bloomfield Douglas, impressed Brooke, who thought that he had the capability of being a good administrator.²⁶

Rajah James realised that he could not rely indefinitely on temporary staff and began seeking out potential candidates in Britain to join the Sarawak government service. Brooke solicited the help of friends such as John Templer to recruit suitable persons in Britain. His correspondence with Templer revealed the type of man favoured by the Rajah. They were expected to be

..spirited but gentle, with fair abilities and rudimentary knowledge. I want them heart and soul in their work. Other things being equal, I should decide in favour of the candidate who has the least prospects and fewest friends..²⁷

Rajah James further elaborated;

..you are aware how little pecuniary inducement we can offer [to Sarawak officers]. They will be poor,

²⁵According to Spenser St.John, Williamson was "born and educated in the East" and he joined James Brooke as interpreter, coming to Sarawak in the *Royalist* in 1839. By the mid-1840s, the Rajah had grown to dislike Williamson and it was claimed that he was being influenced and exploited by the female relatives of Malay chiefs. Williamson drowned in 1846. See St.John, *The Life of Sir James Brooke*, Edinburgh, 1879, pp.106-107 and *Sarawak Civil List*, 1925.

²⁶Runciman, p.68. See also Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya*, pp.77-82, and J.M.Gullick, 'Selangor, 1876-1882, *The Bloomfield Douglas Diary*', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol.XLVIII, 1975. Bloomfield Douglas later became a Resident in Selangor.

²⁷G.L.Jacob, *The Rajah of Sarawak*, vol.II, London, 1879, p.188.

but independent and they will share the success of Government. If they have higher feeling, they will appreciate being nobly employed and leading a life of usefulness..Now for the qualifications, sweet temper is indispensable, [good] judgement in preference to ability and native ability in preference to acquired; moderate and just-minded, plucky, refined and gentle. If you think them wanting in firmness, send them not, for that one weakness would nullify all the other virtues.²⁸

James Brooke was also careful to stress the importance of a high standard of personal conduct of his officers. In a letter to his interpreter, Williamson, Brooke indicated several guidelines which should be strictly adhered to by his officers.²⁹ Among others, the Rajah discouraged his officers from getting into debt with a native and from engaging in trade. Brooke also warned his officers not to be on too familiar terms with natives; according to him, this circumstance, "if it does not breed contempt, certainly acquires no respect".³⁰

The early officers recruited into the Sarawak Service were mostly either relatives of James Brooke or sons of his colleagues. One of the first officers recruited from Britain was Arthur Crookshank, a cousin of Rajah James, who entered the Service in March 1843. Crookshank was appointed initially as secretary to the Rajah, but he also held administrative and magisterial duties. Three of the sons of James Brooke's sister, Emma - Brooke Brooke, Charles and Stuart Johnson -

²⁸Quoted in C.P.Cotter, 'Some Aspects of the Administrative Development of Sarawak', M.P.A. thesis, Cornell University, 1955, p.50.

²⁹'Letter to Thomas Williamson, 26 January 1846', in J.C.Templer, *The Private Letters of Sir James Brooke, K.C.B., Rajah of Sarawak*, vol.II, London, 1853, p.114.

³⁰Ibid.



also joined the Service. The eldest, Brooke Brooke, came to Sarawak in 1848, was made the Rajah's heir and held the title of Tuan Besar. Charles Johnson, who later adopted the name Brooke, joined the Service in 1852 and was regarded as the heir when his elder brother, Brooke Brooke, was disinherited in 1863. The third brother, Stuart, came to Sarawak in 1861 and served for five years before resigning to join the prisons service in Britain. William Brereton, who arrived in Sarawak at the tender age of 15, was the son of Reverend C.D. Brereton, a relation of James Brooke. Brereton came to Sarawak as a midshipman but later decided to leave the navy and join Brooke in June 1848.³¹ Harry Nicholetts, who as a young Cadet was killed in the Chinese insurrection of 1857,³² was a younger brother of Gilbert Nicholetts, the husband of Charles Brooke's sister, Mary Anne. J.B.Cruikshank,³³ or "Fitz" as he was more familiarly known, was the son of Rajah Brooke's old friend, Dr.Cruikshank. From the preceding examples, it can be deduced that Brooke hired his officers on a random basis, relying upon recommendations from close acquaintances and relations.

³¹See *Sarawak Civil List, 1925*, E.Hahn, *James Brooke of Sarawak..A Biography of Sir James Brooke*, London, 1953, p.129 and R.Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: the Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941*, London, 1970, p.89.

³²The Chinese rebellion will be discussed later in this chapter.

³³J.B.Cruikshank was the godson of the Rajah and his initials, J.B., stood for 'James Brooke'. Charles Brooke, on becoming the second Rajah, tried to retire Cruikshank from the Service as it was alleged that Cruikshank was in danger of becoming "native". Cruikshank retired in 1875 and rejoined the Service briefly in 1885, in which year he died. See 'Notes by Mrs.Noble about the three Cruikshanks', Basil Brooke Papers, Box 3/10, Mss Pac s 90.

Recruiting was given a more positive impetus from 1848 onwards, the year of Rajah James's tour of England when he earned his Crown appointments. Brooke, at times, enticed potential candidates with the possibility of a life of adventure in Borneo, and also tempted them with personal offers as seen in the case of Charles Grant.³⁴ Brooke met Charles Grant, the son of the Laird of Kilgraston, when he was still a midshipman at sea. In his attempts to secure the approval of Grant's release from the navy, Brooke wrote to the Laird on 29 February 1848,

..I am seriously desirous to advance his[Charles Grant's] interest and open to him a road to fortune and to independence..the position I hold in Sarawak is one which any gentleman in Europe might be proud of. The independent sovereignty of a considerable province, rich both in soil and mineral productions and with resources in the course of development which must under revenue be large..afford me the power to advance my friends..I propose appointing Charlie my private secretary on a salary of two hundred a year and the surplus salary, which he would be entitled were he older, I will lay out in making for him a coconut plantation at Sarawak..in seven or eight years, this plantation will be bearing..it will give Charlie a local interest and stake..³⁵

Charles Grant's father alleged that James Brooke promised to give his son £5,000 as an inducement to leave the navy. Brooke also extended to Charles's mother a bracelet made of Sarawak gold and managed eventually to secure parental approval for Charles Grant to join the Sarawak Service. It is

³⁴Charles Grant was the grandson of the seventh Earl of Elgin. His sister, Annie, married Brooke Brooke and died in Sarawak in 1858. Charles Grant and his father supported Brooke Brooke in his disagreement with the Rajah, which later resulted in Brooke Brooke's disinheritance.

³⁵M.Saint, *A Flourish for the Bishop and Brooke's Friend, Grant. Two Studies in Sarawak History, 1848-1868*, Devon, 1985, pp.174-176.

clear that James Brooke went to great lengths to persuade young men of established backgrounds to work for him, even to the point of misrepresenting the economic potential of Sarawak. In the 1840s, Sarawak's finances were at best meagre and the economy depended heavily on the antimony trade and the export of other local produce.³⁶ Its revenue was certainly not "large", otherwise Rajah James would not have drawn on his own personal finances. Brooke also made a promise of an advance of £5,000 to Charles Grant, which he could not keep, and Grant never received the money nor did the coconut plantation yield much.³⁷

The Rajah also mentioned that his pioneering officers were "independent gentlemen of means", who served Sarawak without receiving compensation.³⁸ Baring-Gould and Bampfylde affirmed that officers such as Brereton joined the Rajah "to assist him in his great work and..never drew a penny from the Sarawak Government".³⁹ However, this was not entirely true. Although some of the Sarawak officers came from well-established families, they all received monthly allowances. Crookshank and Brereton each received an initial salary of \$20 a month,⁴⁰ and by December 1851, Brereton's monthly

³⁶Brooke initially exaggerated the economic potential of Sarawak in order to secure official British recognition. See R.H.W.Reece, 'Economic Development under the Brookes', in R.A.Cramb and Reece, ed., *Development in Sarawak: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Monash Paper on Southeast Asia no.17, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1988, pp.22.

³⁷According to the Laird, he was led to believe that the coconut plantation would yield £700 a year. See Saint, p.195.

³⁸Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.87.

³⁹Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, p.156.

⁴⁰Roll Book 1, 'European Officers on Permanent Service, 1843-1929'.

stipend had increased to \$40.⁴¹ Rajah James himself observed that "...both Brereton and Lee⁴² will have a small sum yearly to live upon and out of what they can get and I can afford to supply, they can pay their establishment of half a dozen men".⁴³ The pecuniary rewards of Sarawak officers improved through the years and most recruits, who entered the Service in the 1860s, received initial monthly salaries in excess of \$50.⁴⁴

By the late 1840s, Rajah James had become convinced that the problem of Iban raiding could be halted by the establishment of government forts on each of the major rivers containing concentrations of Iban settlements. The idea of installing forts at strategic points could have been inspired by local examples. The Sultan of Pontianak had previously constructed a fort on the Kapuas river to prevent Iban raiders from launching attacks on his territory.⁴⁵ Brooke thought that he could apply this idea to similar circumstances in Sarawak where forts could be placed along rivers in order to restrict the movement of marauding Ibans.

Fort-building also had other advantages. Apart from keeping Iban war fleets from moving downriver, the regulation of

⁴¹See Pringle, p.87, fn.2, where it is indicated that Brereton's salary for four months from September to December 1851, totalled \$160.

⁴²Alan B. Lee joined the Rajah's Service in 1851.

⁴³H.Keppel, *A Visit to the Indian Archipelago in H.M.Ship Macander*, vol.II, London, 1853, p.108, also cited in Pringle, p.87, fn.3.

⁴⁴Stuart Johnson's first salary in 1861 was \$50 while A.R.Houghton, who joined the Service in 1863, received the initial remuneration of \$70 a month. See Roll Book 1, 'European Officers'.

⁴⁵Pringle, p.84.

river traffic was also possible, and essential items such as salt and iron could be prevented from reaching rebel Iban longhouses. Brooke's idea of stationing forts and controlling Iban movements assumed its final form a few months before the battle of Beting Maru in 1849. Writing to the Foreign Office that same year, Brooke proposed that forts when built should be under the charge of a native force "which can be readily and without expense supplied for this duty".⁴⁶ In addition, steamers or brigs could be stationed at certain locations along a river in order to discourage large movements of Ibans.

By the time the battle of Beting Maru was fought in July 1849, Brooke had already decided that instead of native men, European officers should take charge of the forts. Between late 1849 and early 1850, Arthur Crookshank was sent to build a fort at the confluence of the Skrang and Batang Lupar rivers. After completing his task, Crookshank returned and William Brereton, a young officer aged 20, was despatched to the fort. Brereton was the first European officer to be stationed outside Kuching; he lived at Skrang fort for nearly three years without any other European officer nearby until Alan Lee was sent as Brereton's assistant in 1852 and assigned to take control of the new fort at Lingga.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Ibid., p.85.

⁴⁷See Runciman, p.96 and Pringle, p.87.

Brereton's administration at Skrang was described as "primitive but justified"⁴⁸ and, with limited resources, he managed to curtail the movements of the upriver Skrang Ibans and thus made it more difficult for them to launch raiding expeditions. Brereton was able to secure a loyal following among the Malays and downriver Skrang Ibans under their leader, Gasing. In a letter to his father in 1852, Brereton gave an insight into the demands of his work as an outstation officer. He wrote,

..if I were alone here and had only my own interest at heart, I should discard the sword and pistol as repugnant to my feelings, as they would be injurious to my safety; but that I have nearly 2,000 Malays who have joined their fortunes to my own..It must be remembered that this is the heart, the central spot where piracy has prevailed for years; from whence thousands yearly passed out to scour the high seas, whose hands were against every man's and whose religion encourages murder..I have attained my present influence amongst these people, and the place has attained its present importance without having caused the death of a single individual..A firm attitude has accomplished this; but I have no hesitation in affirming that if I had not been prepared, my own life and that of all the Malays under me, would have been in danger.⁴⁹

These early outstation officers or Residents, as they were later designated, led rather dangerous and lonely lives. It was not Rajah James's intention to leave his officers alone in the middle of Iban country, particularly after the

⁴⁸Runciman, p.108. This opinion is attributed to Reverend F.McDougall, who came to Sarawak in 1848 as a missionary and was later consecrated as Bishop of Borneo. See G.Saunders, *Bishops and Brookes, the Anglican Mission and the Brooke Raj in Sarawak, 1848-1941*, Singapore 1992, passim, for an account of McDougall's work for the Anglican Mission in Sarawak.

⁴⁹Keppel, *A Visit to the Indian Archipelago*, vol.II, pp.34-35. Also cited in Crisswell, pp.15-16 and Pringle, p.93.

withdrawal of Royal Navy support in 1854. Both Brereton and Lee lost their lives within a few years of taking up their posts; Lee was killed in a mêlée with Skrang Ibans in 1853,⁵⁰ while Brereton succumbed to dysentery the following year. In spite of this, Brooke held the view that an administration in the outstations headed by a single European Resident, with assistance from native officers, was more than adequate. This was evident in his tract, 'Hints to Young Out-Station Officers from the Rajah', where he stated that "no out-station in the country is so extensive that it cannot be guided and governed by one man who possesses an active mind with discipline or regularity".⁵¹ The presence of Christian missionaries in the outstations was also encouraged and mission posts outside Kuching were gradually established. In 1858, Charles Grant wrote that the missionaries had an important role in creating a loyal following among the indigenous tribes, which could, in turn, add to the political strength of Brooke rule.⁵²

Apart from the government posts at Lingga and Skrang, other forts were constructed in the following areas; Kanowit in 1851, Lundu in 1853, Sarikei in 1856, Betong in 1858 and the Skrang fort was relocated to Simanggang in 1864 (see Map 1). The forts at Skrang, Lingga and Kanowit, when initially

⁵⁰Saunders, *Bishops and Brookes*, p.39.

⁵¹St.John, p.396. The tract, referred to above, is undated and is attributed to Rajah James. See R.H.W.Reece, 'A "Suitable Population": Charles Brooke and Race-Mixing in Sarawak', *Itinerario*, vol.IX, 1985, p.79, fn.41.

⁵²J.M.Seymour, 'Education in Sarawak under Brooke rule, 1841-1941', *Sarawak Gazette*, 31 July 1970.

built, were all located in territory belonging to Brunei. These areas, comprising mainly the major Iban districts of the Saribas and Skrang as far east as Kabong on the Kalaka river, were only ceded to Rajah James in 1853 by the Brunei Sultan Mumin, who ascended the throne in 1852.⁵³ In 1861, the coastal areas of Mukah and the profitable sago districts and their hinterlands up to Kidurong point, north-east of Bintulu, were ceded to Rajah James⁵⁴ (see Map 1).

Charles Brooke's ability as Resident outshone other Brooke officers. He was first appointed Resident of Lundu in January 1853, but was transferred to Lingga upon Lee's death in June 1853. After the death of Brereton in 1854, Charles was given charge of the Batang Lupar area and later established his influence in that district. One of Charles Brooke's early preoccupations was to isolate other ethnic communities from the Ibans. As an illustration, the Malays of Banting were encouraged to move away from Iban settlements and live nearer to the government fort where they could be better protected.

After the withdrawal of Royal Navy support, James Brooke realised that there was only a handful of European officers, who could easily be outnumbered, and thus he felt that the local resources available should be fully utilised. In the 1850s, Rajah James also exhorted his officers to take on the task of defending their areas of supervision whenever they

⁵³Runciman, p.110. The Sultan agreed to cede the Saribas and Skrang Iban areas in return for a small sum and half of any surplus revenue produced from the area.

⁵⁴Crisswell, p.80.

were threatened by any rebel tribes. The Rajah wrote that should the "peace of the country be threatened or disturbed, the officer administering the government, will immediately collect a force sufficient to maintain order".⁵⁵

Charles Brooke had early on began to experiment with the idea of pitting downriver Ibans against the upriver rebel Ibans; these initial attempts proved to be quite successful. In fact, he managed eventually to organise the downriver Ibans and Malays, with European leadership, into an "effective fighting force". Through trial and error, Charles Brooke perfected the "expedition technique",⁵⁶ which was directed against recalcitrant Ibans, particularly against Rentap, leader of the upriver Skrang Ibans whose stronghold at Sadok became a rallying point for disaffected Ibans. Pringle maintained that the construction of forts manned by European officers changed the pattern of hostilities in the Saribas and Skrang rivers; he pointed out that

..instead of raiding with Malay leadership or encouragement against the people of neighbouring coastal areas, the downriver Skrang Ibans with European leadership or encouragement would attack upriver Ibans.⁵⁷

One of the major challenges against Brooke rule in the 1850s was fomented by the Chinese inhabitants of Sarawak. Although the Chinese had had links with Borneo for several hundred

⁵⁵Memorandum by Sir James Brooke on the duties of the officers administering the government of the different districts of Sarawak', 29 April 1857, Basil Brooke Papers, vol.I, pp.307.

⁵⁶See Pringle, pp.101-105, for an elaboration of the "expedition technique".

⁵⁷Ibid., p.91.

years, Sarawak in the 1850s contained only a small community of Hakka Chinese living in Bau; they were mostly gold miners. James Brooke initially encouraged Chinese immigration thinking that their industry and enterprise would be an asset to Sarawak. The Chinese resented the Brooke government's restrictions on their local secret societies, the monopoly on opium and the increase in taxes. Apparently, the Chinese were aware of the proceedings of the Commission of Inquiry in Singapore, following the battle of Beting Maru, and had concluded that the British would not come to the aid of the Rajah. Hence they decided to launch their attack on Europeans in Kuching in February 1857.⁵⁸ The Rajah's astana was razed to the ground as well as several houses belonging to Brooke officers. Fortunately, the timely arrival of an armed steamer, belonging to the Borneo Company, intimidated the Chinese before they could inflict any more serious damage. The arrival of Charles Brooke and his Iban irregulars eventually routed the rebels. The Chinese rising put a further strain on Sarawak's economy and drove it to financial privation.

Just as Sarawak was adjusting to the calm after the brief turmoil brought about by the Chinese, two European officers,

⁵⁸The threat posed by the Chinese rebels was localised and confined to the Kuching area. For a first-hand account of the rising by Harriette McDougall, see Saint, pp.62-68. See also Lockard, 'The Southeast Asian Town in Perspective', pp.83-84, J.Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese*, Kuala Lumpur, 1981 p.68 and Saunders's reassessment of the uprising in 'The Bau Chinese Attack on Kuching, February 1857: A Different Perspective', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, vol.XLII, no.63, 1991.

Henry Steele⁵⁹ and Charles Fox,⁶⁰ stationed at Kanowit, were murdered in June 1859. Charles Brooke was quick to implicate Sharif Masahor in the murders, which were depicted as a grand plot by disgruntled and displaced Brunei nobles to overthrow Brooke rule. However, Governor Edwardes of Labuan claimed that the harsh administrative methods of Fox and Steele were the precipitating factors causing the murders. Edwardes wrote to the Foreign Office that

..the information given me..would induce me to ascribe the murders of Messrs Fox and Steele, to an act of desperate revenge, by men who had been previously fined and still lay under the pressure of a further heavy exaction.⁶¹

Although Edwardes was not favourably disposed towards the Brookes and viewed the Rajah's incursion into Brunei territory with alarm, he pointed to the possibility that the murders were entirely a local affair.⁶² Moreover, his assertions did throw light on the state of administration in Kanowit. The Brooke officers, who were posted to far-flung outstations, often had to support their own administrations with whatever local revenue was available, and this probably resulted in the imposition of heavy taxes. Perhaps Charles Brooke, in alleging the complicity of the Brunei nobles, was looking for a justification to pursue Masahor into the

⁵⁹Steele was originally posted to Sarawak to supervise the mission school in Kuching. He left the mission and joined the Brooke Service in 1849. In 1851, Steele was placed in charge of the fort at Kanowit where he remained until his death in 1859.

⁶⁰Fox, a catechist, arrived in Sarawak with Bishop Wilson in 1851 and took charge of the mission school in Kuching. Fox joined the government service in 1855 and was posted to Sarikei in 1856. He was moved to Kanowit, a few months before his death, to assist Steele.

⁶¹Tarling, p.108.

⁶²Most Labuan Governors between 1860 and 1880, resented the expansion of Sarawak, particularly into the Melanau sago districts, which affected Labuan trade. See Irwin, p.193 and Pringle, p.119.

Melanau districts and this later resulted in the Rajah finally succeeding in obtaining the cession of the rich sago-producing areas of Oya, Igan and Mukah in 1861.⁶³

After the troubles of 1859, Rajah James left Sarawak for England, returning only for a few months in 1863. During that same year, his nephew Brooke Brooke, the Tuan Besar, lost his position as heir owing to a disagreement with his uncle. From 1863 to 1868, Charles Brooke became largely responsible for the Sarawak government and he succeeded as the second Rajah following his uncle's death.

Conclusion

The administration of Sarawak, which evolved under James Brooke, was very much a by-product of the unique circumstances prevalent in Sarawak. During the first eight years of his reign, James Brooke was distracted by the issues of "piracy" as well as building a secure and loyal following in Sarawak. However, after the battle of Beting Maru in 1849 and the unfortunate publicity the incident engendered, Brooke gradually lost interest in Sarawak. It was only seven years after the founding of Sarawak that Brooke seriously considered recruiting for the Sarawak Service. Sarawak's meagre revenue meant that only a handful of European officers could be employed.

⁶³Bassett, pp. 50-54.

The responsibilities given to the pioneering Brooke officers were indeed substantial; they were directed to administer inhospitable areas and ensure that their administrations were self-supporting. Their vocation was made all the more arduous because they could not call on precedents or examples set by previous officers. The Residents, who were often given sole charge of an outstation fort, were expected to provide a sense of security to the local residents within their area of supervision, punish rebel tribesmen and introduce a more settled and stable system of government. They learned their job by experimenting and improvising to the best of their abilities. Moreover, there was a lack of direction and guidance from the Rajah, who did not preoccupy himself with nor did he wish to be encumbered by details of administration. Rajah James was, however, fortunate to be surrounded by able and exemplary officers such as Arthur Crookshank and Charles Brooke. As the second Rajah, Charles Brooke developed this system of *ad hoc* administration in the outstations into one which was more regularised and predictable. The next chapter traces the development of the Sarawak Service under his rule.

CHAPTER 2

RAJAH CHARLES BROOKE'S APPROACH TO ADMINISTRATION, 1868-1917

The previous chapter dealt briefly with Charles Brooke's early experiences as an outstation officer before becoming Rajah in 1868. After joining the Sarawak Service in 1852 at the age of 23, he accumulated a wealth of experience working with the various communities in Sarawak, particularly in the Second Division, where he developed an affinity with the Ibans. Rajah James testified to the expert knowledge possessed by his nephew, and expressed his confidence that Charles Brooke, upon becoming Rajah, would continue his administrative policies and provide a stable government for Sarawak. Rajah James wrote of Charles Brooke as follows;

He is looked up to in that country as the chief of all the Sea Dayaks and his intimate knowledge of their language, their customs, their feelings, and their habits far exceeds that of any other person..It is a gratification to me to acknowledge my nephew's devotion to the cause to which my whole life has been devoted. It is well that his strength has come to supply my weakness, and that his energies and his life (if needed) should be given to establish the governorship and promote the happiness of the people of Sarawak. My career draws to its close, but I have confidence that no consideration will turn him from the work which I shall leave for his hand to do.¹

Rajah James died on 11 June 1868 and Charles Brooke awaited the official notification of his uncle's demise before proclaiming himself as Rajah on 3 August.

¹C. Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, vol. I, London, 1866, pp. xi-xii.

Rajah Charles's approach to government differed from his uncle in one important respect; he ruled as a patriarchal monarch who supervised every detail of his government while his uncle was content to leave matters of administration to the discretion of his subordinates. The following discussion gives an account of Rajah Charles's style of government and the ensuing development of the Administrative Service under his guidance.

Political Philosophy

When Rajah Charles succeeded his uncle in 1868, he was already well-equipped and more than qualified to deal with the tasks that lay before him. He also realised that Brooke government had only limited resources at hand, and thus it was necessary to tailor his administration according to what was already available. He inherited an economy that was almost bankrupt and was pressured to initiate austerity measures. Expenditure in the early years of his reign exceeded revenue and this was the basic reason which prompted Rajah Charles to exercise strict economy and supervision over the smallest details of expenditure.

Rajah Charles imbibed much of his uncle's philosophy on the rule of natives. Rajah James's tenet that the principle of Sarawak's government was "to rule for the people and with the people and to teach them the rights of free men under the

restraints of government"² was always adhered to. Charles Brooke was also convinced of the applicability to Sarawak of the system of 'one-man rule' and his administration demonstrated a tendency for power to be concentrated in the office of the Rajah. However, Rajah Charles was flexible as a monarch and understood that, owing to his country's diversity in population and circumstances, regional variations in administration could not be avoided and should, within limits, be encouraged. There was no hard-and-fast rule on how an outstation government should be run; the Residents themselves would determine the measures most suitable according to local needs and demands.³ Wherever possible, local inclinations would be utilised for the government's own ends. Indeed, Charles Brooke's many expeditions against rebel tribes in the Second Division made use of the Iban love of war and headhunting and pitted one group of loyal Ibans against the defiant tribes.

Although Rajah Charles felt that change was inevitable, he believed that any new innovation or development should be effected gradually so as not to result in any dislocation for the natives. It would be preferable for his government to

..start from things as we find them, putting its veto on what is dangerous or unjust, and supporting what is fair and equitable in the usages of the natives, and letting system and legislation wait upon occasion. When new wants are felt, it examines and provides for them by measures rather made on the spot than imported from abroad; and, to ensure that these shall not be contrary to native customs, the consent of the people is gained for them before

²Ibid., p.xiii.

³Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.157.

they are put in force..and the rules of government are framed with greater care for the interests of the majority who are not Europeans than for those of the minority [European] race.⁴

The principle of government was thus to allow "system and legislation" to "wait upon occasion". This type of government closely resembled an *ad hoc* administration which reacted to a situation rather than anticipated problems. Legislation was passed piecemeal in response to given circumstances and there appeared to be a reluctance towards commitment to any long term programme or planning. One contemporary writer even suggested that Sarawak law throughout the reign of Rajah Charles was but a "hodge-podge of Orders, Notices and Proclamations issued when the occasion arose and quite informally drafted".⁵

Like his uncle, Rajah Charles continued to allow for the participation of natives in government. The Supreme Council, which acted as a forum for the discussion of government affairs between Rajah Charles, his officers and the Malay *datus*, was already created in 1855.⁶ Another institution, the Council Negri, was established in 1865, three years before the accession of Charles Brooke as Rajah. This latter body consisted of the Rajah, the senior European and Native Officers and traditional native chiefs. According to Rajah Charles, the Council Negri was formed to "consolidate the

⁴Sarawak Gazette, 2 September 1872. The above quotation is attributed to Rajah Charles.

⁵W.H.Treacher, 'British Borneo: Sketches of Brunei, Sarawak, Labuan and North Borneo', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no.21, 1890, p.24. Treacher had been both acting Governor of Labuan and the first Governor of North Borneo under the Chartered Company and, in both capacities, he was critical of Rajah Charles.

⁶See Chapter 1, p.22 and fn.23.

Government by giving the native chiefs more than local interest in the affairs of state [and] to impress them with a sense of responsibility".⁷ It was also hoped that with the native leaders meeting occasionally, they might be deterred from waging war against one another. The purpose of the Council Negri duplicated that of the Supreme Council in one respect, that is, the former also existed to enable the natives to participate in decision-making. The Council Negri met less frequently than the Supreme Council; while members of the Supreme Council convened annually, Council Negri members gathered together once in three years.⁸

The role ascribed to the Council Negri was vaguely legislative whereas the Supreme Council was set out to be an executive body. As with the experience of the Supreme Council, the Council Negri was not allowed a clearly defined legislative role nor did it debate actively on important issues. By 1883, the *Sarawak Gazette* had acknowledged that the duties of the Council Negri had, with few exceptions, been of little importance.⁹ From the late 1880s to the end of Rajah Charles's reign, meetings of the Council Negri were more of a formal occasion held triennially during which the Rajah gave a speech on the progress of the state and met his officers and native chiefs from all over Sarawak who had

⁷C.P.Cotter, 'Some Aspects of the Administrative Development of Sarawak', p.137.

⁸See *Council Negri Centenary, 1867-1967, Sarawak, Malaysia, Kuching, 1967*. The first meeting of the Council Negri was held on 8 September 1867.

⁹Cotter, p.142. The *Sarawak Gazette* was a semi-government publication.

gathered in Kuching.¹⁰ These meetings also gave the outstation officers an opportunity to have a week's holiday in Kuching at the government's expense.¹¹ However, although the Council Negri held little legislative power, it did bring together the various native leaders and government officials.

Another body, the Committee of Administration, was formed in 1873 and was given the task of taking over the reins of government in the absence of the Rajah. Its members were drawn from the Supreme Council, but instead of the Rajah, the Resident of the First Division presided over the meetings. With the passing of the 1915 Order towards the last years of Rajah Charles's reign, the Committee was given additional executive powers, which allowed it to function even while the Rajah was present in Kuching. The new Order empowered the Committee to relieve the Rajah and the First Division Resident from their more cumbersome administrative duties.¹²

The political philosophy of both Rajah James and Rajah Charles gave expression to certain high ideals. However, the examples of the Supreme Council and the Council Negri showed that, while the Brookes emphasized constantly the need for native participation in government, these bodies were not given much effective power and only native participation of a subordinate kind was tolerated. It was also clear that there

¹⁰This pattern of proceedings was evident in most Council Negri meetings, see Saravak Gazette, 1 October 1886, 2 August 1912 and 17 August 1915.

¹¹A.B.Ward, *Rajah's Servant*, Data Paper no.61, Southeast Asia Program, Dept. of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1966, p.142.

¹²Cotter, p.146.

was a wide disparity between the theoretical pronouncements of the first two Brooke Rajahs and what they practised. Apart from the issue of native participation, Rajah Charles was equally disposed to make statements about the need to avoid the use of force in native rule. He criticised the tendency of a number of colonial governments at the turn of the century which went to war at the slightest pretext. Yet Rajah Charles's administration was, in fact, characterised by the numerous expeditions it launched against various native tribes and his officers did not hesitate to use force in their many attempts to punish rebel groups or restrict Iban migration.

Although government bodies such as the Supreme Council and the Council Negri were created, Rajah Charles did not believe that a successful relationship between ruler and ruled could be assured or formalised in any institution, but rather depended on the character of European rulers. He explained,

..the fault again that so often leads to fighting and quarrels is that the right men to deal with natives are not chosen and such men should be carefully picked. At present, there is a total indifference on this important point, and it seems impossible to find men who will look upon a native as a reasonable creature, or speak in the manner of an equal..though in many ways different.¹³

Rajah Charles impressed upon his officers the importance of treating the natives with respect and the cooperation of local chiefs should always be solicited. He also urged his officers to cultivate social and friendly relations with the natives in order to familiarise themselves with local

¹³C. Brooke, *Queries: Past, Present and Future*, London, 1907, pp.3-4.

problems. Accessibility of the government to the natives should always be maintained. In dealing with natives, Rajah Charles reasoned, face-to-face contact was necessary; according to local experience, leadership had always been a personal matter. The British experience in the Malay States during the last few decades of the nineteenth century also bore testimony to the importance of close contact with the native population. Sir Frederick Weld, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, in a paper read to the Colonial Institute in 1884, shared the Rajah's views with regard to the necessity of having a personal type of government. Weld stated that

..personal government is a necessity for Asiatics, it is the outcome of their religious systems, of their habits of thought and of long centuries of custom.¹⁴

Rajah Charles echoed Weld's statement that the personal touch in government was essential in the East. He noted that the Dutch authorities faced difficulties in settling local disputes because they rarely sent their officers to arbitrate personally on the matter.¹⁵

Charles Brooke also saw the importance of maintaining and utilising native elements in government. He called for the preservation of native authority along traditional lines because it was only by sustaining the status quo that Sarawak could be ruled by a handful of European officers. Both Doering and Pringle were of the view that the Brooke tendency

¹⁴Excerpts from the text of Weld's paper appeared in *Sarawak Gazette*, 1 August 1884.

¹⁵Crisswell, p.88.

to incorporate native elements in their government, their desire to protect native interests and reluctance to effect changes were motivated by the limited alternatives and resources available.¹⁶ Pringle further explained that Brooke philosophy was "less an expression of policy than an apology for what, under Borneo conditions, they could not do".¹⁷ Brooke ideology was more a rationalisation of the circumstances prevailing in Sarawak and a response to practical necessity. In 1889, Rajah Charles clarified further his method of rule;

..we know that we have been left to work out the problem of government and development of commerce for ourselves, and if we might say so, to paddle our own canoe but with scant assistance from without. It was just that slow and gradual development - first the blade, then the oar, after that the full corn in the ear, the law of all healthy growth which had taught us to govern this country with its many dusty races. There is give and take in all departments of life and the native inhabitants had taught us and we had taught them..¹⁸

Thus, the government which developed under the Brookes was very much conditioned by the local environment. Rajah Charles adopted local elements and improved upon them. The following discussion examines the type of European officers preferred by Rajah Charles to assist him in administering the country.

¹⁶See Doering, 'Government in Sarawak under Charles Brooke', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol.xxxix, no.2, December 1966, p.98 and Pringle, 'The Brookes of Sarawak: Reformers in spite of Themselves', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, vol.xix, nos.38-39, 1971, p.73.

¹⁷Pringle, 'The Brooke..', p.73.

¹⁸*Sarawak Gazette*, 2 September 1889, also cited in Pringle, 'The Brookes of Sarawak', p.73.

Rajah Charles's Attitudes Towards His Administrative Officers

The type of recruits employed by Charles Brooke reflected his Victorian sense of class. He had a distinct preference for those with at least a middle class background. Recruits were obtained from many sources, but Rajah Charles selected personally most of the prospective candidates. There was no formal procedure for application and neither were minimum qualifications set. Some were his relatives, others the sons of Brooke family friends, and there were yet others who were recommended by friends. The Rajah's brother-in-law, Harry de Windt¹⁹ was an early recruit, and a nephew, Henry Carslake Brooke Johnson, became an Administrative Officer in 1894.²⁰ Another recruit, Arthur Ward, had no connection with the Brooke family. Ward had originally come to Malaya to work on a coffee plantation in Johore, but when the coffee market collapsed soon after his arrival, his employer arranged for him to meet the Rajah and Ward joined the Sarawak Service in 1899.²¹ Charles Hose, the son of a clergyman who arrived in Sarawak in 1884, was recommended by his uncle in Singapore, Bishop Hose, a friend of Rajah Charles.²²

¹⁹De Windt served as aide-de-camp to the Rajah between 1871 to 1873.

²⁰After leaving the Service in 1902, Henry Johnson quarrelled with his uncle following an attempt to establish himself as the ruler of Lawas. See Runciman, pp.197-198.

²¹Ward wrote an account of his experiences as an Administrative Officer in Sarawak in his monograph, *Rajah's Servant*.

²²See introduction by B.Durrans in C.Hose, *Natural Man, A Record from Borneo*, Singapore, 1988.

A practical education rather than high academic qualifications was preferred. In an attempt to discourage those recruits who were keen on a life of adventure, the Rajah wrote in 1888 that

..life here is sedentary and I may say slow, more of office in description and not suited to the tastes of any man fond of field sports..we require good accountants to write well and have a good practised education..If a knowledge of surveying and some idea of official routine can be added, so much the better.²³

In a letter to the father of an interested applicant, Rajah Charles recommended that prospective Cadets go through a 'modern' system of education in which disciplines like civil engineering, mapping, surveying and architecture were taught.²⁴ This type of education, the Rajah felt, would prepare recruits for the varied duties of a Cadet and Resident. According to Ward, Rajah Charles wanted men with a personal touch not brilliant scholars. Only two of his officers had attended university; both Demetrius Bailey and Charles Hose were at Jesus College, Cambridge, but only Bailey graduated.

Rajah Charles was circumspect in his choice of recruits. One would assume that his good judgement secured for Sarawak the services of a number of Englishmen of high ability and impeccable moral attributes. However, Rajah Charles's wife, Ranee Margaret, was taken by surprise at the demeanour of

²³C.Brooke to T.Fairbairn, 11 August 1888, H.H. The Rajah's Order Book, vol.II, also cited in Crisswell, p.121.

²⁴Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.147.

some outstation officers soon after her arrival in Sarawak in 1869. She noted that the

..type of Englishmen who were out there at the time were crude and ill-mannered and would sit with their feet on the table. Each felt that because he was in charge of some minute outstation kampong, that he was a Supreme being..so, with newborn authority, they lost the little manners they might once have had.²⁵

It must be remembered, however, that the above comments were made early in the second Rajah's rule, and the Ranee's remarks might have been prompted by the uncouth behaviour of one or two officers.

Rajah Charles proved to be strict with his officers and was careful to emphasize to them the importance of conducting themselves in a manner befitting a high government official. He passed numerous orders which served as guidelines for his officers and legislation passed also showed the Rajah's concern about his officer's discipline and financial solvency. As an illustration, the Order of 29 March 1872 states that

..second class officials are to maintain a respectful bearing to their senior as well as to all gentlemen whom they meet..Anyone so offending in future will be dismissed for insubordination and disrespect.²⁶

Again in 1903, Rajah Charles forbade his officers to lend money to Chinese traders and natives and he passed an Order to this effect;

²⁵S.Brooke, *The Three White Rajahs*, London, 1939, p.71.

²⁶This 1872 Order was republished in the *Sarawak Gazette*, 1 June 1894.

I now make known that I consider this to be an irregularity and that no officer who is liable to have official dealing with the inhabitants shall become a money lender.²⁷

The Rajah did not hesitate to put his officers on suspension or even dismiss them for not observing Service regulations. He viewed seriously any officer who did not return from his leave as scheduled. In July 1891, John Bloomfield Douglas, an Assistant Resident, was dismissed from the Service for overstaying his leave by 27 days without prior permission.²⁸ In 1911, another officer, William Shaw, also overstayed his leave but the Rajah gave him the option to retire at the age of 35.

The problem of insobriety or drunkenness also received the Rajah's attention. It was claimed that the lonely lives led by officers in the remote outstations drew them to drink. Moreover, the European community in Kuching was allowed to import spirits free of duty and this made alcohol widely available. In 1875, an officer appeared for dinner in the presence of the Rajah highly intoxicated and was immediately suspended from his duties.²⁹ R.A.W.McPherson was also dismissed for drunkenness in 1870 within two months of his entering the Service. It appeared that insobriety among officers was also a common problem in the Straits Settlements towards the latter half of the nineteenth century. As in Sarawak, warnings were usually sufficient to bring the

²⁷Sarawak Gazette, 2 October 1903.

²⁸Roll Book 1, 'European Officers on Permanent Service, 1843-1929'. Bloomfield Douglas was allowed to rejoin the Service and he later resigned voluntarily in January 1896.

²⁹The officer referred to above was T.S.Chapman, who resigned a few months later.

offenders to heel, but in certain cases, resignations had to be forced on the officers.³⁰

A number of officers were also found to be constantly in debt. Sarawak officers were permitted to borrow from the government and the post office. Some officers found it difficult to manage their expenses on their small income, particularly those staying in the bigger towns, and they resorted to borrowing. There were also officers reprimanded for other reasons. In 1898, Demetrius Bailey, a Resident in the Second Division, was sent on furlough before his leave was due because he failed to follow the Rajah's instructions in dealing with the Iban rebel, Bantin, and bring about a settlement.³¹ Another officer, E.H. Williams, was removed from his post at Simanggang for having used insulting language against the senior Native Officer, Pengiran Matali. Rajah Charles's disciplinary actions were not confined to middle and lower ranking officers. In June 1914, the Divisional Resident of the Third Division, Julian Baring-Gould, arrived in Kuching after his furlough and brought with him two pedigree fox terriers. Baring-Gould was probably unaware that he had contravened an order of Rajah Charles prohibiting the import of dogs. When the Rajah heard of the incident, he reacted angrily, ordering the dogs to be destroyed and demoting Baring-Gould to a second class Resident. Baring-Gould was then ordered to take charge of a minor post at

³⁰R. Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya, The Malayan Civil Service and Its Predecessors, 1867-1942*, Oxford, 1981, p.38.

³¹Crisswell, p.129. For an account of the Bantin troubles in the Ulu Ai area, see Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp.210-235.

Lundu and he was only reinstated as a Divisional Resident six months later.³²

Rajah Charles had a predilection for his recruits to be in their early twenties and he only considered those who were single. His officers were not permitted to marry until they had completed at least ten years of service. Charles Brooke was of the opinion that it was best for his officers to postpone marriage for as long as possible. It was widely known that the Rajah himself married in 1869 at the age of forty in order to produce an heir for Sarawak. He elaborated in his book, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, on the difficulties of having a family in Sarawak,

..it is no easy matter for a European with a wife and family while moving in the vortex of civilisation, to obtain any real knowledge of the native mind or entertain any sympathy with them. My own personal experience and observation have told me how difficult it is to manage natives in active work when one is placed in a largish assembly of Europeans.³³

Sarawak officers were not provided with any form of marriage or family allowance and this could be seen as an indirect measure to deter officers from marrying. Ward mentioned that the Rajah believed the effectiveness of a man deteriorated by half on his marriage.³⁴ In the days when outstation life meant having to live in isolated villages, not many European women would be able to put up with the hardships, and neither would

³²Ward, p.52. See also *Sarawak Civil List, 1930*, which gives an indication of Baring-Gould's service history.

³³C.Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, vol.II, p.79.

³⁴Ward, p.59.

it be thought proper for officers to leave their wives alone when they went touring. Under the third Rajah, Vyner Brooke, however, it became quite common for a married officer's appointment to a particular station to be influenced by such factors as to whether that station was suitable for a European wife's residence. During Rajah Charles's reign, these considerations were not thought relevant; an officer was sent to the station where he was needed and, if he were married, his wife accompanied him as "part of his personal luggage".³⁵

While Rajah Charles frowned on the presence of European wives, he did not discourage his officers from forming illicit liaisons with native women. In his book, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, Charles Brooke showed a predisposition to the idea of miscegenation between Asians and Europeans, which he believed suited tropical climes and the circumstances of such Asian countries as Sarawak. He argued that race-mixing had a number of advantages and could result in the emergence of a "suitable population".³⁶ The by-product of half-caste children of this union could gradually "merge into a more enlightened race, better qualified in every way for the duties required of them".³⁷

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Reece examined the Rajah's views on miscegenation in his article, 'A "Suitable Population": Charles Brooke and Race-Mixing in Sarawak', *Itinerario*, vol.IX, 1985

³⁷Ibid. p.67.

On the other hand, Rajah James had constantly reminded his officers to avoid being too familiar with native women. In a letter to one of his officers, Thomas Williamson, James Brooke had reiterated this point and suggested that his officers refrain from the habit of "almost daily visiting at native houses, and a degree of intimacy with the females of other families".³⁸ However, Rajah James did not take any draconian measures to stop his officers from taking native mistresses, although he believed that "too great a familiarity with natives is injurious to the estimation in which an official person should be held".³⁹ A number of Rajah James's officers like William Brereton and the two former catechists who later joined the Sarawak Service, Charles Fox and Henry Steele, were known to have had children by local women.⁴⁰ Rajah James's secretary, Spenser St. John, lived openly with native women and offended the wife of the Anglican Bishop, Harriette McDougall, on several occasions. Bishop McDougall, who disliked St. John, claimed that younger officers were corrupted by him and influenced to emulate his bohemian lifestyle. The Bishop, writing about Fox in a letter to his colleague, stated,

..poor Fox [the] last time I saw him..told me not only had St. John enticed his doubt about Our Lord's divinity, which made him leave the Mission, but that he afterwards never left him alone until he followed his example and kept a native woman.⁴¹

³⁸James Brooke to T. Williamson, 26 January 1946 in Templer, *The Private Letters of Sir James Brooke*, vol. II, pp. 116-117.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Reece, 'A "Suitable Population"', p. 79.

⁴¹Bishop McDougall to E. B. Evelyn, Rector of Wotton, Surrey, 9 March 1863, M. Saint, *A Flourish for the Bishop*, pp. 133-134.

While still a Resident under his uncle's administration, Rajah Charles himself appeared to have followed the practice of his peers, and it was acknowledged that in 1867, he fathered a son by a local woman, named Tia (Dayang Mastia); his son was christened Esca.⁴² R.E. Stubbs, a Colonial Office official, in his comments on the ability of Rajah Charles's sons in 1906, gave his opinion that

..the only man in Sarawak who is any good as an administrator is one of the Rajah's illegitimate sons by a native mother.⁴³

It is not clear whether Stubbs was referring to Esca or another of Charles Brooke's illegitimate sons. A number of Rajah Charles's officers also kept native mistresses, including Francis Maxwell, whose name featured in the genealogy of a well-known Iban family in the Second Division.⁴⁴

The issue of morality concerning the Rajah's officers frequently became the subject of criticism by members of the Sarawak clergy. It appeared that Rajah Charles did not particularly like Bishop Chambers, who succeeded Bishop McDougall, for being too sanctimonious in denouncing the morals of the Rajah's officers.⁴⁵ For a long time, relations between the Rajah and the Church were strained, but matters

⁴²See Reece, 'A "Suitable Population"' and *The Name of Brooke, The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur, 1982, pp.18-19.

⁴³Stubbs was very critical of the second Rajah's administration. See Stubbs to Lucas, 10 December 1906, CO 144/81; Appendix A of Pringle's *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.359, gives a full text of Stubb's memorandum.

⁴⁴Cited in B.Sandin, *The Sea Dayaks of Borneo*, London, 1967, pp.100-101 and Crisswell, p.29.

⁴⁵Saunders, *Bishops and Brookes*, pp.180-182. Apparently, Chambers's attitude towards the way of life of the Rajah's officers changed after his marriage. See also Runciman, p.165.

gradually improved when Bishop Hose replaced Chambers in 1881.⁴⁶ However, the Church continued to be a source of irritation to the Rajah and, in 1916, he was incensed with the Vicar of Kuching's remark that the European community there "led open and notorious lives".⁴⁷ Rajah Charles often came to the defence of his officers in the face of such moralising and stated many times that he did not wish the Church to interfere in the private affairs of his unmarried officers. Although the Rajah permitted casual liaisons with native women, he preferred his officers to conduct their affairs discreetly and did not approve of them appearing on public occasions with their mistresses.⁴⁸

It may be worthwhile here to examine briefly the type of officers who became members of the Service. Several of the European Residents serving under Rajah Charles had distinguished careers while a few were academically inclined. Although only one officer under Rajah Charles had obtained a degree, many others like Charles Hose, Charles Bampfylde and Hugh Brooke Low, conducted extensive research on a variety of subjects connected with Sarawak. They also contributed significantly in such fields as ethnography, ethnology and the natural history of Borneo.

⁴⁶Runciman, p.211.

⁴⁷Reece, 'A "Suitable Population"', p.87.

⁴⁸In the early 1880s, Rajah Charles forbade his officers to take their mistresses on government steamers. See Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.148.

Charles Agar Bampfylde joined the Sarawak Service at the age of 21 and, as a new Cadet, served in Balleh. In less than a year, he was promoted to the post of Assistant Resident and was stationed in Kalaka. The next nine years of his career were spent in the Rejang and upper Sarawak districts and, in 1888, he was appointed Divisional Resident of the Third Division.⁴⁹ Bampfylde retired from the Service at the age of 49. During his retirement, he co-wrote with Reverend S.Baring-Gould,⁵⁰ an informative and authoritative book, *History of Sarawak Under Its Two Rajahs, 1839-1908*, which was published in 1909. Rajah Charles gave financial support for the publication of the book, which is widely taken as the official history of Sarawak up to the end of the first decade of the twentieth century.

Another contemporary of Bampfylde was Demetrius Bailey, who cooperated with the Anglican missionary, William Howell, to produce the first dictionary of the Iban language. Bailey began his service as an extra-officer, the equivalent of a Cadet, after having read for a degree at Cambridge. He spent nearly the whole of his 21 years' service as a Resident in the Second Division, except for a brief stint between 1890 to 1891 and in 1900 when he was posted to Kuching and Mukah respectively.

⁴⁹Bampfylde resigned in 1882 but rejoined the Service in 1884; the reason for his resignation was not disclosed.

⁵⁰Reverend S.Baring-Gould's son, Julian, was admitted as a Cadet by the Rajah in 1897.

Perhaps the most prolific researcher and writer among the Brooke officers was Charles Hose, who acquired considerable academic standing as a result of his studies on the Kayans and the Kenyahs of the Baram and his observations on the natural history of Borneo. Hose joined the Service in 1884 at the age of 21 and his first posting was to the Baram where he remained for ten years. In 1904, Hose was appointed a Divisional Resident of the Third Division. After serving for 23 years, Hose retired at the age of 44. As a Resident, he demonstrated his remarkable abilities, and was instrumental in effecting the surrender of the Ulu Ai Iban leader, Bantin, as well as the disaffected tribes of the Engkari, Empran and Kanowit districts.⁵¹ Hose also distinguished himself as an anthropologist and geographer and collected numerous natural history specimens.⁵² He was the first Brooke officer to explore thoroughly the Baram area and wrote various scholarly articles and books on his findings. Hose received numerous awards from many countries, prestigious institutions and societies, including an honorary Doctorate in Science from Cambridge University.

Hugh Brooke Low, another of Rajah Charles's officers, served from 1869 to 1887 and was an amateur ethnologist. Low's

⁵¹See *Sarawak Civil List*, 1925 and 1930.

⁵²Hose's publications include *A Descriptive Account of the Mammals of Borneo*, London, 1893, *Natural Man*, London, 1926, *Societies in Borneo*, London, 1927, *Fifty Years of Romance and Research or a Jungle Wallah at Large*, London, 1927 and in collaboration with W.McDougall, he wrote *Pagan Tribes*, 2 vols., London, 1912. He also wrote numerous articles on Sarawak and Brunei and, in 1924, completed a comprehensive map of Sarawak.

father, Sir Hugh Low,⁵³ who became the Resident of Perak in 1877, first came to the attention of Rajah James in the 1840s. Sir Hugh Low was sent initially to Labuan where he worked as the Governor's secretary. Hugh Brooke Low was born in May 1849 in Labuan and was baptised by Rajah James. He was thus already familiar with Sarawak when he joined the Rajah's Service. On his first appointment to Sibiu as a young Cadet, Low found himself faced with the difficult task of repelling an attack on the fort by the rebellious Lintong, an Iban chief. Low accompanied Rajah Charles on several expeditions, including the second Mujong expedition in September 1881, when a force of 300 boats and 7,000 Dayaks and Malays successfully attacked rebel Ibans at Bukit Batu inflicting heavy losses. Low's career was concentrated in the Third Division where he served from 1875 until his death in 1887 at the age of 38. During his 18 years' service, Low acquired an intimate knowledge of the Ibans and Kayans in the Rejang area and he travelled extensively throughout the upper reaches of the Rejang river. H. Ling Roth's book, *The Natives of Sarawak and North Borneo*,⁵⁴ was based partly on the notes left by Low.

The Sarawak Service also managed to attract the sons of distinguished families such as Francis Maxwell, who was the youngest son of Sir Peter Benson Maxwell, the Chief Justice of the Straits Settlements from 1867 to 1871. His elder brother, Sir William and ^{nephew,} Sir George, both had reputable

⁵³Sir Hugh Low was a botanist and wrote one of the earliest books on Sarawak, *Sarawak, Its Inhabitants and Productions*, London, 1847.

⁵⁴Roth's book was published in 1896.

careers in Malaya and other British colonies. Francis Maxwell served for 22 years from 1872 to 1894. In 1881, Maxwell was promoted as Divisional Resident of the First Division and, in this capacity, he presided over meetings of the Committee of Administration on several occasions. After his retirement in 1894, he was appointed British Consul for Brunei and Resident of Labuan and held these positions until his death in 1897 at Yokohama.

The Terms of Employment for Administrative Officers

During the 49 years of Rajah Charles's reign, the remuneration and terms of service of Administrative Officers were regularised and gradually showed a steady improvement. In the late 1860s, second class Residents like Stuart Johnson and Walter Watson,⁵⁵ were receiving salaries of between \$110 to \$160 a month.⁵⁶ By 1873, the maximum salary of a second class Resident had increased to \$230.⁵⁷ The pay of other ranks also showed a marked increase; in the 1870s, a Resident received a maximum of \$350 a month, an Assistant Resident's maximum salary was \$150, while a Cadet began at \$80. Table 1 shows the increase in salaries between 1873 and 1917.

⁵⁵Watson joined the Service in 1869.

⁵⁶Roll Book no.1, 'European Officers on Permanent Service, 1843-1929'.

⁵⁷'Maximum Scale of Pay and Allowances of Sarawak Government Officers, effective 1 June 1873'. H.H. The Rajah's Order Book, vol.I, p.348.

TABLE 1

Monthly Salaries in Straits Dollars for 1873, 1897 and 1917

	<u>1873</u> ⁵⁸	<u>1897</u> ⁵⁹	<u>1917</u> ⁶⁰
Divisional Resident	\$350	\$450	\$450
Second Class Resident	\$230	\$300	\$300
Assistant Resident	\$150	\$200	\$200
Cadet (newly-appointed)	\$80 ⁶¹	\$100	\$120

The above table indicates the comparative salaries received by different ranks of officers over a period of 44 years. The increase in salary of a Divisional Resident from 1873 to 1917 was only \$100 while a Cadet received a small addition of \$40. There seemed to be virtually no difference in the salaries cited for 1897 and those of 1917. This apparent immobility was attributed to the fluctuating value of the Straits dollar which fell from 2s. in 1897 to 1s.6d. in 1902. In 1906, the value of the dollar rose again and was then attached to the gold standard and pegged at 2s.4d.⁶² Hence, although Table 1 shows little difference in the salaries of Administrative

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹See *Sarawak Gazette*, 1 December 1897, and St. John, *Rajah Brooke: The Englishman as Ruler of an Eastern State*, London, 1899, p.225. St. John gave the figures in pounds sterling per annum. In the late 1890s, \$1 was equivalent to 2 s. and the figures given in Table 1 for the year 1897 were based on this exchange rate.

⁶⁰See Order no. XIII, 1917, 'Pays, Furlough and Allowances', in W.F. Skrine Papers, Mss Ind Ocn s 142. Although the 1917 Order became effective in July 1917, two months after the death of Rajah Charles, the figures are included here for comparative purposes.

⁶¹The Order of 1873 did not include the salary of Cadets but it can be assumed that since R.A.W. McPherson and G. Gueritz joined the Service in 1870 with an initial pay of \$80, the latter amount is taken as the standard starting point of entry for newly-appointed Cadets in the early 1870s.

⁶²According to Ward, *Rajah's Servant*, p.20, fn.2 and J. Butcher, *The British in Malaya, 1880-1941*, Kuala Lumpur, 1979, p.78, the value of the Straits dollar fluctuated severely in the 1880s and early 1900s and, in 1906, the dollar was fixed at 2s.4d. My calculations estimate the following exchange rates; for 1897, £1=\$10 and for 1917, £1=\$8.6.

Officers between 1897 and 1917, apart from a \$20 addition for Cadets, it cannot be assumed that the real value of the salaries remained unchanged. Table 2 gives the figures in pounds sterling per annum and presents a more realistic picture.

TABLE 2

Maximum Annual Salaries in Pounds Sterling for 1897 and 1917

	<u>1897</u> ⁶³	<u>1917</u> ⁶⁴
Divisional Resident	£540	£630
Second Class Resident	£360	£420
Assistant Resident	£240	£280
Cadet (newly-appointed)	£120	£170

The above Table indicates that the salaries for all the ranks of officers did, in fact, show a modest increase.

The cost of living in Sarawak was invariably low, but even then these salaries were not overly generous. Ward, who joined the Rajah's Service in 1899, related that at the turn of the century, whisky was sold at 90¢ a bottle. Assistant Residents like him, with a monthly stipend of \$200, could not always afford whisky for their "sundowner" and had to make do with gin and water. The prices of other commodities, however, were not as steep, and Ward recounted that, as a Cadet earning \$100 a month, he felt the cost of living in Sarawak

⁶³St. John, *Rajah Brooke*, p.225.

⁶⁴The figures given in Order no.XIII, 1917, are in Straits dollars and the conversion to pounds sterling is made on the basis that \$1=2s.4d.

then was lower than in the 1930s.⁶⁵ On his \$100 salary, Ward managed as follows;

I engaged an excellent Malay 'boy' for \$6 a month and my share of the mess bill upcountry did not amount to much more than \$5 a week, so it was possible to keep well within bounds with care, perhaps better than the present-day Cadet [circa 1934] with his \$200 to \$250 a month.⁶⁶

Living expenses were not as high in the outstation posts such as Kabong or Kanowit as in Kuching or Sibul, but the latter towns compensated with amenities and conveniences not available elsewhere.

A newly-appointed Cadet was allowed £40 for his passage from Britain to Sarawak. The 1873 Order⁶⁷ provided leave of two years on half pay for officers with at least ten years' service. However, the Rajah was flexible with this regulation and occasionally allowed his officers to divide the period and take one year's leave after completing five years of service. An officer proceeding on furlough was only given \$300 as a contribution towards his passage. Ward maintained that the meagre sum of \$300 was hardly adequate to meet passage costs and officers had to draw on their savings for the balance.⁶⁸ On his return from his first furlough, an officer was entitled to another year of furlough after serving a further five years. An Administrative Officer was also eligible to retire after 21 years' service and his pension was calculated at half of his last drawn salary.

⁶⁵Ward, p.20.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷'Maximum Scale of Pay..effective 1 June 1873', H.H. The Rajah's Order Book, vol.I.

⁶⁸Ward, p.96.

There were no marriage or family allowances provided for Sarawak officers. Unattractive though these conditions were, the Rajah had no difficulty in drawing recruits.

Administrative Structure

When Charles Brooke assumed control of Sarawak in 1868, the country was divided into three divisions, each headed by a Divisional Resident. Sarawak's territory then stretched westwards to Kidurong point. The Rajah's territorial ambitions continued unabated and Charles Brooke entertained designs on the territory belonging to the Brunei Sultanate. As early as 1868, Rajah Charles made overtures to Britain for approval of his plans for the cession of the Baram area to Sarawak. However, the Foreign Office was hesitant and finally concurred with the Governor of Labuan, H. Bulwer, that the expansion of Sarawak territorially would only result in the decline of Labuan. Hence permission was refused.⁶⁹ By 1874, the Rajah had begun making claims that the people of Baram resented Brunei rule and that the Sultan actually permitted the cession of the area to Sarawak. Britain was then still reluctant to allow Sarawak to extend its borders at this stage.⁷⁰

With the growing interest of adventurers and foreign countries in northern Borneo in the late 1870s and early

⁶⁹Criswell, p.152.

⁷⁰Hose and McDougall, *Pagan Tribes*, p.262.

1880s and the granting of a charter to the North Borneo Company in 1881, the Foreign Office found it increasingly difficult to continue to refuse permission to Sarawak for the cession to it of the Baram. In 1882, the cession was finally realised on condition of a perpetual payment of \$5,000 annually to Brunei.⁷¹ After Baram, Trusan was added in 1884 to the expanding borders of Sarawak (see Map 2). The Rajah next turned his attention to the basin of the Limbang river and, in 1890, he managed to reach an agreement with the Chartered Company of British North Borneo for the sale of the Limbang area to Sarawak (see Map 2). Lawas was acquired in 1905. In view of the Rajah's onslaught on Brunei territories, Britain decided to place the Sultanate under the administration of a British Resident in 1906.

By 1906, Sarawak was already divided into four administrative divisions and these were further subdivided into various smaller districts. The First Division comprised the Sarawak and Sadong river systems while the Second Division included the Batang Lupar, Saribas and Kalaka rivers. The Third Division consisted of the Rejang, Oya, Mukah, Bintulu and Matu areas and the Fourth Division covered the newly-acquired territories of Baram, Trusan and Limbang. A final addition, the Fifth Division, was incorporated in 1912 and included the Limbang and Lawas districts. Each of these divisions was under the supervision of a Divisional Resident, normally held by a first class Administrative Officer. Below the Divisional

⁷¹Crisswell, p.161. The Sultan was awarded \$3,000 while the Temenggong received \$2,000.

Resident in ranking were the second class Resident, Assistant Resident and Cadet respectively.

While Sarawak was administratively divided into divisions and districts, there was also a more practical partitioning of the country into Residencies. In 1882, the following were listed as 'Residencies'; the Kuching Residency with its headquarters at Kuching; the Upper Sarawak Residency with its headquarters at Paku; the Lundu and Sematan Residency with its headquarters at Lundu; the Sadong, Batang Lupar and Saribas Residency with its headquarters at Simanggang; the Kalaka Residency with its headquarters at Fort Charles, Kabong; the Rejang Residency with its headquarters at Sibü; the Mukah and Oya Residency with its headquarters at Mukah and the Bintulu Residency with its headquarters at Bintulu.⁷² The term, 'Residency' referred to the more important districts which were usually placed under the charge of a European officer. Formally-constituted 'districts' did not exist in Sarawak until the 1920s.

It can be observed that within a Division, one Residency normally took precedence over the others and was frequently put under the supervision of a senior Resident. For example, the Rejang Residency was given more prominence than the Mukah or Bintulu Residencies. Through the years, it became apparent that the Resident stationed in Sibü was too preoccupied with his responsibilities and he tended to leave his subordinate

⁷²Doering, 'Government in Sarawak under Charles Brooke', p.101.

European officers in the other residencies on their own. These lesser Residents were theoretically accountable to the Divisional Resident of the Rejang and any communication they might have with the Rajah would go through the usual channel at Sibü. In practice, however, the Residents in the less important residencies were given a degree of independence. Reports from Bintulu and Mukah went directly to Kuching instead of being forwarded initially to the divisional headquarters in Sibü. Perhaps this practice was even encouraged by the Rajah who took an active interest in the affairs of all residencies and he preferred to deal personally with individual officers. Thus, there grew an anomalous situation whereby although the Divisional Resident at Sibü was the most senior officer in the Third Division, he did not, in practice, hold ultimate responsibility over the whole division.

As a result of the years the Rajah had spent in the Second Division early in his career, he took a keen interest in that division's affairs. Rajah Charles saw the Second Division as the "heartland of Iban country and hence of his own power".⁷³ After becoming Rajah, he continued to keep a close watch over matters there and appeared reluctant to delegate his authority over the Second Division to a Divisional Resident. Unlike the First and Third Divisions, each of which had a Divisional Resident, the Second Division was not allocated a Divisional Resident throughout most of Rajah Charles's reign

⁷³Criswell, p.23.

(see Appendix 1).⁷⁴ Hence, the Rajah assumed direct responsibility over Second Division affairs. It was only in 1916 when the Rajah began to feel the stresses and strains of his age that he assigned the Rajah Muda, Vyner Brooke, to be the Divisional Resident of the Second Division. During the rule of Rajah Charles, the most senior post in the Second Division had been held by nine Administrative Officers in succession, and two officers in particular had a total of 23 years' service between them; H.F.Deshon served in the Second Division between 1879 and 1892 and D.J.S.Bailey from 1888 to 1908.

The Divisional Resident⁷⁵ was assisted by the second class Resident and Assistant Resident. These middle-ranking officers were the equivalent of District Officers. Under Rajah Charles's government, the term 'district officer' was not used and it only gained prominence in Sarawak from the 1920s onwards.⁷⁶

The austerity measures adopted by Rajah Charles when he came to power also had an impact on outstation administration. Owing to the peaceful situation in the downriver areas, the

⁷⁴Appendix 1 gives a list of Divisional Residents for the various divisions during the rule of Rajah Charles.

⁷⁵See Appendix 1.

⁷⁶See Chapter 3, pp.105-106. Hose and McDougall in *Pagan Tribes*, vol.II, p.269, explained that the term 'district officer' instead of 'Assistant Resident' was used in their book so as to ensure that readers not familiar with Sarawak would understand the connotations of the term. The actual description of the middle-ranking officers were, in fact, Residents and Assistant Residents. See also Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, pp.309-310 and Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.143.

Rajah saw the need for trimming unnecessary costs and decided to cut down the size of the outstation establishment. As an illustration, the Rajah did not allocate a Resident to Betong after 1869 or to Kabong after 1874. Under Rajah Charles, Lubok Antu was not placed under the charge of a European Resident except during periods of rebellion. Rajah Charles concentrated his European officers in Simanggang and the nearby districts with the result that the Second Division had at any one time, at the most, one senior Resident and two Assistant Residents.

In spite of Rajah Charles's strict economy, his reign saw a steady increase in the size of the European establishment. During the early decades of his rule, European officers were thinly spread throughout Sarawak. Between 1880 and 1883, there was an average of two European officers at Batang Lupar and Mukah and one officer at Bintulu.⁷⁷ At Betong, Pusa, Tuban, Kabong, Saribas, Balleh and Kanowit, the senior officer and the junior staff were all native. In 1884, a French traveller, Edmond Cotteau, observed that members of the Sarawak Service consisted of about 30 European officers⁷⁸ and, out of this, approximately slightly more than half were Administrative Officers. By 1899, the size of the establishment, according to Ward, had grown to "barely 50 Europeans",⁷⁹ while Hose and McDougall estimated that there

⁷⁷Doering, 'Government in Sarawak under Charles Brooke', p.102.

⁷⁸Runciman, p.203.

⁷⁹Ward, p.33.

were between 50 to 60 members of the Sarawak Service around 1912.⁸⁰

Duties and Responsibilities of Administrative Officers

During the rule of the first Rajah, the primary reason for posting an European officer in the interior was to keep peace and order by curbing unauthorised headhunting and preventing raids on coastal settlements. Through the decades, the duties of a Resident multiplied and became diversified so that by the end of the nineteenth century, they encompassed a whole spectrum of administrative responsibilities. The work of a Resident became varied and he was expected to

..preserve order in his district and to punish crimes of violence. But he is responsible also for every detail of administration including the collection of taxes and customs duties, and the hearing of complaints of all kinds, the furnishing of reports to the central government on all matters of the moment, the development of trade and the protection of traders..and above all, in the newer districts, it is his duty to gain the confidence of the chiefs of the wilder tribes and to lead them to accept the Sarawak flag..in return for the small poll tax required of them.⁸¹

The Residents in the various outstations were required to send regular reports to Kuching detailing the nature of problems encountered and noting any social and economic developments of importance. However, lengthy reports were usually discouraged by the Rajah. Charles Brooke was more content to communicate his decisions by word of mouth to the

⁸⁰Hose and McDougall, *Pagan Tribes*, vol.II, p.268.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p.270.

Residents when they came to Kuching or when the Rajah happened to visit the outstations.⁸²

The duties of a Cadet, although dealing mainly with minor tasks, were also multifarious and did not lack variety. One former Brooke officer recalled that as a Cadet, he was left to do the mundane duties which the Assistant Resident had "no time or desire to do".⁸³ Ward elaborated that a Cadet had to take charge of the rangers and was also responsible for the management of prisons. Apart from these, he was directed to dispense medicines, sell postage stamps and observe his superiors in the conduct of their work. Although these tasks might appear slight, they did help the newly-posted Cadet to familiarise himself with the local people and their language.

During Rajah Charles's reign, Sarawak enjoyed a period of relative stability in the sense that there did not exist any major challenges to Brooke rule as there had been in the Chinese uprising of 1857. There were, however, a number of expeditions launched from time to time to prevent Iban migration into unauthorised areas and punish uncooperative tribes. Most of the Resident's time began to be spent in his office where natives could easily approach him. The Resident also had to keep accurate accounts and details of any financial dealings. In spite of the lack of formality in routine administration, the Resident was required to write reports and paperwork took a fair amount of his time. Native

⁸²Runciman, pp.203-204.

⁸³Ward, p.24.

officers in his district also reported to him. With time, the Resident found that he was not as free to go on his usual tours and visit the remoter parts of his district or division. The burden for undertaking these tours fell increasingly on the Assistant Resident. Tours normally lasted for one month and no travelling allowance was given to officers since the Rajah expected them to rely on the hospitality of the local people.⁸⁴

Under Rajah Charles, each district continued to be regarded as being financially independent and had to fend for itself. Revenue in the outstations was derived mainly from taxes paid by the local inhabitants in the form of head or door taxes, light import duties on essential items like salt, fines, court fees and a small inheritance tax. This revenue had to cover expenses such as the maintenance of prisons and forts, public works and also the salaries of subordinate officers.

As early as 1875, the establishment of local officers in Sibuloh consisted of about 14 rangers, 1 corporal, 4 policemen, 1 Chinese court writer and 2 Native Officers. Expenditure in 1875 for the Sibuloh district ranged between \$150 to \$174 a month.⁸⁵ The Rajah urged his Residents to practise strict economy and after deducting a small amount for the needs of the district, the rest of the revenue went to Kuching. By the

⁸⁴See *ibid.*, pp.44-54, for an account of a typical tour.

⁸⁵This estimate varied according to the number of rangers employed; during settled periods, the number of rangers was kept small. See 'Compliments of the Rejang Forts, 1875', H.H. The Rajah's Order Book, vol.I.

turn of the century, a district's subordinate establishment comprised an average squad of between 10 and 25 rangers, under the charge of a sergeant, about 12 policemen, several Malay or Chinese clerks and two or three Native Officers.⁸⁶ In the 1880s, the Sarawak government spent only \$1 per head of population compared to between \$6 and \$19 in the Malay states under British colonial rule.⁸⁷

Among the responsibilities which consumed a greater part of the Resident's work schedule were his legal duties. The Resident was regarded as the chief judicial officer in his division or district and he introduced the natives to the British concept of justice. The early judicial system in Sarawak was characterised by the absence of any written legal codes. As a result, informal methods were very much the norm rather than the exception, particularly in the outstations.⁸⁸ It was left largely to the Resident in the outstations to exercise his discretion over legal matters.

By the 1870s, there had already existed four courts in Sarawak; the Supreme Court adjudicated the more serious and capital cases while the Police and General Court settled the less important disputes. The Courts of Requests dealt with debt cases while the Native Court was concerned with matters pertaining to Muslim and customary law affecting the natives. The Supreme Court later branched out to the outstations where

⁸⁶Hose and McDougall, *Pagan Tribes*, vol.II, p.269.

⁸⁷Crisswell, p.118.

⁸⁸Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.171.

it became known as the Resident's Court and the latter's members consisted of the Resident, local chiefs and senior Native Officers. Cases presented before the Resident's Court had the right of appeal in the Supreme Court in Kuching. The Resident also presided in the Police Court in the outstations together with at least one senior Native Officer, while the Assistant Resident and a Chinese court writer were responsible for the proceedings of the debtor's Court of Requests. Native Officers, possessing the powers of third or fourth class magistrates, presided in the Native Court.⁸⁹ In reality, the first three of these courts were more or less the same institutions held under the supervision of the Resident or his junior officer, but meeting on different days. Hence the nature of a Resident's court duties fluctuated in urgency and importance from day to day.⁹⁰

It was a well-recognised dictum that the success of a Resident depended on his acquiring intimate knowledge of the local inhabitants. Charles Brooke frequently impressed on his officers the value of having a close and personal working relationship with the natives. He also urged the Residents to ensure that they were accessible to the natives at all times. It was through maintaining rapport with the people that a Resident could derive "early intelligence on the doings and intentions of his people".⁹¹ In order to do this,

⁸⁹The Native Courts during Rajah Charles's reign were not properly guided on the complexities of the Iban adat or the customary law of other native communities. It was not until 1915 that there was an attempt to collate a list of Iban offences.

⁹⁰Crisswell, p.117.

⁹¹Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, p.312.

Administrative Officers were required to be reasonably fluent in the local language of his district. Additionally, he was also expected to learn Malay, which was the official language in Sarawak and served as a medium of communication between various tribes and communities.

Forts continued to be built during the rule of Rajah Charles. Among the new ones constructed were the forts at Kabong, Belaga, Balleh, Mukah, Baram and Trusan. The Balleh fort was later relocated to Kapit. According to Ranee Margaret, Sarawak forts were all built on the same design because the Rajah preferred his forts to be as uniform as possible. The Ranee described the physical appearance of a fort as being constructed of "square stockades with watch towers at each corner, made of planks of iron-wood, which no native missile can penetrate".⁹² In each fort, there were quarters for policemen and rangers on the ground floor and an office and living quarters for the Resident were located on the first floor.⁹³ The fort was the focal point of administration and it also attracted traders. Chinese bazaars and Malay *kampongs* grew within the vicinity of the fort where they could be afforded protection by the government.

Important stations were usually located strategically at river mouths so that the Residents would be conveniently placed to oversee trade and other activities as well as

⁹²M. Brooke, *My Life in Sarawak*, Singapore, 1986, p.36.

⁹³Runciman, p.203.

regulate river traffic.⁹⁴ Residents thus continued to blockade essential items from reaching rebel tribes. For example, when faced with troubles in the Ulu Ai area at the turn of the century, the Resident, Bailey, resorted to halting all supplies of salt from going upriver in order to press the recalcitrant Iban group to cease their headhunting activities and migrate to a designated area. However, Bailey failed in his efforts in 1903, the Ulu Ai Ibans preferring to forgo salt and continue with their headhunting.⁹⁵ Periodic headhunting persisted under Rajah Charles's rule and posed a difficult problem to the outstation Residents. Headhunting among the downriver Ibans in the Second Division had already been brought under control and almost eliminated. The Ibans in the remote upriver areas were, however, not easily controlled and there were intermittent instances of headhunting activities with government retaliatory expeditions continuing to the final years of Rajah Charles's reign. In dealing with the Ibans, Charles Brooke drew on his early experiences at Skrang fort when he experimented with the technique of pitting downriver against upriver Ibans. He believed that "only Dayaks can attack Dayaks to make them feel in any way a punishment".⁹⁶ This technique was fraught with several problems because the Iban irregulars on the government's side were difficult to control and usually fought for heads and plunder. Moreover, rebel Ibans often wreaked their vengeance on the Iban groups who participated

⁹⁴Doering, 'The Institutionalization of Personal Rule in Sarawak', p.115 and Cotter, p.159.

⁹⁵Ward, pp.121-122.

⁹⁶C.Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, vol.I, p.188.

in the government expeditions and this, in fact, broadened the conflict. The Dutch authorities across the border described Rajah Charles's methods as "self-defeating".⁹⁷ During the 1890s, Rajah Charles found that the Iban groups in the upper reaches of the Batang Lupar had a marked tendency to engage in local feuds. As a result, the Rajah thought it wise to scrutinise closely Iban migration. He decided that Iban settlement in the upriver areas of the Batang Lupar and its tributaries should be confined to the main banks of that river. The upriver Ibans resented the restrictions on their movements and were led by Bantin, who also had a grievance against the government.⁹⁸ Hence, several expeditions were launched against Bantin from 1896 onwards. These expeditions were usually commanded by Residents and included a force of Malays, local fort rangers and Iban irregulars from the downriver areas.⁹⁹ By 1905, the Ulu Ai troubles had spread to the Third Division. Through the tact and diplomacy of Charles Hose, then Divisional Resident of the Third Division, a truce was broached between the Rejang Ibans and the Ulu Ai rebels. It was only later when the government began to place greater reliance on the more disciplined Sarawak rangers that the Brooke forces managed to overpower Bantin and he finally paid his fines and moved to Dutch Borneo in 1909.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.241.

⁹⁸Bantin was fined by Bailey in 1895 for importing brassware from Dutch Borneo without paying duty. See Crisswell, p.129.

⁹⁹Rajah Charles often took part in these expeditions and led his last expedition in 1903 at the age of 73.

¹⁰⁰See Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp.210-235, for a detailed account of Bantin's struggles against the Sarawak government.

The above illustrations highlight only the more important responsibilities of a Brooke Resident. It is difficult to define precisely the nature of his work; the Resident generally held a supervisory role in his district. Any problem of importance which could not be settled at the lower level of government received his attention. By the end of the reign of Rajah Charles, the institution of the Resident had become an important feature of outstation life and represented, in essence, a symbol of Brooke rule.

Native Administration

The Residents were assisted at the lower level of administration by junior local officers known as Native Officers. They were usually appointed from among Malays of established families or descendants of Arab immigrants. The Native Officers were normally recommended for their posts by the Residents, who referred them to the Rajah, and it was left to the Rajah's discretion whether to employ them.

Native Officers not only served as advisers to European officers but also participated in the many expeditions against rebel tribes. They received regular salaries and were often directed to take sole charge of important border posts such as Lubok Antu in the Second Division. Native Officers were expected to acquaint themselves with the local customary law of the various communities living in their assigned

districts and were given magisterial powers to enable them to arbitrate minor disputes.¹⁰¹ Ranee Margaret was impressed by the dedication and loyalty of Native Officers and commented as follows;

..they invariably stood by the present Rajah through thick and thin, and had on many occasions risked their lives for him. The Rajah has often spoken to me of their loyalty, their courage and also their extraordinary aptitude in helping him with advice in political matters.¹⁰²

During Rajah Charles's reign, the most senior Native Officer post in the Second Division was consecutively held by four Malays. They were very experienced officers who had a good grasp of local affairs and gave invaluable guidance and assistance to newly-appointed European officers. Whenever the Rajah saw fit to intervene in Second Division affairs, he often turned to the Native Officers rather than his European officers.¹⁰³ For many years, Rajah Charles was closely associated with Abang Aing, who held the post of senior Native Officer in the Second Division until his death in 1884. His father, Laksamana Minudeen, had been earlier acquainted with James Brooke. Abang Aing was succeeded in his post by Pengiran Matali, who served from 1865 to 1898 and was the grandson of a Brunei wazir(vizier). Pengiran Matali participated in various expeditions in the Second Division and was commended for his leadership qualities. Tuanku Putra, who became the next senior Native Officer, was the son of

¹⁰¹See Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.149 and Hose and McDougall, *Pagan Tribes*, vol.II, p.270.

¹⁰²M.Brooke, *My Life in Sarawak*, pp.115-116.

¹⁰³Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.150.

Sharif Sahap, a bitter enemy of James Brooke. Thus, Rajah Charles demonstrated that, in his choice of Native Officers, he was not vindictive or revengeful. Tuanku Putra was succeeded by Abang Haji Tamin. Both Abang Aing and Pengiran Matali were known to Charles Brooke even before he became Rajah and they accompanied him in the numerous expeditions against the Iban rebel, Rentap, in the 1850s.

There were also a number of Native Officers in the Second Division whose origin was not Malay.¹⁰⁴ They were instead Balau Ibans from the Banting areas, who had adopted Islam and *masuk Melayu*. One example was Dagang who provided assistance to Charles Brooke during the siege of Mukah following the murders of Fox and Steele. Another convert was Sindut, also a Balau Iban, and he was placed in charge of the Lubok Antu border post for many years. However, not all Native Officers were of the same calibre as Abang Aing. Some were tempted to exploit their official position and indulged in corruption. Sindut was banished from the Second Division in 1900, much to the disappointment of Rajah Charles, for selling Chinese jars to the Ibans at exorbitant prices. Another Native Officer, Abang Unit, who was stationed at Kanowit, was, in 1914, accused of misappropriating government funds.

There was also a small number of non-Malay Native Officers who were placed in positions of trust. A Eurasian officer,

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p.150.

F.Domingo de Rosario, popularly known as "Mingo",¹⁰⁵ was widely known for his remarkable administrative capabilities. Mingo's father, a Portuguese from Malaya, worked as a chef for Rajah James. Mingo served the government from 1864 to 1911 and for 30 years he was responsible for the upper Rejang station.¹⁰⁶ In his substantial correspondence to the Resident in Sibul, Mingo indicated the extent of his responsibilities, which included the hearing of minor law suits, keeping an eye on trading activities in the district and dealing with debt defaulters.¹⁰⁷

The Rajah did not always rely on his Native Officers for lower level administration. This was particularly evident in the Saribas where Rajah Charles preferred to associate the administration with the prominent Iban families. He relied on the descendants of Dana and Bunyau of the Saribas, such as Nanang, Insol and Ringkai, to perform similar duties as the Native Officers.¹⁰⁸ In 1882, both Insol and Nanang received titles from Rajah Charles; Nanang was awarded the title of *Orang Kaya Pemancha* while Ringkai was made a *pengarah*. Both were made members of the Council Negri, a privilege given to senior Native Officers. Ringkai was appointed a Native Magistrate in 1897 and received a regular salary whereas

¹⁰⁵Mingo was born in 1843 and educated at the Protestant Mission school in Kuching. He later married a Tanjong woman. See *ibid.*, p.145 and M.Brooke, p.215-216.

¹⁰⁶The upper Rejang station was initially located at Nanga Balleh but later moved to Kapit.

¹⁰⁷Runciman, p.204.

¹⁰⁸Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.155.

other Iban *penghulus*¹⁰⁹ received their income from commissions on taxes and fines.

It has been stated earlier that the Brooke Rajahs were able to rule Sarawak with only a handful of European Residents because they permitted the perpetuation of the native system of village administration. The success of Brooke government depended ultimately on the cooperation of the native village headmen while the Native Officers acted as a bridge between European officers and the various local communities. At the lower level of government, the native chiefs and village elders were given important roles to maintain law and order and also had to liaise with the government.

Among the Malays, the Brooke officers relied on the institution of the *tua kampong*. They were the equivalent of village elders and received their appointments from the government. Their administrative and law and order duties were confined to their villages and should disputes involving other villages arise, the *tua kampongs* would represent the interest of their villages in the Resident's Court. The *tua kampong* was also equipped with magisterial powers to settle minor offences and matters relating to the Islamic religion.¹¹⁰ They were allowed to keep a percentage of revenue accruing from taxes and fines.

¹⁰⁹The office of *penghulu* was equivalent to *pengarah*.

¹¹⁰See Order of 22 March 1893, *Sarawak Gazette*, 1 April 1893, for an elaboration of the duties of a *tua kampong*.

Native leaders among the Ibans, Bidayus, Kayans and Kenyahs were known as *penghulu*. Unlike the Malay villages, where authority was vested in the office of *tua kampong*, the *penghulu* appeared to administer more by common consent. The *penghulu's* authority was not confined to his village or longhouse but it also extended to various chiefs of other villages of the same tribe and region. He thus acted as a unifying force among various sub-groups of his tribe. The *penghulu* supplied the Native Officer and Resident with information about any local incidents or matters of importance. Apart from these, he also collected door taxes and in the event of an imminent expedition, the *penghulu* had to raise a force to accompany the government force and command his group of warriors.¹¹¹ Usually at least two *penghulus* were assigned to any important river system. It must be noted that the level of authority of the institution of *penghulu* tended to vary between different ethnic groups. For example, Kayan and Kenyah *penghulus* generally held more effective power than their Iban counterparts; this was largely a consequence of differences in traditional social organisations. The Kayans and Kenyahs traditionally recognised a social hierarchy and their chiefs were vested with significant powers and authority, while Ibans had a relatively egalitarian social order.

The leaders of the Chinese or *kangchew*, had considerably more power than the *penghulu* or the *tua kampong*. The *kangchews*

¹¹¹Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp.156-159.

controlled the gambling activities in their community and regulated the more profitable monopolies. A special Chinese court was created to deal specifically with Chinese affairs and the proceedings were presided over by leading members of the community. The Chinese, more than any other group in Sarawak, were generally left to fend for themselves.¹¹²

It became apparent that, although the explicit features of the traditional native system of government were retained, the system of lower level administration, which evolved under the Brookes, underwent some profound changes. First, among the Ibans, the Brooke Rajahs created the office of *penghulu* in an attempt to coordinate the activities of the various longhouse headmen or *tuai rumah*.¹¹³ Before the existence of the *penghulu*, the Resident found it difficult to keep track of the numerous *tuai rumah*.

Second, the Kuching *datus*, who were the traditional source of authority among the Malays, declined in importance. Under Rajah James, the Kuching *datus* had already lost their right to tax the Land Dayaks and were subsequently given fixed salaries. Their real authority diminished gradually and they began to appear more as functionaries and symbols of the legitimacy of Brooke rule. The Brooke Rajahs also introduced another innovation to the prevailing native structure of government. From 1854 onwards, *kampong* chiefs or *tuah*

¹¹²Runciman, pp.207-210.

¹¹³Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp.158-159 and V.H.Sutlive, *Tun Jugah of Sarawak, Colonialism and Iban Response*, Kuala Lumpur, 1992, p.78.

kampongs were given more prominence; they were appointed by Residents and were thus answerable to the latter.¹¹⁴ These *tua kampongs* no longer owed their office to the Malay *datus* and this development undermined further the power and influence of the *datus*, particularly in the outlying areas. By the time of Rajah Charles's accession, officially-appointed *tua kampongs* began to emerge in Malay *kampongs* throughout Sarawak and this had the effect of decentralising Malay political power.

In lieu of the former power and authority of the Kuching *datus*, *tua kampongs* and Native Officers were allocated more important roles in administration. Native Officers were given greater opportunities for participation and influence at the lower level of government. The more senior Native Officers also became members of the Council Negri, which had vague legislative powers, while the Supreme Council remained the preserve of the Kuching *datus*. The *tua kampongs*, *penghulus* and Native Officers were closely associated with district and village administration and hence provided the necessary prop and support for European rule in Sarawak. On the other hand, the Kuching *datus* continued to be mere "symbols of Malay trust and participation in Brooke rule".¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴Lockard, 'The Southeast Asian Town in Perspective', p.62.

¹¹⁵Doering, 'Government in Sarawak under Charles Brooke', p.100.

Conclusion

It has been mentioned earlier that Rajah Charles inherited an economy that was almost bankrupt. With his guidance and strict supervision, the state revenue increased gradually and, by 1905, the public debt had been brought under control and revenue for 1909 showed a surplus of \$800,000. Charles Brooke was against the development of a large-scale cash crop economy and also discouraged the presence of major foreign companies in Sarawak. Rubber, coffee and pepper planting were allowed but restricted to small-holdings. The development of social services was sadly neglected and expenditure on education was at best meagre. In 1876, the government spent 1.4% of its total expenditure on education and this amount increased slightly to 1.6% in 1917.¹¹⁶ By the time of Rajah Charles's death in May 1917, there was neither a formally established Secretariat nor a uniform system of taxes.¹¹⁷ Throughout his reign, Rajah Charles exhibited a restraint towards change. Yet under him, Sarawak enjoyed a period of relative stability and its territory extended to its present-day borders.

One important feature of Sarawak government under the second Rajah, was the concentration of power in the office of the Rajah. Rajah Charles governed as an absolute monarch and was an energetic ruler who scrutinised all aspects of

¹¹⁶J.M.Seymour, 'Education in Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941', *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 June 1970.

¹¹⁷Crisswell, p.115.

administration. However, his style of administration was markedly informal and there was a lack of regulations and procedures with regard to the conduct of government. Authority from the Rajah did not go down to his officers in a regular manner. The Rajah could bypass his senior officers and deal with a Native Officer. Similarly, an Assistant Resident had the opportunity to communicate directly with the Rajah. This often placed the Divisional Resident in a quandary. Moreover, the Divisional Resident of the First Division stationed at Kuching, often found that, owing to his close proximity to the Rajah, he had less discretionary power than his counterparts in other divisions. As a result of the difficulties in communications, the Rajah's control over the various divisions decreased proportionately according to distance; the further away a Resident was from Kuching, the less opportunity for constant intervention by the Rajah. It was not until the introduction of the telegraph in 1917 and the next Rajah's different approach to administration that control was exercised with greater regularity through the proper channels from the Divisional Resident to his subordinate European officers and Native Officers.

Another characteristic of Rajah Charles's government was the preoccupation with the need to preserve traditional native institutions. It can be argued that this arose as a result of the lack of alternatives and resources available to the Brooke Rajahs. Sarawak could not draw on the financial support of a major European power and the 1888 Treaty with

Britain merely provided for military assistance in the event of external aggression. Therefore, Rajah Charles adopted native elements and utilised local political structures for his administration. The system of government which evolved was economical and did not require the paraphernalia, infrastructure or ancillary services found in other European colonies. The continued success of Brooke government was dependent, as far as was possible and practical, on the preservation of the native status quo. Rajah Charles was insistent on protecting the natives against the influence of economic forces. Similarly, education was not a priority since it could result in the breakdown of native traditions and value systems. Thus, any change brought about by Brooke rule was to be gradual and well-paced so as to allow only minimum dislocation and disruption to the native way of life.

One positive impact of government under the first two Rajahs was the unifying effect the administration had over the disparate communities. Hose and McDougall maintained, though perhaps in rather exaggerated terms, that

..the Rajah's government binds together all of its isolated groups to form one harmonious whole by means of the hierarchy of officers whose authority proceeds from the Rajah.¹¹⁸

This was made possible by the convergence of administrative roles between the European and the native chiefs who were responsible for village administration. European government in the outstations served as a stabilising authority

¹¹⁸Hose and McDougall, *Pagan Tribes*, vol.II, p.276.

overseeing the various native communities.¹¹⁹ Under Rajah Charles, the natives experienced a gradual shift from identifying themselves geographically to an affiliation which was based on language and ethnicity.¹²⁰

Rajah Charles's personal government worked well in a limited capacity with about 50 Europeans administering the whole country. However, the strains on the system soon became apparent in the twentieth century when new demands began to exert increasing pressure on Brooke traditions. The task of providing a solution to these new challenges fell on the next Rajah, Vyner Brooke.

¹¹⁹Cotter, p.120 and Doering, 'The Institutionalization of Personal Rule', p.93.

¹²⁰Pringle, 'The Brookes of Sarawak', p.28.

CHAPTER 3

SARAWAK GOVERNMENT IN THE 1920S AND 1930S - CHALLENGES TO THE BROOKE TRADITION OF ADMINISTRATION

The terms, "Brooke Raj" and "Brooke Rule", are broad expressions describing the method of government encapsulating the principles and philosophies of the Brooke Rajahs. Rajah James expounded his beliefs in what he felt was the ideal system of governing the natives of Sarawak. His ideas were expanded and elaborated upon by his successor, Rajah Charles, though always within the practical constraints of available resources and the scattered nature and ethnic diversity of Sarawak's population. However, during the reign of the next Rajah, Vyner, who ruled from 1917 to 1941, what had already developed into a tradition of Brooke rule was increasingly questioned as to its validity and practicality in a changing environment. This chapter addresses issues and challenges facing the Sarawak government in the 1920s and 1930s as well as highlights developments in the Administrative Service.

The last chapter has shown the important strides made by Rajah Charles in administration. Under the second Rajah, administrators in the outstations were given wide latitude in governing their particular areas. An article in the *Sarawak Gazette* which appeared in 1946, paid tribute to the enormous powers held by administrators under Rajah Charles,

..they indeed were snowmen of unsullied whiteness;
kings in their own domains. Some of their names were
legendary; Hose of Baram, Bailey of Simanggang,

Ricketts of Limbang, Stilwell of Bau. In their districts, they were the law. Not only did they wield in their own hands almost unlimited executive powers, but they were to a considerable extent, the legislature as well.¹

Although great discretionary power and authority were given to these early administrators, Rajah Charles acted as an effective check on the government. The second Rajah kept a close watch on events and made frequent visits to the interior in order to appreciate, first hand, the many problems encountered by his administrators.

The system of independent administrators that developed under the first two Rajahs and became a characteristic feature of Brooke rule, was deemed anachronistic during the 1930s. The impetus for change sprang from the government officers themselves, who felt that a review of the system of administration was timely so as to accommodate new demands on the government. The case for change was largely put forth by Secretariat officials in Kuching; they believed that centralization of administration at the capital was preferable to regional autonomy. Thus, there developed a controversy in Sarawak in the 1930s as to whether the old system of rule by semi-independent Residents could still be relevant for a government that was becoming more bureaucratic and complex. What prompted or rather gave opportunity for this challenge to the Brooke tradition of rule was Rajah Vyner's lack of participation in the administration. The authority of the third Rajah was not as all-embracing or effective as his father's had been, and Vyner generally had a tenuous hold over

¹Sarawak Gazette, 1 October 1946.

his officers. One of his administrative Cadets even remarked that the respect paid to Rajah Vyner was mainly "lip service in the reflected glory of his father".²

Rajah Vyner was born in 1874 and, at the age of 16, was proclaimed heir apparent. Six years later in 1897, after going to school at Winchester and Cambridge, Vyner joined the Sarawak Service and one of his early posts was that of Resident in the Batang Lupar district. He remained in this capacity until May 1899 and was then assigned to the Third Division where he served as Resident of Sibuluan and the Upper Rejang until 1901. While serving as Resident at Mukah and Oya between 1902 and 1903, Vyner participated in the unsuccessful expedition led by Henry Deshon against the Ulu Ai Dayaks of Delok during which 1,000 men from the government force lost their lives to cholera. As Resident of the Third Division, Vyner organised a successful expedition against the Ibans of the Upper Rejang in 1904. For nearly ten years, from 1904 to 1914, Vyner was stationed in Kuching where, as Rajah Muda, he shared the duties of his father. During the First World War, he saw active service in the anti-aircraft forces between 1914 to 1916 and returned to Sarawak in 1916. Thus Vyner had nearly 18 years' experience as an administrator in Sarawak before he was proclaimed Rajah in 1917.³

²A.J.N.Richards to L.S.Walsh Atkins, 8 April 1939, A.J.N.Richards Papers, Mss Ind Ocn s 213.

³Reece's assertion that Vyner had been "a District Officer in the predominantly Iban and strongly traditional Second Division for more than twenty years during his father's reign" is therefore somewhat misleading. See Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p.44 and *Sarawak Civil List, 1930*.

Vyner had two other brothers, Bertram, who was two years younger and Harry, four years his junior. Rajah Charles had early showed a liking for Bertram, who in character and personality, resembled Rajah Charles more than his elder brother. While Rajah Charles was circumspect and austere, Vyner, on the other hand, showed a tendency to be easy-going and lax. The Second Rajah had qualms about Vyner being given sole charge of Sarawak. His relations with Vyner reached a low point in 1911 when Vyner married Sylvia Brett, the second daughter of Lord Esher, who was then Private Secretary to King George V.⁴ Hence, Rajah Charles was determined to place constitutional checks on the powers of his successor to ensure that Vyner, as the next Rajah, could not abuse his royal prerogatives.

The previous chapter has already mentioned the creation of a legislative body, the Committee of Administration in 1873.⁵ The Committee was revamped in November 1915 and was constituted as a permanent and representative body with supervisory legislative powers which could henceforth act as a counterbalancing authority.⁶ As an added precaution, Rajah Charles stipulated in his will of 1913 that in the event of Vyner's absence from Sarawak, Bertram would assume the duties of Rajah.

⁴Reece, pp.14-15. Rajah Charles was convinced that Sylvia was a bad influence on his son and was also fearful that Vyner's marriage would give opportunity to Lord Esher and his colleagues to exploit Sarawak's resources for their own ends.

⁵See Chapter 2, p.44.

⁶T Corson, 'The Form of Government in Sarawak, A Constitutional History', n.d., circa March 1945, Brooke Papers, Box 23/4.

Early Developments

Rajah Vyner's administrative style differed from that of his father; his policies often suffered from a lack of direction and purpose, and decision-making was at times described by his officers as being "capricious". He also appeared vulnerable to the influence of his officers such as G.T.M. MacBryan, who served as his Private Secretary on several occasions.⁷ During Rajah Vyner's reign, a Secretariat was created in 1923 to provide for more coordination in administrative matters. In its early years, however, the Secretariat's role in government was not clear owing to the many changes in appointments to the post of its executive officer, the Chief Secretary.

Before the formation of the Secretariat in 1923, the First Division Resident was the Rajah's chief adviser, in addition to his routine divisional responsibilities. J.C. Moulton, a former Curator of the Sarawak Museum, was appointed as the first Chief Secretary. The choice of Moulton was curious for he had had no administrative experience and his elevation to a prominent post was resented by the senior officers of the Service. Not only did they dislike the idea of having a Secretariat in Kuching, which would necessarily direct policy from the capital, but they were also bitter that Moulton was appointed rather than someone from among their ranks.⁸

⁷See Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp.19-29.

⁸Ibid., pp.41-42.

Under Moulton, the system of administration underwent a reorganisation which was unprecedented; he introduced "secretaries, typewriters, typists, letters to be answered and reasons to be given".⁹ The outstation officers were not accustomed to any form of interference from Kuching and they were annoyed that a Chief Secretary now acted as an intermediary between them and the Rajah. When Moulton died in 1926, the Rajah decided that his successor should be someone who was more sympathetic to the interests of outstation officers. Two officers with outstation experience succeeded Moulton; H.B.Crocker from 1927 to 1928 and F.F.Boult who took over in January 1930. Between the end of 1928 and January 1930, the Rajah dispensed with the office of Chief Secretary and it was notified that, in the interim, he would assume the responsibilities of the Chief Secretary.¹⁰

Vyner soon felt that the responsibilities were too burdensome and decided to revive the post of Chief Secretary and Boult was thus appointed in January 1930. While Boult was on furlough later that year, Rajah Vyner appointed J.C.Swayne, the First Division Resident, to act as Chief Secretary. Swayne remained in this acting capacity for six months before the Rajah discontinued the post of Chief Secretary once again. This time the reason cited was the economic slump Sarawak was then experiencing which necessitated the pruning of the Civil Service. In May 1931, it was announced that Swayne, as First

⁹Ward, *Rajah's Servant*, p.168 and Reece, p.41.

¹⁰T.S.Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak' undated typescript, circa 1934 and Memorandum by Boyd, 24 March 1929, T.S.Boyd Papers, Mss Pac s 86, Box 2/2.

Division Resident, would take over the duties of the Chief Secretary. According to the Judicial Commissioner, T.S.Boyd, it was widely known that Swayne was not an efficient officer and was even informed officially that "he need never expect promotion beyond Class II".¹¹ Yet from 1930 to 1932, Swayne was the most senior civil servant in Sarawak and even became the Rajah's adviser. The Rajah soon realised that Swayne was not fit for his job and decided that Swayne had to leave the Service. A short while before Swayne was due to go on leave, the Rajah presented him with the option of either returning in a lower grade or retiring from the Service. Although Swayne was entitled to reasonable notice, he only received news about his impending retirement about a week before he was due to leave Sarawak.¹²

In 1932, the post of Chief Secretary was again reinstated but it was now known as the Government Secretary. The tasks and responsibilities of the office remained the same. C.F.C.Macaskie, a seconded officer from the North Borneo Service, was appointed as the new Government Secretary.¹³ Rajah Vyner did not appear willing to cooperate with Macaskie and the latter stayed in Sarawak for only two years.

From 1934 to 1937, the post of Chief Secretary was again left vacant. Although this office was created in order to streamline and rationalise administration in the various

¹¹Boyd, 'Government in Sarawak' typescript, n.d., Boyd Papers, Box 3/5.

¹²Boyd to Cockburn, 24 December 1932, Boyd Papers, Box 2/5.

¹³Boyd to Cockburn, 31 July 1932, Boyd Papers, Box 2/5.

divisions, Rajah Vyner did not seem to appreciate the importance of the contribution of a Chief Secretary. There was apparently very little commitment to make the office a permanent feature of Sarawak government and Vyner clearly vacillated on its role and importance. It was only in 1937, with the appointment of E.Parnell, that the Chief Secretary was allowed to play a significant role in administration.

Rajah Vyner's policy towards the Committee of Administration also demonstrated a similar lack of direction. From the outset, Vyner was determined not to allow the Committee to wield much influence in the government as his father would have wished. Between 1915 and 1917, meetings of the Committee were held monthly but when Vyner became Rajah in 1917, its meetings became less regular. From 1921 to 1934 very few meetings were conducted and during this period the Committee's existence was often described as "fitful".¹⁴

In February 1924, the Committee reverted to its pre-1915 arrangement, that is, it met on an *ad hoc* basis during the absence of the Rajah from Sarawak.¹⁵ As before, the members of the Supreme Council were appointed members and during the Rajah's absence from Sarawak, the Committee was, in fact, the Supreme Council under a different name. In March 1925, there was another change as regards the function of the Committee. On this occasion, it was not allowed to lapse when the Rajah was present in Sarawak but was given the authority to act in

¹⁴Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p.41.

¹⁵The Order of November 1915 which reconstituted the Committee as a permanent body, was cancelled in February 1924.

an advisory capacity "at all other times". An order was passed in August 1927 to put this into effect.¹⁶ The Committee was also given well-defined powers which enabled it to deal with matters of general administration and new expenditure not already sanctioned in the yearly estimates. Additionally, it was also given the authority to issue and amend existing orders during the absence of both the Rajah and the Tuan Muda. Although the Committee, in this form, was stipulated to meet at least once a month, no meetings were held between 1927 to 1932. In 1933 when both Vyner and Bertram were away from Sarawak, several meetings of the Committee were convened and in 1934, it was again reorganised and had gradually evolved into an executive arm of the government by the late 1930s.

Rajah Vyner's treatment of his officers was often unpredictable. His attitude towards the European officers was, at times, dictated by personal reasons. If he showed a liking for a particular officer, the Rajah would let the officer off lightly, even if the officer concerned had committed a serious breach of discipline. The following illustrations demonstrate that the Rajah's measures to discipline his staff did not always follow a regular procedure.

Several cases of embezzlement riddled the Sarawak government in the late 1920s and early 1930s. In August 1929, a clerk at Miri was charged with misappropriating \$8,000. The defalcations continued undetected for more than a year, presumably because of the lack of supervision. The District

¹⁶Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', p.51.

Officer in charge of the district was immediately accountable, but H.D.Aplin, the Fourth Division Resident, was also indirectly involved. Apart from receiving a reprimand, the District Officer was allowed to go unpunished and there was no inquiry held. Aplin's chances of promotion were unaffected by the incident and, soon after, he was appointed a member of the Committee of Administration and was promoted to Class IA in 1933.¹⁷

During Aplin's tenure as Resident, there was another case of embezzlement involving a huge sum amounting to \$60,000. The misappropriation of government funds had apparently been going on for several years. The Judicial Commissioner was convinced that, had there been proper supervision by the Resident, the embezzlement could have been detected earlier. On this occasion, Aplin had to shoulder the blame but there seemed to have been a considerable measure of compassion for Aplin. He was allowed to retire and given very generous terms, including a full pension equivalent to the amount he would have received had he retired at the normal age.¹⁸ The District Officer concerned was also given the opportunity to retire and was additionally awarded a gratuity of £1,500.

However, in Willes Johnson's case, the Rajah resorted to sharp measures in dispensing with his services. Johnson was the Sarawak Government Agent in London and was the nephew of Rajah Charles. He came to Sarawak in 1928 and returned to England in

¹⁷Boyd, 'Government in Sarawak', p.4.

¹⁸Ibid. Aplin later became the Sarawak Government Agent in London.

1929. As soon as he left Sarawak, he was given a telegram which informed him that he had been retired on pension and was not allowed the opportunity to air his grievances.

The dismissal of the Director of Public Works in 1935 followed the same pattern. Rajah Vyner became convinced that the Director was unnecessarily extravagant. When the Director was on leave and due to return in six weeks, he was informed that his resignation, if tendered, would not be refused. The Director was a senior officer of 14 years' standing and was only offered a gratuity the equivalent of two years' pay.

Such inconsistencies in the discipline of officers did not augur well for the Service. Not only might it deter prospective recruits but the existing members of the Service might consider leaving if they felt that their tenure was subjected to arbitrary procedures. The following discussion elaborates on the changes in the terms of service for Administrative Officers under Rajah Vyner's rule.

Changes in the Terms of Employment for Administrative Officers

During the second Rajah's reign, formal legislation with regard to the conditions of service of Administrative Officers appeared as late as 1897.¹⁹ Prior to this, rules and regulations were intermittently drawn up or amended as the situation warranted. The conditions set out in the 1897 Order,

¹⁹Sarawak Gazette, 1 December 1897. See Chapter 2, p.62-63.

except for salary revisions, remained intact until the death of Rajah Charles in 1917. Under Rajah Vyner, the Administrative Service continued to develop and grow in size and its terms of employment were adjusted and modified in response to the needs of an expanding service.

Soon after Vyner succeeded as the next Rajah, an order was enacted in July 1917²⁰ to amend the previous 1897 terms of service. What was noticeable in the 1917 Order was the upward revision of salaries for all classes of Administrative Officers. Owing to the rise in the cost of living in Sarawak, it was decided that an increase in salary was long overdue. Newly-appointed Cadets henceforth received \$120 a month instead of the previous salary of \$100. The pay of Assistant Residents was raised to \$200 a month while the monthly salaries of a Second Class Resident and Divisional Resident were given modest increases.²¹

While the other terms of service remained constant, there were modifications in employment conditions such as those governing leave of European officers. Previously, the first tour of duty for a newly-appointed Cadet, that is, the length of period spent by an officer in Sarawak before his first home leave was due, was, on average ten years. Rajah Charles, however, often relaxed this requirement and allowed his officers one year's furlough after they had served for five years. Under the 1917 Order, the first tour of duty was officially shortened to five

²⁰Order no.XIII, 1917, 'Pays, Pensions, Furloughs and Allowances', in W.F.Skrine Papers.

²¹See Table 2, p.63.

years after which an officer was entitled to seven months furlough on full pay. On his return from the first furlough, an officer had to work for three consecutive years before he could be released for his second furlough of four months. Subsequently, an officer would be entitled to four months' furlough after every three years' service.

The award of local leave also received attention during Rajah Vyner's reign. It was not clear when local leave was first introduced but short leave of two weeks annually was already enjoyed by officers even before the end of the nineteenth century. Perhaps Rajah Charles realised that it would be to the advantage of the Service if officers could look forward to a short rest period in between furloughs. Under the 1917 Order, Administrative Officers were permitted a maximum of six weeks local leave each year. In 1920, legislation was again passed regarding the extension of local leave to the European officers.²² In a 1924 circular, the Chief Secretary, Moulton, postulated certain principles as regards the granting of local leave. He stated that local leave would be given only when the exigencies of the Service permitted it.²³ In this respect, it was different from the usual furlough which was granted to officers at fixed intervals. The responsibility for granting local leave to an officer rested on the Head of Department or Divisional Resident whereas the Chief Secretary was responsible for the furlough of an officer. If the European officer could be spared for local leave, he was encouraged to

²²Order no.XVIII, 1920, Sarawak Gazette, 1 June 1920.

²³Circular by J.C.Moulton, 14 July 1924, Chief Secretary's Office, no.5, 1924, Skrine Papers.

take as much leave within Sarawak in order to keep fit and reinvigorate himself before his next furlough was due.

Retirement benefits were also addressed by the 1917 Order. Briefly, the Order stipulated that after serving for 30 years exclusive of the periods of furlough, an officer was entitled to a pension for life equivalent to half his last salary. An officer who had served for at least 20 years would also be awarded a pension; his retirement allowance would be calculated at the rate of 1/60th of his average pay for the last two years immediately preceding retirement multiplied by the number of years served. As an illustration, an officer whose last post was as Divisional Resident with a salary of \$450 and who retired after 23 years' service, would be eligible for a pension equivalent to \$173. However, if this officer continued to work for a further 7 years on the same pay and retired after 30 years' service, he would have received a pension of half his last pay, that is, \$225.

TABLE 3

Comparative Remuneration of Administrative Officers²⁴

	<u>1917</u>	<u>1920</u>
Divisional Resident	\$450	\$600-A20-750
Second Class Resident	\$300	\$400-A20-560
Assistant Class	\$200	\$300-A20-380
Cadet	\$120	\$220-A20-280 (unpassed, \$200)

²⁴This Table was compiled from information given in Order no.XIII, 1917 and Sarawak Gazette, 1 June 1920.

Following the revisions in remuneration brought about by the 1917 Order, the next major increment occurred three years later in 1920. Table 3 above shows that Administrative Officers enjoyed a substantial increase in their salaries with the changes effected in 1920.

One might assume that the revisions in remuneration of the Malayan Civil Service officers in 1919 had an important bearing on the Sarawak revisions. The Bucknill Report of 1919, which was the outcome of the inquiry on the Malayan service conditions, was prompted by the low salaries paid by Malaya in comparison to India and Ceylon.²⁵ As evident in Table 3, Sarawak followed the precedent set by Malaya and introduced a 22 year time-scale in the salary structure of Administrative Officers. This was a welcome change for it made the Service more attractive to prospective recruits and it was also designed to ease obstacles in the promotion of officers. Thus, an officer would not be stuck with only one salary in each class but he would be able to make gradual yearly progress from the low to the high end of the salary range for his class. Promotion from one class to the other was not automatic but depended on the discretion of the Rajah, who would weigh such factors as merit and length of service.

The 1920 Order also introduced two categories of Cadets; Unpassed(Class V) and Passed(Class IV). This distinction into two classes would lead one to assume that in order to be a Passed Cadet, a new recruit would have to pass his preliminary

²⁵Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya*, pp.136-137.

examinations and complete his first tour of duty. However, there was no indication in the 1920 Order that Cadets should sit for any form of examination. It was only in the following year, in 1921, that an Order was enacted imposing the requirement that a Cadet, on completion of his first year, would have to pass an examination known as the Lower Standard. This examination tested the Cadet's ability in Malay and his knowledge of government orders as well as Sarawak court procedures. After passing his Lower Standard, the Cadet would automatically gain promotion to Class IV. At this stage, the Cadet would have to sit for another examination, the Higher Standard, which tested the candidate on the same subjects but he was required to have a more indepth and comprehensive understanding of them. Additionally, the Cadet would also be examined in native fines and adat. The first candidates for the Lower Standard sat for the examinations in 1922. Since then, examinations had become an important pre-requisite for the confirmation of Cadets in the Administrative Service. By the early 1930s, Cadets had to pass the Lower Standard examination before completing two years' service and the Higher Standard within four years of joining the Service.²⁶

After the end of the First World War, it was increasingly felt that the use of the term 'Assistant Resident' and 'Second Class Resident' was becoming anachronistic. Under Rajah Charles, these terms referred to middle-ranking Administrative Officers who, in most British colonies, were widely known as District Officers. Until 1920, a Cadet in Sarawak, after

²⁶State of Sarawak, *General Orders*, Kuching, 1933.

completing his apprenticeship, would be promoted to the rank of Assistant Resident holding a Class III rank. In neighbouring British colonies like Malaya, the intermediary class of officer between the rank of Cadet and Divisional Resident, was already known as District Officer even before the turn of the century. Sarawak only made the change in 1920 when the Order no.XXII was passed which specifically stipulated that the post of Assistant Resident in Classes II and III was to be discontinued; these officials were henceforth known as District Officers.²⁷ With this Order, the terms 'Assistant Resident' and 'Second Class Resident' lapsed in the nomenclature of the Sarawak Administrative Service. Following the passing of this Order, A.E. Lawrence was the first officer gazetted as District Officer in 1921.²⁸

Apart from the above, another important change in the 1920s was the introduction for Residents(Class I) of the distinction between Class IA and IB.²⁹ Salaries for these two classes of Residents differed slightly; Class IB received the same time-scale but with a smaller rate of annual increment as seen in \$600-A25-750 while Class IA was awarded \$600-A50-750.³⁰ Class IA Residents were assigned to be divisional heads of the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth divisions while the First Division, owing to its close proximity to the capital, was allocated a Class IB officer.³¹

²⁷Sarawak Government Gazette, 16 July 1920.

²⁸Lawrence was then stationed at Mukah.

²⁹Order no.XXV, 1922, Sarawak Government Gazette, 16 September 1922.

³⁰Order no.XIX, 1923, Sarawak Government Gazette, 17 December 1923.

³¹It was felt that there was no need for a senior Resident to be stationed in the First Division as the Chief Secretary or the Rajah could easily supervise administration there.

In 1926, a circular was issued by the Chief Secretary amending further the terms of employment for the Administrative Service.³² The starting pay of a Cadet was raised by \$20 to \$250 a month. He would then receive subsequent annual increments of \$10 monthly after passing his Lower Standard examinations. Upon completing four years' service and after passing the Higher Standard, the Cadet would receive \$280 monthly with an annual increment of \$20. The Cadet would then qualify for promotion into Class III as a junior District Officer.

Before the 1926 changes came into effect, the maximum pay of District Officers, Class II, was \$400-A20-560. With the new proposals, the maximum for this category of officers was raised to \$600. Class IB Residents would henceforth draw annual increments of \$50 instead of the previous \$25.

Under Rajah Charles, Administrative Officers were not given any stipend to cover expenses incurred while travelling on duty. This was because the Second Rajah believed that his officers should rely on the hospitality of the native villagers. It was also the responsibility of the local inhabitants to provide transport for the District Officer to his next destination. In the 1920s, there appeared a slight shift in this policy and a growing consensus emerged that, just as their counterparts in Malaya, Sarawak Administrative

³²Circular no. 1/26, 12 January 1926, Chief Secretary's Office, Skrine Papers.

Officers should be entitled to a small allowance for travelling. In 1922, an Order was passed granting officers a daily field allowance which was calculated at 1% of the officer's salary subject to a maximum limit of \$5 and a minimum of \$3 daily.³³

By the 1930s, the fall in the price of rubber was having an impact on the Sarawak economy and the balance of payments began showing a deficit with \$1,123,000 in 1931, rising to \$1,621,000 the following year.³⁴ In June 1933, for reasons of economy, the Fourth and Fifth divisions were merged under one Resident which meant that there were then only four divisional heads.³⁵ In spite of the depressed financial situation, there was a further upward revision in the pay of Administrative Officers in August 1933. The new salaries benefitted the lower classes of officers rather than Residents. Cadets saw a 20% rise in their monthly pay from \$250 to \$300. The time-scale for District Officers, Class III, was slightly improved as seen in \$320-A20-400 as against the previous \$300-A20-380. Similarly senior District Officers did not see much change save for a \$20 addition in their initial entry point. Classes IA and IB Residents were no longer placed on their previous time-scales but were given single salaries of \$750 and \$700 respectively.

³³Order no. XXVI, 1922, *Sarawak Government Gazette*, 16 September 1922. The 1922 Order cancelled the earlier two orders of 2 June 1882 and 9 March 1917 pertaining to travelling allowances for European officers.

³⁴Boyd to Cockburn, 22 May 1932, *Boyd Papers*, Box 2/5. Although Sarawak was then in financial straits, the Rajah, without consulting the Treasurer, presented the British government with a gift of £100,000.

³⁵Order no. 292, 1933, *Sarawak Government Gazette*, 12 June 1933.

Recruitment to the Administrative Service came from various sources. During the early years of Rajah Vyner's reign, recruits were chosen informally as was the case during the second Rajah's time; some were Brooke family friends while others had connections with former Sarawak officers. But from 1934 onwards, Sarawak looked increasingly to the Colonial Office for potential recruits and during that year the Colonial Office proposed that an entrance examination be introduced.³⁶ By the late 1930s, Sarawak had already emulated the Colonial Office example of recruiting more and more university graduates as Administrative Cadets. The first batch of recruits recommended by the Colonial Office came in 1934. They were three Cadets; A.R.Snelus and A.F.R.Griffin, graduates from Cambridge, and K.H.Digby who obtained a law degree from Oxford. Appendix 2 which gives a list of new recruits between 1934 and 1941 shows that nearly all of the Cadets during this period had undergone some form of tertiary education.³⁷

Anthony Richards, who came to Sarawak in 1938, recounted that he did not choose the Sarawak Service, "it chose me".³⁸ After completing his studies at Oxford, Richards was informed that Sarawak was looking for two candidates and if he was

³⁶Runciman, *The White Rajahs*, p.234. Runciman did not provide details on the nature of the entrance examination nor did he mention whether any examination was actually held. Apart from this citation in Runciman, there is no other available evidence on the entrance examination.

³⁷See Appendix 2. All except Anthony Brooke had university degrees. Brooke studied at Cambridge but did not complete his studies.

³⁸personal correspondence with A.J.N.Richards, 17 February 1992.

interested, he could go to the office of the Sarawak Agent at Millbank and an interview could be arranged. Richards then proceeded to Millbank where he and another candidate, William Morison, were interviewed by Bertram Brooke and H.D.Aplin, the Sarawak Agent.³⁹ Soon after receiving news that their applications were successful, both Richards and Morison were sent back to Oxford to do the one-year First Devonshire Course.⁴⁰ They arrived in Kuching in September 1938.

Digby recollected in his monograph, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, his early experiences as a newly-appointed Cadet in Sarawak. Although he, Griffin and Snelus arrived together, they were immediately assigned to their various posts. Digby remarked that it was not for another eighteen months later that he managed to see Griffin again and after a four-year interval, he ran into Snelus. Digby's initial posting was at Limbang where he assisted the District Officer there. During the early 1930s, several Dayak longhouses had relocated from the Third Division to the Limbang river area and one of Digby's first duties was to supervise these new arrivals and ensure that they were not a nuisance to the neighbouring local inhabitants. As a Cadet, Digby observed that up-river trips to isolated villages formed an important facet of his work. It was through these frequent visits to outlying areas that personal contact with the local people was established.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰This is a preliminary course designed to prepare recruits for service in the British colonies. For an elaboration of the course, see Chapter 5, p.211.

We have already seen in Chapter 2 that Rajah Charles discouraged his officers from marrying early as he held the belief that marriage handicapped officers in the performance of their duties.⁴¹ While Rajah Charles did not object to his officers forming illicit liaisons with native women, his son, Vyner had reservations about such associations. The latter took steps to discourage marriage between his European officers and native women as seen in the following 1938 Order;

No European shall marry a woman of Asiatic origin without the permission of H.H. the Rajah and if such permission is granted, it may be subject to the condition that if such a woman becomes a widow she shall not be entitled to a pension.⁴²

Recruits were expected not to be married at the commencement of their service. Marriage for an officer was permitted only after he had completed his second tour of duty.⁴³ This was the observed rule during the reign of Rajah Vyner and it appeared to have worked out equitably and without hardship. In the 1920s, the average age of an officer joining the Service was between 19 and 20 years and he would be 29 or 30 years and a middle-ranking officer before he was permitted to marry. By the mid-1930s, when Sarawak began to employ Cadets with tertiary qualifications, the average age of these was 22.5 years; they would therefore be in their early 30s before being eligible for marriage.⁴⁴ In April 1939, an Administrative Cadet wrote to the Rajah requesting permission to marry after his first tour, but the Rajah refused to make any exception to the

⁴¹See Chapter 2, p.53.

⁴²*General Orders*, 1933, Amendment dated 1 February 1938.

⁴³The length of tours was shortened in 1937 from five to four years.

⁴⁴This is calculated on the assumption that the tour of duty remained constant at five years.

rule.⁴⁵ A few months later, however, in November 1939, the *General Orders* were amended resulting in officers being allowed to marry after the first tour.

A not uncommon problem faced by the government was the frequency with which officers became indebted. The cost of living in Sarawak rose gradually and by 1919, it was estimated that while salaries increased by 50%, the price of foodstuffs was 100% dearer.⁴⁶ According to a Colonial Office Report on the conditions of living in Sarawak, a European officer working in Kuching would spend an estimated \$200 monthly, or \$130 if he was based in an outstation, for his household expenses. One officer remarked that had he stayed outside Kuching, he would have been out of debt.⁴⁷ Accommodation was provided free and the pay of domestic servants or helpers could amount to \$30 a month.⁴⁸ If an officer regulated his spending carefully, he could live comfortably.

The pattern of social behaviour also contributed to the problem of indebtedness. A number of Brooke officers were enthusiastic about pony or horse racing and the races were a huge event when most of the outstation officers converged at the capital. Many of the officers kept race horses and their

⁴⁵Letter from Anthony Richards to his mother, 6 April 1939, Richards Papers.

⁴⁶Runciman, p.234.

⁴⁷Richard Backwell to Anthony Brooke, 25 May 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 19/1. The officer concerned was Richard Backwell who joined the Service as a Cadet in 1938. He was dissatisfied with conditions in Sarawak and submitted his resignation in 1942.

⁴⁸'Report on Living Conditions in Sarawak' submitted to Colonial Office, 28 April 1928, cited in Runciman, p.234.

upkeep was an expensive undertaking.⁴⁹ Entertainment at the Sarawak Club, the hub of social activities, also proved to be a drain on the officer's salary.

Ward asserted that the biggest "culprit" for drawing government officers into debt was the system of paying for everything by chits which facilitated borrowing. He explained,

No European dreams of carrying money in his pocket and rarely has any in the bungalow. Every small purchase he makes, every drink he has in the Club, is signed for on a slip of paper. At the end of the month, packs of chits arrive from forgotten sources and the monthly salary disappears like snow before a thaw. The system has done more than gambling or reckless living to involve youth in debt.⁵⁰

By the early 1920s, it was evident that the habit of some officers of keeping native mistresses was also a financial drain. Digby remarked that a "bachelor officer was considered to be a little 'queer' if he did not keep a native or Chinese mistress".⁵¹ In a 1924 circular, the Chief Secretary expressed his concern that certain officers had run into considerable debt as a result of having spent large sums of money on native women. He further stated that while the government did not wish to interfere in the private affairs of its officers, it could not allow certain officers to bring the Service into disrepute.⁵² The government, the Chief Secretary added, took seriously any matter which

⁴⁹Ward mentioned that the races were held twice yearly and were public holidays. See Ward, pp.57-58. Boyd in 'Government in Sarawak', p.3, contended that military expeditions against the Ibans in the 1930s were often halted so that Residents and District Officers could return to Kuching in time for the races.

⁵⁰Ward, p.192.

⁵¹Digby, p.11.

⁵²Although there are no figures to show the extent of indebtedness among Service members, it can be assumed that the numbers were

..tends to reduce the efficiency of its officers where an association with native women leads to an increasing and .. intolerable drain on the financial resources of an officer resulting in debt and the inability to save funds for a well-earned holiday after the usual periods of service.⁵³

In 1924, the government took several measures aimed to dissuade officers from getting into debt. From January 1925, any officer who was in debt as a result of keeping native mistresses, could apply in confidence to the Chief Secretary for all his debts to be written off. In return, he should give a written undertaking not to spend more than 10% of his salary on local women. If the officer continued in debt, he would risk a delay in his salary increment.⁵⁴

It was not known whether the 1924 regulations had a salutary effect on officers but there continued to be instances of officers not being able to balance their budget. In 1929, a senior officer with practically no assets, accumulated debts to the sum of £10,000. This incident caused much embarrassment to the Brooke government and the officer was eventually given the sack.⁵⁵ The government then resorted to more severe measures and, in 1932, the Secretariat issued a circular to all European officers advising them that the government viewed seriously any officer incurring debt beyond his immediate requirements.⁵⁶ In 1939, there emerged another incident

sufficiently large to warrant attention from the Chief Secretary. See Confidential Draft Circular, Chief Secretary's Office, 30 December 1924, Skrine Papers.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Letter no.26 by Boyd, 12 May 1929, Boyd Papers, Box 2/2.

⁵⁶See Secretariat Circular dated August 1932 and General Order no.52 in 'Enquiry into the dismissal of F.L.G.Crossley', 27 and 28 March 1939, Brooke Papers, Box 20/2.

involving a middle-ranking District Officer getting into debt to the amount of \$2,600.⁵⁷

When Anthony Brooke, the nephew of Rajah Vyner, became Rajah Muda in 1939, he took it upon himself to eradicate the problem of indebtedness. He noted that in 1939, a number of European officers were badly in debt and one had been asked to leave the Service. Anthony Brooke introduced a scheme which, in short, would place all senior officers in a "position of temporary indebtedness" to the government rather than to local traders.⁵⁸ The government would then pay the creditors the loans borrowed and the officers would settle their outstanding loans to the government on a monthly basis. In late 1939, Anthony Brooke sent a circular to all European officers instructing them to declare their debts. He found that the officers had accumulated debts totalling at least \$30,000. Anthony Brooke, in his capacity as Rajah Muda, transferred to the Astana account the sum that was owing and ordered the officers involved to pay the government back by monthly instalments.⁵⁹

Anthony Brooke's actions provoked a storm of controversy with Rajah Vyner denouncing his nephew's methods as being irregular. On the other hand, Sir Shenton Thomas, the British Governor of Singapore, defended Anthony Brooke and maintained

⁵⁷The officer concerned was F.L.G.Crossley; his case has special significance and is discussed on pp.127-129.

⁵⁸The Tuan Muda (Bertram Brooke) to Anthony Brooke, 19 December 1939, Brooke Papers, Box 20/3.

⁵⁹Sir Shenton Thomas to Rajah Vyner, 18 January, 1940, Brooke Papers, Box 20/5.

that he had acted in the interests of the Sarawak government. Sir Shenton reasoned that if an officer knew the government had intervened and taken care of his debts, he would be reckless to incur fresh debts before the present ones were cleared.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, Anthony Brooke's short-lived career as Rajah Muda put an end to his grandiose schemes.

Iban Administration

The previous chapter has shown how the Brooke administrators kept a close watch on the patterns of Iban migration in order to prevent the more aggressive tribes from moving downriver and waging war on the peaceable lowland groups. The reign of Rajah Charles saw the expedition technique being perfected as a means to keep the more belligerent and recalcitrant tribes at bay. The Ibans continued to pose problems for the Brooke government in the 1920s and 1930s so much so that the time-tested effectiveness of the expedition technique was called into question and an alternative suggested.

Iban troubles during the reign of Rajah Vyner began during the onset of the economic depression in the late 1920s when the government was attempting to enforce strictly the collection of the annual door tax.⁶¹ Widows and orphans, who would normally be exempted, now had to pay the taxes and rumours

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹See Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.336 and 'Asun's "Rebellion": the Political Growing Pains of a Tribal Society in Brooke Sarawak, 1929-1940', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Vol.XIV, July-December 1968, pp.346-376.

were rife that the government was on the verge of imposing more taxes. The Ibans found a leader in Penghulu Asun from the Upper Kanowit district and they began to resist the rubber restriction schemes,⁶² the imposition of gun fees and the creation of new forest reserves⁶³ which denied the Ibans the opportunity to farm, collect jungle produce or hunt in these areas. Apart from these, the restrictions placed on upstream settlement and the tightening of inland passes only increased Iban resentment towards the government. As Brooke rule became more centralised, policy was made at Kuching with little regard for the particular circumstances of the rebel Iban areas. Brooke administration also followed faithfully the precedent set by the first two Rajahs and the government continued to send several military expeditions against Asun and his followers. These achieved little and only served to exacerbate tension between the rebel Ibans and the government.

By 1935, the Brooke method of launching expeditions in response to Iban unrest was felt to be out of date. Cyril Le Gros Clark,⁶⁴ a prominent Brooke officer, wrote *The Blue*

⁶²The Ibans of the Second and Third Divisions were avid planters of rubber. Although they were small-holders, the returns were good when the price of rubber was reasonably high. Rubber prices were badly affected by the depression and fell dramatically in 1931. Sarawak became a signatory to the International Rubber Restriction scheme and had to abide by the quota allocated to it. It was the Sarawak government's attempts to restrict rubber production which antagonised the Ibans.

⁶³These reserves were a new innovation and were established by the Forest Department. See Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p.56.

⁶⁴Le Gros Clark joined the Sarawak Service in 1925 and served for many years as Secretary for Chinese Affairs before his promotion as Chief Secretary in 1941. Prior to taking up his post as Cadet in Sarawak with special duties for Chinese affairs, he was attached to the Chinese Protectorate in Singapore and later proceeded to Amoy, China, where he studied Hokkien. He showed remarkable ability as a linguist and also distinguished himself in Chinese literature and history. His

Report⁶⁵ in that year and recommended a new approach to the administration of upriver areas, one that established a permanent government presence in the area and was also sympathetic to the needs of the people. In concurrence with other Administrative Officers, Le Gros Clark suggested that permanent stations be built in the troubled Iban areas. As a first step, two stations would be built at Nanga Entabai on the Kanowit and Nanga Bangkit on the Katibas. The present government station at Lubok Antu would be moved upriver to Nanga Telaus. Kapit should also be made a district, placed on par with the Baram district, and allocated a fairly experienced European Officer assisted by two Native Officers. What was then envisaged was a system of blockhouses linked by police patrols, first proposed by Demetrius Bailey, thirty years earlier during the Bantin revolt in the Second Division.⁶⁶ The European officer would have a coordinating role and would also be given wide discretionary power at the local level. Moreover, laws and orders of the State should not be automatically applied to the interior unless specifically instructed by the Rajah. Thus Brooke policy towards the Ibans in the 1930s shifted gradually from the previous approach of

outstanding translation of the works of the eleventh century Chinese poet, Su Tung-p'o, earned him scholarly recognition. He was married to the author, Averil MacKenzie-Grieve.

⁶⁵This Report, published in 1935, was concerned with the various aspects of administration. Le Gros Clark's recommendations concentrated on native education and the junior administrative service as well as policy towards the Ibans and other non-Malay natives. The proposals put forth for improving the junior administrative service and the state of the Native Officers' Service in the 1930s will be discussed in Chapter 7.

⁶⁶See Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.340, for an elaboration on the system of blockhouses.

downriver control to one of establishing a permanent presence in the heart of Iban country.

The Breen Report

By the mid-1930s, there was already a growing concern about the state of administration in Sarawak. The Brooke government made overtures to the Colonial Office and solicited its assistance to improve, among other things, the terms and conditions of the Sarawak Service. In 1936, M. Rennie, the Sarawak Government Agent in London, formally called on G.E.J. Gent of the Colonial Office, to discuss the desirability of a comprehensive examination into the Senior Service.⁶⁷

M.J. Breen, a retired officer from the Hong Kong civil service, was assigned to undertake the review of Sarawak's administration.⁶⁸ The Colonial Office had always wanted an insight into conditions in Sarawak and saw their opportunity in 1936. Breen was therefore asked by Gent to prepare a confidential report on Sarawak for the perusal of the Colonial Office and Governor Sir Shenton Thomas in Singapore.⁶⁹ This was the first time that a trained officer of the Colonial Service had access to Sarawak government affairs. Gent, however,

⁶⁷The Senior Service referred to the upper echelons of the civil service and its members were mostly Europeans. The Administrative Service was a part of the Senior Service. On the other hand, the Junior Service recruited local officers and some of its important components were the Native Officers' Service and the Clerical Service.

⁶⁸Minute by G.E.J.Gent, 30 September 1936, CO 531 26/10.

⁶⁹Breen's secret report is closed for 100 years and is only available in the year 2037.

intimated that Breen was not enthusiastic about his task as he doubted whether any reforms could be successfully introduced in Sarawak if the present status quo was allowed to continue.⁷⁰

Breen observed that Sarawak's economy was heavily dependent on primary products like rubber and pepper and was especially subject to commodity price movements. Hence, it was adversely affected by the depression of the 1930s and this had had an inevitable impact on the Service. Consequently, there was engendered a feeling of financial insecurity among the Sarawak Service members. In order to restore confidence in the Service, Breen proposed that the terms of employment should be made more attractive. A uniform pension system should also be introduced as well as a widows' and orphans' pension for dependants of officers.⁷¹

The test of adequacy of a salary scale was usually the evidence or absence of discontent among officers and their willingness to remain in the Service. Breen maintained that the adequacy of a salary scale became apparent when new recruits had to be engaged. He explained that if recruits were not forthcoming, or if the standard cannot be maintained and second-rate material accepted, instant measures would have to be taken.⁷² Nevertheless, according to Breen, there was little indication in Sarawak of any dissatisfaction arising from low

⁷⁰Minute by Gent, 27 January 1936, CO 531 26/10.

⁷¹M.J.Breen, 'Report on Conditions of Service in the Sarawak Civil Service', 30 April 1937, CO 531 27/4.

⁷²Ibid., pp.4-6.

salaries, and therefore the situation was not as serious as one might have originally thought.

He also recognised that before any salary adjustment was attempted, it was important to assess the burden of the revision in remuneration on the State revenue. The Senior Service in 1936, consisted of 88 officers, out of whom 39 were pensionable and the rest were mainly serving under provident fund terms. There were 34 members of the Administrative Service in 1936, 33 of whom were pensionable and one officer who had voluntarily opted for provident fund terms. An all-round increase of \$50 a month to each officer's salary would burden the Service with an additional expenditure of \$53,000 or 1.3% of the Sarawak average annual revenue of \$4,000,000.⁷³

For the Senior Service, the issue of salaries was not a case of revamping the present system but more of adjusting and modifying the existing salary scales. Senior officers in Sarawak also had a tendency to compare their service conditions with those of other neighbouring British colonies or dependencies. The superior conditions obtaining in Malaya were often highlighted but the less favourable terms of the North Borneo Service were ignored, although conditions there were more similar to Sarawak.

Malayan conditions were habitually compared to those of Sarawak. In the 1930s, the establishment of the Federated Malay States ran into the hundreds and hence there existed a

⁷³Ibid., p.6.

larger quota of super-scale posts. Under these circumstances, the prospects for intermediate promotion were therefore greater than in Sarawak. Another difference was derived from the higher salaries in Malaya; the Administrative time-scale for District Officers in Malaya was \$450x30-880 compared with \$300x20-600 in Sarawak. However, both time-scales were similar in length and had the same points for efficiency bars. As if to compensate for the lower salaries, Sarawak Administrative Officers were provided with free government accommodation while their Malayan counterparts were charged 7% of their salaries for housing and furniture. Moreover, most of the Administrative Officers in Sarawak were pensionable with a more favourable fraction of 1/42 for computing pensions as against the Malayan rate of 1/60.

Breen therefore recommended a small upward revision in salaries for Sarawak Administrative officers and the unit of annual increment was proposed at \$25 instead of the previous \$20. The standard time-scale, which also applied to Administrative Officers, would range from \$325 to \$775 a month with the efficiency bar set at \$600.⁷⁴ In comparison, the entry points for professionals were slightly higher with engineers' salaries commencing at \$375 and doctors at \$450. Table 4 below shows that Administrative Cadets started at \$325 and proceeded to their first increment after passing the Lower Standard examination. Upon completing the Higher Standard, the Cadet would be eligible for his second increment. He would then receive his second increment after which he would be called a

⁷⁴Ibid., p.10.

Passed Cadet. Subsequently, after an additional one year's service, he would enter Class III and then proceed by eight annual increments until he arrived at the efficiency bar for

TABLE 4

Salary Revisions Proposed by Breen for Administrative Officers

	<u>1935⁷⁵</u>	<u>Breen's Proposals</u>
Cadet	\$300	\$325x25-375
Class III	\$320x20-400	\$400x25-600/bar
Class II	\$420x20-600/bar	\$625x25-775
Class IB	\$700	\$800x25-875
Class IA	\$750	\$900x50-1,050

entry into Division II at the \$600 point. For this Division, the salary ranged from \$625 to \$775 and the rate of annual increment remained the same at \$25. Breen also called for the abolition of acting allowances for Class II officers unless they were acting for a super-scale post.

The increases in remuneration recommended for Classes II and III also entailed adjustments for Class I officers. The rank of Class IB normally held by a junior Resident saw a jump in their monthly pay from the previous flat rate of \$700 to a short time-scale beginning at \$800 and proceeding by increments of \$25 (see Table 4). Senior Residents or Class IA officers had an increase of \$150 for their commencing salary and the rate of annual increment was fixed at \$50, double that received by the junior Resident.

⁷⁵Data for 1935 were compiled from entries in the *Sarawak Civil List, 1935, Kuching, 1935.*

In line with the practice of other British colonies, Breen also saw the need to reorganise the higher posts of the Secretariat. The Treasurer was elevated in rank and became known as the Financial Secretary.⁷⁶ This change in title also signified the growing importance of the work of the Treasurer. The Chief Secretary and the Financial Secretary, the only two staff appointments, would be placed under two grades, Staff A and B respectively. Breen did not allocate specific salaries for these staff officers, leaving the Sarawak government to determine the appropriate salaries for these two posts.

He further noted that the Sarawak Service, in general, showed an undue bias in favour of the Administrative branch. Most of the pensionable officers belonged to the Administrative Service and Administrative cadres were also entitled to widows' and orphans' pension benefits without having to make their own contribution. The other branches of the Service, particularly the Technical branch, resented the perks and privileges enjoyed by Administrative Officers. Sarawak's case was not unique but was also experienced by other colonial territories.

There was, however, a justification for the Administrative Service to take precedence over the other branches owing to the nature of the work done by its members. Administrative Officers wielded an important influence in government and assumed a general responsibility over policy. Breen suggested a compromise and proposed that all officers, except for a few

⁷⁶Breen, 'Report on Conditions of Service', p.13.

special appointments, join the Sarawak Service initially on provident fund terms. After serving for 10 years, they would be entitled to transfer to pension terms but the new unit of calculating pension would be less favourable than the existing $1/42$. The Sarawak government heeded Breen's advice and fixed the pension rate at $1/50$. In view of the smaller pension fraction, the retiring age limit was raised from 50 to 55 years.⁷⁷

Breen's various proposals on the terms of employment of the Senior Service were well received by the Sarawak government and most of his suggestions adopted. The adjustments in salaries for the lower and middle-ranking officers were warranted. However, the increases in remuneration recommended by Breen for the whole Senior Service amounted to \$100,000 annually, a huge sum Sarawak could ill afford after the economic downturn of the 1930s. The main criticism made against the Sarawak government was that the Senior Service, whose members were nearly all Europeans, benefitted from the new salaries while social service programmes for health and education were neglected because not enough funds could be found to finance them.

Judicial Reform

The first two Rajahs had a strong dislike for lawyers and ensured that the administration of Sarawak, as far as

⁷⁷Ibid., p.17.

possible, was not hampered by the niceties and ramifications of the legal profession. There was no equivalent of a legal adviser in Sarawak, let alone a Judicial Commissioner, until the reign of Rajah Vyner when circumstances precipitated a crisis resulting in the Colonial Office putting pressure on the Rajah to appoint a well qualified legal officer.

The incident, which occurred between 1926 and 1927, involved a British subject by the name of St.Vincent B.Down in a case against the Sarawak government. As a result, Down was ordered by the Rajah to leave the country and he was not allowed to lodge an appeal. Down then alleged that he had not received fair treatment in the Sarawak courts and sent a petition to the British Secretary of State. The latter took Down's complaint seriously and consulted the Governor at Singapore, Sir Lawrence Guillemard. It was agreed that Guillemard should attempt to impress upon the Rajah the need for Sarawak to employ an officer with proper legal qualifications and experience. Apparently, Guillemard intimated to the Rajah that, if the appointment of a legal officer was not expedited, the British government would appoint a Consul in Sarawak. The Rajah chose the lesser of the two "evils" and in 1928, Thomas Stirling Boyd was appointed as Sarawak's first Judicial Commissioner.⁷⁸ There had not been a legally-trained judge in

⁷⁸According to Boyd, his appointment was "more or less forced" upon Sarawak. See Boyd to Sir Joseph Nunan (former Attorney-General to British Guiana), 24 May 1929, Boyd Papers, Box 2/4 and Boyd to Ward, 25 October 1964, Boyd Papers, Box 3/3.

Sarawak before Boyd's appointment and he was unsure what his job entailed him to do apart from his Supreme Court duties.⁷⁹

Boyd also found that the administration of justice in Sarawak was in dire need of reform. There were no definite procedures for the courts apart from a sketchy code drawn in 1870. This code, in effect, gave the Residents power to settle nearly every case in Sarawak. In a letter to a colleague, Boyd vented his frustration;

..the published Orders are absolutely silent on such important subjects as criminal procedure, civil procedure(except for fragmentary references), evidence, contract, tort..nor is there any way a Resident of a Division can ascertain the law except by reference to Headquarters.⁸⁰

By the time Rajah Vyner took over, the courts system had become intolerable; the Residents found themselves overburdened with court work and they were given little guidance on how to settle the more complicated cases. W.V.D. Skrine, a lawyer, was commissioned by the Rajah in 1922 to draw up a new constitution for the law courts. Skrine was asked to incorporate into the new courts procedure the essence of the Brooke sense of justice. After months of careful deliberation, Skrine finally issued the new courts procedure which coordinated the administration of justice in the various courts in Kuching and the five divisions and also defined the jurisdiction of lay magistrates.⁸¹ However, there were no changes prescribed for the Native courts.

⁷⁹Boyd commented that it was "extremely difficult to know where to start and what to do". Boyd to Nunan, op. cit.

⁸⁰Ibid. Boyd was extremely critical of Rajah Vyner's administration.

⁸¹The new courts procedure was codified as the *Green Order Book*; see Ward, p.202 and Boyd to Ward, 25 October 1964, Boyd Papers, Box 4/4.

In addition to the Native courts, the former Supreme Court, the Resident's Court and the Magistrate's (former Police) Court were reconstituted. Under these new changes, the previous Debtor's Court of Requests was abolished.⁸² The highest legislative authority in a division then was the Resident and he was vested with the power to try any major criminal cases and impose fines of less than \$5,000 and sentences of not more than 15 years without confirmation by the Supreme Court. Boyd initially thought it wise for him to go on circuit and take over the more important cases in each division as was the practice in Malaya.⁸³ However, he was prevented from doing so by the lack of qualified personnel at Kuching to act for him while he was away travelling. Moreover, the difficulties of transportation necessitated that he be absent from Kuching for a long period of time.

The District Court was presided over by the District Officer who was usually a senior officer with about ten years' experience. When Boyd first arrived in Sarawak in 1928, none of the Residents or District Officers had undergone any form of legal training with the result that minutes of evidence of trials held by them, more often than not, inadvertently left out important facts. Boyd endeavoured to put the situation right and he made it a requirement for all new Cadets to go through some form of legal training. Legal subjects such as

⁸²Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', p.167.

⁸³Ibid.

the courts procedures and Sarawak orders were introduced into both the Lower and Higher Standard examination syllabi.

It was Boyd's attempts to reform the administration of justice and regulate the courts procedure which brought him into conflict with the die-hards among the Brooke officers. According to Boyd, the traditionalists did not desire any interference and they saw the new reforms as an added burden to their already tedious routine.⁸⁴ One champion of the old Brooke system of justice was Arthur Ward, who retired in 1923 but continued to take an active interest in Sarawak affairs. In his letters to Boyd, Ward voiced his concern lest Boyd's reforming zeal should alter the existing system of justice to the detriment of the natives.⁸⁵ Ward maintained that the codes of law as practised in India and other British colonies, were not suitable in governing Asians. In these colonies, magistrates were often too immersed in rigid rules of law and they failed to appreciate the native viewpoint. Ward elaborated;

..there are flaws in every code of law but the native in Sarawak has suffered less injustice from the ordinary common-sense of an outstation officer than his fellow in neighbouring states from code-bound magistrates.⁸⁶

Boyd, however, disagreed with Ward's views and continued to uphold the rule of law. In 1935, he wrote,

..there is an antecedent matter which requires examination and that is the fundamental question whether the country is or is not to be governed by

⁸⁴Boyd to Nunan, op.cit.

⁸⁵Ward to Boyd, 10 November 1928, Boyd Papers, Box 3/3.

⁸⁶Ward to Willes Johnson(Sarawak Government Agent in London), 3 October 1928, Boyd Papers, Box 3/3.

fixed principles which have been laid down beforehand or is to be subject to rough and ready rules, called by some the rule of common-sense and made up as and when occasion requires.⁸⁷

This clearly went against the spirit of native government and personal rule as postulated by Rajah Charles, who had favoured a system of justice that responded to the local situation rather than one which imposed foreign-formulated laws on the natives. Boyd pointed out that the unique Brooke system of common-sense justice had its limitations when it was applied to complex cases involving commercial relations such as those existing between Asian and European traders. Evidently, by the 1930s, Sarawak's economy had grown rather large. Boyd reasoned that if disputes concerning commercial transactions broke out, they could not possibly be settled by a "rule of common-sense" which must necessarily be arbitrary.⁸⁸ He attempted to reassure traditionalists like Ward that his reforms would not be drastic and would be implemented only after careful consideration. His main concern was not to satisfy the whims of a "few hundred Europeans", but what was uppermost in his mind was the establishment of legal procedure on a sound basis.⁸⁹

Boyd's reforms also incurred the resentment of divisional Residents who were not keen to be supervised in their legal work. As Chief Justice, Boyd was responsible for confirming any death sentences passed by Residents. In early 1934, the Resident of the Third Division, C.D.Adams, presided over a

⁸⁷Boyd, 'The Sarawak Crisis', cited in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p.45.

⁸⁸Memorandum by Boyd, 10 November 1928, Boyd Papers, Box 3/3.

⁸⁹Ibid.

murder case in Sibü and passed a death sentence on the defendant. The case was then referred to Boyd to have the sentence confirmed. Boyd made several routine queries on the conduct of the case to which Adams reacted angrily, claiming that Boyd's unmitigated interference constituted an "insult to assessor's magistrates presiding over [the] case".⁹⁰ Boyd protested that lay magistrates without appropriate jurisdiction given to them were trying cases and passing sentences in excess of their powers. Furthermore, there had been a tendency for some Residents to question or dispute decisions made by the Chief Justice. As a result of these protests, the Rajah issued a circular reminding lay magistrates that irregularities in the divisional and lower courts were not to be tolerated by the government.⁹¹

Boyd's reforms presented a disconcerting challenge to the Brooke judicial tradition. As mentioned earlier, Boyd sought to introduce the rule of law in the administration of justice because he felt that the main weakness of Brooke government was that too much emphasis was placed on the use of discretion by the officers on-the-spot. According to Boyd, the lack of regulation and accountability in the courts system was a major weakness of Brooke rule. His tenure as Judicial Commissioner saw the introduction of the Indian Penal code and elements of British law as well as the codification of existing Sarawak laws. Although Boyd's efforts to strengthen the rule of law in Sarawak courts were countered with strong resistance from the

⁹⁰Boyd to Rajah Vyner, 18 April 1934, Boyd Papers, Box 3/1.

⁹¹Secretariat Confidential Circular no.1, 1935, 24 December 1935, Boyd Papers, Box 3/1.

traditionalists, his reforms had the effect of putting Sarawak very near the standard of legal practice in neighbouring colonies.

Events leading to the Crisis of 1939

It has been stated earlier that the Secretariat was created in 1923 and since then it had gradually grown in importance despite its chequered early history. By the mid-1930s, the Secretariat was able to give itself a degree of authority which was unprecedented in Brooke rule. The so-called 'Kuching bureaucrats' who ran the Secretariat, were dissatisfied with the traditional way of governing Sarawak and had wanted to institute changes in the administrative system which they felt would benefit Sarawak in the long term. Boyd, had from 1928, initiated numerous legal reforms and he was now joined by the Secretariat officials who desired to go even further than Boyd and introduce sweeping changes. As with Boyd's experience, the conservative establishment among the Service members strove to preserve the age-old traditions of Brooke rule and hence they attempted to block any reforms proposed by the Kuching bureaucrats. It was thus inevitable that the confrontation between the 'old' and the 'new' would reach a crisis point.

The rise in importance of the Kuching Secretariat coincided with the career of Edward Parnell.⁹² He did not have any

⁹²Parnell joined the Sarawak Service as a clerk in 1905, resigned in 1927 and later worked with the Sarawak Steamship Company as Managing Director before being appointed as Treasurer.

outstation experience and was appointed Treasurer in 1934. Three years later, Parnell was elevated to the rank of Chief Secretary, thereby entrenching his position and influence in government. His views and principles on how Sarawak was to be administered were shared by H.M. Calvert who succeeded him as Financial Secretary. The Parnell-Calvert team stood for efficient and business-like government and favoured centralised control of the outstations from Kuching. Proper accounting procedures, the writing of detailed reports and adherence to rules and regulations were hallmarks of the Parnell-Calvert style of government. Additionally Calvert sought to tighten up expenditure in the outstations.

Both Parnell and Calvert aimed to do away gradually with the Residential system and centralise administration at the capital. Senior Administrative Officers would in future be stationed in Kuching and District Officers would report direct to Kuching and not come under the supervision of Residents. It was even rumoured that there were to be no more promotions to the post of Resident and when the existing Residents retired, there would not be any replacements. Anthony Brooke claimed that from 1935 onwards, the former authority and prestige of the office of Resident went through a period of decline.⁹³ In the 1938 establishment list for Administrative Officers, there were only two Residents, the First Division Resident, W.F. Dick (Class IB) and the Third Division Resident, J.B. Archer (Class IA). The Second Division was under the

⁹³ 'Minutes of a meeting of Residents held in Kuching, 26, 27 and 28 June 1939', Council Negri and Residents' Meetings, 12 July 1933 to 8 December 1941, Kuching District Office File, ADM 3.

responsibility of a senior District Officer while the combined Fourth and Fifth divisions were also not allocated a Resident. In 1938, both R.L.Daubeny and H.E.Cutfield were experienced District Officers, having been appointed to Class II in 1930 and 1931 respectively and could have been promoted as Residents.

Many outstation officers were hostile to what they saw as undue interference from the "bureaucratic centralisers" in Kuching, particularly with regard to the new accounting procedures. In November 1938, W.F.Dick, Resident of the Third Division, wrote a strongly-worded letter to Calvert protesting against the methods of the Treasury Department. At issue was Calvert's memorandum to the Divisional Treasurer regarding the hospital expenses incurred for Dick's son. Apparently, the Treasury could not come up with any proof that Dick had settled the hospital bill and, consequently, Dick was put down as a defaulter, although he claimed to have made the outstanding payment. Dick wrote a letter to Calvert alleging that the policy of the Treasury Department was to assume that everyone was a "probable defaulter". Calvert took the accusations seriously and felt that Dick had to be severely disciplined. As a result, Dick was given the option of either a demotion to Class II or retirement from the Service on condition that he should leave Sarawak before 15 December 1938.⁹⁴ Dick's case illustrated the high-handedness and lack of sensitivity towards the outstation officers. In all

⁹⁴Dick chose the second option and he was additionally given a 6 months' furlough on full pay. See Digby, p.27.

probability, the matter could have been resolved amicably if both parties had been more understanding towards each other.

Digby, who came to Sarawak in 1934, maintained that there was much mutual bitterness and hostility between the Kuching Secretariat and the outstations. He explained that the "real trouble was the usual one in such circumstances; each half of the world was ignorant of the way of life of the other half".⁹⁵ In 1936, Breen also observed a distinct division in the Service.⁹⁶ Administrative Officers in the upcountry stations distanced themselves from the officers based in Kuching, while the Kuching bureaucrats were largely ignorant of conditions in the hinterland. Hence there grew a divergence in outlook; the Kuching officers claiming that their upcountry counterparts lacked discipline while the outstation staff alleged that they were not allocated their fair share of expenditure appropriations.

One drawback of the Service was that the perspective of an Administrative Officer was often kept narrow by his lack of exposure to events occurring outside his area of supervision. A District Officer, for instance, had little opportunity to be transferred to the Secretariat for a short stint of duty. Thus his experience was limited to his working environment in the various stations to which he was posted. Similarly, the Secretariat staff could benefit and appreciate better the

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Breen, p.24.

problems associated with administration in the interior if they were attached to an outstation post from time to time.

In the late 1930s, the traditional system of Brooke rule came under close scrutiny. Anthony Richards, after only a few months in Sarawak, formed the opinion that the system of rule perpetuated by the two Rajahs was greatly decentralised and outstation officers were given a high degree of independence. He added that "it permitted the growth of separate policies..and from that, the growth of separate territories, differing too much in essentials".⁹⁷ Digby, a contemporary of Richards, felt that the central weakness of traditional Brooke rule was too much decentralisation and enormous discretion and responsibility was left to the officer on-the-spot. In his monograph, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, Digby disclosed his misgivings and maintained that

..the most elementary needs and desires of the ordinary inhabitants of the country were exposed to the winds of individual idiosyncracies, whims and prejudices of whatever administrative officer happened to hold sway at any particular time. There was no continuity of policy and nobody knew whether actions and omissions which were held to merit punishment or censure today, might not in six months' time, when the little cock was due to go on furlough, reap praise and rewards from his successor.⁹⁸

The tension between the outstation officers and the Kuching bureaucrats came to a head in March 1939 when an inquiry was convened to look into the dismissal of F.L.G.Crossley, a

⁹⁷Richards wrote the above impressions of Sarawak in a letter to his mother about six months after his arrival. See Richards to his mother, 5 April 1939, Richards Papers.

⁹⁸Digby, p.31.

District Officer. At the time of the inquiry, Crossley was a Class III officer of nine years' standing and he was last stationed at Oya and Mukah. Crossley was discovered to be in debt to the sum of \$2,600 and in his application for a government loan to cover his medical expenses,⁹⁹ he grossly understated the extent of his indebtedness. In January 1939, Crossley was informed by Parnell of his impending dismissal and was at the same time given the opportunity to appeal to the Rajah. On 23 February 1939, he received news that his appeal was not successful and on 8 March, he learned that his passage for London had already been booked for 21 March. The details of the subsequent exchanges between Crossley and Parnell need not detain us here but suffice it to say that Crossley protested against his compulsory departure at such short notice.¹⁰⁰

It was at this juncture that Anthony Brooke decided to take up Crossley's case. Brooke,¹⁰¹ who was then a District Officer at Mukah, had long disliked Parnell's overbearing attitude towards outstation officers and his methods of disciplining staff, and he saw his opportunity to be heard. He was given

⁹⁹Crossley had, on various occasions, contracted venereal disease and was advised to go to Singapore for medical treatment. The loan was intended for his hospitalisation in Singapore. See 'Enquiry into the dismissal of F.L.G.Crossley', 27 and 28 March 1939, Brooke Papers, Box 20/2.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Anthony Brooke was born in 1912 and after school at Eton, he studied at Cambridge and the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. His father was of the opinion that Anthony Brooke would gain by spending a few years in Malaya and consequently, he was seconded to the Malayan Civil Service for two years, from 1934 to 1936. Brooke returned to Sarawak in 1936 and after short attachments at Nanga Meluan and Marudi, he left for Oxford in 1938 to do a course in colonial administration under Margery Perham. He came back to Sarawak in February 1939.

permission by Rajah Vyner to hold an inquiry investigating the circumstances surrounding Crossley's dismissal. The Rajah cautioned that if the inquiry was "abortive and merely mischievous", his nephew would have to resign. In order to facilitate the holding of the inquiry, Anthony Brooke was appointed Rajah Muda and this gave him added authority and wider leverage.

During the inquiry, Brooke questioned the procedure followed with regard to Crossley's dismissal. He contended that if there existed a strong justification for the dismissal, Crossley should have been suspended immediately instead of being allowed to carry on his duties for two months. Brooke explained that Crossley was unable to leave on the booked passage as he was heavily indebted. Moreover, telegrams the contents of which should have been transmitted in code, were sent to him openly with the result that it caused him much embarrassment.¹⁰² Anthony Brooke felt he should assume responsibility here and sent Crossley another telegram altering the terms which had earlier been offered by Parnell. Crossley was accordingly permitted to resign and given \$800 to settle his debts in Sibü. He was also advised that more money would be available to settle his Kuching debts.¹⁰³

In response to Anthony Brooke's actions, Parnell issued a memorandum jointly signed by Calvert, Boyd, J.B.Archer,

¹⁰²See 'Enquiry into the dismissal of F.L.G.Crossley'.

¹⁰³Crossley was also generously allowed a leave of absence of nearly 6 months on full pay.

N.A.Middlemas and J.H.Bowyer.¹⁰⁴ Parnell objected to the holding of the inquiry alleging that it was intended to question the propriety of his actions as well as those of the other signatories. Except for Archer, the other signatories tendered their resignations. Hence, Anthony Brooke succeeded in putting an end to the ambitions of the Parnell-Calvert regime and, in so doing, he had the support of Sir Shenton Thomas, the British Governor in Singapore. Rajah Vyner appeared to have sanctioned his nephew's measures; in a note to Thomas, the Rajah wrote that the administration of Sarawak under the direction of Parnell was drifting away from concern with native interests and he felt strongly that a "native state could not be governed from an office table".¹⁰⁵

Soon after the inquiry, Anthony Brooke was made Officer-Administering-the-Government when the Rajah left for Britain. Brooke immediately attempted to reverse the centralising policies of Parnell and sought to restore the traditional tenets of Brooke rule. He noted that the relatively autonomous Residential system was still the most suitable form of administration for Sarawak and that a blueprint for a Resident-centred system of government should be prepared as an alternative to the policies of Parnell. Anthony Brooke suggested the formation of a Residents' Council and its members would include at least two senior Residents. This Council would meet periodically to discuss various government

¹⁰⁴Archer was then Secretary for Internal Affairs; Middlemas, the Superintendent of Lands and Surveys and Bowyer, the Principal Medical Officer.

¹⁰⁵Rajah Vyner to Sir Shenton Thomas, 28 March 1939, CO 531/29; also cited in Reece, p.65.

policies.¹⁰⁶ However, Anthony Brooke's tenure as Rajah Muda was short-lived; he fell out of favour with the Rajah and was stripped of his title in early 1940.¹⁰⁷

The inquiry of March 1939 provided the final denouement to the clash between the Kuching bureaucrats and the conservative establishment among Service members. Although the Brooke traditionalists eventually triumphed, the changes brought about by the Parnell-Calvert team had already taken root in Sarawak. There were many who saw that Parnell's methods also had its advantages. Archer and Le Gros Clark, who succeeded as Chief Secretary, continued some of Parnell's policies. While the Residential system was not dismantled, the Secretariat continued to tighten its control on the outstations. In a sense, the system that prevailed in the closing years of Rajah Vyner's reign was one which balanced elements of the 'old' with those of the 'new'.

Conclusion

Under the first two Rajahs, Sarawak had developed largely in isolation and was free to experiment, at its own pace, with the system of government best suited to the natives. By the end of the First World War, when Vyner succeeded as Rajah, Britain began keeping a close watch on events in Sarawak. The

¹⁰⁶Minutes of a meeting of Residents, 26, 27 and 28 June 1939.

¹⁰⁷See Reece, pp.29-32 for events leading to Anthony Brooke's demotion. His father's intervention and tact softened the Rajah and it was agreed that Brooke would be allowed to return to Sarawak as a District Officer.

Colonial Office had expressed concern about the state of administration under the Brooke Rajahs and gradually started putting pressure on Sarawak to conform to colonial practices. The first Judicial Commissioner was appointed in 1928 following the insistence of the Colonial Office, and the crisis of March 1939 gave Britain the opportunity for the appointment of a British General Adviser, W.E.Pepys, in Kuching in January 1940.¹⁰⁸ Sarawak also gained from the keen interest Britain had in Sarawak; for one, from the mid-1930s, Administrative Cadets were recommended by the Colonial Office. The terms of employment of Administrative Officers were also standardised and rationalised similar to the experience of Malaya, in spite of the lower salaries obtaining in Sarawak. Therefore, 'personal' rule and administration gradually began to give way to administrative regularisation and bureaucratisation.

This process was further strengthened when in March 1941, Rajah Vyner made overtures to the Secretariat about his preparedness to grant Sarawak a constitution in return for a financial settlement.¹⁰⁹ The constitution would introduce a representative legislature and it marked a departure from the era of absolute rule by Brooke Rajahs. By September 1941, the parameters of the Rajah's powers had been drawn. With the new constitution, the Rajah could only exercise his executive and

¹⁰⁸Sir Shenton Thomas had hoped that Pepys would furnish him with information regarding the details of events in Sarawak. Most of the Kuching officers were indifferent towards Pepys. See Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp.102-108.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp.73-74. The Rajah was eventually given \$200,000 by the Treasury.

legislative powers with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council and the Council Negri. However, Sarawak's constitutional developments were temporarily halted by the arrival of the Japanese in December 1941. The next chapter discusses the experience of Sarawak under three and a half years of Japanese occupation.

CHAPTER 4

THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION AND THE BRITISH MILITARY

ADMINISTRATION IN SARAWAK

The Japanese occupation period from December 1941 to September 1945 and the commencement thereafter of the British Military Administration in Sarawak until April 1946, was a transitional phase in Sarawak history. This period of nearly four and a half years could be seen as an interregnum between the end of Brooke rule and the transfer of Sarawak's administration to the British Crown in July 1946.¹

The Japanese interlude provided an alternative to European government and local residents were entrusted briefly with greater roles of responsibility in government than previously existed. While in many respects signalling a break from the past, the Japanese occupation also saw the perpetuation of certain of the Brooke administrative traditions. This chapter will firstly examine Japan's interest in Sarawak and its occupation by the Japanese military. The second half is concerned with Allied attempts to reoccupy Borneo and the setting up of a British Military Administration in Sarawak, pending the restoration of civilian government.

¹Although the British Military Administration handed over the government of Sarawak to the Rajah in April 1946, cession, by then, had already become imminent.

Japan's Interest in Sarawak

The Japanese, since the turn of this century, had entertained the idea of setting up a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In order to realise this ambition, they had to be self-sufficient in raw materials to service their industrial needs. In the 1930s, Japan expanded her industries and this subsequently stretched her resources to the maximum. Hence, it began looking for alternatives overseas. Japan recognised that it had the potential to be an important industrial power in the region if it could gain unlimited access to the resources of countries in the southern Pacific. It was especially important to ensure an adequate supply of oil, and this explained Japan's interest in the oil-producing centres of Borneo, Sumatra and Java.

Before the lines of communication to the south could be secured, the colonial powers had to be expelled from South-East Asia, and Siam had to be occupied. It was then decided that the Philippines and Malaya were to be attacked simultaneously and, from there, the Japanese forces were to advance southwards and capture the Netherlands Indies. The landings in Malaya were to precede the invasion of British Borneo by a few days so as to capture the oil-producing centres of Brunei and Sarawak as well as protect the lines of communication for the advance in Malaya.

Perhaps it may be worthwhile here to elaborate on the strategic importance which Japan attached to Borneo. Since

Borneo lay across the sea routes from Malaya to Sumatra, on the one hand, and from the Celebes to Java, on the other, the capture of the island was strategically important in the defence of the Malay Archipelago. With the eastern flank secured, the Japanese could then concentrate their efforts on the onslaught on Malaya, Singapore, Sumatra and Java.² Thus, by eliminating the springboard in British Borneo by which Allied forces could launch reprisals, the Japanese would be closer to victory in their Malayan campaign.

Apart from strategic considerations, Japan was determined to secure access to the oil resources of Borneo. The oilfields in northern Borneo were located in two groups; one at Miri in the Fourth Division of Sarawak and the other at Seria in the British Protectorate of Brunei. Crude oil from both fields was pumped at Lutong on the coast from which loading lines ran out to the sea. The thirty miles of beach between Miri and Lutong were undefended and vulnerable to attack.

Britain's Responsibility for the Defence of Sarawak

The treaty of 1888³ signed between Rajah Charles and Britain stipulated that the British held responsibility for the defence of Sarawak and the conduct of its foreign relations. Of great importance in the event of war, was the protection of the oilfields at Miri, but Sarawak's only defence force,

²S. Woodburn Kirby, *The Pacific War*, London, 1956, pp.220-224.

³See 'Agreement between Her Majesty's Government and Charles Brooke, Second Rajah of Sarawak', the Treaty of 1888, in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp.288-289.

the Sarawak constabulary, was hardly adequate for the task. In 1935, representatives from the British Royal Air Force, visited Sarawak to survey the possibility of building airfields as the availability of suitable landing sites was crucial in the defence of Sarawak. Bukit Stabar, near Kuching, was thought to be an ideal location and construction there commenced in 1936 and was completed in 1938. Airfields were also constructed in Miri and Bintulu; the former was completed in September 1938 while the latter, scheduled to be ready in November 1939, was later abandoned.⁴

As early as March 1941, Rajah Vyner had recognised the possibility of war with Japan and he sought to remind the British of its responsibility for the defence of Sarawak under the 1888 treaty. The Rajah contributed generously to the British war effort and, in addition to the £25,000 given in 1937, he gave a total of \$2.5 million from the Sarawak state reserves between late 1939 and early 1941.⁵ In view of Sarawak's contribution, the Rajah felt that it was time the British focused attention on the airfields. Those constructed by the British in the 1930s, were undefended and constituted a source of danger to Sarawak.⁶ In a letter to the British Agent, the Rajah stated that while Sarawak would continue to contribute to the British war fund, Britain was expected to fulfil its obligation in meeting Sarawak's defence. The Rajah

⁴J.L.Noakes, 'Report upon Defence Measures adopted in Sarawak from June 1941 to the Occupation in December 1941 by Imperial Japanese Forces', typescript, p.9, in J.L.Noakes Papers, Ms Pac s 62.

⁵Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p.122.

⁶Sarawak Gazette, 6 August 1949.

added that the Sarawak government would bear the cost of raising and maintaining the local forces in Sarawak.⁷

In response to the Rajah's overtures, Britain sent Lieutenant-Colonel Bruce Steer to Kuching to determine the defence measures necessary. His report only served to confirm the Rajah's earlier apprehension that Kuching occupied an important strategic position for the defence of South-West Borneo where major Dutch airfields were located. An enemy force could also easily use the Bukit Stabar landing ground for attacks on shipping passing through Singapore.

Acting on Steer's report, the British sent the 2/15th Punjab Regiment to Kuching; the first detachment arrived in April 1941 and the remainder ensued a month later. The role of the Punjab Regiment was, firstly, to deny prospective attackers access to the Lutong refinery and Miri landing sites until a scheme, which would seal off the oilwells, could be put into effect. Secondly, the Regiment was also instructed to defend Kuching against attack and safeguard the Bukit Stabar airfield until it could be destroyed.⁸ The existence of the Miri and Seria oilfields and the refinery at Lutong required the stationing of troops in these areas and their presence was also prompted by the oil denial schemes. These were, in essence, a series of plans to destroy the installations in

⁷Noakes, 'Report upon Defence Measures', p.9.

⁸Ibid., p.10.

the oilfields and were designed to prevent the Japanese from tapping the oil resources of Borneo.⁹

The strategy fell into two parts: a general denial scheme, which could be completed in 48 hours, and, an emergency denial scheme, which required only a few hours to put into effect. The latter was to be adopted if time did not permit the general scheme to be completed.¹⁰ The emergency scheme involved the positioning and laying down of explosive charges in 1940. In November, a detachment of the 2/15th Punjab was sent to Lutong to guard the firing point. In an emergency, the officer commanding the detachment would assume the responsibility for firing the charges.

The general denial scheme, on the other hand, comprised of three sub-strategies known as the 'Denial Scheme', the 'Elaboration of the Denial Scheme' and the 'Destruction Scheme'.¹¹ The first of these was dependent upon a 48 hour warning and was to be carried out by staff of the Sarawak oilfields as well as government officers. The purpose of the scheme was to remove essential parts of machinery and, if possible, slip them away, or, failing that, dump them into rivers. The second sub-strategy, went a step further and was, in effect, superficial destruction of machinery. It was later decided that a more drastic measure was required in order to deny the Japanese the use of the oilfields for an indefinite

⁹'Report by Colonel C.M.Lane, Officer Commanding the Sarawak and Brunei Forces', 9 January 1942, CO 203/2689.

¹⁰Memorandum by Secretary of State for the Colonies, 24 December 1941, CO 968 15/5.

¹¹Ibid.

period. The third sub-strategy, also described as the 'plugging' method, involved the pumping of cement into the oil pipelines and would take eight hours to complete. The oil wells at Miri were cemented in September 1941. When the Japanese declared hostilities on the Allied powers on 7 December 1941, the general denial scheme was put into effect the next day and was successfully carried out.¹²

By 1941, there had already existed in Sarawak a Defence Secretariat headed by J.L.Noakes. The Secretariat was set up to coordinate the various policies for Sarawak's defence and Noakes was directly responsible to the Chief Secretary. One of the functions of the Secretariat was to issue detailed instructions to all government officers in the event of war with Japan.

The Commander-in-Chief, Far East, during a visit to Kuching in July 1941, stressed the urgent need for local forces to complement Imperial forces in the defence of Sarawak. In September 1941, the Sarawak Rangers, comprising mainly Ibans, was constituted as a military force and it grew to about 400 men at the outbreak of the war. It was initially decided that the role of the Rangers should be that of a harassing, forward force, trained in jungle warfare. However, owing to frequent changes of command, much valuable time was lost and by 8 December 1941, the Sarawak Rangers were not in any way fit to carry out the role ascribed to them.¹³

¹²T.S.W.Thomas, British Agent(Sarawak) to Colonial Office, 24 December 1941, CO 968 15/6.

¹³Noakes, 'Report upon Defence Measures', pp.3-4.

The existing Sarawak Constabulary Force was not a well-disciplined military unit and was not prepared for a war-time situation, while the Sarawak Volunteers were given roles far beyond their limited capabilities.¹⁴ Defence was to be concentrated mainly at Kuching and Miri and the latter would only be defended until the completion of the oil denial schemes. In Kuching, the military garrison was totally inadequate. Moreover, the British had not organised any air defence measures and this left the Japanese free to inflict maximum damage with their bombing raids. There was also no attempt to cooperate with the Dutch in Indonesia in order to coordinate defence plans. It would, however, be inaccurate to assert that the British had no defensive strategy for Sarawak against Japanese attack, but rather, as a result of limited resources, the British could only provide token resistance.

Early on 8 December 1941, news was received of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and Manila Bay and that a state of war now existed between Japan and Britain and, therefore, Sarawak. One of the first few measures taken by the Sarawak government was to intern all male Japanese nationals. The final phase of the denial scheme of the Miri oilfields was also implemented with immediate effect and the destruction of the oilfields and the Lutong refinery was completed by 13 December. Most of the major towns were already evacuated by then.

¹⁴Sarawak Gazette, 7 September 1949.

The Japanese Landing

In early December 1941, a strong Japanese force, the Kawaguchi Detachment, operating from Canton, left by ship for Camranh Bay where it departed again on 13 December and headed for Miri.¹⁵ On the morning of 16 December, the Japanese arrived off the coast of Miri. The landing in Sarawak was made difficult by rough seas caused by one of the worst gales ever recorded in the area. According to one account,¹⁶ the Japanese landed an estimated 10,000 troops on the oilfields within a few hours. They found them almost completely wrecked and much work was required before the oilfields could be put to use again. Despite the odds, the Japanese managed to drill 16 new wells and had brought production at both the Miri and Seria fields to pre-war levels by 1945.¹⁷

Dutch bombers raided the Japanese at Miri between 17 to 28 December but only minor damage was done. The main body of the Japanese invasion force consisting of two battalions, left Miri on 22 December heading for Kuching and only one battalion was left to secure all of British Borneo outside Sarawak.¹⁸ On 24 December, the Japanese captured Kuching and, three days later, took control of the Kuching airfield. The airfield was, however, found to be inadequate to protect the

¹⁵See Special Staff US Army Division, 'The Borneo Operations, 1941-1942', *Japanese Studies in World War II*, no.27, AL 1099.

¹⁶*Sarawak Gazette*, 7 October 1949.

¹⁷Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p.143.

¹⁸This detached battalion occupied Labuan on 1 January 1942 and Jesselton a week later. On 17 January, two infantry companies landed at Sandakan.

left flank of the 25th Army during its operation to seize Singapore.¹⁹

By the time the Japanese began their onslaught on Sarawak, the Rajah had already left for Australia where he later established a government-in-exile. Most of the Sarawak government officers including the Chief Secretary, Le Gros Clark and the Defence Secretary, Noakes, and several Administrative Officers were interned at Kuching and were moved to the Bukit Lintang Camp in July 1942.²⁰ A large number of those who were interned, survived the war except for the few who died from natural causes and several who were killed by the Japanese, including Le Gros Clark who met his fate at Keningau in June 1945.²¹ In the Third Division, a group of Sarawak officers and other Europeans led by the Resident, Andrew MacPherson, attempted to escape to Dutch Borneo. Their route took them to the Rejang river and they eventually arrived at Long Nawang, a Dutch military outpost near the Sarawak border. At Long Nawang, the original party, as well

¹⁹Colonel Itsu Ogawa and Lieutenant-Colonel Masash Ino, 'Borneo Operations, 1941-1945', Japanese Monograph no.26, HQ US Army, Japan, 1957, AL 5256, p.12.

²⁰The Sarawak Gazette published a series of articles under the title 'Past History, 1941-1942', giving a run-down of events several days before the Japanese capture of Kuching up to the surrender and internment of Sarawak officers. See the following entries; 7 September 1949, pp.218-220, 7 October 1949, pp.256-257, 7 November 1949, pp.289-291, 7 December 1949, pp.317-319, 7 January 1950, pp.13-15, and 7 February 1950, pp.38-39. See also Rev.Peter Howes, 'The Lintang Camp, Reminiscences of an Internee during the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society, Sarawak Branch*, no.2, March 1976.

²¹Le Gros Clark was shot at Keningau, along with other British civilians and a Chinese diplomat, a few months before the Japanese surrender.

as those who joined later were massacred by the Japanese between late August and September 1942.²²

The Japanese Occupation of Sarawak

The Kawaguchi Detachment left Borneo for the Philippines on 23 March 1942 and its former role in Borneo was taken over by the 4th Independent Mixed Brigade under the command of the Southern Army. The mission of the Mixed Brigade was to maintain peace and order, establish a military government and mop up the remaining enemy in western Borneo. This regiment was placed under the order of battle of the Borneo Garrison Army on 5 May 1942 and Kuching was established as its headquarters. The Army was responsible for the defence of

²²MacPherson's party travelled along the Rejang river, passing through Belaga and arriving at Long Nawang 28 days after leaving Sibiu. Upon arrival, they found that the Dutch had already evacuated the area and their only chance of getting out was by trekking through difficult jungle terrain to Samarinda. However, news later arrived that Samarinda had fallen to the Japanese. A small group led by the District Officer, H.P.K.Jacks, decided to try their luck and proceeded in search of an aerodrome. They were successful in locating the aerodrome and managed to escape to Java. Another party from Miri joined MacPherson, including the District Officer from Marudi, D.Hudden. Hudden later left and was murdered by a group of Ibans at Longbangan. A group of Dutch marines arrived in April 1942 at Long Nawang, followed by several American missionaries. The Japanese descended on Long Nawang in late August 1942. All the men in the party were massacred on 26 August and the women and children met a similar fate on 23 September. Among the dead were MacPherson and his family, S.G.Hanson, a District Officer and employees of the Sarawak oilfields at Miri. The book, *Lieutenant Okino*, London, 1968 by R.H.Hickling, gives a fictionalised version of the massacre. For a more detailed account of the events at Long Nawang, see 'Report by W.McKerracher, Manager of Rejang Timber Concession' in A.F.R.Griffin Papers, Mss Pac s 109 and 'Report concerning the massacre of Europeans, Longnawan, 1942' by VX31299, Lieutenant F.R.Oldham, 20 May 1946, in Sarawak War Crimes and Miscellaneous Reports, WO 203/5591.

British Borneo, while Dutch Borneo came under the control of the Japanese navy.²³

Meanwhile, in July 1942, the 4th Independent Mixed Brigade was reorganised into the 40th and 41st Independent Garrison infantry battalions in July 1942, each having approximately 500 men. In December 1942, the 41st infantry battalion was diverted to Siam and returned to Borneo at the end of 1943. Hence, for approximately one year, from the end of 1942 to 1943, about 500 men, belonging to the 40th battalion, garrisoned Borneo. Despite this limitation, the Japanese managed to extend the area under military government. In April 1944, the Borneo Garrison Army transferred its headquarters from Kuching to Jesselton. Owing to heightened enemy counter-offensives in the latter half of 1944, there was an urgent need to convert the Borneo Garrison Army into an operational one and, in September, it was reorganised into the 37th Army and placed under the direct command of the Southern Army. In December 1944, the operational zone of the 37th Army was extended to southern Borneo.²⁴

Under the Japanese, the designated area of 'North Borneo' referred to the four former British Borneo states of Sarawak, Brunei, Labuan and the territory previously occupied by the Chartered Company of North Borneo. Until June 1942, this area included Pontianak as well as the west coast of Dutch Borneo. On the assumption of control by the Borneo Garrison Army in

²³Ogawa and Masash, 'Borneo Operations, 1941-1945', pp.19-21.

²⁴Ibid., pp.28-31.

May 1942, North Borneo was divided into five provinces²⁵ with capitals at Kuching, Miri, Jesselton, Sandakan and Pontianak. In June 1942, the administrative divisions were reorganised; the Pontianak Province was excluded and came under the jurisdiction of the navy while the army was still responsible for the former territories of British Borneo. In lieu of Pontianak, the Sibiu Province was created in its place and covered the former Third Division of Sarawak as well as half of the Fourth Division.²⁶

The redrawing of territorial boundaries meant the division of the former territory occupied by the Chartered Company into two Provinces, the East Coast and the West Coast, each under a Governor. Brunei existed as a mere Prefecture within the Miri Province which comprised the oil-rich areas of British Borneo. In December 1943, minor adjustments were made to the divisional set-up with the addition of the Natuna islands to the Kuching Province.

As far as was possible, the Japanese maintained the pre-war administrative system, but staffed it with Japanese and some of the pre-war native officials. At the apex of the administration in each province, was the Governor while prefectures were under the charge of the Residents. The prefectures were in turn subdivided into smaller districts

²⁵During the Japanese occupation, the term 'Province' referred to division while 'Prefectures' corresponded to districts.

²⁶See 'Status of the Military Administration in North Borneo..' Nishijima collection, Waseda University, p.29 and Item no.2178 (Interrogation of Kuji Manabu), Bulletin no.237, WO 203/6317. Kuji Manabu was the Governor of the West Coast Province from December 1942 to July 1945 after which he was replaced by Major-General Kuroda.

under the control and surveillance of the chief Japanese officer or native officers; in pre-war days, this post was the equivalent of a District Officer.

A directive²⁷ issued by the Army Commander in 1942 indicated the chain of command in administration. Orders issued by Provincial Governors to Prefectural Residents could be modified by the latter as the local circumstances warranted. The Resident's primary duties were firstly, to keep law and order, secondly, to maintain the production of food and raw materials, and thirdly, to aim for self-sufficiency within their own prefectures. This was the original order of importance of the Resident's duties, but as the war situation deteriorated, self-sufficiency became the most important goal. Under the Brooke Rajahs, the Chief of Police in each division was subordinate to the District Officer, but the Japanese system placed the Chief of Police and the District Officer on an equal footing and both were under the direct orders of the Prefectural Resident.

Perhaps owing to a shortage of personnel, the Japanese appointed natives to positions of responsibility in government. Early in 1942, Abang Openg, who had worked as a Native Officer in the pre-war Brooke service was appointed District Officer of the Kuching Division.²⁸ The Dato Bandar,

²⁷This directive was titled 'The Fundamental Principles for the North Borneo Civil Administration', Item no.2178, Bulletin no.237, CO 203/6317.

²⁸J.Chin, 'Reminiscences of the Japanese Occupation', *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society, Sarawak Branch*, no.3, December 1976, p.17.

Abang Hj. Mustapha, held the post of district court magistrate until the Japanese surrender. Ibans were also given access to the administrative service as illustrated in the case of Empenit Adam, who served as a District Officer during the greater part of the Japanese occupation. It may be assumed that the Japanese were aware that non-Malay natives, particularly the Ibans, although large in numbers, were not proportionally represented in the government service. In an effort to redress this balance, Eliab Bay, an Iban, was appointed in January 1942 as Liaison Officer in Iban affairs.²⁹ That his position held some importance was confirmed by the fact that other Ibans were appointed as District Officers on his recommendation. Bay was also responsible for the supervision of Iban and Chinese padi planting teams and played an important role in the transportation of padi and other essential foodstuff in Sarawak.

Another channel of native participation was by means of the *ken sanji-kai* or the Prefectural Advisory Council established in October 1943.³⁰ This body was set up by Setno Yamada,³¹ an Oxford graduate and an influential Japanese army official, with the aim of allowing native members the opportunity to give advice and assistance on administrative matters and

²⁹Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p.147.

³⁰See 'Extracts from a broadcast interview by Christopher Chan and Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui, 14 February 1975', published in the *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society, Sarawak Branch*, no.3, December 1976, p.9.

³¹Yamada was seconded from the Department of Interior in Japan and was posted to Sarawak in 1943 as head of the 37th Army's research section. In 1944, he was made head of the general affairs division in Kuching.

economic projects. Meetings of the *ken sanji* were also used to disseminate Japanese propaganda and discredit the former Brooke government.³² Members were drawn from the old Malay elite and Iban local leaders such as Tuanku Bujang, Abang Openg, Charles Mason and Philip Jitam. Apart from the natives, local Chinese also participated in the Councils as extraordinary members and among the more prominent were Ong Kuan Hin and Lee Wing Thoong.

In an effort to ferret out the anti-Japanese elements in the population, the Japanese instituted a vigilante system or the *jikeidan*. This system divided centres of population into manageable units of approximately thirty households, each under the supervision of a local leader. These leaders were responsible to the police and were answerable for all activities in their designated areas. They bore resemblance to Brooke-appointed officials such as the *tua kampongs*, who were in charge of the Malay and Melanau villages, and the *penghulus*, who acted as headmen in the native longhouses. It was not clear whether the *jikeidan* leaders held the same status as the above-mentioned pre-war native officials or whether the former displaced the latter altogether. Reece maintained that the *jikeidan* provided a "structure of social organisation and responsibility previously unknown in Sarawak".³³ It may be worthwhile to note a major difference in the nature of the two systems, that is, in the *jikeidan*, emphasis was laid more on its police duties and its

³²Minutes of meeting of the Simanggang Ken Sanji held on 10 Ichi-gatsu, 2604, JAP/2, Kuching District Office File.

³³Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p.146.

organisation was akin to an "informal spy network", while the Brooke native officials' task was more diverse and largely administrative.

By 1944, the Japanese position in Borneo had weakened irreversibly and the war was beginning to take a heavy toll on the population. As a result, the Japanese intensified their propaganda campaign and urged the people to work harder. Civil servants were required to do manual work projects and grow food crops. The general feeling then was that the war would end in late 1945 or early 1946. Since it was expected that the Allies, in order to defeat Japan, would have to take island by island, the Japanese were determined to make each Allied territorial gain as costly as possible. It was hoped that this strategy of attrition would pressure the Allies to come to terms. To this end, all Japanese garrisons were ordered to fight to the last man. When the Imperial order to surrender was known in Borneo, the Japanese were taken by surprise. On 6 September, a despatch arrived from Singapore ordering the Commander of the 37th Army to begin negotiations for surrender with the commanding officer of the 9th Australian Division. On 10 September 1945, Lieutenant-General Baba accompanied by his staff surrendered to Major-General Wootten at Labuan. However, several detachments refused to lay down their arms immediately and the surrender did not become complete until 8 November when the Fujino force submitted to the Allies in the Ulu Trusan.

The Japanese allowed natives greater participation in government during their brief occupation of Sarawak. Of importance was the opportunity given to the non-Malay natives such as the Ibans in exercising important administrative functions. Eliab Bay, for example, was given wide discretionary powers as Liaison Officer for the Iban community. However, it must be noted that the Japanese were more interested in the propaganda value of appointing local officers rather than giving these natives proper administrative guidance. Although the Japanese had tried to enlist the support of the local residents in Sarawak, the deprivations brought on by the occupation eventually alienated the natives. Towards the latter half of the occupation, food had become scarce in the towns and the Japanese practice of using forced labour to build airfields and roads further caused resentment among the local population.³⁴

British Post-War Planning for Borneo

Colonial Office planning for the post-war military administration of Britain's colonies and dependencies in the Far East began as early as 1942. Talks between the Colonial Office and the War Office eventually led to the institution, in February 1943, of the Malayan Planning Unit under Major-General Hone. Its authority was, however, only effective

³⁴Sutlive, *Tun Jugah of Sarawak*, p.105.

within the area falling under the British South-East Asia Command (S.E.A.C.), which excluded Borneo.³⁵

In March 1942, it was agreed between the United States and Britain that the conduct of operations in the Pacific would become an American responsibility and General MacArthur was appointed Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific Area (S.W.P.A.), under the United States Chief of Staff. General Sir Thomas Blamey, Commander-in-chief of the Australian Forces (A.M.F.), took charge of the Allied land forces for the Borneo area.³⁶ These forces were then, and for a long time to come, predominantly Australian.

The Borneo Planning Unit (B.P.U.), which was established within the Colonial Office and staffed by civilians, was inaugurated in October 1943.³⁷ C.F.C. Macaskie³⁸, an officer of the North Borneo Service, who was then on leave in Britain, was appointed head of the Unit and Chief Civil Affairs Officer for Borneo in 1943. Policy from the outset envisaged a single civil affairs administration bringing Sarawak, Brunei, Labuan and North Borneo under centralised control. The main object for the Borneo territories was to ensure that their future political and social development did not run contrary to general colonial policies. The B.P.U. was

³⁵Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p.172.

³⁶F.S.V.Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-1946*, London, 1956, p.171.

³⁷See report titled, 'British Military Administration of Borneo', CO 203/2400 and Reece, pp.172-173.

³⁸Macaskie served briefly as Chief Secretary in Sarawak, on secondment from North Borneo, from 1932 to 1934. See Chapter 3 p.86. He was the Chief Justice and Deputy Governor of North Borneo from 1934 until the Japanese invasion.

established on the assumption that the Borneo states would fall under British control. It later transpired that Borneo would, in actual fact, be within the American and Australian sphere of influence. In spite of this, the British were given a role in the future development of the Borneo states through the charter of the Combined Civil Affairs Committee in which Britain could provide the American commander with civil affairs policy directives for the Borneo territories.

The British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit (B.B.C.A.U)

The staff of the B.P.U. gradually increased to 14 and this number remained almost constant until December 1944 when it expanded further and the B.P.U. began to be militarised and became known as the 50th Civil Affairs Unit (50 C.A.U.), headed by Macaskie.³⁹ On 9 April, a group of 35 officers of the 50 C.A.U. nearly all from the former administrations of British Borneo, arrived in Australia. The 50 C.A.U. personnel learned that the Borneo operation was to be staged earlier than expected and a primarily Australian civil affairs force was hastily organised to do the tasks which the 50 C.A.U. had been planning for years to perform.⁴⁰ The Australian force, known as British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit (B.B.C.A.U.), was under Colonel A.A. Conlon, who was also holding the post of army Director of Research and Civil Affairs at General

³⁹'British Military Administration of Borneo', p.2.

⁴⁰G.Long, *The Final Campaigns*, Canberra, 1963, p.401. Long's book is Vol.VII in the Australian official series, *Australia in the War of 1939-1945*.

Blamey's land headquarters in Melbourne. The mobilization base for the Australian forces and the 50 C.A.U. was established at Ingleburn Camp near Sydney where the necessary documentation took place to second or attach British officers to the Australian force.

Conlon apparently was determined to exert Australian influence as a mandate power in Borneo and he attempted and succeeded in delaying the transfer of British officers to the B.B.C.A.U., thus preventing their early posting to Borneo.⁴¹ It was even alleged that there was rivalry between Conlon and Macaskie and, the former often depicted Macaskie as representing Colonial Office interference in policies. Although Macaskie was the chief planner and had had several years of experience in North Borneo, the concrete military plan was not revealed to him until much later. It was not until June 1945 that the 50 C.A.U. was merged with the Australian unit and Macaskie eventually took command of the B.B.C.A.U. in July 1945. By August, the unit had 138 Australian officers and 48 British officers.⁴² Although there existed friction between the Australian and British personnel within the B.B.C.A.U., the disagreements were confined to the higher ranks and there was little evidence of non-cooperation between the two groups of officers in the field.

⁴¹In a letter to General Berryman, Conlon maintained that it was difficult to include most of the British officers during the initial operational stage. See Long, p.402.

⁴²Long, p.405.

The tasks assigned to the civil affairs unit were to establish administration in the re-occupied areas of British Borneo, the distribution of relief supplies and services as well as providing assistance to the operational forces.⁴³ The reoccupation of Borneo was effected in June 1945 with the landing of the 9th Australian division in Brunei Bay. After preliminary bombardment, the liberating forces succeeded in securing control of the oil fields and refinery in north-east Borneo and by 13 June they had cleared the coastal area stretching from Miri to Papar, of Japanese troops.

Units of the B.B.C.A.U. sent earlier to Borneo were instrumental in extending administrative control of reoccupied areas alongside the Services Reconnaissance Department (S.R.D.).⁴⁴ The latter was the Australian equivalent of the British Force 136 in Malaya. The first S.R.D. party to arrive in Sarawak was dropped at Bario in March 1945 and its primary objective was to assess and prepare the way for further operations. On 27 April, the B.B.C.A.U. advance headquarters and the first detachment arrived at Morotai on 7 May. By an arrangement made between the guerrilla organisation and B.B.C.A.U. in June 1945,

⁴³Ibid., p.402, fn.1. See also 'Report on Operations during the Borneo Campaign', 1 May to 15 August 1945', WO 203/2690.

⁴⁴The Sarawak S.R.D. operation was divided into three separate commands; Semut I under the command of Major T.Harrison and covering the Kelabit and Murut areas; Semut II under the charge of Major G.S.Carter and covering the Baram and Tinjar rivers, Bintulu and Miri areas and Semut III under Major W.L.Sochon, covering the Rejang and southwards. Sochon was additionally instructed to raise a guerrilla force of ex-rangers and members of the Constabulary. See Sarawak Gazette, 12 April 1951 and G.S.Carter, 'Services Reconnaissance Detachment', Kinabalu National Memorial Park Project, a Proposal for Commemoration, ed. Carter, Kuala Belait, Brunei Press, 1958.

members of the B.B.C.A.U. were infiltrated into S.R.D. positions and they assisted in re-establishing civilian administration behind Japanese lines.

Wherever possible, S.R.D. acted as advance representatives of B.B.C.A.U. On the other hand, B.B.C.A.U. furnished the S.R.D. with all civil affairs policy directives and kept them informed on all matters of general policy in connection with territorial administration. As soon as an area was re-occupied, control would pass on to members of the B.B.C.A.U. acting under the task force. If necessary, B.B.C.A.U. would provide S.R.D. with personnel to assist in areas not yet re-occupied. This applied particularly to members of the Unit who had previous experience in the area.

After preliminary air and naval bombardment, the Australian Military Force launched two landings on 10 June 1945. Lieutenant-General Sir L.J.Morshead, of the 1st Australian Corps, then proclaimed martial law and established military administration on the same day.⁴⁵ During the next two weeks, the Australian force succeeded in extending control to Labuan, Brunei, Weston and Miri. Beaufort and Papar in North Borneo were taken on 27 June and 12 July respectively. By mid-July, B.B.C.A.U. had already established control over the north-eastern part of North Borneo, Brunei and much of northern Sarawak. As the S.R.D. was operating behind Japanese lines throughout this period, the B.B.C.A.U. already held the

⁴⁵'British Borneo Military Administration Gazette', 1 September 1945, CO 855/56.

greater part of Sarawak by the time of the Japanese surrender on 10 September. On the disbandment of their forces, many of the S.R.D. officers were posted to B.B.C.A.U. and the transfer from guerrilla control to military administration was effected smoothly.

After the Japanese surrender, the area under civil affairs control was gradually extended to cover the whole of British Borneo. The operational phase came to a close in October 1945 and, by then, all the Japanese troops in Borneo had laid down their arms except for the outlaw Fujino force in the Ulu Madihit-Limbang area; they eventually surrendered in November. From 10 June 1945 to 5 January 1946, the responsibility for administration rested with the Commander-in-Chief of the Australian forces, through the officer commanding the 9th Australian division. There was no delegation of powers to the Chief Civil Affairs Officer and all questions of policy had to be referred to and all proclamations signed by the Officer Commanding the 9th Australian division.

It is useful here to see how the B.B.C.A.U. was organised territorially. In November, the Unit embraced six divisions as follows;

a) Kuching Division - under the command of Major W.P.N.L. Ditmas and covering Kuching, Simanggang, Bau and Serian with its headquarters at Kuching.

b)Sibu Division - under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel J.K.McCarthy and covering Sibu, Sarikei, Rejang, Mukah and Oya with its headquarters at Sibu.

c)Miri Division - under the command of J.R.Black and covering Miri, Marudi, Bintulu and Sibuti with the headquarters at Miri. The Ulu Trusan was under the command of Major T.Harrisson and the Murut area eventually came under the Miri Division in January 1946.

d)Brunei-Labuan Division - under the command of Wing-Commander K.E.H.Kay and covering Brunei, Labuan, Kuala Belait, Limbang and Lawas with its headquarters at Brunei.

e)Jesselton Division - under the command of Lieutenant Colonel R.G.P.N.Combe and covering Jesselton, Weston, Kudat, Mempakul, Papar and Beaufort with its headquarters at Jesselton.

f)Sandakan Division - under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel H.M.Tasker and covering Sandakan, Simporna, Tawau, Sapi and Lahad Datu with its headquarters at Sandakan.

The British Military Administration of Sarawak

On 5 January 1946, Brigadier E.C.J.Woodford, officer commanding the 32nd Indian Infantry Brigade, took over the command of the military forces from Brigadier T.C.Eastick, commanding the 9th Australian Division. On 10 January, B.B.C.A.U. ceased to be an Australian unit and became a British establishment under the title of British Military

Administration (B.M.A.), British Borneo.⁴⁶ Macaskie, who was the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, was assigned powers so as to enable him to conduct the military administration in the four Borneo states of Labuan, Brunei, Sarawak and North Borneo.

The Australian government permitted the B.M.A. to retain the services of members of the Australian forces who had earlier volunteered to remain temporarily in Sarawak as attached officers. 57 Australian officers decided to continue their services in British Borneo and their offers were gratefully accepted. These officers had acquired local experience and would be of immediate value as Administrative Officers when civilian administration began.⁴⁷

The B.M.A., which assumed the administration of the British Borneo territories until the next civilian government took office, governed the whole of British Borneo as a single entity.⁴⁸ Until then, the Head of Administration in Labuan was responsible for each Sarawak division separately, but from 11 January 1946, Sarawak was administered as a whole. British Borneo then became divided into two Subordinate Area Commands with Sarawak under Colonel H.H.Goss and the states of Brunei,

⁴⁶On 5 January 1946, Admiral Lord Mountbatten proclaimed that "a military administration to be called the British Military Administration, British Borneo, is hereby established to replace the administration recently functioning under and by virtue of the Martial Law (Continuance) Proclamation, 1945". See 'British Military Administration Gazette, 1 February 1946, CO 855/56.

⁴⁷Lieutenant Colonel E.P.Hill, Liaison Officer, B.B.C.A.U./S.R.D. to Headquarters, 22 September 1945, C.F.C.Macaskie Papers, Mss Pac s 71.

⁴⁸Sarawak Tribune, 16 January, 1946.

North Borneo and Labuan under Colonel R.G.P.N.Combe.⁴⁹ Both Area Commanders were issued with warrants enabling them to exercise, on the Chief Civil Affairs Officer's behalf, necessary executive and administrative powers in their own respective areas. The tasks assigned were, briefly, to maintain law and order and ensure adequate food and relief supplies, to set up an administrative machinery and recruit local staff. The administration gradually transformed from one of operational necessity to that of reconstruction.

In February 1946, certain departments at the Labuan headquarters were reorganised. The British Borneo Police Force, and departments such as the Agriculture, Lands and Survey, Public Works and Customs, were divided, each becoming responsible for the state of Sarawak on the one hand and the remainder of British Borneo, on the other. These departments became territorially independent while the headquarters of the Chief Civil Affairs Officer coordinated policy.

One major difficulty faced by the B.M.A. was the shortage of personnel. Many officers with valuable experience were lost when the Australian forces withdrew.⁵⁰ Even with Colonial Office incentives giving the Australians priority for service in post-war Borneo, many officers could not be induced to stay on and it was not found possible to replace all of them

⁴⁹G.Graham-King, Director of Civil Affairs, War Office to Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, 2 October 1945, CO 203/3973

⁵⁰Headquarters, B.M.A. Labuan, to Colonel Rolleston, 20 March 1946, Macaskie Papers.

with newly-arrived officers between December 1945 and January 1946.⁵¹

Conclusion

On 15 April, the military administration in Sarawak formally handed over the government to Rajah Vyner. By then, negotiations were already underway for the cession of Sarawak to the British Crown and the Rajah's return to Sarawak in April was to explain to the people his decision and attempt to secure token approval on the cession issue. Even before the Japanese occupation, it had been suggested that the Colonial Office would eventually assume responsibility for the government of Sarawak. Colonial Office efforts to exert some influence in Sarawak materialised in October 1941 when the Rajah signed an agreement allowing for the appointment of a British Representative who was "entitled to offer his opinion on matters touching the general administration of Sarawak".⁵²

The Labour government, which had assumed power in Britain after the war, was not inclined to be sympathetic to the perpetuation of Rajah rule in Sarawak. As a result of the Japanese occupation, pressure could be brought to bear on the Rajah to yield to the prospect of cession. The Colonial

⁵¹F.G.Drew, War Office, to Macaskie, 15 March 1946, Macaskie Papers. Contracts for service within Sarawak after the termination of the B.M.A., were offered to 17 men from the Australian forces.

⁵²See Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp.289-290, for the text of the Supplementary Agreement of 1941 signed between Britain and the Rajah-in-Council and Chapter 3 p.131.

Office impressed upon the Rajah that the Sarawak government resources were inadequate for post-war reconstruction. The extension of colonial rule to Sarawak instead of being a strong possibility, now became a necessity in order to uplift the state from the ravages of war.

One important outcome of the Japanese occupation was the introduction of the Australian element in Sarawak administration. This was made possible by the Australian participation in the liberation of British Borneo and their subsequent involvement in the military administration. These Australian officers, who had accumulated considerable experience, could be recruited as Administrative Officers and two officers, Captains Richard Morris and Gordon Roberts, gained admission into the Sarawak Administrative Service.

While the impact of the Japanese occupation on the natives is difficult to gauge, the Japanese invasion demonstrated the strategic importance of Sarawak and the enormous potential of the Miri oil reserves. Furthermore, the suspicion of Australian motives and rumours about their intent in the South-West Pacific area, whether unfounded or not, contributed towards the hardening of British attitudes in favour of cession.

CHAPTER 5

SARAWAK, 1946-1954: THE TRANSITION TOWARDS A CROWN COLONY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE

The cession of Sarawak to the British Crown became a reality in July 1946¹ and the country now joined the ranks of other new colonies to swell the expanding seams of the British Empire. This chapter highlights developments in the Sarawak Administrative Service from 1946 to 1954 and traces the various problems associated with the transformation of Sarawak into a Crown Colony. With its new status as a British colony, Sarawak could not be isolated from changes which were taking place in the rest of the Empire nor could it be spared from Colonial Office directives which were instrumental in dictating the nature and pace of change.

This chapter discusses the issues and problems that beset the Colonial Office in drawing up new terms of employment for the Sarawak government leading to the appointment in 1947 of the Trusted Commission. The general developments of the Administrative Service during this period as well as the administrative links established between Sarawak and Brunei will also be examined.

¹For events leading to the cession of Sarawak, see Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, passim.

Background

During the Japanese occupation, Sarawak was fortunate to have escaped extensive physical damage, unlike North Borneo where major towns were flattened by Allied bombing. Most of the war damage inflicted on Sarawak was confined to the north-east, stretching from Bintulu to Miri. Economically, however, the Japanese left the country in a deplorable state of neglect. Moreover, the shortcomings of Brooke government, such as the lack of development of education and health services, were carried over into the post-war period. When the British assumed responsibility for the government of Sarawak on 1 July 1946, the country was found to be badly equipped for major development programmes and handicapped for the restructuring and improvement of essential services which were necessary in order to bring the state on par with other colonies.

Sarawak's resources were relatively under-exploited under the Brooke Rajahs and the country was seriously devoid of any proper economic infrastructure. Roads were sparse and were limited to the Kuching area, and the promotion of education had not been given due attention.² There were hardly enough schools for the local population, and the few government schools which existed, catered mainly for Malay students,

²It was only in 1923 that a Director of Education was appointed, but this post was abolished in 1933. The responsibility for education was then divided between the Chief Secretary, who looked after the mission schools, the Secretary of Native Affairs, who was given charge of Malay and Dayak schools, and the Secretary of Chinese Affairs, who assumed responsibility for Chinese schools. It was not until 1939 that the post of Director of Education was again revived.

while the Chinese, through their mutual self-help associations, provided Chinese schools. Apart from these, education was left largely in the hands of the Christian missions.³ Although Sarawak then was a predominantly agricultural country, information on acreage and yield, except for rubber, was virtually non-existent.⁴

Sarawak, in 1946, did not have the financial means to cope with major development needs after the war. It had an appropriated surplus balance in the public exchequer of assets totalling \$19 million, but the cost of Sarawak's rehabilitation would consume most of these reserves.⁵ Furthermore, Sarawak lacked the manpower and expertise to manage the post-war government as a number of its senior officers had either been interned or had died during the war and the technical branches of government were also very weak.⁶

³Before the war, only about 2-3% of the revenue was spent on education. The figures for children attending school in 1940 are as follows;

	<u>Children attending school</u>	<u>1940 Population Estimate</u>
Chinese	19,648 (16%)	123,626
Malays	4,317 (4.6%)	92,701
Others	1,162 (0.4%)	274,258

See minute by N.J.Reddaway, 1 January 1947, CO 938 1/6.

⁴Sarawak's rubber acreage was surveyed as a result of the International Rubber Regulation Agreement of 1934. See MacFadzean's Report, 'Proposals for Assistance under the Colonial and Development and Welfare Act', 15 November 1946, CO 938 1/6.

⁵It was not known in what form the assets were or whether they were easily recoverable. The Treasury ledgers containing records for the years from 1939 to 1941, as well as subsidiary records, were destroyed by the Japanese. The figure of \$19 million was quoted by the Treasury after studying all sources of available evidence and was considered by the Council Negri members of 1946 to be an accurate estimate. See *Sarawak Gazette*, 2 January 1947 and *Council Negri Proceedings*, 2 December 1946.

⁶A.Morrison, 'Development in Sarawak in the Colonial Period: A Personal Memoir' in R.A.Cramb and R.H.W.Reece, eds., *Development in Sarawak: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Monash Paper Southeast Asia no.17, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash Univ., 1988, p.36.

The colonial government took several steps to put Sarawak back on its feet again. A census was undertaken in November 1947 and various geological and socio-economic surveys on the Iban, Bidayuh, Melanau and Chinese communities were proposed.⁷ Under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945, the Borneo territories were collectively allocated a total of \$12.8 million and Sarawak was initially granted \$5.4 million to finance her development needs and improve social services.⁸ The condition attached by the then British government was that Sarawak should introduce trade union legislation as soon as possible.

The Colonial Office assigned H.S.MacFadzean to examine Sarawak's development needs. His report, 'Proposals for Assistance under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act', submitted in 1947, became the basis for a comprehensive programme of economic and social development in Sarawak for the next five years.⁹ This was later broadened into a First

⁷The anthropological studies were under the direction of E.R.Leach and were commissioned by the Sarawak government so that it could "formulate and implement development projects on the basis of sound ethnographic data on Sarawak's peoples". See V.T.King, 'Anthropology and Rural Development in Sarawak', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, vol.XXXVI, no.57, December 1986, p.14, and E.R.Leach, *Social Science Research in Sarawak. A Report on the Possibilities of a Social Economic Survey of Sarawak presented to the Colonial Social Science Research Council*, London, HMSO, Colonial Research Studies, no.1, 1950. However, King in his article (p.33), remarked that evidence seemed to suggest that the colonial government was not "particularly interested in applying the findings and suggestions" of these early anthropological studies.

⁸The British Parliament voted a total of £120 million for development purposes in the colonies for a period of ten years beginning from April 1946. A greater part of these funds was channelled to the many British colonies in the African continent.

⁹Minute by A.N.Galsworthy, 28 January 1947. See also minute by N.J.Reddaway, 4 December 1946, CO 938 1/6.

Development Plan, covering the years from 1947 to 1956, for which the government allocated an expenditure of \$23.5 million. The main aims of the Plan were, firstly, to increase the production of foodstuffs with particular emphasis on rice and, secondly, to expand Sarawak's existing exports.¹⁰ Since sago was one of Sarawak's more important exports then, one of the initial schemes underlined by MacFadzean was the rehabilitation of the sago industry. MacFadzean also stressed the importance of employing the services of a Development Secretary whose duties were to collate information on the state's resources and requirements and coordinate proposals put forward by Residents and departmental heads.¹¹

The post-war period was also the scene of a bitter controversy over the cession issue. Local opposition to the cession of Sarawak to the British Crown had stirred strong sentiments among the local population and gave rise to numerous expressions of dissent such as the Malay National Union and the Sarawak Dayak Association.¹² C.W.Dawson, a former Malayan Civil Service officer, was appointed as the British Representative in Sarawak in April 1946 pending cession, and his task was to oversee a smooth path to cession.¹³

¹⁰Morrison, 'Development in Sarawak', p.38.

¹¹Extract from a Residents' Conference held in Kuching, 6-9 December 1946, CO 938 1/6.

¹²For an indepth discussion of the various local reactions to cession, see Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp.205-240 and Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Singapore, 1985, pp.37-62.

¹³Dawson joined the Malayan Civil Service in 1920 and, in November 1940, he was appointed Secretary of Defence for Malaya. He was interned in Singapore during the Japanese occupation. When Sarawak

In May 1946, a British Parliamentary mission toured Sarawak for the purpose of ascertaining the views of the people on cession. The mission took the view that there was sufficient favourable opinion among the local population and it called for a vote on the cession issue in the legislative council, the Council Negri. After a vote of 19 for and 16 against, the cession bill was passed in the Council Negri on 15 May, thus legitimizing the transfer of Sarawak's government to the British Crown.¹⁴ The manner in which the passing of the bill was conducted was open to controversy, specifically because the Council Negri had a dominant official representation and therefore did not reflect the opinions of the majority of the local people. The Malays under the Brookes had enjoyed a position of privilege in government, monopolising important posts. The Brooke Rajahs relied on the Malays, particularly those from the *perabangan* class, in the administration of Sarawak. This Malay elite was apprehensive lest their privileged status should suffer under the newly-constituted colonial government, and the anti-cession movement which evolved, was a manifestation of their opposition to change and desire for the restoration of the pre-war status quo.

Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, who had wide experience as an administrator in the African colonies, was appointed as the

became a colony, Dawson assumed the post of Chief Secretary and remained in that capacity until his retirement in 1950.

¹⁴Liang Kim Bang, *Constitutional Advancement and Political Development of Sarawak, 1941-1957*, Singapore, 1960, p.7.

first colonial Governor of Sarawak in October 1946.¹⁵ The Colonial Office decision to appoint Arden-Clarke was met with surprise in Sarawak as many had thought that the first Governor would be someone familiar with the region. A more plausible candidate was the then British Representative, Dawson. Reece maintained that the choice of an 'African' was intended to make a "clean break with the Brooke past" and Arden-Clarke was seen as being capable of handling the transition of Sarawak to its new colonial status.¹⁶

Among Arden-Clarke's outstanding contributions to Sarawak was his influence in the introduction of local government. He felt that the institutions of local government could be utilised to give measured responsibilities to the people in the tasks of administration. Arden-Clarke wrote a comprehensive tract, 'Note on the Development of Local Government in Sarawak', and played an important role in the drafting of the 1948 Local Authority Ordinance.¹⁷ Although he recognised Sarawak's urgent need for important reforms, Arden-Clarke moved cautiously in introducing changes and attempted to ensure that these did not run counter to Brooke traditions of government. Important features of Brooke rule

¹⁵Arden-Clarke, born in 1898, joined the Colonial Service in 1920 and served as an Administrative Officer in Northern Nigeria until 1933. He had an illustrious career in Africa before being posted to Sarawak. Between 1934 to 1936, he was Acting Principal Secretary of the Nigerian Secretariat, later becoming Government Secretary and Resident Commissioner of Bechuanaland in 1936 and 1937 respectively. From 1941 to 1946, Arden-Clarke served as Resident Commissioner of Basutoland. He assumed duty as Governor of Sarawak on 19 October 1946.

¹⁶Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p.257.

¹⁷The growth of local government in Sarawak will be discussed in Chapter 8.

such as the wide accessibility of government to the people was continued and Administrative Officers were encouraged to travel extensively in their districts.

It is against this background that Sarawak began as a new colony in July 1946. With its new status, Sarawak now was expected to abide by Colonial Office guidelines concerning the tasks of government and administration. In order to appreciate the context of post-war changes on the administration of Sarawak, it is worthwhile here to trace briefly the history of the Colonial Service between the wars and in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.

Developments in the Colonial Service

The British Colonial Empire at the end of the First World War, was, in terms of its size, at its peak. The League of Nations had added responsibility for the administration of Palestine, Tanganyika, Iraq and other smaller ex-German territories to the Empire, which by then had encompassed territories in east, west and central Africa, Ceylon, the Malay Peninsula and other innumerable islands spread over the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans.¹⁸ These territories were subject to the authority of the British Crown, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies was given charge for the responsibility of advising the Crown on colonial affairs and

¹⁸The self-governing Dominions of India and Burma also preoccupied Britain.

to convey policy to the various local administrations. The Colonial Office acted as a Secretariat translating policy decisions into appropriate action.¹⁹

From the early 1920s onwards, the Colonial Office became increasingly concerned with the management of the Colonial Service in an effort to streamline its organisation and improve efficiency and recruitment of new candidates for the public services in the colonies. However, it should be borne in mind that the public services of each administrative unit in the Colonial Empire must be viewed as a self-contained entity in itself and that officers of the Colonial Service were employed by each individual colonial government and not the government of Britain, the Colonial Office or the Secretary of State for the Colonies. But it can also be argued that as long as Britain held effective control over the financial and administrative operations of each colonial territory, leverage on them could be exercised by London in an indirect manner.

Until 1930, the Colonial Service had not officially existed.²⁰ Each territorial government under the responsibility of the Secretary of State, had its own public service which was paid for from its revenue, subject to its laws and regulations. The Governor of each territory appointed officers to their posts but was obliged to follow directions given by the Secretary of State. The impetus for unification grew as a

¹⁹C. Jeffries, *Whitehall and the Colonial Office: An Administrative Memoir, 1939-1956*, London, 1972, pp.1-2.

²⁰See *ibid.*, pp.11-12.

result of the needs of the various colonial territories for well-qualified candidates which could not be met under the existing system. Suitably qualified candidates had a tendency to prefer a career in which they were ensured of good prospects, guaranteed by the supervision and protection of His Majesty's government.

Unification of the Colonial Service was put into operation in October 1930 and its aim was to provide suitable candidates for admission into a prestigious corporate Service with standardised and improved conditions of service. Furthermore, officers employed by the unified Colonial Service, had the added advantage of promotion beyond the colony which first employed them.

In 1945, steps were taken by the Colonial Service Division to outline a scheme for improving the Service in a White Paper which could then be published as a statement of government policy. However, the scheme met with opposition from the Secretary of State who felt that the Empire was still grappling with enormous problems brought on by the war and the time was not yet opportune to bring it into practice. The Secretary of State's decision meant that it was almost impossible to offer standardised conditions of service and hence each colony was encouraged to institute reforms itself. In an attempt to adapt to the post-war situation, most colonial governments found it necessary to seek the expertise of an authoritative commission to suggest revisions in the structure of the public services.

The Far Eastern dependencies presented a completely different problem. Owing to the Japanese occupation, the public services were found to be in a state of neglect and the difficulty was not essentially a matter of realigning war-time arrangements with post-war circumstances but rather a question of starting from scratch to rebuild the public services. These colonies looked to the Colonial Office for guidelines and the Colonial Service Division was prompted to draft a statement of policy for the Colonial Service resulting in the publication, in 1946, of the White Paper, *Organisation of the Colonial Service*.

The White Paper addressed various difficulties posed by the post-war situation and proposed several measures through which colonies could overcome their problems. One of the main points laid out in the Paper was the importance of the participation of locally-recruited staff to complement existing British personnel in the colonies. Hence the training of local people became an important issue in the post-war era. Moreover, if self-government within the framework of the British Commonwealth of Nations was to be achieved, the public services in the colonies would have to rely more and more on employing their local or native staff.²¹ The reality of the situation was that most, if not all the colonies, were ill-equipped for the tasks of self-government and were at the same time hampered by the lack of

²¹Colonial Office, *Organisation of the Colonial Service*, Colonial no.197, London, HMSO, 1946, p.3.

opportunities for education and training. Even as early as 1942, the then Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Harold Macmillan, had called for increasing the opportunities for 'native peoples' of the colonies so that they would be able "to acquire the qualifications for service and the desire to serve".²² As a result, many colonies would have to rely on Britain for the staffing of its public services for the near future. In the light of these demands, and owing to political and social developments, the Labour government felt that Britain's prime task for her colonies lay in the improvement and quality of the Colonial Service.²³

The structure and organisation of the Colonial Service itself needed readjustment in order to accommodate changes after the war. The Colonial Service, according to the White Paper, should be increasingly seen as an institution in which the right people had equal opportunities to undergo appropriate training and instruction. Greater emphasis was now given on the type of training for officers so as to ensure that the administrator in the field would be better prepared to deal with the different post-war circumstances. The training of indigenous candidates also received attention in the White Paper. The passing of the Colonial and Development Welfare Act was a step in this direction. In 1946, it allocated £1,000,000 over the next ten years for the provision of

²²See 'The War Effort and Colonial Policy: Speech by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (Harold Macmillan) in the House of Commons, 24 June 1942', *Hansard Parliamentary Debates* (1941-1942), vol.380, cols.2003, also quoted in A.N.Porter and A.J.Stockwell, *British Imperial Policy and Decolonisation, 1938-1964*, vol.I, 1938-1951, London, 1987, pp.109-124.

²³*Organisation of the Colonial Service*, p.4.

programmes for professional and vocational training for locally-recruited staff.

It was desirable that differences in service conditions among the various colonies should be reduced to a minimum. In this respect, the colonies themselves would have to abide by guidelines drawn up by Whitehall. The difficulties of having a uniform pattern of salaries and terms of service throughout the colonies, were obvious and guidelines given should instead be looked upon as objectives rather than rigidly applied.

The question of the determination of salaries and remuneration also received attention. The White Paper stated that salaries should be decided firstly, according to the nature of the work of the officer concerned and his relative responsibilities and, secondly, at rates applicable to locally-recruited staff. Thirdly, salaries should reflect local circumstances such as the prevailing income levels, and fourthly, in cases where salaries were insufficient to attract and retain officers from overseas, expatriation pay should be provided.²⁴

A general review of the conditions of service was deemed essential to ensure the attractiveness of the Colonial Service as a career alternative. As an illustration, it was proposed that the system of long tours be replaced by a system of annual holidays and frequent postings to remote

²⁴Ibid., p.8.

outstations avoided. Another suggestion put forward by the White Paper concerned the development of regional arrangements between neighbouring countries for the pooling of staff. It raised the possibility of establishing a central executive authority on the spot to manage a regional service.

The White Paper of 1946 also stipulated that the burden of financing the cost of expatriate officers in the Colonial Service would be borne by Britain. Perhaps, in the short term, this would be advantageous as the colonies could divert more funds to development programmes. In the long run, however, it might give rise to a situation whereby the local colonial legislature had no control over expatriate officers whose terms of employment were governed by the Colonial Office. A gulf between the expatriate and local officers could result and this might erode the "spirit of cooperation in a common task".

The various difficulties faced by Sarawak in adjusting the conditions of service of its government officers in the aftermath of the Japanese occupation will be dealt with in the next section.

New Service Conditions for Sarawak Officers, 1946-1947

After the cession of Sarawak in July 1946, it was found necessary to institute changes with regard to the terms of

service of the civil service staff.²⁵ Two factors had an important bearing on the nature of these conditions and the terms of service that eventually materialised. First was the condition of cession postulated by Rajah Vyner which stipulated that officers of the Sarawak Service should not be employed on less favourable terms than those which had existed prior to cession. Second, in any long term policy considerations, it was desirable that service conditions in both Sarawak and North Borneo be identical.²⁶

Section 3 of the Sarawak Cession Instrument reads;

All persons who, immediately before the date of cession, are employed in the service of the Government of Sarawak will be continued in their employment by His Majesty on terms not less favourable than those obtaining before the date of cession save that they shall hold office at the pleasure of His Majesty.²⁷

The Colonial Office found itself bound by the above prerequisite of cession. In the event of the formulation of new service conditions, former officers of the Brooke Service had to be given the freedom to choose whether to accept the new conditions or continue with the old. On the other hand, for practical purposes, it was obviously desirable that all officers should be governed by the same conditions; the continuation of old conditions with the new would give rise to enormous problems.

²⁵N.L.Mayle to T.K.Lloyd, 6 July 1946, CO 531 32/7.

²⁶A.N.Galsworthy to Tegetmeier, 6 July 1946, CO 531 32/7.

²⁷Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo, Singapore 1947, p.2.

A.N.Galsworthy, a Colonial Office official, however, argued that section 3 of the Cession Instrument need not be taken as meaning that the new terms of service must, in every detail, be at least equivalent to the old.²⁸ For example, free living quarters were provided for Administrative Officers under the Brooke Rajahs and it was unlikely that this condition would be met by the colonial government. Hence, in place of free living quarters, perhaps a family allowance of sorts might be given. In this respect, the new conditions of service taken as a whole should rather have the net effect of providing continuing Sarawak officers with terms of employment not less favourable than before cession. If it was still found that the new conditions were generally less favourable, or if doubts persisted regarding the net advantage between the old and new conditions, former Brooke officers should be given the option of either remaining on the old terms or transferring to the new. However, newly-appointed officers should come under the new terms.

It was also suggested by the Colonial Office that in any drafting of new proposals for service conditions, both Sarawak and North Borneo should be encouraged to adopt similar if not identical terms of employment. Colonial policy then, although still in its infancy, had envisaged a gradual amalgamation of the Borneo states and the merging of the various services into a unified one.

²⁸A.N.Galsworthy to Tegetmeier, 6 July 1946, CO 531 32/7.

The North Borneo treasury had already proposed in early 1946 that Malayan conditions with slight modifications be adopted for that country. Malayan rates with a 12½% reduction would be applied but without the higher Malayan ceiling for administrative and legal personnel. Since the North Borneo conditions were to be seen as a model which Sarawak might emulate, it is worthwhile here to examine the general differences between the modified Malayan conditions adopted by North Borneo in 1946 and the service conditions existing in Sarawak before the war. Moreover, a comparison of the two service conditions with respect to the Administrative Service will throw light on the question of whether the existing Sarawak conditions were more favourable.

Under the North Borneo scheme, as in Malaya, free living quarters, which had long been an assumed privilege in Sarawak, were not provided. Another sore point was the salary scale. The North Borneo time-scale for Administrative Officers was \$350x25-700 without the provision of free quarters, while the former Sarawak scale of \$325x25-775 with efficiency bars at \$400 and \$600 plus free quarters appeared more generous.²⁹ The maximum of \$700 for North Borneo, as compared with \$775 for the former Sarawak time-scale, was also considered rather meagre.

The Colonial Office had assumed that pension legislation would be drawn up as soon as possible and would conform closely to the Malayan experience. The former Sarawak state

²⁹See Sarawak State circular, no.2, 1937.

pension constant was 1/600th of pensionable emoluments for each month of completed service and, in this respect, was the same as the Malayan terms. The main differences between the former Sarawak and Malayan pension conditions were firstly, in Malaya, a death gratuity of one year's pensionable emoluments was payable to the personal legal representative of an officer dying in office.³⁰ However, no such condition existed in Sarawak under the Brookes.

Secondly, in Sarawak, variations prevailed in the maximum amount received as pension and the time it took for officers to arrive at the sum. For Malayan Administrative Officers, the maximum pension was limited to two-thirds of the highest pensionable emoluments drawn by the officer at any time in his service, a limit he would take 33 years to reach. Under Sarawak conditions, an Administrative Officer's maximum pension was limited to a certain amount dictated by his grade and it would take the officer an average of 26.5 years' service to reach the maximum. The effect of this Sarawak limitation was that any service after 26.5 years would automatically not be taken into consideration when calculating pension.

Thirdly, the compulsory retirement age under Sarawak state conditions was 55 but government retained the right to retire an officer after reaching 50 years, and an officer could retire after completing 21 years' service. These conditions

³⁰Minute by Tegetmeier, 17 July 1946, CO 531 32/7.

were similar to Malaya except those pertaining to an officer's right to retire after 21 years of service.

There was little difference with respect to leave and passage conditions. While the amount of leave granted by the Sarawak state was slightly more than Malaya, the latter had more generous conditions regarding children's passage. There was such a wide divergence between the Sarawak widows' and orphans' pension scheme and the colonial model that it would be difficult to make a straight comparison. The Sarawak scheme formed part of the pension law and provided for a widow's pension equal to half the pension for which the officer would have been eligible had he been invalided during service. A pension of £30 per annum (\$21 per month) was paid to orphans of deceased officers. Generally, it was felt that the Sarawak widows' and orphans' pension scheme had more advantages.

In short, Malayan conditions concerning pension appeared more generous in providing for a higher maximum level and the inclusion of a death gratuity. There were no significant differences in the leave and passage regulations, although Malaya gave more in terms of children's passage. The Colonial Office view was that apart from the widows' and orphans' pension scheme, it was really a matter of opinion whether Malayan conditions were a sufficient improvement on the former Sarawak terms.³¹ It must be pointed out that the Colonial Office inadvertently omitted to consider the

³¹Ibid.

question of children's allowances, which was provided for under Malayan conditions but was not extended to Brooke officers.³²

As I have stated earlier, the salary scales for North Borneo were calculated by taking Malayan scales and making a uniform reduction of 12½%, but the full rates of Malayan children's allowances were applied to North Borneo without a corresponding reduction. Taking this into account, the salary scales adopted for North Borneo did not compare so unfavourably with those available for former Brooke officers insofar as married officers with children were concerned, since the advantages of having free quarters were largely offset by the children's allowances.

In view of the requirement of the Cession Instrument, if the North Borneo terms were adopted, serving Brooke officers were not obliged to accept the new terms. However, the Colonial Office recommended that firstly, all officers, whether they had opted for old or new conditions, should abide by Malayan conditions concerning leave and passage. Secondly, former Brooke officers should remain on the existing widows' and

³²The Malayan children's allowances were quite substantial and were provided as follows;

- a) for salaries exceeding \$700, the first child received \$70 and the second received \$50 a month,
- b) for salaries less than \$700 and more than \$600, the first child received \$50 and the second \$35 monthly,
- c) for salaries less than \$600, the first child received \$30 and the second received \$20 per month.

See also minute by A.N.Galsworthy, 22 July 1946, CO 531 32/7.

orphans' pension scheme even if they had elected for new conditions.³³

There were strong reactions against the introduction of the North Borneo scales for Sarawak. C.W.Dawson, the Chief Secretary of Sarawak, lamented that "...it was a pity that scales have been fixed so considerably below Malayan scales."³⁴ This could result in Sarawak being allocated "Malayan discards" unless inducement allowances were provided as well. In November, 1946, Dawson assigned L.K.Morse, Resident of the First Division, D.L.Leach, Director of Lands and Survey and K.H.Digby, Legal Adviser, to study the new terms of service proposed by the Colonial Office.³⁵

Briefly, the memorandum submitted by the three government officers pointed out that many Sarawak officers were resentful of the fact that an officer on the standard time-scale would continue to receive the same salary he was getting previously. The memorandum also recorded the officers' conviction that the introduction of children's allowances was ill-timed and ran contrary to the peculiar circumstances prevailing in Sarawak. They reasoned that the

..primitive conditions of many parts of this country and the absolute necessity that officers should spend a large part of their time travelling, distinguishes Sarawak from more sophisticated colonies. Marriage, particularly, the marriage of

³³Minute by A.N.Galsworthy, 22 July 1946, CO 531 32/7.

³⁴C.W.Dawson to N.L.Mayle, 10 October 1946, CO 531 32/7.

³⁵C.W.Dawson to L.K.Morse, 7 November 1946, Secretariat circular no.12, Chief Secretary's Office, 137/46. See also 'Memorandum of Committee of three government officers on proposal on new terms of service', n.d. (circa November-December 1946), Kuching District Office File.

young officers, and more particularly still the marriage of young Administrative Officers, must to a certain degree, adversely affect an officer's efficiency. This fact has been acknowledged in the past and until recently..the service has contained a higher proportion of bachelors than is the case elsewhere. The result is, of course, that alliances have been contracted by some officers outside the marriage bond..The fact must be squarely faced and we consider that the circumstances of the country being what they are, it would be inequitable to pay allowances in respect of legitimate children only.³⁶

The Sarawak officers further argued that it would not be desirable then to subsidise paternity and it was preferable that the Service forgo the children's allowances and retain the right to free quarters.

In March 1947, the Colonial Office intimated that a Borneo Salaries Commission, along lines similar to the Malayan Salaries Commission currently investigating service conditions in Malaya, would visit Borneo. The Governor of North Borneo, E.F.Twining,³⁷ enthused about the proposal but suggested that before the findings of the Commission were completed, a new administrative time-scale should be adopted for the two Borneo states with immediate effect.³⁸

Dawson, acting for the Governor of Sarawak, felt that such a commission for Borneo was unnecessary and instead proposed that the recommendations of the Malayan Salaries Commission, when finalised, should be applied to Borneo without any further inquiry. This, he argued, was in accordance with the

³⁶'Memorandum of Committee of three government officers', pp.5-6.

³⁷Twining later became the Governor of Tanganyika and he was one of the few members of the Colonial Administrative Service to be elevated to the peerage as Lord Twining.

³⁸Minute by M.B.Ramage, 27 March 1947 and Governor of North Borneo to A.N.Galsworthy, 30 March 1947, CO 954 2/1.

guidelines set out in the White Paper of 1946, *Organisation of the Colonial Service*, which called for the standardization of service conditions between neighbouring colonies. Dawson and the Governor of North Borneo further asserted that as an interim award, the initial scales recommended by the Colonial Office were not sufficient to attract good candidates to the public services of the two Borneo states and hence the salary scales should be improved. Finally, Sarawak was also dissatisfied with the suggestion regarding the exercise of option by former officers of the Brooke Service. This was because the Colonial Office had recommended that former Brooke officers be allowed to opt for old or new conditions but that they would have to exercise this option irrevocably without any course for review in the event of a rise in the cost of living resulting in an upward revision of salaries.

The Colonial Office eventually agreed to prescribe the following for Sarawak; firstly, as an interim award, a new salary structure would be proposed for Sarawak officers before the Commission began their investigations and, secondly, that Sarawak officers, who had opted for the old terms, would be given the opportunity of a fresh option if the new terms were subsequently revised at a later date. In return for these concessions, Sarawak should allow the Borneo Salaries Commission to conduct an inquiry into the conditions of Sarawak and abide by the results of the Commission.³⁹

³⁹Ibid.

Thus, pending the investigations of the Borneo Salaries Commission in Borneo, the Colonial Office awarded interim conditions of service to Sarawak officers and proposed that the following provisional terms be backdated to July 1946. The new standard time-scale was set at \$400x25-800, which was a vast improvement on the North Borneo model of \$350x25-700 initially suggested by the Colonial Office. In place of the superscale salaries⁴⁰ which had existed before the war, specific salaries were assigned to the various departmental heads, most of whom were given salaries of either \$1,000 or \$900 monthly. The Chief Secretary's new salary was \$1,350 while the Financial Secretary, as well as the Senior Residents and Deputy Chief Secretary each received \$1,100 a month. Additionally, Senior Service officers also received children's allowances at the rate of \$70 per month for the first child and \$50 for the second.⁴¹

Senior Service officers, not on the time-scale, were given the option of a transfer to the revised scale without undergoing any change in the other conditions of service. Officers who were placed on the time-scale did not experience any immediate improvement in remuneration. This meant that an officer who transferred to the new time-scale did not have

⁴⁰The pre-war Sarawak Senior Service, prior to the Japanese occupation (1941), consisted of a time-scale of \$325x25-775 and above that were three superscales: A - \$950x25-1,100, B - \$825-25-900 and C - \$650x25-825. These superscale salaries, usually given to departmental heads, were not awarded to any particular post but were granted largely on the basis of individual merit. Above the superscales were two staff classes to which the posts of Chief Secretary and Financial Secretary belonged: Staff Class A - \$1,400x50-1,500 and Staff Class B - \$1,200x50-1,300.

⁴¹Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, p.7.

his salary reassessed as if he had started on \$400, which was the lowest end of the new time-scale.⁴² In contrast, an officer who was transferred to Sarawak from another colony after the introduction of the revised salary scheme with previous experience in other colonies, would be offered the salary for which he would have been eligible had his whole service under the Colonial Service been on the revised scale. This variation in the point of entry between former Brooke officers and the newly transferred officers became a major source of resentment.

The time-scale for officers in North Borneo was the same as that awarded in Sarawak but the point of entry for North Borneo officers differed considerably. It should be noted that North Borneo officers under the Chartered Company received salaries far below Brooke officers before the war. With the interim conditions, North Borneo officers were given the option of transferring to the new scale at the point they would have reached had three-quarters of their service under the Chartered Company (and any period of internment and war service), been on the new scale. While this gave North Borneo officers increases in salary more than their counterparts in Sarawak, the method of fixing the point of entry had unfortunately given the impression that the North Borneo Service was "only 75% of the value of services elsewhere".⁴³ Another difference was that the North Borneo offer involved a

⁴²See 'Memorandum of Committee of three government officers', p.2.

⁴³Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, p.8.

more comprehensive change in service conditions, including a revision in pension regulations.

By early 1947, it had become apparent that the interim service conditions were not satisfactory and did not reflect the rising cost of living in Borneo after the war. Hence, it was opportune that a Commission was invited to make a thorough examination of the public services of Sarawak and North Borneo. The Commission would also visit Brunei, which was then a party to the Malayan Establishment Agreement and thus subscribed to Malayan terms of service. The inclusion of Brunei was to allow her to develop more uniform conditions of service with Sarawak and North Borneo.

The Borneo Salaries Commission, 1947

In June 1947, the Governor-General of Malaya with responsibility for Brunei, and the Governors of Sarawak and North Borneo, appointed a salaries commission under the chairmanship of Sir Harry Trusted⁴⁴ to look into the salaries and conditions of service of the three Borneo states.⁴⁵ The terms of reference of the Commission included the following;

- a) to consider and recommend the revision of salaries and emoluments of all public services in the three Borneo states,

⁴⁴Other members of the Commission were C.E.Tilney, J.Maxwell-Hall, Ibrahim bin Mohamed Jaafar, J.B.Archer and A.Inglis, who acted as Secretary.

⁴⁵Sarawak Gazette, 2 June 1947.

- b) to consider the extent to which cost of living allowances should be incorporated in basic salaries while acknowledging that stable conditions had not been re-established,
- c) to reduce the present diversity of salary scales and conditions of service among the various grades of the public services,
- d) to bear in mind the interchanging of officers between Malaya and the Borneo states as well as between individual states within Borneo and to aim for greater uniformity of salary scales between the three Borneo states,
- e) to recommend suitable points of entry for serving officers in any new or revised salary scales and,
- f) to apply, as far as possible, the provisions laid out in the White Paper of 1946, *Organisation of the Colonial Service*.⁴⁶

The terms of reference did not include a review of pension regulations.

In the aftermath of the Japanese occupation, the cost of living in the three Borneo states had risen rapidly and this was especially evident in the oil districts of Miri in Sarawak and Kuala Belait in Brunei. The existing emoluments granted to civil servants in both Brunei and Sarawak did not take into account the spiralling prices which had considerably raised the cost of living. The Trusted

⁴⁶See *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 August 1947 and *Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission*, p.3.

Commission, however, did not deem it desirable to recommend that part of the cost of living allowances should be incorporated in basic salaries. The present cost of living allowances had also favoured one group of officers, that is, married officers who were eligible for an increased allowance, but the Commission felt that this measure was justifiable. It was also brought to the Commission's attention that government officers who did not occupy government quarters, were paying exorbitant rents. .

Under these circumstances, the Commission proposed that the payment of the cost of living be continued and that the allowance be placed on an amended scale, giving different rates to married and unmarried officers. It was not practical, at that stage in time, to tie the cost of living allowance to a retail price index. Cost of living allowances had been introduced in post-war Sarawak as early as January 1947 with \$135 per month extended to married officers and \$85 to single officers.⁴⁷ The new cost of living allowances suggested by the Commission were as follows;

- a) \$124-136 monthly for married officers with quarters,
- b) \$155-170 monthly for married officers without quarters,
- c) \$62-68 monthly for single officers with quarters and
- d) \$77-85 monthly for single officers without quarters.⁴⁸

The Commission also recommended that in the Miri district of Sarawak, where the cost of living was relatively higher than

⁴⁷E.F. Twining to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 30 September 1947, CO 954 2/1.

⁴⁸Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, p.75.

elsewhere because of the presence of oil companies, a special allowance should be paid to all government employees in addition to the cost of living allowance. This special allowance was prescribed at an average of one tenth of basic salary, with a minimum of \$10 and a maximum of \$25 a month. It was further stressed that the award of this special allowance was a temporary measure and should be removed in the event of a substantial fall in prices.⁴⁹

The Commission also examined the question of the extension of an expatriation allowance. The need for expatriation pay arose as a result of the paucity of qualified local or indigenous officers who could fill the ranks of the senior public service posts in the three Borneo states. Thus, these states would have to rely on staff recruited from overseas for the foreseeable future. Basic salaries existing before 1947 and the recommended salaries of the Borneo Salaries Commission were not adequate to attract officers from overseas, and, hence to secure the services of suitably qualified officers from outside, a pensionable addition would have to be made to the salaries of expatriate officers in Divisions I and II as seen in the following;

- a) officers with a basic salary of less than \$500 monthly would receive \$50 inclusive of 10% of basic salary,
- b) officers with a basic salary of between \$500-1,000 monthly would receive \$75 inclusive of 10% of basic salary,

⁴⁹Ibid., p.5.

c) officers with a basic salary of more than \$1,000 monthly would receive \$100 inclusive of 10% of basic salary.⁵⁰

The Commission acknowledged that the grant of children's allowances to senior officers in Sarawak gave rise to the criticism that such allowances tended to favour one class of officer, that is the Senior Service⁵¹. Unless the children's allowances could be provided to all classes of officers, such as the Junior Service and the Native Officers' Service, the Commission was of the opinion that any form of family allowances should not be offered.

Another concern of the Commission was the feasibility of interchanging officers from Malaya to Borneo and vice versa. Owing to the persistence of latent differences in development, the interchange of officers between Malaya and the Borneo states was thought to be still too premature. The Commission instead looked at the possibility of cooperation within Borneo itself and pointed out that it was more expedient to exchange senior personnel among the three Borneo states. In the event of such a policy materialising, officers on the permanent establishment should be eligible, but not liable, to serve in a common service.

With regard to leave and passages, the Trusted Commission considered that the new regulations recently introduced in North Borneo should apply to Sarawak as well. The system of

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹The Administrative Service formed part of the Senior Service.

tour of duty which was recommended for Sarawak, was modelled on other colonies and the main advantage was that the duration was shorter than previously⁵² as seen in the following;

- a) below 10 years' service, 36 to 48 months,
- b) 10 to 20 years' service, 24 to 36 months and
- c) over 20 years' service, 24 to 30 months.⁵³

There was an age factor which had to be considered in the new system of tour of duty, that is, an officer joining the Senior Service above the age of 30 would be regarded as having completed ten years' service upon returning from his first leave. Passages would be free for an officer and his family⁵⁴ for one journey each way on each tour.

The salary structure recommended by the Borneo Salaries Commission did not differ much from the provisional time-scales which were awarded pending the findings of the Commission. The basic salary time-scale proposed for the Senior Service to which all Administrative Officers belonged, commenced at \$325 and ran up to \$800 by increments of \$25. Depending on their qualifications and vocation, Senior Service officers entered the time-scale at varying points; for example, police officers started off at \$325,

⁵²The system of tour of duty existing before 1947 was that which applied to Brooke officers before the war. During the first eight years of service, an officer would be eligible for a furlough of seven months after completing four years' resident service. After serving for more than eight years, an officer's tour of duty was reduced to three years of resident service. See Secretariat Circular, no.122, dated 7 January 1938.

⁵³Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, p.14.

⁵⁴This included an officer's wife and up to three children under ten years of age.

Administrative Cadets began at \$350, education officers entered at \$375, while medical and legal officers commenced at \$500.

On passing their first examination, they would be paid their first increment of \$25 and after two years' service, would qualify for their second increment. Further examinations should be passed within five years of service. The time-scale and salary structure for Sarawak Administrative Officers as suggested by the Trusted Commission is shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Comparative Salaries of Administrative Officers⁵⁵

	<u>Rajah's Service</u>	<u>Interim Award</u>	<u>Trusted Commission</u>
Senior Resident	\$950x50-1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100
Resident	\$825x25-900	\$1,000	\$1,000
District Officer (II)	\$625x25-775	\$625x25-800	\$400x25-450/bar/
District Officer (III)	\$425x25-600	\$425x25-600	475x25-600/bar/ 625x25-800
Cadet	\$325x25-400	\$325x25-400	Cadet unpassed - \$350, Passed - \$375

As evident from the above table, apart from raising the point of entry for Cadets from \$325 to \$350 and the inclusion of two bar requirements in the time-scale, the Trusted proposals remained essentially similar to the interim award. By comparison, the Malayan Salaries Commission had recommended a higher time-scale of \$450x30-690/bar/730x30-1,000, which naturally reflected the higher cost of living in Malaya. It was open to question why the Trusted Commission did not see

⁵⁵Compiled from Secretariat Circular no.2/1937 and Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, p.28.

it as necessary to raise the maximum of \$800 in the time-scale in view of the fact that the provision of free quarters was to be discontinued.⁵⁶

The method of fixing the point of entry for the new scales was also given due consideration by the Commission. They felt that it was important to arrive at a satisfactory procedure to determine at which point of the scale, existing personnel should be placed. One alternative suggested was to follow the guidelines laid down by Colonial Regulation 44 whereby an officer entered a new scale at the initial point of entry, or if he was already receiving a higher salary, he would be placed at the salary point nearest to his present pay. The disadvantage of such a system was that the new scales did not provide any immediate relief to Sarawak officers. Hence, the Commission proposed that the best method was to place officers on the new scales with reference to their present salaries, including a uniform increase for officers of the same grade. As an illustration, for Administrative Officers, two increases applied; one of \$40 for Cadets and \$50 for the other members of the Service.⁵⁷ Officers appointed after the findings of the Commission had been approved by the Sarawak government, and who had accumulated incremental credits elsewhere in the Empire, would have their salaries fixed with reference to the position they would hold had their service been in Sarawak. It should not be fixed as if all the service had been on the new scale.

⁵⁶This point was highlighted by J.E.King of the Colonial Office. See minute by King, 10 June 1948, CO 954 3/1.

⁵⁷Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, p.69.

It has been noted earlier that the terms of reference of the Commission did not include a review of pension conditions, and it was not until 1949 that a bill was passed introducing new pension regulations.⁵⁸ Briefly, the bill provided officers with at least ten years' service with pensions at the rate of 1/600th for each completed month of pensionable service. Officers with less than ten years' service would be granted a gratuity. The retirement age was fixed at 55 years but on reaching 50 years, an officer would be allowed to retire with official sanction. Regulations existing before the Ordinance became operational in January 1950, permitted officers with 21 years' service to retire at the age of 45. Thus, officers with at least 21 years' service, and who joined the Sarawak Service before 1950, were given the option to retire at the age of 45.

The recommendations of the Trusted Commission were approved by the Sarawak government, and salaries were revised and the new conditions adopted from 1 October 1948. All 34 Administrative Officers affected by the change in service conditions, as a result of the findings of the Commission, signed the option forms in favour of new conditions.⁵⁹ The following table shows how the salary change affected some members of the Administrative Service.

⁵⁸See 'Ordinance to make new provision for the payment of pensions to officers of the public service', supplement to the Sarawak Government Gazette, 22 October 1949.

⁵⁹'Option forms of Sarawak officers', Secretariat Circular no.16/1948, Co 954 2/1.

TABLE 6

	<u>Salary Changes Effected by the Trusted Commission⁶⁰</u>			
	<u>Before 1.7.46</u>	<u>1.7.46</u>	<u>1.10.48</u>	<u>Trusted Commission Expatriation Pay</u>
J.F.Drake-Brockman (District Officer)	\$500	\$550	\$600	\$150
J.C.B.Fisher (District Officer)	\$725	\$775	\$825	\$175
J.O.Gilbert (Resident)	\$1,000	\$1,025	\$1,025	\$200
A.F.R.Griffin (District Officer)	\$650	\$675	\$750	\$150
D.F.A.E.D.Morgan (District Officer)	\$450	\$525	\$550	\$150
R.H.Morris (District Officer)	\$525	\$575	\$625	\$150

As a result of the adoption of the Trusted recommendations, the terms of employment for Administrative Officers in Sarawak became equitable with those of North Borneo. The Commission also resolved the many difficulties involved in adjusting the old Brooke conditions of service to those which were more desirable for Sarawak's new status as a colony. These conditions remained essentially constant until the mid-1950s when new circumstances precipitated the need for further changes. The next chapter discusses the various attempts made by the colonial government to improve conditions of service so as to attract the best qualified candidates for a career in administration. However, in the interim, there was a realignment in the cost of living allowance and salaries and this is discussed next.

⁶⁰Ibid., the officers cited in Table 6 were picked at random.

The Benham Report, 1951

The recommendations of the Trusted Commission were found to be inadequate in meeting rising living costs and had often been the subject of criticism by both the Senior and Junior Services. The absence of an acceptable cost of living index to which allowances could be adjusted from time to time, was the main weakness of the existing system. In late 1950, the Council Negri recommended that the system of cost of living allowances be examined and improved upon.

A reputable economist with experience in staff relations, F.C. Benham, was engaged by the Sarawak government in January 1951 to look into the structure of cost of living allowances.⁶¹ Benham was also invited to include in his terms of reference, an inquiry into the whole scheme of remuneration of officers in the established services. The Trusted Commission had earlier suggested that the cost of living allowances should not be pegged to an index of prices. This was because it saw the provision of such allowances as a temporary measure which would be removed in the event of a substantial fall in prices.

In his report, Benham proposed a uniform percentage for cost of living allowances at the rate of 50% of basic salary. A ceiling was imposed for cost of living allowances at \$120 a month for single men, \$225 for married men without children

⁶¹Benham's report is not traceable but references to it are made in the Council Negri Proceedings, 24 and 25 July 1951.

and \$350 a month for married men with children.⁶² Unlike the Trusted Report, Benham did not think it necessary to make any differentiation in the award of cost of living allowances according to whether officers were occupying government quarters. Benham also stressed that cost of living allowances should conform to variations in the price index.

As regards remuneration, Benham's recommendations did not involve a regrading of salaries, but gave increases of pay to certain deserving posts. The Senior Service in Sarawak, which included the Administrative as well as Professional services, had to compete with neighbouring countries for recruits, particularly the Malayan Civil Service, which had more attractive terms of employment. Benham sought to make the Sarawak time-scale for Division I officers more favourable by recommending increments of \$30 instead of \$25 a month.

After closely examining the proposals, the Sarawak government modified Benham's suggestions and introduced a two-scale structure for the Senior Service. The precedent for a two-scale structure, one for the Professional Service and the other for the Administrative Service, had already been set by the Malayan Civil Service. The proposed higher time-scale of \$425x50/475x25/900⁶³ was reserved for officers with professional qualifications such as members of the legal and

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³The rates of increment of \$50 and \$25 were not suggested by Benham but the Sarawak government thought them more desirable in order to attract recruits. The government also parted with tradition in introducing a higher increment of \$50 at the lower end of the time-scale instead of the usual upper end.

medical professions and had its maximum raised from \$800 to \$900. In the Trusted Report, the Professional Services were proposed to adhere to the same time-scale as the Administrative Service, but the point of entry was set higher.⁶⁴ The Malayan maximum for the Professional Services' time-scale was \$1,000 and the new Sarawak time-scale maximum for the professional grades of \$900, was seen as a positive measure in reducing the discrepancy in the scales of the two colonies. The lower time-scale recommended for the Administrative Service and other branches of the Senior Service not requiring professional qualifications, was \$400x50/450x25/825, thus raising the ceiling from \$800 to \$825.

In his report, Benham made specific recommendations with regard to housing allowances. The existing allowances for rented accommodation paid to Senior Service officers was 10% of basic salary with a minimum of \$3 and a maximum of \$15 a month. These rates were thought to be too low and Benham thought it timely that housing allowances reflected rising costs which had inflated rents. The Report suggested increasing housing allowances to 20% of basic salary, with a minimum of \$6 monthly and a maximum of \$20. Benham's proposals for housing allowances were meant solely for expatriate officers in the Senior Service. The exclusion of local officers from these allowances became a controversial issue and in July 1951, the Council Negri voted for the

⁶⁴See this Chapter, pp.203-204.

extension of housing allowances to locally recruited staff in the Senior Service.⁶⁵

The housing and cost of living allowances suggested by Benham were adopted by the Sarawak government and these allowances were backdated to May 1951. In July 1951, an index at the level of 50% of basic salary was linked to a cost of living index set at 100 based on figures for August 1950. The index was henceforth calculated at monthly intervals on the basis of prices prevailing in the previous months and if the index exceeded 130 for a continuous period of three months, the general rate of cost of living allowances would be raised from 50% to 60%. Thereafter, if the index fell below 130 for three consecutive months, the rate of cost of living index would revert to 50%.

Owing to the high index of prices, the rate of cost of living allowance was raised to 60%, with effect from 1 December 1951, and continued at that rate for two years. By March 1954, however, the index had fallen to 128 and in April, it went down further to 123. As it was predicted that the index for May would remain below 130, the government announced that, as from 1 June 1954, the rate of cost of living allowance would be reduced to 50%. The staff associations protested at the proposal, claiming that, although the index had fallen, prices of other commodities and services not included in the calculation of the index, had materially increased. The Governor-in-Council felt that

⁶⁵Council Negri Proceedings, 24 and 25 July 1951, p.5.

the system of pegging cost of living allowances to an index of prices had many shortcomings and was not in itself an adequate measure. Hence, he deferred the decision to reduce the rate of cost of living allowances.

Benham's Report can be seen as an *ad hoc* measure intended to grapple with the problems of rising costs. This was evident in the preoccupation of the Report with the short term concerns of inadequate salary scales and cost of living allowances. Although Benham's proposals delayed the need for more changes, pressures continued to mount and by the mid-1950s, the colonial government could no longer postpone a thorough investigation into the structure of public services in Sarawak. The next chapter looks into the efforts of the government to make the Administrative Service, in particular, and the civil service, in general, more attractive as a career alternative.

The Sarawak Administrative Service - Issues and Developments, 1946-1954

As I have already stated earlier, when the B.M.A. was dissolved in April 1946 and civil government restored, Sarawak was ill-equipped to cope with the daunting tasks of rehabilitation and reconstruction. This was made doubly difficult by the fact that one-third of the Sarawak Service members had either been killed by the Japanese or had died from natural causes during the war. A substantial number of

officers had been interned by the Japanese and were given long leave upon their release, thus reducing the number of officers left who were familiar with the administration.

There was a handful of former Brooke officers who managed to escape the ordeal of war-time internment and they later participated in the military administration of Sarawak. Of these, H.P.K.Jacks, J.O.Gilbert and W.P.N.L.Ditmas, had distinguished war services.⁶⁶ Owing to the dearth of experienced officers, members of the B.M.A. were encouraged to transfer to the civil government and 25 army officers decided to remain in Sarawak temporarily until they could be replaced. Six middle-ranking officers, in their 20s and early 30s, joined the Administrative Service.⁶⁷ In April 1946, J.B.Archer⁶⁸ was appointed to act as Chief Secretary and was entrusted with the responsibility of handing over the administration to the British Representative, C.W.Dawson. As soon as Sarawak's status as a colony became official, Dawson succeeded Archer as Chief Secretary in July 1946.

⁶⁶Jacks and Gilbert earned the military rank of Major while Ditmas was awarded with the position of Lieutenant-Colonel.

⁶⁷See *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 April 1946. The six officers were Captain D.F.A.E.D.Morgan, Captain R.H.Morris, Major A.C.Waine, Major I.A.McDonald, Major J.Darley and Captain W.R.Daw. Between April and July 1946, they held administrative positions as District Officers and Assistant District Officers.

⁶⁸Archer, born in 1893, entered the Rajah's Service at the age of 19 and spent his early service years in the coastal areas of the Third Division. He was made Chief Secretary in 1939 following the resignation of E.Parnell. In 1941, Archer was himself pressured to retire from the Service. He was interned by the Japanese during the war and was alleged to have suffered psychologically as a result of his captivity. Archer participated actively during the B.M.A. as Political Adviser, Acting Chief Secretary and Officer-Administering-the-Government. He was a Brooke loyalist committed to the perpetuation of Brooke rule and found himself in an awkward position during the cession controversy. He committed suicide in 1947. See his obituary in *Sarawak Gazette*, 2 August 1947.

According to K.H.Digby, then a legal officer employed by Sarawak, the military officers who were transferred from the B.M.A., could not speak any of the native languages.⁶⁹ It must be remembered, however, that most of the military officers had been in Sarawak for less than a year and their duties were heavily concerned with rehabilitation of the country which allowed them little time for the proper learning of local languages. Digby's remark rather showed a tendency for an undue bias against military officers. At the end of 1946, there were still officers given charge of important districts who had not even passed their first examination in Malay.⁷⁰ It was not until 1948 that the "newly-hatched Cadet, fresh from university and thrilled with his first job" began to emerge in Sarawak.⁷¹ As a result of the lack of experienced officers, young Administrative Officers were being assigned with duties and assumed responsibilities in about a quarter of the time previously allotted to their predecessors.

R.N.Turner, who was briefly a District Officer in Sarawak, gave his insight of Sarawak within one month of its attaining colonial status. He wrote in his diary that

..the day after our arrival in Sarawak in the middle of August, 1946, I went down to have a look at the office where I would carry out my duties as District Officer, Kuching. My worst forebodings were realised. Everything about the place was ramshackle and dingy in the extreme..Quite clearly, I need not look for support or comfort from my superior officer, the Resident. He was one of the 'old guard' of the Rajah's officers, tall as a lamp

⁶⁹K.H.Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p.72.

⁷⁰*Sarawak Gazette*, 2 January 1948.

⁷¹*Ibid.*

post, over fond of the bottle and like several of the Rajah's officers, resentful of the new order.⁷²

I.A.N.Urquhart, who arrived as a new Cadet a few months later in February 1947, gave the following description of his first impressions of Sarawak. He remarked,

..every activity in Sarawak at that time was being run in adverse circumstances. All departments were understaffed at every level; many of the officers were new and inexperienced and suitably educated local persons to fill vacancies did not exist.⁷³

For the purpose of clarity, Administrative Officers during the colonial period can be classified into four main groups. The first consisted of former officers of the Brooke Service; the second comprised those recruited during the war and a few years after. Officers transferred from other colonies belonged to the third group, while Cadets, newly-recruited after the war on their first posting to Sarawak, made up the last group.

In 1948, former Brooke officers constituted almost half of the total number of Administrative Officers.⁷⁴ This ratio inevitably declined steadily through the years and by 1954, Brooke officers accounted for less than one-third of the total number. Thus, it can be surmised that non-Brooke officers, owing to their increasing numbers, had the potential to carry more weight in decision-making.

⁷²Before the war, Turner had served in Malaya. See his diary 'From the Depths of My Memory', vol.II, Sarawak, Mss Brit Emp s 454, p.3.

⁷³Personal correspondence with I.A.N.Urquhart, 8 November 1991.

⁷⁴See Sarawak Civil Staff List, Kuching, 1948.

Officers appointed during the Second World War and its immediate aftermath, that is, specifically between 3 September 1939 and 31 December 1947, were classified as belonging to the war-time group (see Appendix 3). According to the Colonial Office Regulation, RDW6,⁷⁵ their seniority was determined from the date on which they reached the average age of entry of the grade to which they were appointed. This also applied to officers who, immediately after release from war service, resumed their university or professional training and, on completing it, proceeded directly to a Colonial Service appointment. Thus A.R.Meikle and R.H.Morris, who joined the Administrative Service in 1946, both at the age of 31, were senior in rank to G.Lloyd-Thomas who entered the Rajah's Service in 1941.⁷⁶ These war-time appointments made an exception of Colonial Regulation 38 and Sarawak General Order 56, which stipulated that an officer's seniority was normally determined by his date of arrival in the colony to which he was first appointed. Most of the officers appointed in this war-time group were in their late 20s and early 30s.

It should be noted that former Brooke and B.M.A. officers were not technically part of the Colonial Administrative Service when Sarawak became a colony in July 1946. As such, they could not be eligible for secondment or transfer to another colony. It was only in December 1948 that these officers were admitted into the unified services of the

⁷⁵General Orders, Kuching, 1956, pp.8-9.

⁷⁶Lloyd-Thomas was 27 years of age in July 1946.

Colonial Administrative Service. Only one former B.M.A. officer, A.C.Waine, made use of the opportunity for transfer; his request for a transfer to Kenya was approved in May 1954.⁷⁷

As a colony, Sarawak could tap the larger pool of the Colonial Administrative Service. Transfers of officers from Malaya and, as far away as Africa, to fill important openings, were frequent. Appendix 3 shows that out of 42 expatriate officers in the Administrative Service in 1951, 6 were transferred from other colonies. J.H.Ellis and P.Ratcliffe were 'African' officers, T.P.Cromwell and G.A.T.Shaw had previous experience in Malaya, while B.A.St.J.Hepburn was transferred from Jamaica and R.F.Mole had previously joined the Burma Civil Service. The number of transferred officers was later increased, and between 1952 and 1954, out of 13 officers newly-appointed to Sarawak, 6 were officers on secondment from other colonies (see Appendix 4). Although it was imperative that Sarawak recruited officers with experience from other colonies, it was alleged that these seconded or transferred officers usually lacked an understanding of native customs and only had a working knowledge of bazaar Malay. In 1952, Digby noted that officers in the higher echelons of government, who were responsible for framing policies, such as the Financial Secretary, Deputy Chief Secretary and Chief Justice, were all comparative newcomers to Sarawak.⁷⁸

⁷⁷Waine was appointed to the Rajah's Service in April 1946.

⁷⁸Digby, p.91.

There was a certain amount of rivalry between Brooke officers and those transferred from other colonies. The former, jealous of the old Sarawak traditions, felt that owing to their extensive experience and expert knowledge of the country, they should be given greater say in any matters of government. The latter, mostly with experience in Africa, were overly critical of standards in Sarawak and believed that no effort should be spared to develop the economy and social services.

One might conjecture that there was a difference in style and approach towards administration between the two groups of officers. Brooke officers had always identified themselves closely with the indigenous population. They were accessible to the local people at most times of the day and any complaints or local problems were addressed directly to the District Officer. In the African colonies, in particular, this closeness between the natives and government was not always emphasized and sometimes suffered as a result of efforts to make government more efficient. One aspect of Sarawak administration, which was not very obvious in other colonies, was its informality. As an illustration, in the outstations, ulu natives were welcome to call at the house of the District Officer or the Resident for a chat in the evening.⁷⁹ Urquhart recalled the experiences of a transferred officer from Africa who attempted without success to introduce changes in the field. He reminisced that

⁷⁹Personal correspondence with I.A.N.Urquhart, 8 November 1991.

..in Bintulu, which is on a tidal river, an ex-African decided to "improve" the efficiency of the administration in his office by doing what he had been used to in Africa. He ordered that gun licences would only be dealt with one day a week, land applications on the two weekdays and so on for various aspects of his office work. He soon had to abandon his idea of thus making his office "more efficient" when he found that the public refused to cooperate. After all, people from the ulu could rarely afford the time and cost involved in going to headquarters, and when they did so, they usually saved up various problems for dealing with as quickly as possible when they had arrived at headquarters. They would have arranged to paddle downstream on the ebbing tide and expect to return home by the next, or next but one, rising tide and were not prepared to spend several days at Bintulu to fit in with the new D.O.'s plans.⁸⁰

A.J.N.Richards recounted that the ex-African officers in Sarawak were humourously referred to as "Giant African Snails" after the variety of large snails which were widespread in Sarawak during the Japanese occupation.⁸¹ It would be fair to assert that the traditions of administration in the African colonies were rather different from Sarawak. For one, in Sarawak, officers travelling on tour in their districts always stayed with the people, whether "in the longhouse in the Dayak areas, with the *Tua Kampong* in a Malay *kampong* or in the *loteng* of a Chinese bazaar".⁸² In the African colonies, on the other hand, District Officers often stayed in rest houses or they would bring their own tents and set up camp near villages⁸³ and hence they did not live with the local people.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Personal correspondence with A.J.N.Richards, 17 February 1992.

⁸²Personal correspondence with R.H.Morris, 5 January 1992.

⁸³Personal correspondence with Dato John Pike, 14 July 1992

Owing to the fact that the African officers had experience of dealing with peoples and ways which were quite different from Sarawak, it was inevitable that "friction" developed with the new arrivals. Fortunately this apparent friction with the "Africans" did not last long and most officers were able to adjust and fall into the Sarawak pattern of doing things without much difficulty.

Transferred or seconded officers from other colonies were in a position to exert influence in government owing to the important posts they held. In 1948, the Chief Secretary, C.W.Dawson, and other members of the Secretariat, namely, the Development Secretary, J.H.Ellis, and the two Principal Assistant Secretaries, B.A.St.J.Hepburn⁸⁴ and R.F.Mole, all had previous experience in other colonies, whether in Jamaica, Africa or Malaya. The posts of Resident of the five divisions, on the other hand, were all held by former Brooke officers⁸⁵ and only one former Brooke officer, R.G.Aikman, served in the Secretariat in 1948 as the Deputy Chief Secretary. Although it was quite logical that experienced colonial officers, transferred from other territories, should manage Secretariat affairs, former Brooke officers often resented the fact that they remained very much in the periphery, away from the hub of government machinery and

⁸⁴Hepburn, born on 24 February 1911, was a native of Jamaica. He joined the Jamaican Civil Service and after 14 years was promoted to the Colonial Administrative Service. In 1947, he was transferred to Sarawak. See *Daily Telegraph*, 20 June 1991, for his obituary.

⁸⁵In 1948, the Residents of the various divisions in Sarawak were; First Division - D.C.White, Second Division - W.P.N.L.Ditmas, Third Division - J.C.H.Barcroft, Fourth Division - J.O.Gilbert and Fifth Division - J.G.Anderson.

policy-making. However, Sarawak's fourth Governor, Sir Alexander Waddell, noted that "if there was any resentment about officers being brought in to fill senior positions, it did not show and the range and variety of experience produced a..resilient and effective service".⁸⁶

The first Governor of Sarawak, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, who had previously served in the administration of several African colonies,⁸⁷ was inclined initially to favour the newly-arrived colonial officers, but eventually, through his tact and diplomacy, he was able to maintain the balance between the two groups. His successor, D.G.Stewart,⁸⁸ whose brief stint as Governor was halted by the anti-cession movement, began his administrative career in Nigeria. Sir Anthony Abell,⁸⁹ who took over from Stewart as Governor, was another "African" and his whole service was spent in Nigeria; he had been the Resident of Oyo Province in Nigeria before being appointed as Governor of Sarawak in April 1950. In spite of his African experience, Abell was able to take an objective view of the peculiar position of Sarawak and also

⁸⁶Personal correspondence with Sir Alexander Waddell, 5 October 1992. Waddell was appointed Governor to Sarawak in 1960. He had wide experience in various colonies including the Solomon Islands, North Borneo, the Gambia and Sierra Leone.

⁸⁷See this Chapter, fn.15, for his early career.

⁸⁸D.G.Stewart (1904-1949), was appointed as Cadet in Nigeria in 1928. He held various posts in West Africa, and in 1944, was assigned to the Bahamas as Colonial Secretary and also spent two years, between 1948 to 1949, in Palestine as Financial Secretary. Stewart arrived in Sarawak on 14 November 1949 and soon after fell victim to the anti-cession movement. He died on 3 December 1949 as a result of a stab wound received when he was attacked in Sibu.

⁸⁹Sir Anthony Abell joined the Colonial Service as a Cadet in Nigeria in 1929 and spent his whole career in that colony before being appointed Governor of Sarawak.

won the confidence and respect of both classes of his officers.

New Cadets continued to be recruited to Sarawak through the Colonial Service. One might question whether the criteria used in recruitment differed from the Brooke Service or whether greater emphasis was placed in selecting graduates from Oxbridge and the traditional public schools. It has been noted in Chapter 3 that during the 1930s, Rajah Vyner followed closely Colonial Office guidelines on recruitment, and nearly all Cadets appointed between 1934 to 1941, were university graduates.

This being the case, one would assume that as part of the British Empire, Sarawak would now secure the "typical class and temperamental type of man" recruited to the Colonial Service. However, a cursory glance at the qualifications of Cadets recruited between 1946 and 1950 indicates that less than one quarter of them had received any form of tertiary training (see Appendix 3). But one must not overlook the fact that the war had been an important factor in determining the type of Cadet recruited into the Service immediately after the war. Firstly, a number of officers recruited in 1946 had distinguished military services and the war had probably prevented them from pursuing further education. Secondly, the Colonial Office could have de-emphasized traditional educational criteria in selecting prospective candidates; this orientation is exemplified in Sir Charles Jeffries' note that "...there is room and need in the Colonial Service for

various types of individual and..there can be no ideal pattern of the colonial civil servant.."90

The Administrative Service consisted of two divisions, the Secretariat and District branches. A Cadet normally received his initial training in district administration and almost always enjoyed his working life in a far-flung outstation office. The training a Cadet received varied according to the district to which he was posted and the temperament of his senior officer. R.H.Morris recalled that while he was a District Officer in Betong, the office had an open plan so that

..there were no partitions of any kind and the D.O. sat at a table in one corner with the Cadet's table next to him and the N.O.'s table on the other side of the District Office. Everyone in the office could see everyone else. Such division as existed were those made by filing cabinets and cupboards. The Cadet could therefore see and hear virtually everything that was going on. This was intended and from the first day, he was involved in the work of the district office.⁹¹

The Cadet was thus introduced to the nature of his work by observing closely how district administration was being run. There appeared to be a lack of direction with regard to the apprenticeship of Cadets, and the type of training they received in their early years was effected on an *ad hoc* basis and sometimes subjected to the whims and personalities of their senior District Officers.

⁹⁰Sir Charles Jeffries, 'Job Analysis for the Colonial Service', typescript, n.d. (circa 1943), Heussler Papers, Mss Brit Emp s 480, Box 2/2.

⁹¹Personal correspondence with Morris, 5 January 1992. The work of a Cadet will be discussed in Chapter 8.

The centre of administration was, of course, at the Secretariat and most young officers were given a trial in a junior administrative post in Kuching. Many did not particularly enjoy their brief tour of duty at the Secretariat where they were often overwhelmed with an enormous amount of paperwork. Digby noted that, although the volume of correspondence had increased during the colonial period, the efficiency of the Secretariat was open to question;

..The Sarawak government Secretariat was run in 1937 by two Europeans, one Malay clerk, three Chinese clerks and three office boys. Nowadays [1952] it is staffed by seven or eight European men, three or four European women, two or three Asian members of the Senior Service and at least two dozen clerks. I do not know whether it has been necessary to increase the establishment of office boys pro rata. The efficiency of government has not noticeably increased, although the volume of correspondence with the Colonial Office undoubtedly has.⁹²

The Colonial Office evolved its own training scheme for newly-appointed recruits bound for the colonies, to prepare them for the multifarious duties that lay ahead. Between the two world wars, Sir Ralph Furse, who was then Director of Recruitment, was instrumental in the development of the Oxford Overseas courses. Their origins could be traced back to the last century when courses for British officers entering the Indian Civil Service, were being run by Oxford University. Following the end of the First World War, Furse introduced a training scheme for the Unified Services. This was improved upon and in the 1940s, it developed into a

⁹²Digby, p.25.

standard training programme for Cadets and the courses were conducted at three centres, namely, the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London.

The Devonshire Report of 1944 outlined the need for a second training course for officers who had served a few years in the colonies.⁹³ These courses later became divided into the First Devonshire course for probationer Cadets, known as Course A and the Second Devonshire course, Course B, which gave opportunities to selected officers of a few years' experience, to study subjects of their choice connected with their professional careers. D.C.Walker, who attended the First Devonshire in 1946/47, found that his courses were of little practical use except for the language instruction in Malay and a few Chinese dialects.⁹⁴ Other participants found that the courses held in London on Anthropology and Economics were also relevant to the circumstances of South-East Asia. Otherwise, both the First and Second Devonshire courses were aimed at the young "Africans" and therefore exhibited a bias towards the African colonies. According to A.J.N.Richards, officers from the East did not "sit at the feet of Margery Perham whom we found spoke a different 'language' and could not help us".⁹⁵

Apart from the above training schemes provided by the Colonial Service Department, a Cadet had to pass examinations

⁹³E.G.Rowe, 'Reflections on the Oxford Overseas Services courses and their Club', n.d., Heussler Papers, Box 1/6.

⁹⁴Personal correspondence with D.C.Walker, 3 February 1992.

⁹⁵Richards attended the Second Devonshire in 1947/48. Letter from Richards, 17 February 1992.

set by an authoritative body in the colony to which he was posted. The syllabi for these examinations varied from colony to colony but they generally involved a test in one indigenous language, knowledge of financial and colonial regulations and also included legal examinations to prepare Cadets for their magisterial duties. In Sarawak, a Cadet was required to pass the Lower Standard examination and the first section of the law examination before completing two years' service, and the Higher Standard examination and the second section of the law examination before completing three years' service. Failure to pass these examinations within the prescribed period would result in the withholding of an officer's increment. Officers above the age of 35 on their first appointment or transfer to Sarawak, could at the discretion of the Chief Secretary, be exempted from taking these examinations. Transferred officers, who were less than 35 years old, normally had to sit a language examination.⁹⁶

After the war, the type of recruits for the Administrative Service differed from the Brooke Service in one important respect, that is, married officers were not barred from becoming Cadets. The Brooke Rajahs' preference for the single man as the ideal candidate suitable for service in the remote outstations, and official policy which discouraged officers from getting married before the completion of two tours of duty (after 8 years' service), seemed archaic in post-war Sarawak. A.R.G.Morrison, who was already married when he joined the Sarawak Service in 1947, was even given permission

⁹⁶General Orders, pp.84-86.

for his wife to accompany him during his travelling duty tours.⁹⁷ The 1946 White Paper, *Organisation of the Colonial Service*, stated that "every effort should be made to avoid constant changes of station..and officers should be encouraged to make homes for themselves with a reasonable prospect of permanence". However, an Administrative Officer in Sarawak was often subjected to constant transfers and, on average, remained in a station or post for about 18 months. When transferring an officer to a station, an officer's marital status was not an overriding factor of which account had to be taken.⁹⁸

In accordance with the guidelines laid out in the 1946 White Paper, which called for the opening of government posts to locally-recruited officers, the Sarawak government began gradually from 1948 onwards, to promote competent local officers into the Senior Service. Between 1948 and 1950, two Chinese were promoted and in January 1950, one Eurasian, one Malay and one Iban joined the ranks of the Senior Service.⁹⁹ A parallel junior administrative service, the Sarawak Administrative Officers' (S.A.O.) Service modelled on the Native Officers' Service, was created in 1951 and opened to all races. Unlike the Native Officers' Service, which was

⁹⁷A.Morrison, 'In Days Gone By - Some Early Experiences of an Expatriate Officer', *Sarawak Gazette*, November 1982, p.52. Morrison asked his District Officer, A.R.Snelus, for permission for his wife, Hedda, a professional photographer, to accompany him while travelling on duty. Snelus thought the request unusual and brought the matter up with his Resident and permission was eventually granted.

⁹⁸Dato John Pike noted that he was not aware of any difference in treatment between himself, who was married, and a bachelor officer. Letter from Pike, 14 July 1992.

⁹⁹*Crown Colonist*, February 1950.

formerly a Malay preserve but later admitted other natives, this junior service, for the first time, gave opportunities to Chinese candidates for a career in administration. Competent local officers from this service had the chance of promotion to the Senior Service.¹⁰⁰

From 1948 onwards, Sarawak Administrative officers found that they were liable to be seconded to Brunei. The next section traces the events which gave rise to this situation.

Administrative Links between Sarawak and Brunei, 1948-1959¹⁰¹

Between 1948 to 1959, Brunei was associated administratively with Sarawak owing to the 1948 Agreement which resulted in the appointment of the Governor of Sarawak as the High Commissioner of Brunei. The following discussion examines the circumstances leading to the forging of administrative links between these two states and attempts to elucidate briefly the course of 11 years during which members of the Sarawak Service were seconded for service in Brunei.

The status of Brunei as a colony was not immediately resolved after the end of the Second World War. The War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo had, in 1944, recommended that Brunei be given the opportunity to enter into a new agreement

¹⁰⁰The creation of the Sarawak Administrative Officers' Service and the entry of local officers into the Senior Service will be discussed in Chapter 7.

¹⁰¹For the sake of continuity, the discussion here takes the period up to 1959.

so as to allow Britain to legislate under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act in Brunei.¹⁰² Upon the termination of the B.M.A. in Brunei, it was decided that the British Resident in Brunei would be accountable to the Governor-General in Malaya.

W.J.Peel, a junior Malayan Civil Service officer, was sent to Brunei in 1946 as Resident and given the task of re-establishing civil government.¹⁰³ Peel was directly responsible to Malcolm MacDonald, who was then Governor-General of Malaya. The Trusted Commission had suggested in 1947 that the post of British Resident in Brunei warranted a higher status as the Resident was in charge of a state with a revenue of \$3 million where large commercial undertakings were active. It was proposed that the British Resident be placed on the same level as Senior Residents in Sarawak and would be entitled to a salary of \$1,100 a month.¹⁰⁴

In 1946, the Colonial Office began to view Brunei as too small a state to stand on its own administratively and it was desirable that it be associated with a larger administrative unit. In the event of such an association, Brunei would not lose its independent status. In May 1946, a Colonial Office servant, N.R.Mayle, disclosed that Brunei should be informed of the impending administrative changes as a matter of course

¹⁰²Memorandum by Secretary of State for the Colonies, 24 December 1947, CO 537/2244.

¹⁰³In 1946, Peel held a Class IV rank. See A.V.M.Horton, 'The Development of Brunei during the British Residential Era, 1906-1959; A Sultanate Regenerated', Ph.D. thesis, Hull University, 1985, pp.456-457.

¹⁰⁴Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, p.9.

as there was no obligation on their part to discuss or negotiate with the Sultan under the existing agreements.¹⁰⁵

Two years later in May 1948, Brunei entered into an agreement which transferred the High Commissionership from the Governor-General of Malaya to the Governor of Sarawak. The latter would have the same powers as those exercised by the Governors of the Straits Settlements before the war and by the Governor-General since his appointment. Under the new 1948 Agreement, the British Resident in Brunei would come under the direct supervision of the High Commissioner who was also the Governor of Sarawak. His status would remain essentially similar to past Residents in Brunei. The Colonial Office cautiously avoided equating the Brunei Resident to Divisional Residents in Sarawak as this would give rise to objections that Brunei might be seen as a "Sixth Division" of Sarawak. The 1948 Agreement also required that heads of Sarawak's technical departments such as Education, Health and Agriculture, would effectively assume responsibility for their respective departments in Brunei.

The primary objective of the association of Brunei with Sarawak was to allow the High Commissioner to spend more time on Brunei affairs. Sir Anthony Abell, who became the third Governor of Sarawak in 1950, however, maintained that he was not clear as to how far he was required to intervene in Brunei affairs and he was often impeded by the nebulous legal

¹⁰⁵Governor-General to T.K.Lloyd, 29 November 1947. See attached 'Notes to the Sultan of Brunei and the members of his Advisory Council', CO 537/2244.

status of the office of the High Commissioner, which was largely undefined.¹⁰⁶

On 22 April 1948, an agreement was signed between the Sultan of Brunei and the Governor of Sarawak, which provided for the secondment of Sarawak officers for service in Brunei.¹⁰⁷ This ended the link between Malaya and Brunei, and henceforth Sarawak Administrative Officers filled the ranks of Residents and Assistant Residents in Brunei and other important government departments.

Sarawak officers who took up appointments as Residents in Brunei between 1950 and 1959, J.C.H.Barcroft, J.O.Gilbert and D.C.White (see Appendix 5), all had distinguished careers under the Brookes and the colonial government. Barcroft joined the Rajah's Service in 1930 and upon his secondment to Brunei in 1950, was gazetted as a Class IB officer. Gilbert and White also began their service in Sarawak under Rajah Vyner and between them had many years' experience as Residents of the Third, Fourth and Fifth divisions before being seconded to Brunei. Perhaps as an acknowledgement of Brunei's growing importance as a significant oil-producing state in the 1950s, the High Commissioner was careful to select Sarawak Officers who had tremendous experience in administration for the post of Resident. This stood in

¹⁰⁶See minute by K.G.Ashton, 5 December 1949, CO 943/1 and High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 11 August 1951, CO 943/2.

¹⁰⁷The 1948 Agreement referred to above is not available but reference to it is made in the following; 'Brunei Overseas Officers Agreement, 1959' and 'The Brunei and Sarawak (Administration Separation) Agreement, 1959', Brunei Government Gazette, 16 July 1960, no.139.

contrast to the earlier choice of W.J.Peel, who became Resident in Brunei in 1946 after the end of the B.M.A.; Peel only held a Class IV rank in the Malayan Civil Service.

From 1949 onwards, there were two Assistant Residents in Brunei, one stationed in Kuala Belait and the other at the capital, Brunei Town. Sarawak officers seconded as Assistant Residents, which was the equivalent of District Officers, had varied backgrounds and it would be difficult to generalise on the type of candidate who was sent to Brunei (see Appendix 5). Some were seconded after one or two years' experience, while D.L.Brueen was an officer of nine years' standing before serving in Brunei. J.T.Weekes, who was on transfer from Uganda to Sarawak, had barely spent two months in Lawas, Sarawak, before he was despatched to Brunei Town. Yet two other officers, H.P.K.Jacks and G.Lloyd-Thomas, were former Brooke officers, while R.H.Morris was a former Australian army officer who had served under the B.M.A. in Sarawak. As far as was possible, officers who had spent some time in the Miri, Limbang and Lawas areas were favoured when considering postings to Brunei. This was, however, not laid down as a general rule. Perhaps it might not be wrong to assume that the secondment of Sarawak officers to Brunei as Assistant Residents was effected in the same way as the transfer of District Officers within Sarawak itself, and administratively Brunei was regarded as an adjunct of Sarawak.

The 1948 Agreement stated that officers seconded from Sarawak would be paid by the Brunei Treasury and that their

remuneration would be at the same salary level as that in Sarawak. The Trusted Commission of 1947 had already recommended the same salary structure for both Brunei and Sarawak. For Administrative Officers, the scale was \$400x25-450/bar/475x25-600/bar/625x25-800, compared to the previous revised Malayan Civil Service scale of \$450x30-6690/bar/730x30-1,000. The salary of the Resident in Brunei was proposed at \$1,100, similar to that of a Sarawak senior Resident. Officers posted to the oil district of Kuala Belait were recommended an allowance of 20% of basic salary within the range of \$15 to \$50 a month owing to the high cost of living in the area.

The association of Brunei with Sarawak, while initially conceived as a matter of administrative convenience, caused some initial resentment within Brunei. As early as 1950, Kathleen Clark wrote to Anthony Brooke that the people in Brunei felt they were being gradually absorbed into Sarawak and the Sultan would like to have as little connection with Sarawak as possible.¹⁰⁸ P.A.Coates, a seconded Malayan Civil Service officer who served in Brunei between 1954 to 1956, asserted that although he expected to observe some manifestations of discontent, he could not say that this was the case. He further elaborated,

I think the underlying feeling was there, but as the officers concerned in most cases were good professional civil servants who did their jobs mindless of political considerations, this feeling rarely surfaced..by 1959, the Sarawak officers in Brunei..were so integrated into Brunei that it was

¹⁰⁸Kathleen Clark to Anthony Brooke, 27 March 1950, Brooke Papers, Box 19/7.

an easy matter for them to take a Brunei contract; as expatriates, it mattered not to them whether their bread and butter came from Brunei or Sarawak.¹⁰⁹

The Colonial Office decided to terminate the Sarawak administrative link in 1959 when Brunei achieved internal self-government. With the end of the British Residential period in Brunei and the setting up of its own permanent establishment, an agreement was formalised in September 1959 between the Governor of Sarawak's Deputy, F.D.Jakeway, and the Brunei Sultan, hence officially ending the administrative association between the two states.¹¹⁰ The Brunei government offered several Sarawak officers on secondment the opportunity of transferring to the establishment of Brunei. Two Sarawak officers, W.I.Glass¹¹¹ who, in 1959, was Assistant Resident at Brunei Town, and E.W.Cousens, State Treasurer, opted for the transfer. D.C.White, Resident in 1959, also transferred for service in Brunei. The 1959 Agreement marked the separation of Brunei's administration from Sarawak.

Conclusion

I have highlighted in the preceding discussion the various problems encountered in the transition of Sarawak from the paternalistic rule of the Brooke Rajahs to a Crown Colony in

¹⁰⁹Personal correspondence with Pehin Dato Peter Coates, 9 September 1992.

¹¹⁰See 'The Brunei and Sarawak (Administration Separation) Agreement, 1959'.

¹¹¹Glass was transferred from Malaya to Sarawak in February 1958 and after serving for several months in the Sarawak Secretariat, he was seconded to Brunei later that year. Glass transferred to Brunei in November 1959.

the British Empire. The changes experienced by the new colony did not involve a complete overhaul of its system of administration because there had already existed in Sarawak before the war, a government machinery which closely resembled other British colonies. The Brooke Rajahs upheld British ideals in government, and Sarawak, by the end of the 1930s, had progressed along lines similar to other colonies. As an illustration, the conditions of service under the government of Rajah Vyner compared favourably with the interim measures introduced by the colonial government in 1946. The problem was essentially that Sarawak had developed independently, at its own pace, without the control and dictates of an extraneous central authority such as the Colonial Office.

In 1946, the Colonial Office found Sarawak lagging behind other colonies in the development and exploitation of its resources and the provision of essential services. Therefore, greater effort had to be made to place Sarawak on par with the other British colonies. Under the colonial government, Sarawak was subject to the directives from the Colonial Office whose long term policy objectives were concerned with the amalgamation of smaller colonies in order to pool resources rather than allowing each colony to develop independently. Hence in the post-war era, there was a pressing need to regularise terms of employment of the public services so as to facilitate the exchange of officers between neighbouring colonies.

Transferred officers from other territories immersed in colonial traditions, held sway in government because they occupied important positions in government and were able to influence the directions of administrative policy and organisation. One might assume that the Brooke traditions of administration gradually diminished in the face of an encroaching bureaucracy which was increasingly becoming institutionalised. The approach of the colonial government in administration was pragmatic, practical and purposeful. The days of the eccentric Brooke officer reigning over his 'subjects' in a remote outstation without much interference from the centre of government in Kuching, had no place in post-war Sarawak where strict accountability was stressed. However, the government during this early period of colonial rule, managed to retain certain features of the Brooke tradition such as the easy accessibility of government to the people and the personal and informal nature of administration. While Sarawak endeavoured to reduce its gap with other British colonies, it was also able to maintain its uniqueness as a result of the Brooke past. The next chapter will examine the Sarawak administration during the remaining nine years of colonial rule.

CHAPTER 6

THE PROSPECT OF COLONIAL DISENGAGEMENT AND THE SARAWAK

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE, 1955 - 1963

The previous chapter examined the various adjustments made by the Sarawak Administrative Service from 1946 to 1954 as a result of Sarawak's new status as a Crown Colony. The latter half of colonial rule forms the focus of this chapter and although it did not essentially see a departure from the practices and policies of the earlier period, new circumstances emerged which had an important bearing on the Service.

From the mid-1940s Britain increasingly associated itself with the objective of guiding her colonies towards self-government. After the end of the Second World War, various development schemes and welfare programmes were initiated and local government machinery introduced in the colonies in an effort to educate the people politically. Before self-government could be attained, it was preferable for colonies to be politically mature and economically equipped to stand on their own. Thus, political and constitutional changes were effected so as to involve more local people in the running of their government. Economic development and social integration were also necessary to achieve a manageable standard of

living before independence.¹ Where territorial units were seen as too small to be visible independent entities, they were encouraged to amalgamate with neighbouring colonies in a federation before being granted independence.

Sarawak, like other colonies, was also encouraged to abide by these policies. This chapter seeks to examine firstly, political developments in Sarawak leading to its entry into the Federation of Malaysia and the granting of independence in August 1963; secondly, the changes in the conditions of service of Administrative Officers; thirdly, the various measures undertaken by the Colonial Service in general, and the Sarawak administration, in particular, in response to colonial disengagement, and fourthly, some prominent trends in the Administrative Service during the nine years before independence.

Constitutional Changes

One of the important constitutional changes witnessed during this period was the enactment of a new constitution for Sarawak in 1956. After Sarawak assumed colonial status in July 1946, the government inherited a Constitution (Order no. C-21) introduced by Rajah Vyner in 1941. The preamble to this Constitution contained references to the cardinal principles of the rule of the Brooke Rajahs; the most significant in the

¹A.N.Porter and A.J.Stockwell, *British Imperial Policy and Decolonization, 1938-1964*, vol.II, London, 1989, pp.39-65.

context of Sarawak after the end of the Japanese occupation was number 8 which read,

..that the goal of self-government shall always be kept in mind..that the people of Sarawak shall be entrusted in due course with the governance of themselves and that continuous effort shall be made to hasten the reaching of this goal by educating them in their obligations, responsibilities and the privileges of citizenship.²

Although the 1941 Constitution was amended by the Sarawak Letters Patent in June 1946, it retained the substance of its 1941 predecessor. The 1946 amendment provided for the establishment of an executive body, the Supreme Council, with at least five members, and a Council Negri with legislative powers. The latter would comprise fourteen ex-officio members nominated from the civil service and eleven unofficial members. In addition, there would also be a number of standing members.³

Since the cession of Sarawak, the Secretary of State for the Colonies had reiterated on many occasions that, while it was necessary to make several modifications to the Constitution in order to align it with Sarawak's new status as a colony, care should be taken to avoid measures which might offend local feelings and sensibilities. Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, the first Governor of Sarawak, was advised by the Colonial Office to examine the whole constitutional question and liase with local representatives to make recommendations on how the

²Order no. C-21 (Constitution) 1941, see also R.G.Aikman (O.A.G.) to Colonial Secretary, 19 April 1952, CO 1022/90.

³The standing members were nominated for life and were mainly Malay officials appointed before the enactment of the 1941 Constitution.

people of Sarawak could be more directly associated with their government and administration on a broadly representative basis.⁴ Arden-Clarke cautioned that constitutional changes should not be introduced too rapidly and proposed that the best means to work towards ultimate self-government was "...to start at the bottom and to switch over from existing direct to more indirect methods of administration".⁵ According to Arden-Clarke, the people of Sarawak could be educated politically by introducing a system of local government which would employ the use of racial and inter-racial local authorities, municipal boards and district and divisional councils. As a result, local authorities were started in Sarawak in 1948 and by the mid-1950s, more than two-thirds of the population of Sarawak were living within the jurisdiction of their local authorities.⁶

During the early 1950s, the colonial authorities in Sarawak indicated that opposition to the cession was no longer significant and the time was ripe to effect major changes in the constitution. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary, R.G.Aikman, then Officer Administering the Government, proposed that the people of Sarawak be given the opportunity to select representatives to the Council Negri. It was desirable for members of the legislative council to be elected by the people instead of being nominated by the Governor. However, Aikman felt that direct election to this body would not be a suitable method at this juncture and

⁴Minute by G.C.Whiteley, 10 July 1947, CO 1022/90.

⁵Ibid.

⁶The growth of local government will be examined in Chapter 8.

that it would be more in keeping with the present state of political consciousness of the people to use electoral colleges to elect Council Negri members. Aikman further suggested that existing bodies such as the divisional and district advisory councils could be modified to function as electoral colleges.⁷ These proposals appeared to receive official backing when the next Governor of Sarawak, Sir Anthony Abell, announced in December 1952 that the government was working towards the objective of allowing unofficial members of the Council Negri to be elected by representatives of Divisional and Urban District Councils.⁸

The composition of the Council Negri, that is, the fact that official and appointed members exceeded unofficial ones, also received attention. This was because most of the official members were drawn from the civil service and naturally their sympathies lay with the government. One solution was to increase the number of unofficial members so that they formed the majority in the Council Negri.⁹ In September 1955, a Chinese unofficial member, Khoo Peng Loong, moved a resolution in the Council Negri calling for the enactment of a new constitution for Sarawak in order to effect the above changes.

⁷R.G.Aikman to Colonial Secretary, 19 September 1952, CO 1022/90.

⁸See Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Sarawak: Political and Economic Background*, London, 1957, p.8, and Human Relations Area Files, *North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak (British North Borneo)*, New Haven, 1956, p.63.

⁹'Broadcast talk by the Attorney-General of Sarawak, G.E.Strickland', Brooke Papers, Box 23/5.

In brief, his proposals centred on the issue of the composition of the Council Negri, namely, that the number of unofficial members should be increased from 11 to 24 members, 21 of whom were to be elected by representatives of Divisional Councils and 3 from representatives of the Urban District Councils of Kuching, Sibü and Miri. The number of official members should remain unchanged at 14 and there were, additionally, 4 nominated members to represent interests not adequately represented in the Council Negri as well as standing life members.¹⁰ These proposals demonstrated a demand for a majority of unofficial members in the legislature in terms of their numerical strength, but it must be pointed out that their influence could be checked by the Governor who held powers of veto.¹¹

It was also found necessary to work out a means whereby District and Divisional Councils could be reorganised as elective bodies for the election of unofficial members. The system which was finally agreed upon, provided for the election of representatives to the various District Advisory Councils who would, in turn, nominate from among themselves, members to the five Divisional Advisory Councils. These five Divisional Councils, as well as the elected representatives of the Urban District Councils, would further elect 24 unofficial members to the Council Negri.¹²

¹⁰There were 4 life members in 1955 and 3 in 1956.

¹¹*Council Negri Proceedings*, 6,7 September 1955, pp.26-27.

¹²*Royal Institute of International Affairs, Sarawak: Political and Economic Background*, p.10.

Membership of the executive body, the Supreme Council, was similarly in need of revision. The 1955 Council Negri resolution proposed that there would be three ex-officio members, namely, the Chief Secretary, the Attorney-General and the Financial Secretary. In addition, five members were to be elected from among the unofficial members of the Council Negri and two other Council Negri members would also sit on the Supreme Council. The 1955 Council Negri resolution, proposing major changes in the existing constitution, was unanimously passed later that year and resulted in the enactment of a new constitution for Sarawak in August 1956, which came into force in April the following year. Local elections to the Council Negri were held towards the end of 1957.

The 1956 Constitution marked a significant step in the advance towards self-government by giving the unofficial members an overwhelming majority in the Council Negri, thus allowing them greater participation in the legislative process. However, as has been mentioned earlier, ultimate executive and legislative powers still lay in the hands of the Governor who was vested with wide discretionary and veto powers. All bills passed by the Council Negri had to obtain the consent of the Governor before they could become law. In practice, however, the Governor's powers were seldom employed and their primary aim was to protect the Secretary of State's responsibility for Sarawak.¹³

¹³Personal correspondence with Sir Alexander Waddell, 24 October 1992.

The colonial government introduced a three-tiered electoral system with the intention of preventing any strong interest groups from dominating the Council Negri and ensuring that those elected had the support of representatives of all communities.¹⁴ However, the election results of 1959 showed that these assumptions were generally flawed. The formation of pressure groups by District Councils at the Divisional electoral colleges gave rise to a situation whereby some communities found themselves represented at District and Divisional Councils but not in the Council Negri.¹⁵

The first political party in Sarawak, the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), formed in June 1959, was largely Chinese based although it had representatives from other communities. In the 1959 Council elections, the SUPP scored some notable gains particularly in the Kuching Rural and Urban Councils. These successes spurred the Malays to form their own political party, Party Negara Sarawak (PANAS), in April 1960, which had the backing of the Kuching Malay abangs. There soon emerged a proliferation of political parties, and by 1963, there were six major political groupings.¹⁶ These parties participated actively in the June

¹⁴Council Negri, 'Electoral and Constitutional Advance', sessional paper, no.2, 1961, p.4. Some minor modifications were made to the electoral system in 1961. See also E.Lee, *Sarawak in the Early Sixties*, Singapore, 1964, pp.60-61 and M.B.Leigh, *The Rising Moon, Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney, 1974, p.49.

¹⁵Lee, p.61.

¹⁶The other political parties were first, the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA), formed in July 1962 with members drawn from the Sibu Foochow and Kuching Teochew communities; second, the Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA), founded in 1961 and was the successor of the former Barisan Pemuda Sarawak which led the anti-cession

1963 District Council elections.¹⁷ Again, the electoral college system was used, which meant that the elected Councillors would nominate from among themselves representatives to the Council Negri. Through indirect elections to the Council Negri, the principles of parliamentary democracy were gradually introduced to Sarawak, and on the eve of independence, Sarawak saw her first multi-party elections being held and this later led to the formation of a ministerial form of government.

The British Borneo Federation Proposal and Sarawak's Entry into Malaysia

The pooling of resources among smaller colonial territories, provided that conditions were favourable for such a development, was encouraged by the Colonial Office. The White Paper of 1946, *Organisation of Colonial Service*, argued that many advantages could be gained from such an arrangement.¹⁸ Also, the merging of such territories would make them more viable when granted self-government. After the Japanese occupation, the British Borneo territories of Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei had exhibited similarities in their levels of economic and social development and conditions gradually

movement; third, the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) formed in April 1961 which was mainly Dayak based; and fourth, the Party Pesaka anak Sarawak (PESAKA), which was formed in 1962 and had Temenggong Jugah as one of its founder presidents. See Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, pp.7-38.

¹⁷Ibid., pp.72-80.

¹⁸*Organisation of the Colonial Service*, p.10.

existed for them to be merged into a British Borneo federation.

The idea that the Borneo territories could be joined together into a single unit was first hatched in the late 1940s. The Earl of Listowel, after a visit to Sarawak in 1948, maintained that there was a strong case for the merger of the British Borneo states. He stated that "the administrative economies which would result from giving them a common administration with among other things, only one Governor, instead of two, are too obvious to require emphasis."¹⁹ Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, however, felt that any move towards closer association should be measured and gradual since the constitutional machinery in the Borneo states was not yet mature enough for a wider political structure to be conceivable.

The question of closer association of the three Borneo states was addressed at a conference for Governors held by the Commissioner-General for South-East Asia in January 1948. It was then decided that steps should be taken to advance gradually towards the goal of closer integration and coordination in all fields. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Arthur Creech Jones, endorsed the conclusions arrived at during the conference and added,

..I am anxious that no opportunity should be lost of furthering the ultimate aim of full

¹⁹Speech by the Earl of Listowel at the House of Lords Parliamentary debate, 15 November 1956, Brooke Papers, Box 24/1. The Earl of Listowel referred mainly to a merger of Sarawak and North Borneo but did not mention Brunei.

administrative union..it is however clearly inadvisable to unduly force the pace in that direction. On the other hand, it is equally clear that there is much to be said for joint action by the three governments in detailed questions of common concern, and it may be hoped that increasing liaison and cooperation between various departments..may lead to the evolution of a political union more organic and natural than could be imposed through purely political action..²⁰

Acting on this, certain cooperative and joint ventures among the Borneo states were established in 1949 and a combined Department of Geological Survey was also created under a Colonial and Development Welfare scheme. This was followed by the setting up of a single Supreme Court for the Borneo territories with a common establishment in 1951. A twice-yearly inter-territorial conference was also held from 1953 onwards to discuss the coordination of policies in areas of common concern. A standing body known as the Sarawak-North Borneo-Brunei conference was established to review the implementation of decisions arrived at during the inter-territorial conferences.²¹

At this stage of development, the integration of the civil services of the Borneo states into a single establishment was thought to be premature. The Trusted Commission of 1947 had already introduced uniform terms and conditions of service for public servants throughout British Borneo. We have also seen, in the previous chapter, the secondment of Sarawak officers to Brunei under the 1948 Agreement.

²⁰Report by G.C.Whiteley, Colonial Office, 26 July 1956, CO 1030/164.

²¹These conferences were under the chairmanship of the Commissioner-General, the Governors of Sarawak and North Borneo and the Sultan of Brunei.

One difficulty in the way of a closer association was Brunei's reluctance to participate in such an endeavour. Brunei was particularly suspicious of any attempt which might prejudice her status as an independent sovereign state and British Protectorate, and the prospect of sharing her enormous oil wealth to the advantage of Sarawak and North Borneo. The British Commissioner-General to South-East Asia, Malcolm MacDonald, suggested a possible means to persuade Brunei to adopt a more favourable posture. He proposed that the Sultan of Brunei should be made to understand that before any constitutional changes could be effected, Brunei should agree to work towards the integration of the British Borneo territories.²² Thus, in giving "concessions" to Brunei, "concessions" would be extracted from it in return.

Among the concessions suggested for Brunei was the termination of the then current administrative arrangement with Sarawak which meant that the Governor of Sarawak would cease to be the High Commissioner to Brunei and the latter would then come under the direct instructions of the Secretary of State. A second involved the status of Labuan; it would no longer be part of North Borneo and would instead be administered by the Brunei government. In return, Brunei would initially agree to be a member of the proposed Standing Joint Council which would be the successor of the inter-territorial conferences. The latter was a purely consultative

²²Malcolm MacDonald to A.T.Lennox-Boyd(MP), 4 February 1955, CO 1030/164.

body without any legal or statutory authority, while the former would be a constitutional body with vested executive powers and its creation would mark a conspicuous step towards closer integration of the Borneo states.

Before any of these proposals could be presented to Brunei, the Sultan, in March 1956, publicly announced that he firmly rejected the idea of a federation of the Borneo territories.²³ Apart from the intransigence of Brunei, the differing status of the three states could also have been difficult to resolve; Brunei was a British Protectorate while the other two states were Crown Colonies.²⁴ The Colonial Office then decided that nothing more was to be done for the next two years and the idea of a Standing Joint Council was temporarily shelved. It was hoped that Sir Anthony Abell, the Governor of Sarawak, would use his office as High Commissioner to Brunei to convince the Brunei Sultan of the advantages of federation. Abell's efforts, however, proved futile.

The Colonial authorities had meanwhile decided that the idea of integration should not be imposed from above but that any move towards closer association should involve, to a certain extent, the agreement of the local population. In 1958, the integration of the Borneo states was officially sponsored and public discussions on the subject encouraged. The Governors of Sarawak and North Borneo, Sir Anthony Abell and Sir Roland

²³Sarawak Tribune, 16 March 1956.

²⁴See minute by G.C.Whiteley, 23 May 1956, CO 1030/164, for the legal ramifications of the differing status of the three Borneo states.

Turnbull, made several radio broadcasts on the prospect for closer integration.²⁵ During these broadcasts, the term 'federation' was largely avoided, although it was very much implied that the British had that objective in mind. The Governors also did not commit themselves to state specifically the nature or type of closer association envisaged.²⁶ The legislative councils of both states later set up committees to find out the reaction of the people to a possible federation.

The feedback received from the grassroots was not favourable and basically ran along racial lines. Firstly, the Chinese in both territories, while welcoming the proposals, feared that the necessary concession to Brunei would result in the Malays dominating the seat of government. Secondly, the non-Malay natives felt that in the event of a federation materialising, the Chinese would constitute the largest racial group numerically, while the non-Malay natives, owing to their internal divisions and dispersed settlement patterns, would fail to secure any influence.²⁷ Thirdly, the Chinese and European business interests were convinced that centralisation of administration might result in unnecessary

²⁵*Sarawak Tribune*, 8 February 1958.

²⁶See J.R. Angel, 'The Proposed Federation of Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei; the Development and Decline of the British Borneo Concept', M.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 1963. Secondary literature on the proposed British Borneo federation, apart from Angel's thesis, is rather sparse. Angel's study, while providing an informative background to the subject, inadvertently overlooked some important points possibly because the author had limited access to official documents then.

²⁷J.D. Boles, 'Closer association between the British Borneo territories', typescript dated June 1960, Mss Pac s 52. Boles was a former District Officer in Kota Belud, North Borneo.

bureaucratic red-tape and, as a result, higher taxation would be inevitable. Fourthly, most communities preferred the continued presence of the British in Borneo acting as "umpire ensuring fair play between potentially rival groups".²⁸

Brunei continued to be averse to the idea of closer association and, in 1959, was granted a new constitution; administrative links with Sarawak were subsequently severed. It is noteworthy that under the new constitution, the Brunei Sultan was not allowed to bring his country into any form of amalgamation or federation without the express consent of his executive council. With this clause and the continued suspicions of the Sultan towards the idea of closer association, prospects for any form of future federation of the British Borneo territories appeared dim.

While the concept of a federation was slowly being buried, there emerged a new initiative in the early 1960s to bring the British Borneo states into an alliance with Malaya and Singapore in a federation of Malaysia. Owing to the differing rates of political and economic development between the Borneo states on the one hand, and Singapore and Malaya, on the other, it was not thought realistic before then to bring about an amalgamation of the territories concerned.

Both Sarawak and North Borneo lagged behind Malaya and Singapore in many aspects. The annual per capita income of Sarawak in 1961 was \$550 and \$700 for North Borneo, compared

²⁸Ibid.

with \$800 for Malaya and \$1,300 for Singapore. Only about 25% of the population of the two Borneo states were literate, while Malaya had a literacy rate of 50%.²⁹ Sarawak and North Borneo then were also not politically ready for self-government even within Malaysia. By 1961, Sarawak had a majority of elected unofficial members in the legislative council, but North Borneo had not reached the stage whereby any members of its legislature were elected, whether directly or indirectly. When the Prime Minister of Malaya, Tengku Abdul Rahman, first enunciated the Malaysia proposal in May 1961, there were only two political parties in Sarawak, the SUPP and PANAS, while North Borneo was still without any political party.

In proposing that the Malaysia federation include the Borneo states, the Tengku was hoping that the problem he had with Singapore could be solved. Although Singapore formed a natural economic unit with Malaya, the Tengku had rejected previous requests for federation because the inclusion of Singapore in a merger would tip the racial balance in favour of the Chinese, who in Singapore were increasingly being infiltrated by left-wing elements. The entry of the Borneo states, with their large indigenous population, would redress the imbalance caused by the relatively large numbers of Singapore Chinese.

²⁹R.S.Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, Boston, 1967, p.50. The data given above are for the year 1961.

But one must not exaggerate the importance of the racial factor in influencing the Borneo states' decision to join Malaysia. The British authorities felt that it was also in the interests of both Sarawak and North Borneo to be associated with the more advanced economies of Singapore and Malaya. In 1961, both states were not politically prepared for internal self-government. Even if Sarawak had been given independence, it would not have been able to cope with the enormous responsibilities on her own and thus the experience and expertise of both Singapore and Malaya would naturally put her in good stead.³⁰

The initial response of the Borneo states was one of outright rejection. There was a feeling among some political leaders such as Ong Kee Hui of the SUPP and A.M.Azahari of the Party Ra'ayat Brunei, that it would be more desirable to work for a closer integration of the Borneo states first before independence should be contemplated.³¹ The Brunei Sultan, however, continued to dissociate himself from the Malaysia idea.

The Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee (M.S.C.C.) was later set up to continue discussions on the Malaysia issue and it was through this forum that the Malaysia movement gained both form and content. The Malayan and Singapore delegates utilised the M.S.C.C. meetings to convince their

³⁰Ibid., pp.62-64. One of the problems which Milne highlighted was communist subversion among the Chinese in Sarawak.

³¹J.P.Ongkili, *The Borneo Response to Malaysia, 1961-1963*, Singapore, 1967, p.27.

Borneo counterparts of the viability of federation, and this helped to bring the idea of Malaysia closer to realisation.³² By February 1962, the Bornean leaders of Sarawak and North Borneo had begun to view Malaysia favourably. The next step was to ascertain the response of the people of Borneo and a commission of inquiry headed by Lord Cobbold was formed for this purpose. Between February and March 1962, the Commission held extensive meetings in Sarawak and canvassed the views of the various communities. It concluded that one-third of the population of Sarawak was in favour of Malaysia, one-third had reservations and would like to see some form of security to safeguard their interests, while one-third was opposed to it. The Cobbold Commission Report was considered in detail at a series of meetings in London in July 1962 by British and Malayan representatives. They concluded that a federation of Malaysia was to the advantage of both Sarawak and North Borneo, and further declared that Malaysia should be brought into being by 31 August 1963.³³

An Inter-Governmental Committee (I.G.C.), was established to work out the constitutional issues involved as well as enumerate safeguards for Sarawak and North Borneo when they became part of Malaysia. The Committee's Report was published in February 1963 and, amongst others, stipulated the establishment of a separate Public Service Commission (P.S.C.) in each of the Borneo states. A state P.S.C. had

³²*The Times*, 22 January, 1962.

³³Ongkili, *The Borneo Response to Malaysia*, p.71. See also *Straits Times*, 2 August 1962.

already existed in Sarawak from November 1961 under the chairmanship of R.L.V.Wilkes.³⁴

When Sarawak was merged with Malaysia, the federal P.S.C. would set up a branch in Sarawak with members of the state P.S.C. serving on the board of the federal P.S.C. Through this channel, Sarawak state officers were given an opportunity for promotion, transfer or secondment in the federal service. On 6 July, Sarawak signed the Malaysia Agreement, which was to bring the federation of Malaysia into being on August 1963.

Throughout the 1950s, the Colonial Office appeared preoccupied with the prospect of the formation of a British Borneo federation. However, the unyielding posture adopted by Brunei towards the idea and the fact that the three Borneo states were not politically equipped for independence, even within a federation, caused the British Borneo federation proposal to be temporarily shelved by the late 1950s. Moreover, the earlier efforts made towards closer association among the Borneo states were limited to practicable matters such as inter-territorial joint services and was without much political implication.³⁵ The Tengku's announcement in 1961 of

³⁴The chairman of the Sarawak P.S.C. had the status of a High Court Judge and the local representatives sitting on the board were Edward Jerah, Kho Soon Ewe and Abang Hj Mustapha bin Abang Hj Gapar. Wilkes, who was very experienced in staff matters, served in Nigeria from 1928 to 1951 and was later assigned to establish the P.S.C. of Sierra Leone where he became chairman from 1954 to 1958. Personal correspondence with Sir Alexander Waddell, 5 October 1992. For a more detailed account of the formation of the P.S.C., see *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 July 1961, 30 October 1961 and 1 November 1961.

³⁵Personal correspondence with Sir Alexander Waddell, 24 October 1992.

a Malaysia federation, encompassing the Borneo states, therefore, came at an opportune time.

From 1961 onwards, the British accelerated the pace of political development in both Sarawak and North Borneo by encouraging the formation of political parties, expanding the electorate and introducing the rudiments of parliamentary democracy. Within two years, Sarawak and North Borneo had achieved independence within Malaysia. The rapid flow of events contrasted sharply with the earlier British cautious approach to the British Borneo federation proposal. While it was regrettable that Sarawak did not have the experience of evolving its own internal ministerial form of government before independence, there was little reason to delay its entry into Malaysia, particularly after having obtained the approval of the Council Negri and formulating extensive safeguards.

The Bain Report, 1956

Since the end of the Second World War, civil servants in Sarawak had experienced many adjustments in their levels of remuneration. The steep rise in the prices of essential foodstuffs in the aftermath of the Japanese occupation, necessitated the award of a cost of living allowance for government officers. This was introduced to junior officers in May 1946 and was later extended to senior officers in January 1947. The previous chapter has elaborated on the more

important revisions in service conditions brought about as a result of the findings of the 1947 Trusted Commission. Four years later, F.C.Benham, was called upon to review the salary structure of civil servants. In essence, his proposals sought to increase salaries and introduce a variable cost of living allowance pegged to an index of prices.

In spite of the numerous changes in the gross emoluments and other conditions of service, the structure of the service, that is, how the service was organised, had remained relatively untouched since the 1930s. As a result of successive alterations of salary and the addition of new salary scales, major stresses in the prevailing structure of the service became evident. This was largely due to the fact that salary revisions were not followed by appropriate changes in structure, and according to the Financial Secretary, J.C.H.Barcroft, had given rise to a series of "complications and anomalies".³⁶

By 1955, there was a pressing need to simplify and rationalise the organisational structure of the service as well as review the conditions of service. Members of the Junior and Senior staff associations pointed out that an examination of the service terms of government servants was timely and hence the Sarawak government decided to obtain the advice of a consultant expert. In December 1955, L.Bain, who had extensive experience in establishment matters, was appointed to review the structure of remuneration and

³⁶*Sarawak Tribune*, 15 September 1956.

conditions of service for the civil services of Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei.³⁷

Both North Borneo and Brunei had also encountered similar difficulties as Sarawak. Brunei took the lead by approving a supplementary revision of salaries in March 1955.³⁸ This resulted in an increase in the emoluments for Brunei government officers and marked the beginning of a gradual divergence between basic salary scales in Brunei and Sarawak. Previous to this supplementary review, basic salaries in Sarawak and Brunei were similar, apart from minor variations in the cost of living allowance. Sarawak officers seconded to Brunei under the 1948 Agreement were on the Sarawak establishment and hence received Sarawak salaries.

The Bain Commission Report, which was submitted in April 1956, was concerned, firstly, with making proposals to streamline the present structure of the service. Secondly, the Report examined the relationship between salaries and the cost of living allowances in determining how the former could be adjusted with regard to the latter. Salary revisions and new salary scales were also looked into. Thirdly, the Commission studied the broad spectrum of allowances granted to government officers and recommended ways of improving such allowances as inducement pay, as well as those applying to marriage and child support and housing.³⁹ The following

³⁷*Council Negri Proceedings*, 12,13 December 1956, p.22.

³⁸L.Bain, *Report of the Commission on the Public Services of the Governments of Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei*, 1956, Sarawak, 1956, p.3.

³⁹*Ibid.*

discussion focuses on the proposals affecting the Sarawak Administrative Service.

1. Salary Changes

The Bain Commission proposed that the present structure of the Sarawak civil service would have to be revamped. The Trusted Commission of 1947 outlined the structure of the service as follows;

- Division I - Administrative and professional officers with salaries of more than \$600 per month or scales the maximum of which was \$600,
- Division II - Administrative and supervisory technical officers with monthly salaries between \$350 and \$600 or scales the maximum of which was more than \$350 but less than \$600,
- Division III - Clerical and junior technical officers, field staff and others,
- Division IV - Employees in posts not requiring a high degree of skills or academic qualifications.⁴⁰

Since 1947, there had been many salary revisions and the divisions above were no longer clearly demarcated; where one division ended and another began had therefore become vague. Apart from reducing the overlap of salaries between divisions, the Bain Commission also sought to cut down the number of salary scales.⁴¹

⁴⁰Report of Borneo Salaries Commission, 1947, p.6.

⁴¹Bain, Report of the Commission on Public Services, p.6.

Administrative Officers from the post of Cadet upwards belonged to Division I and were members of the Senior Service. One legacy of Brooke administration was the retention of a broad classification of the Sarawak Service into a Senior and Junior Service; the former being the preserve of expatriate personnel and requiring higher educational qualifications, and the latter consisting of local officers with more general skills. The colonial government found this distinction in the service largely unsatisfactory, and it had become irrelevant in the post-war period owing to the presence of several local officers promoted to the Senior Service since the late 1940s. Moreover, the Senior Service had been generally associated with expatriates and it was considered timely to dispense with such connotations in an era when localisation of the civil service was being actively promoted in other colonies. Thus, the Bain Commission was called upon to make recommendations for a fully integrated service, which would obviate the use of the terms 'Senior' and 'Junior' as descriptions for particular sections of the Sarawak Civil Service.

The Senior Service had 25 superscale or ordinary scale salaries while the Junior Service contained 120 fixed or scale salaries for officers on the permanent establishment, and 50 for those holding non-established posts. One of the objectives of the Bain Commission was to reduce this multiplicity of salary scales. The new structure should also

reflect an evaluation of the duties and responsibilities of officers within each division.

After a thorough examination, Bain recommended a new structure for the civil service which had five divisions instead of four as seen in the following;

- Division I - Superscale posts (indicated by groups),
- Division II - Administrative and Professional: the Administrative scale would be designated by 'A' and the Professional by 'B',
- Division III - Executive and Higher Technical: this is the new intermediate division introduced by Bain and was given one scale, 'C',
- Division IV - Clerical and Technical: included the general clerical and technical grades and was designated by the scales, 'D' and 'E',
- Division V - Sub-clerical and Minor Technical: allocated the scales, 'F' and 'G'.⁴²

Table 7, which follows, shows how the above structural changes affected the Senior Administrative as well as former Junior Service members, such as Native Officers(N.O.) and the Sarawak Administrative Officers(S.A.O.).

⁴²Ibid., p.7.

TABLE 7

Changes in the Structure of Administrative Posts
Proposed by the Bain Commission, 1956⁴³

	<u>Present Structure</u>		<u>Bain's Proposals</u>	
	<u>Division</u>	<u>Scale</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Scale</u>
Administrative Officer, Class IA	I	S5	I	5
Administrative Officer, Class IB	I	S6	I	6
Administrative Officer, Class II, III and Cadet	I	S14	II	A
S.A.O., Special Grade and N.O., Personal Grade	II	J4	III	C4
S.A.O. and N.O., Class I	III	J15	III	C3
S.A.O. and N.O., Class II	III	J27	III	C2
S.A.O. and N.O., Class III	III	J53	III	C1
Probationary S.A.O.	III	J75,80,91	IV	D1A,1

As seen in Table 7, the distinction between the Senior and Junior Service lapsed with Bain's proposals. Another important change was the transfer of Administrative Officers with the ranks of Class II, III and Cadet, formerly of the Senior Service, Division I, to the new Division II. This change was necessary as Bain intended to keep Division I for superscale posts and hence the retention of the Resident's posts of Class IA and IB within this Division. A novel idea proposed by Bain was the introduction of Division III (see Table 7), designed for the intermediate grade officer.⁴⁴ In

⁴³Table 7 is compiled from data cited in the Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, 1947, pp.28,37 and Bain, Report of the Commission on Public Services, pp.84, 89. The letters 'S' and 'J' in the Table signify that the officers concerned belonged to the Senior Service and Junior Service respectively. The 1947 Trusted Report separated the N.O. and S.A.O. posts (Junior Service) under the Department of Native Affairs and the Administrative Officers (Senior Service) under the Administration Department. The Bain Commission, however, made no distinction between the former Junior and Senior services and grouped them all under the Department of Administration.

⁴⁴Sarawak Tribune, 15 September 1956.

the new structure, the S.A.O. and N.O. from the Special Grade category and classes I, II and III came under Division III.⁴⁵ Entry to this Division would either be by means of direct admission for those with a post-secondary education or by promotion from Division IV.

2. The Level of Remuneration and Cost of Living Allowance

The various representations made by the staff associations to the Bain Commission generally focused on the issue of remuneration, that is, prevailing salaries were inadequate for civil servants to maintain a fair standard of living. Another grievance aired was the plight of married officers with children, who were apparently plagued by financial difficulties. The staff associations also called for parity of gross emoluments between Sarawak and Singapore. This proposal was not without precedence and had been put forward on several occasions since 1946, although previously the staff associations asked for parity with Malaya instead of Singapore.⁴⁶

The Bain Commission found little justification for parity as different circumstances determined the income levels of Singapore and Malaya from those of the Borneo territories. Bain also attempted to impress on Sarawak officers that, although Sarawak and Singapore had the same unit of currency, the most important considerations in determining salary rates were prevailing factors indigenous to each territory and not

⁴⁵The differences between the S.A.O. and N.O. services will be discussed in Chapter 7.

⁴⁶Council Negri Proceedings, 12, 13 September, 1956, p.23.

remuneration paid in another colony. However, there was a strong case for parity between the three Borneo states. Similar salary scales and conditions of service were especially encouraged between Sarawak and North Borneo. Brunei, owing to its higher standard of living, had comparatively higher salaries, although other conditions of service were essentially akin to the other two Borneo states.

The demand for increases in gross emoluments had been met by a series of salary revisions since 1947. By 1954, Cadets started with a minimum of \$510 compared with \$350 in 1947 and this was further consolidated just before the submission of the Bain Report to the Sarawak government (see Table 8). With the Bain proposals, Cadets began with \$750 and the minimum entry requirement was normally a tertiary qualification and preferably one year's attendance of the First Devonshire course. The time-scale for Division II Administrative Officers was \$750x30-870/930x30-1,050/bar/1,085x35-1,260/bar/1,300x40-1,420 and it was approximately similar in length to that which had existed previously (see Table 8), except for the imposition of two efficiency bar requirements in the Bain proposals. The two bars divided the Division II time-scale into three segments, the first for Cadets and junior officers, the second was intended for Class II officers, while the third was reserved for senior officers with added responsibilities, particularly those Administrative Officers holding acting appointments. There was also one starting point for the new time-scale compared to two for

1955 depending on the Cadet's qualifications (see Table 8 below).

TABLE 8

Proposed Salary Revisions for Administrative Officers⁴⁷

<u>Administrative Grade</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>Pre-Bain Revision</u>	<u>1956 Bain Proposals</u>
Class IA	\$1,440	\$1,600	\$1,870
Class IB	\$1,320	\$1,485	\$1,730
Class II, III	\$510/570/30-630/ \$660/30-780 \$810/30-1,080	\$595/665/35-875/ \$910/35-1,260	\$750/30-870/ \$930/30-1,050/ bar/ \$1,085/35-1,260/ bar/ \$1,300/40-1,420

In the earlier 1955 scale for Class II Administrative Officers, there was a wide disparity between the top end of the time-scale, \$1,080, with that of the next grade of officer, that is, Class IB with a salary of \$1,320, a jump of \$240. The new Bain scales, however, did not attempt to reduce this gap and allowed for a bigger difference of \$310 (from \$1,420 to \$1,730). Possibly, Bain wanted to underline the fact that Class IB was a superscale post with heavy responsibilities equivalent to heads of departments. Class II officers were not automatically promoted to Class IB and entry into this Class was usually reserved for officers with outstanding qualities.

⁴⁷Table 8 is compiled from data available in *Sarawak Government Staff List, 1955*, Kuching, 1955, pp.2-7, Secretariat Circular no.10, 1956, 'Revision of Salaries and Terms of Service', 18 September 1956, and *Sarawak Government Staff List, 1957*, Kuching, 1957, pp.1-8.

The role of the cost of living allowance in the determination of salaries was also examined by the Bain Commission. The cost of living allowance was introduced in 1947 in order to cushion the effect of the rise in food prices. The rate for this allowance varied according to whether an officer was single or married, with or without children. The award of the cost of living allowance was meant to be a temporary measure, which would be removed in the event of a fall in prices. The Benham Report of 1951 reaffirmed the need for allocating this allowance and went further in suggesting that different rates should be given to single and married officers.

The Bain Commission, however, considered that granting cost of living allowances based on the marital status of an officer should be discontinued.⁴⁸ In order to ensure that married officers did not suffer unduly, Bain suggested the introduction of a child allowance at the rate of 7½% of basic salary with a maximum of \$100 per month. Bain also stressed that the present system of the cost of living index was not a good means for determining changes in the cost of living or even salaries. It was not worthwhile for the Borneo states at that stage to be preoccupied with the lengthy and difficult process of broadening the base of the price index frequently. Moreover, Bain was of the opinion that the price index mechanism was not a reliable guide for determining salary scales. Bain therefore stated that he had no recommendation

⁴⁸Bain, *Report of the Commission on the Public Services*, p.13 and *Council Negri Proceedings*, 12, 13 September 1956, p.22.

for the adjustment of salaries corresponding to future changes in the cost of living.

3. Inducement Pay

The 1946 White Paper, *Organisation of the Colonial Service*, prescribed that salaries should, as far as possible, be fixed at rates which were applicable to local staff even if there were few local officers serving in that particular grade.⁴⁹ Due regard should also be paid to local circumstances such as the ruling income levels and the standard of living. However, if salaries reflected the local situation, they might prove too low to attract and retain qualified and experienced officers from overseas. In such cases, the provision of a pensionable allowance, known as 'inducement' pay, should be added on to salaries. The rates of inducement pay were determined by such factors as the expenses incurred by British officers serving overseas, the level of remuneration and conditions of service of alternative careers in Britain and the Colonial Service.

The Bain Commission examined the prevailing rates of inducement pay and concluded that the rates had not been revised for several years and were inadequate. The rates recommended for Administrative Officers varied from increases of between \$30 to \$65 over previous allowances. Cadets and Class II and III officers formerly received between \$150 and \$175 per month and, with the Bain proposals, their inducement

⁴⁹*Organisation of the Colonial Service*, p.8.

allowances were raised to between \$180 and \$240. Officers in Division I were granted the maximum rate of \$240 monthly.

4. Housing and Rents

The problem of housing encountered by civil servants, particularly expatriate officers, had been earlier addressed by the Trusted Commission, which held the view that the practice of extending free housing to civil servants should be discontinued.⁵⁰ Although no housing allowances were allocated, the Commission indirectly provided measures which aided officers in alleviating the burden of the rising cost of housing. One of the measures included the award of a higher cost of living allowance for officers not staying in government quarters.

Bain argued that this practice actually acknowledged the government's liability to house its permanent staff. Thus, as the establishment expanded, the government's burden of meeting the costs of housing also increased. Bain recommended that subsidised housing should only be provided for officers in dire need of accommodation such as newly-arrived expatriate officers and that rents for government quarters should be charged at more economic rates. Salary revision would also be designed to allow for a rental expense of approximately 10% of salary.⁵¹

⁵⁰Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, p.13.

⁵¹Bain, Report of the Commission on Public Services, pp.48-49.

5. Education Allowance

The issue of providing an education allowance for the children of expatriate officers had been a contentious one. Even before the appointment of Bain, the Sarawak government had been under pressure from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to emulate the practice in other colonies of extending assistance for the education of expatriate officers' children. The costs of educating children in Britain had risen enormously since 1945. Overseas officers normally sent their children to boarding school in Britain where fees in the 1950s ranged between \$2,600 (£303) to \$3,800 (£443) a year.⁵² Although local authorities in Britain did provide education grants, practice had shown that such assistance was not extended to officers serving overseas in colonial territories.

Before the mid-1950s, the Sarawak government had not intended granting an education allowance for expatriate officers, although the Senior Staff Association made repeated pleas over the years. In 1955, North Borneo took the lead by introducing an education allowance for the children of overseas officers from the ages of 8 to 18. The Bain Commission was therefore instructed to look into the feasibility of providing a similar education allowance in Sarawak.

Bain concluded that an education allowance for children of expatriates in Sarawak had long been overdue. An allowance of

⁵²Ibid.

\$100 per month for each child (limited to two children per family) was suggested and this would be payable to children between the ages of 5 and 18. When the Bain Commission Report came up for debate in the Council Negri, an unofficial member, A.T.Wedgwood, voiced his reservations on the proposed allowance arguing that huge increases in salary and the revised rates of inducement pay should be sufficient for expatriate officers to maintain their children without any help from government.⁵³ In spite of this outcry, the education allowance suggested by Bain was approved by the Council Negri.⁵⁴

The foregoing discussion summarises the more salient recommendations of the Bain Commission affecting members of the Administrative Service. Among the more important changes introduced was the reorganisation of the civil service into five divisions and the removal of the distinction between the Senior and Junior services. As a result, Cadets, and Classes II and III officers were transferred from Division I to II. Another innovation which was more relevant to the junior or local administrative officers, in the N.O. and S.A.O. services, was the creation of Division III, an intermediate grade. Apart from this, Bain proposed salary increases and raised the inducement pay for expatriate officers, while simultaneously doing away with differing rates of the cost of living allowance determined according to an officer's marital status. In lieu of the increases in

⁵³Council Negri Proceedings, 12,13 September 1956, p.24.

⁵⁴See Secretariat Circular, no.10, 1956, p.1.

salary, government was to further reduce its commitment to house officers.

As soon as the Bain Report was submitted to the government in April 1956, a Whitley Council with representatives from government and various staff associations, was set up to examine the Report. A debate in the Council Negri on the Bain recommendations also followed suit. Both the Whitley Council and the Council Negri agreed with the changes proposed by Bain and approved the decision to implement the findings of the Report. The revisions were backdated to take effect from 1 January 1956.

The Watson Report, 1963

Following the study made by the Bain Commission in 1956, there were no further alterations in the service conditions of civil servants until October 1962 when H.M.Watson was appointed to examine the structure of public services in Sarawak and North Borneo. The Sarawak government instructed Watson to review the existing salary structure in order to achieve, as near as possible, parity between North Borneo and Sarawak. This was especially important in view of the impending entry of both states into a federation with Malaya and Singapore. The Bain Commission had earlier proposed similar salary scales and conditions of service between the two states, but there were still minor variations in the

lower ranks of the service and Watson was asked to make recommendations to further reduce this disparity.⁵⁵

Bain had earlier reorganised and simplified the salary structure but Watson claimed that this rationalisation was more apparent than real.⁵⁶ Moreover, overlapping of scales occurred at several points in the structure and, as a result, promotion from one division to another did not necessarily ensure a financial gain. However, these criticisms were mainly relevant for the middle and lower divisions of the Service which occupied the main attention of the Watson Report. I discuss the proposals affecting Administrative Officers below.

Administrative Officers from the rank of Cadet to Class II were within Division II with a single time-scale of \$750x30-870/930x30-1,050/bar/1,085x35-1,260/bar/1,300x40-1,420. Watson pointed out that long scales proceeding by incremental steps often gave rise to apathy among officers. As an alternative, he suggested a scale with steeper increases of salary rather than a uniform progression. Additionally, a scale structure, while promising a career up to a reasonable retirement point for the satisfactory officer should also be flexible enough to reward the officer with above average or exceptional qualities with promotion within the same division or to a higher division. Another point to which Watson took exception

⁵⁵H.M.Watson, 'Report of the Commission to Examine the Structure of the Public Services of North Borneo and Sarawak, 1962', (Confidential) unpublished typescript dated 15 February 1963.

⁵⁶Sarawak Tribune, 31 May 1963.

was the inclusion of an 'upper segment' (\$1,300x40-1,420) in Bain's Division II time-scale, which was originally intended to give remuneration to officers assigned to posts with heavier responsibilities.

Watson recommended that the time-scale be divided into three sections as follows;

A1 - \$530x30-620x32.50-750/examination

A2 - \$800x35-1,220/vacancy bar

A3 - \$1,260x40-1,420⁵⁷

Those with pass degrees or equivalent qualifications would enter at \$530, while officers possessing a good honours degree and those promoted from Division III started from \$620. The above scale was also prescribed for Division II officers in North Borneo. In the new structure, the former 'upper segment' appeared as A3. It must be stressed that Bain proposed two time-scales for Division II officers, scale A for Administrative and Professional Officers and a lower scale B (\$720x30-870/930x30-1,202/bar/1,050x35-1,225/bar/1,260x40-1,380) for other officers within this Division. Watson proposed only one time-scale for Division II irrespective of their departments.

One outstanding feature of the Watson time-scale was the downward salary revision, with an initial starting point of \$620 for Honours degree holders compared with \$750 recommended by Bain for Administrative Officers. Watson was

⁵⁷Watson, 'Report of the Commission to Examine the..Public Services of North Borneo and Sarawak, 1962', p.10.

aware this might create the impression that the Administrative Service was being curtailed at a time when more and more local officers were entering it.⁵⁸ He maintained that he had not been presented with enough evidence to show that the proposed downward salary revision might result in a failure to attract new staff. Watson asserted that there had not been any marked increase in the cost of living and statistics had shown that there was only a small rise of 0.75% in living costs since 1960.⁵⁹ Moreover, he might have taken into consideration the vast increases in inducement pay in 1962⁶⁰ which could have compensated for the reduction in salaries, at least for the expatriate officer. With the entry of Sarawak into Malaysia a distinct possibility, Watson could have had the local officer in mind when formulating the salary scales.

The salaries in Division I with regard to Administrative Officers, remained largely unchanged, and the wide gap in salary between the top end of the Class II (Division II) scale of \$1,420 and the salary of \$1,730 (Group 6) for Class IB (Division I) officers was allowed to persist. In other departments, promotion to Division I would normally be to a lower super-scale post such as Group 7 (\$1,610) or Group 8 (\$1,520).

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹This figure was cited by the Deputy Chief Secretary in a Council Negri debate on the Watson Report. See *Council Negri Proceedings*, 28-30 May 1963, p.42.

⁶⁰see Table 12, p.294, for the new rates of inducement pay.

When the Watson Report was submitted to the Sarawak government in February 1963, the views of the staff associations, as well as the Asian Officers Union, were solicited and consultations held with the government of North Borneo. A sessional paper⁶¹ based on the proposals of the Report was then prepared. This paper, while approving Watson's proposals for the middle and lower divisions of the service, stated that the Division II time-scale for Administrative Officers and professionals would not apply, and this group of officers would retain Bain's scale A without any changes. During the Council Negri debate, several unofficial members expressed their concern over the lowering of entry points for Division II officers and it seemed that the government had acted wisely in rejecting the Watson time-scale for Administrative Officers.⁶²

The Watson Report was the last in a series of attempts initiated by the colonial government to improve the conditions and terms of service of the Administrative Service since 1946. The government sought to ensure that a career as an Administrative Officer was a secure and satisfying one with good prospects for promotion. It had also become a Service which reacted to prevailing circumstances and effected changes when the need arose. For example, after the end of the Japanese occupation, Sarawak experienced a steep

⁶¹Ibid., pp.42-43. The sessional paper, no.4, 1963, was quoted during the debates.

⁶²During the May 1963 Council Negri proceedings, there appeared to be some confusion as to which Watson proposals were eventually accepted and set out in the sessional paper, no.4. This was a result of the insufficient time given to Council Negri members to study the Report and the sessional paper.

rise in the prices of essential commodities and hence the Trusted and Benham commissions recommended the award of a cost of living allowance which was intended to ease the burden of the higher costs of living. When prices stabilised in the mid-1950s, the cost of living as a factor in determining salaries, was de-emphasized. In 1963, Sarawak inherited a Service which was largely unified and integrated.

Political Advance in the Colonies and its Impact on the Colonial Service and the Expatriate Staff of the Sarawak Administrative Service

The end of the Second World War saw Britain's declared objective of guiding the colonial territories to self-government translated into policy. To this end, localisation of the public services was encouraged. As more and more colonies moved towards self-government, there gradually developed a fear of insecurity among the expatriate civil service members with regard to their future career prospects. Recruitment literature for Cadets even emphasized that the main task of the Service was to guide and prepare the colonies for eventual self-government.⁶³ Political pressure within the colonies might therefore result in the immediate replacement of expatriate civil servants with local officers, and this apprehension could have impaired the attractiveness of the Colonial Service as a promising career. If unchecked, this trend might have affected new recruitment or even

⁶³Jeffries, *Whitehall and the Colonial Service*, p.45.

resulted in a mass exodus of experienced expatriate staff from the colonies.

In the early 1950s, there were already difficulties in filling vacancies for Colonial Service appointments. Table 9 below gives an indication of the problem of dwindling new recruits as against the rising number of unfilled vacancies. The Colonial Office was increasingly faced with the challenge of devising a service structure which would incorporate enough guarantees of security and stability so as to offer the potential recruit a 'reasonably settled career'.

TABLE 9

Appointments and Unfilled Vacancies in the Colonial Service
in the early 1950s⁶⁴

	<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>
New Appointments	1,396	1,378	1,227
Unfilled Vacancies	988	1,055	1,048

Even expatriate officers, who were already employed by colonial governments, were not spared the anxieties brought about as a result of these developments. One of their fears sprang from the anomalous position of the Colonial Service officer in relation to the Crown and the colonial territory in which they served. Members of the Colonial Service were servants of the Crown and, as such, their conditions of employment were bound by colonial regulations. On the other

⁶⁴Table compiled from data cited in *ibid.*

hand, the officer did not have a contractual agreement with the Secretary of State for the Colonies but was under contract with the employing colonial government.⁶⁵ Thus, the expatriate officer's common fear was that his career would be jeopardised if, owing to constitutional changes and independence in the colonies, Britain no longer had control over his tenure and conditions of employment.

A similar situation was seen in Ceylon in 1931 when a new constitution was granted giving the country a large measure of self-government. It was considered that the constitution introduced, affected the basis of employment of serving Ceylon civil servants and that the transfer of executive control from the colonial Governor to the State Council actually involved a change of conditions under which these officers had initially agreed to serve. The Donoughmore Commission, which was appointed to look into the matter, proposed special retirement conditions for officers who preferred not to continue their service under the new conditions.⁶⁶ However, the Colonial Office chose not to see the Ceylon case as a precedent influencing future policy. It argued firstly, that when the Donoughmore Commission's recommendations were considered in 1929, the Colonial Service was not yet unified and what transpired should be taken as an

⁶⁵Ibid., p.45.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp.41-43. See also memorandum by L.K.Morse, K.H.Digby and D.L.Leach with attached notes titled 'The Donoughmore Scheme of Retirement', Secretariat Circular no.12, CSO 137/46, Kuching District Office File. Morse, Digby and Leach used the example of the Donoughmore scheme to argue for the option to retire with compensation for loss of career when Britain took over the administration of Sarawak from Rajah Vyner in 1946.

internal matter between Ceylon and her civil servants,⁶⁷ and secondly, new recruits after the war entered the Service on the understanding that their main task was to guide colonial territories towards self-government.

It was also in the interest of the colonial government approaching independence to retain the services of experienced expatriate officers before their own local public services could be fully developed. A colony's administration might suffer inexorably if overseas officers left before there were adequately qualified local personnel to replace them. Economic development in the colonies should not be allowed to slacken as a result of the sudden departure of experienced officers or by the fact that colonies could not attract new overseas officers when the need arose.

The Colonial Office gave serious consideration to the problems brought about by firstly, possible changes in the conditions of service affecting expatriate officers as a result of the advance towards self-government in the colonies and secondly, the continuing need of colonial territories for experienced expatriate personnel in many areas of administration even after independence had been achieved.

In 1954, in an attempt to address these issues, a White Paper was published proposing that the Colonial Service should be reorganised into Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service

⁶⁷Jeffries, *Whitehall and the Colonial Service*, pp.40-41.

(H.M.O.C.S.).⁶⁸ Most of the members of the various branches of the Colonial Service, including the Colonial Administrative Service, were entitled to membership. The White Paper put forward the condition that when a colonial territory attained self-government, it should undertake to ensure that the conditions of service of expatriate officers would be safeguarded and, in the event of any premature retirement, these officers would be eligible for compensation for loss of career. In order that these conditions would be honoured, Britain would enter into a formal agreement with the colonial territory concerned.

Matters were taken a step further when the Colonial Office decided to introduce a new scheme outlining a Special List of H.M.O.C.S. members who could be seconded to colonial territories after independence.⁶⁹ These colonies had to make arrangements to create conditions so as to encourage expatriate officers to continue their service even after independence. While seconded, the expatriate officer would serve on conditions of service prescribed by Britain after consultation with the employing colonial government. Officers on this List would also be obligated to serve up to the age of 50 in any post to which they might be assigned.

This scheme had various difficulties. There was a reluctance on the part of the expatriate officer to stay on after

⁶⁸See Colonial Office, *Reorganisation of the Colonial Service, 1954*, Colonial no.306, H.M.S.O., London, 1954.

⁶⁹Colonial Office, *Her Majesty's Oversea Civil Service, Statement of Policy Regarding Organisation, May 1956*, Cmnd 9768, H.M.S.O., London, 1956.

independence as assurances made by the Colonial Office, such as the prospects of further employment in other colonies, the attractiveness of a lump sum compensation and other benefits to which Special List members were eligible, were not sufficient incentives.⁷⁰ It was therefore left to individual colonial territories to enter into agreements with Britain to improve upon the guarantees of employment granted to Special List members as an inducement for expatriate officers to continue to serve after independence.

It must be stressed that the above undertakings only took effect when the colony became independent. However, problems associated with self-government started well before independence had been attained. Furthermore, colonial governments had to bear the costs of rising rates of inducement pay prior to independence; the payment of large lump sum compensation to officers who had been prematurely retired was also a heavy drain on the coffers of the colony concerned. In 1960, a new set of arrangements was formulated whereby Britain provided financial assistance to colonies by shouldering the payment for inducement allowances with immediate effect, that is, before independence, as well as sharing the cost of compensation schemes. These arrangements

⁷⁰This problem was faced by Nigeria, a colony with a large expatriate establishment. By 1957, it was discovered that only 400 out of 2,000 of her expatriate staff eligible for membership with the Special List had actually applied to do so. See Colonial Office, *Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service, Statement of Policy regarding officers serving in Nigeria*, July 1958, Cmnd 497, H.M.S.O., London, pp.4-5.

were to be the subject of ad hoc agreements between Britain and each colonial territory from April 1961.⁷¹

Sarawak, during the early 1960s, experienced similar problems as in other colonies. After the abandonment of the British Borneo federation proposal, both Sarawak and North Borneo were promised independence within a federation of Malaysia in August 1963. The Sarawak Administrative Service remained under the purview of the State government, which was solely responsible for the employment of expatriate Administrative Officers after independence. The I.G.C. Report (see p.254) stated that localisation of the public services in Sarawak was a major objective and posts in government would, as far as possible, be given to qualified local candidates.⁷²

On joining Malaysia, expatriate Administrative Officers opting to remain would be seconded to the Sarawak public service, serving on their pre-independence service conditions. The length of service available to these officers would also be made known immediately. Officers serving in federalised departments such as Education, would be seconded to the Federal public service but would continue to be subject to the Sarawak State government's pension and provident fund regulations.

⁷¹Colonial Office, *Service with Overseas Governments, October 1961*, Cmnd 1193, H.M.S.O., London, p.3. Under this agreement, Britain was to be responsible for determining the rate of inducement allowances. Members of the H.M.O.C.S. who retired under the compensation scheme could be considered for re-employment on contract terms with other colonies or be temporarily appointed by the Home Civil Service.

⁷²Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee, Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, pp.25-26.

Under the Overseas Service Aid scheme, Britain entered into an agreement with Sarawak whereby inducement pay and children's education allowances as well as half the passage costs for expatriate officers would be met by Britain with effect from the date of the Agreement.⁷³ The payment would continue for a period of ten years and the Agreement also allowed Sarawak, in consultation with Britain, to continue recruiting expatriate staff to fill vacancies in the public services which could not be met locally.

A retirement scheme was also drawn up for members of the H.M.O.C.S. whose services would be terminated as a result of localisation or reorganisation of the civil service brought about by independence.⁷⁴ Officers affected were not subject to the usual pension requirements such as the imposition of the minimum retirement age and length of service. For these officers, pension would be calculated on the basis of the pensionable emoluments they were drawing at the time of retirement, and would not be liable to the averaging provisions of pension regulations.⁷⁵

Apart from the favourable pension terms, expatriate officers opting for the retirement scheme were eligible for compensation irrespective of whether they had elected to

⁷³Ibid., p.27, refers to 'The Overseas Service (North Borneo/Sarawak) Agreement, 1961'.

⁷⁴See 'Scheme of retirement benefits for members of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service and for officers designated under the Overseas Service (North Borneo/Sarawak) Agreement, 1961', in *ibid.*, p.30.

⁷⁵Ibid.

retire immediately or remain in the service of the Sarawak State government on a short term basis after independence. The amount of compensation would correspond to the length of an officer's service as well as his age and salary drawn prior to independence. The maximum amount payable under this scheme was £12,000 (\$102,857) and compensation rates normally peaked for officers between the ages of 28 and 40 but declined steadily from the ages of 40 to 55.⁷⁶ For example, an officer aged 40 with ten years' service was given the factor⁷⁷ 4.3, while those aged 50 received 2.1. Officers transferred from other colonies received the most favourable rates of compensation as the computation of their factors took into account salary loss sustained during their transfer.⁷⁸

Officers agreeing to retire early immediately after independence were granted their compensation entitlement in one lump sum, while those deciding to continue their service with the Sarawak State government would receive their compensation over a period of five years in six instalments.⁷⁹ It can be argued that an officer's desire to leave would be lessened if he could obtain, while proceeding with his work after independence, an advance of a substantial amount of his compensation rather than receiving the full amount after he had completed his contract. As an added incentive, his

⁷⁶Ibid., pp.39-41, appendix I, II, III and IV.

⁷⁷These factors were obtained by interpolation and corresponded to an officer's age and completed years of service. Compensation rates depended on the factors allocated; the higher the factor, the greater the amount of compensation.

⁷⁸Ibid., p.40, appendix II.

⁷⁹If the compensation was less than £1,000, the officer would be paid in full regardless of whether he chose to continue his service.

compensation rates would be calculated on a yearly basis while he was serving under contract.

An officer who opted for the retirement scheme and did not wish to remain working for the Sarawak State government was eligible for a disturbance grant equivalent to one-quarter of his annual pensionable emoluments. He would also be deemed to have completed a normal tour and was thus given retirement passage and a baggage concession. At least three Administrative Officers, M.J.Christie, T.M.Ainsworth and A.R.Snelus, opted to retire immediately under the retirement scheme in 1963 while other expatriate members of the Administrative Service were re-engaged on a short term basis. The expatriate officers who remained in Sarawak under the scheme were not technically on contract terms but continued on pensionable terms, the only difference was that they were guaranteed four years' service instead of the previous expectation of proceeding with the service until the normal retirement age. If the services of the expatriate officers were still required after the expiration of the four-year term, they would normally be employed on short term contracts.⁸⁰ However, the Sarawak government gave expatriate officers the option to retire early even before completing four years' service after 1963. According to A.J.N.Richards who retired in April 1964, most expatriate officers had left Sarawak by about mid-1965.⁸¹

⁸⁰Personal correspondence with Dato John Pike, 25 May 1992.

⁸¹Personal correspondence with A.J.N.Richards, 17 February 1992.

In order that conditions of employment for expatriate officers would be safeguarded upon Sarawak's entry into Malaysia, Britain and Sarawak signed another agreement which came into effect on 31 August 1963.⁸² Under this Agreement, Sarawak undertook to ensure that conditions of service would not be less favourable than those previously existing, and to honour its obligations to pay pensions. On the other hand, Britain retained the option to transfer any member of the H.M.O.C.S. to another colony provided that the officer concerned reimbursed the Sarawak government any compensation or instalments of compensation already received.

The above discussion elaborates on the various attempts made by the Colonial Office to ensure that the security of service of H.M.O.C.S. members were not greatly affected by the move towards self-government in the colonies. Apart from the reorganisation of the Colonial Service into H.M.O.C.S. in 1954, the arrangements made to safeguard the security of service for expatriate officers were usually effected on a piecemeal basis in the form of bilateral agreements between Britain and each colonial territory. This was perhaps necessary owing to the differing circumstances and needs of various colonies. However, it should not be taken to indicate the absence of a centralised policy from Britain. While London formulated guidelines on compensation and retirement

⁸²For 'Public Officers Agreement between Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of Sarawak', undated draft copy, see *Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee*, p.42. This agreement came into effect on 'Malaysia Day', that is, 31 August 1963.

schemes, each colonial government was allowed to improvise on the details according to its own particular situation.

Developments in the Sarawak Administrative Service, 1955-1963

The years 1946 to 1954 saw Sarawak gradually responding to the changes brought about as a result of its new colonial status. By the early 1950s, the Administrative Service in Sarawak was not unlike any other British colony. The impact of colonial rule reduced the uniqueness of Sarawak's former paternal government and brought it more in line with the other colonial dependencies in the region.

In a House of Lords debate on Sarawak in 1956, Lord Milverton noted that in order to increase the pace of development of essential services in Sarawak, it was inevitable that certain aspects of Brooke administration would have to be forfeited.⁸³ Lord Milverton's comments were prompted by Lord Ogmores,⁸⁴ who lamented the passing of the personal nature of Brooke rule. Lord Ogmores maintained that "...a flood of memoranda and orders..keeps coming down from the top..but the people in the interior do not personally see the Government officers".⁸⁵ Lord Milverton further suggested that this was a regrettable consequence of progress evident in most colonies.

⁸³House of Lords Parliamentary debate, 15 November 1956 (extract), Brooke Papers, Box 24/1. See also Sarawak Tribune, 26 November 1956.

⁸⁴Lord Ogmores, formerly D.R.Rees-Williams, Labour M.P. for South Croydon, visited Sarawak with L.D.Gammans, Conservative M.P. for Hornsey, in 1946 to ascertain the views of the people on the cession of Sarawak to the Crown.

⁸⁵Sarawak Tribune, 29 November 1956.

As government became more complex, the District Officer found himself tied down to his office and becoming increasingly preoccupied with the heavy volume of paperwork. Traditions which had long been a distinct characteristic of the Brooke Rajahs were open to pressure as a result of new demands and circumstances in post-war Sarawak. For example the District Officer found himself overburdened with more and more responsibilities, and had less time on his hands for establishing close contact with the local people.⁸⁶ Queries or complaints were often dealt with by his native deputies and this limited the access the people had with the Administrative Officer.

By the mid-1950s, circumstances simply did not allow the distinctive features of Brooke administration to persist. This was partly attributed to the presence of numerous transferred officers from other colonies who were less sympathetic to the informal nature of Brooke government as witnessed in the 1930s. Brooke precepts of administration, such as personal rule and paternal government, worked well in an environment in which government was limited to merely providing law and order. But when government expanded and penetrated into every level of political and economic decision-making, a slightly different approach was needed. It was inevitable that the style of administration had to

⁸⁶Changes in the duties of Administrative Officers in the post-war period will be discussed in Chapter 8.

respond to the nature and objectives of the colonial government in the 1950s and early 1960s.

There were no significant changes in the composition of the Administrative Service during the latter half of colonial rule apart from the fact that more and more posts were extended to locally recruited officers.⁸⁷ In 1957, out of 55 members of the Service, 43 were expatriate officers while there were 11 local officers. By 1963, the number of local officers had jumped to 21 or 44% of the Service (see Table 10).

TABLE 10

Composition of the Administrative Service, 1957-1963⁸⁸

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Expatriate Officer</u>	<u>Local Officer</u>
1957	55	43 (78%)	12 (22%)
1958	53	39 (74%)	14 (26%)
1959	51	39 (76%)	12 (24%)
1960	48	35 (73%)	13 (27%)
1961	45	30 (67%)	15 (33%)
1962	47	30 (64%)	17 (36%)
1963	48	27 (56%)	21 (44%)

With the localisation of the Service encouraged by the colonial government during the 1950s, the number of expatriate Administrative Officers fell significantly.

⁸⁷The localisation of the Administrative Service will be dealt with in Chapter 7.

⁸⁸The Administrative Officers referred to here were those belonging to Division I (Groups 5,6) and Division II. Table 10 is based on information gathered from the 1957-1963 staff lists.

Experienced technical officers with their more specialised skills were liable to be needed for a longer period of time since it would take longer to replace them with local officers. The posts of Administrative Officers, on the other hand, were more likely to be localised. As tertiary education became available to local candidates, the number of local recruits promoted into the higher echelons of the public services increased. Furthermore, there was also an increasing number of experienced local officers promoted from Division III, who began filling the ranks of the Administrative Service from the early 1950s. In spite of this, there was still a dearth of qualified local officers and the Administrative Service continued to recruit new expatriate officers.

Between 1955 and 1963, only four expatriate Cadets were recruited; G.T.Barnes, H.A.L.Ferguson and O.G.Haydock-Wilson joined the Administrative Service in July 1956 while the last expatriate Cadet to be appointed was M.J.Christie, in July, 1958 (see Table 11 below). All these Cadets held tertiary qualifications and had attended the First Devonshire course before being posted to Sarawak. It is interesting to note that even attendance of the Devonshire courses at Oxford reflected the trend towards localisation of the colonial public services. One course participant observed that locally-recruited officers from the colonies began to outnumber expatriate officers in attendance, rising sharply from 36% of the total number of participants in 1958/59 to

70% by 1961/62. The year 1962/63 saw the last of the British Cadets attending these courses, three headed for Bechuanaland and one for Fiji.

TABLE 11

Newly-Appointed Cadets to Sarawak, 1955-1963⁸⁹

	<u>Age on arrival</u>	<u>Date of appointment</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1963</u>
G.T.Barnes	23	13.7.56	\$840*	\$870*	\$930*	\$960	\$1,020	\$1,050
M.J.Christie	24	27.7.58			\$810*	\$840*	\$870*	\$960
H.A.L.Ferguson	25	13.7.56	\$810*	\$870*	\$870*	\$930*	\$930	\$1,050
O.G.Haydock-Wilson	23	13.7.56	\$750*	\$780*	\$810*	\$840*	\$870*	\$960

While there were only four newly-appointed Cadets between 1955 and 1963, the number of expatriate officers leaving the service showed a big increase. Appendix 6 indicates that approximately 24 Administrative Officers left the Service during this period, either retiring, resigning or being transferred. Six officers opted for transfers to other colonies, three to Brunei, two to Hong Kong, one to North Borneo and one to Northern Rhodesia. In view of Sarawak's imminent entry into Malaysia, expatriate officers were given the option of immediate retirement with favourable terms under the compensation scheme or, if their services were still required, they could remain in Sarawak after independence on a short term basis. As stated earlier, only three Administrative Officers took advantage of the

⁸⁹Table 11 is compiled from data given in the 1957-1963 staff lists. The year, 1962, is not included because the 1962 staff list does not indicate salaries of officers. '*' in the Table above signifies that the officer concerned was on probation.

opportunity for immediate retirement under the compensation scheme and they were M.J.Christie⁹⁰(then aged 30), T.M.Ainsworth⁹¹(then aged 43) and A.R.Snelus (then aged 52).

The terms of employment for Cadets during the latter half of colonial rule, remained very much the same as those outlined by the Trusted Report of 1947. A Cadet's probationary period was normally between three to four years. Table 11 shows the salaries and probationary period of four newly-appointed Cadets during their first few years of service. While under probation, a Cadet would have to pass his Lower Standard examination within two years of the commencement of his service and his Higher Standard examination within three years. As an added incentive, Cadets who completed their examinations before the prescribed time, were entitled to a bonus.⁹² With the salary revision of 1956, a Cadet usually started at the initial point of the Division II time-scale at \$750. Once he was confirmed in his position, he would be promoted to Class III and eventually to Class II. Class I, divided into IA and IB, were super-scale posts within Division I, and appointments to these posts were reserved for Residents and senior Secretariat positions such as the Development Secretary. Administrative Officers with outstanding qualities were eligible for promotion as the

⁹⁰Christie opted to retire in 1963 after only five years' service.

⁹¹Ainsworth transferred within the H.M.O.C.S. to Sarawak in 1956 from Nigeria where he had served for eight years.

⁹²The bonus given was \$750 for completing the Lower Standard before 18 months from the date of an officer's arrival and \$1,250 for those who completed the Higher Standard within two years of joining the service. M.J.Christie was one of the few Cadets who managed to pass the Higher Standard within 14 months of arriving in Sarawak. See *General Orders, Kuching, 1956, p.86.*

Deputy Chief Secretary, Financial Secretary or even the Chief Secretary.

At the discretion of the Chief Secretary, officers on long tours could apply for local leave of up to 14 days for each year of resident service. An allowance of \$150, with additional allowances for dependents, would be granted to an officer proceeding on local leave within Borneo and \$350 for leave taken outside Borneo but within the region.

Although this system of local leave had been in operation since the late 1940s, expatriate officers went on leave only if they could be spared from their duties. The Bain Commission stressed that an annual holiday was essential for the "health and efficiency" of workers and recommended that heads of departments and Residents should make arrangements to release an officer on long tour for local leave annually.⁹³ A.R.G.Morrison, an Administrative Officer, was appreciative of the opportunity for going on local leave and noted that;

..the Senior Service was very generously treated in regard to such leave which, if I remember rightly, amounted to 14 days..per year plus a small grant towards travel expenses. They have enabled us to see more of Asia than we otherwise could have done.⁹⁴

The Bain Report substituted the term 'expatriation' pay, which was a pensionable emolument, with 'inducement' pay.

⁹³See *General Orders*, p.46 and Bain, *Report of the Commission on Public Services*, pp.58-59.

⁹⁴A.Morrison, 'In Days Gone By', *Sarawak Gazette*, December 1982, p.30.

This was not merely a semantic change but rather it indicated a slight shift in purpose for providing expatriate officers with such an allowance. Previously, expatriation pay was extended to officers in Sarawak in order to lessen their burden of shouldering the extra costs of staying overseas. Inducement pay, on the other hand, was given with the aim of persuading the overseas officer to work or remain in the service of a colonial government by providing him with an attractive allowance to make his stay in that colony a financially worthwhile one.

TABLE 12

Rates of Inducement Pay for Administrative Officers⁹⁵

		<u>1953</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1962</u>	
				<u>Resident</u>	<u>Non-Resident</u>
Cadet, Class	II, III	\$150-175	\$180-240	\$273-406	\$46-83
Class	IA, IB	\$200-220	\$240	\$437-451	\$98-105

It has been noted earlier that salaries in the colonies were fixed at rates with the locally recruited officer in mind, and hence it would not be sufficient to attract the well-qualified and experienced officers whose services were badly needed. In order to compensate for the low salaries, inducement allowances for expatriate members of the Sarawak Administrative Service were seen to be increasing steadily as evident in Table 12 above. Table 12 also shows a sizeable growth in the inducement pay for the year 1962 and this was

⁹⁵Compiled from data given in the staff lists for 1953, 1957 and 1962.

attributed to the 1961 Agreement between Britain and Sarawak under which Britain undertook to bear the costs of inducement allowances for expatriate officers in Sarawak. A non-pensionable element was also added to the inducement allowances in 1962.

TABLE 13

Career Background of Transferred Officers, 1955-1963⁹⁶

	<u>Year of Joining Colonial Service</u>	<u>Year of transfer to Sarawak</u>	<u>Previous Experience</u>
T.M.Ainsworth	1948	1956	Nigeria: 1948-56
A.F.H.Coates	1949	1957	Hong Kong: 1948-56
W.I.Glass	1952	1958	Malaya: 1952-58
F.D.Jakeway	1937	1959	Nigeria: 1937, Seychelles: 1946-47, Colonial Office: 1949 -51, British Guiana: 1954-59
J.G.D.Warburton	1954	1958	Malaya: 1954-58
J.A.Williams	1946	1956	Nigeria: 1946-51, Singapore: 1951-56
C.A.R.Wilson	1954	1961	Hong Kong: 1954-60

From 1955 to 1963, Sarawak continued to receive transferred officers from other colonies. Table 13 above gives an indication of the career background of these officers, ranging from service in Nigeria, Malaya and even Hong Kong. Before 1955, there had not been officers transferred from Hong Kong to Sarawak. Prominent among the transferred officers was F.D.Jakeway,⁹⁷ who assumed the post of Chief

⁹⁶Data for Table 13 was collated from entries given in the *Sarawak Government Gazette*, 1955-1963 and the staff lists for 1955, 1957-1963.

⁹⁷After service in Sarawak, Jakeway was appointed as Governor of Fiji and subsequently received his knighthood.

Secretary in April 1959 and remained in that capacity until September 1963. Jakeway first entered the Colonial Administrative Service in 1937 and began his service in Nigeria. Between 1946 and 1959, he served in various colonial territories; five years in the Seychelles, five years in British Guiana as well as a brief stint at the Colonial Office.

On average, officers transferred to Sarawak held Class II ranks, but there were also a number of very experienced senior officers in their late 40s. The issue of senior officers being transferred to Sarawak near their retiring age, occupied the attention of local Council Negri members in 1959. An unofficial member, Ong Guan Cheng, cautioned that the transfer of expatriate officers nearing retirement did not materially benefit Sarawak as he claimed that these officers had only a few more years of service and thus took little interest in their work.⁹⁸ Moreover, payment of their high rates of pension would constitute a great liability to Sarawak. B.A.St.J.Hepburn, who was then Financial Secretary and himself a transferred officer from Jamaica, disagreed with Ong Guan Cheng's allegations. Hepburn explained that the Sarawak government was only liable to pay the proportionate amount of pension corresponding to the transferred officer's duration of service in Sarawak. It would, in fact, cost more in pension payment to have a younger person, who would serve a longer period, than a senior officer, who remained for a shorter length of time. It was also to Sarawak's advantage

⁹⁸Council Negri Proceedings, 2-4 June 1959, p.62.

rather than loss to accept transferred senior officers who had accumulated extensive experience elsewhere.

Transferred officers were also seen to hold senior positions in the Secretariat. This was more a result of Sarawak's peculiar circumstances than outright discrimination. The Sarawak Administrative Service was small in comparison to other larger colonies such as Nigeria or Kenya; it had an establishment of about 50 officers in the late 1950s. There was, therefore, a paucity of experienced and suitably qualified officers. But where possible, it had been the practice of the government to give priority for promotion to Sarawak officers as exemplified in the following instances. R.G.Aikman, a former Brooke officer, was appointed Chief Secretary in 1950 and served in that post for five years before his retirement in 1955. Upon Aikman's departure, J.H.Ellis,⁹⁹ an old Nigerian hand, succeeded him. Similarly, J.C.H.Barcroft,¹⁰⁰ who began his administrative career with the Brooke Service, succeeded C.J.Thomas as the Financial Secretary in 1955 and three years later took over from Ellis as Chief Secretary. A.R.Snelus,¹⁰¹ also a former Brooke

⁹⁹Ellis joined the Colonial Administrative Service in 1931 and served in Nigeria before his transfer to Sarawak. He became Development Secretary in 1948 and, in 1950, was appointed the Deputy Chief Secretary.

¹⁰⁰Barcroft joined the Rajah's Service in 1930 and was interned during the Japanese occupation. During the post-war period, he served as Resident of various divisions and was promoted to Class IA in 1952.

¹⁰¹Snelus came to Sarawak in 1934. He was interned by the Japanese and after the war, he resumed his duties as District Officer with the colonial government. He held the post of Deputy Chief Secretary until 1963 when he opted to retire under the compensation scheme at the age of 52.

officer, was appointed Deputy Secretary in the same year and held the post until Sarawak's entry into Malaysia.

On the other hand, since the war, the post of Resident for the various divisions, was held almost without exception, by officers who had risen through the ranks in Sarawak. The exception was M.J.Forster, a transferred officer with former administrative experience in the British Solomon islands and Malaya. Forster came to Sarawak in 1953 and after serving for six years as a District Officer, he earned his promotion as Resident of the Fifth Division in 1959.

A survey of the service history of Administrative Officers in Sarawak shows that some officers spent most of their careers in the field, while others appeared not to have ventured out of Kuching. On closer scrutiny, three groups of officers became evident; first, officers whose careers were concentrated at the capital or the Secretariat; second, officers who seemed to shun the centre of government and appeared to prefer service in the far-flung outstations; and third, officers who had a balanced mix in their careers and had both field experience as well as their fair share of Secretariat responsibilities. It must be stressed that this is not an attempt to compartmentalise Administrative Officers but rather an illustration of some distinct patterns seen in their careers. These officers often did not intentionally opt to be a Secretariat man or an outstation administrator, and postings or transfers within Sarawak were at the discretion of the Chief Secretary.

It has been mentioned in the previous chapter that a Cadet or junior Administrative Officer usually spent a short period of time doing Secretariat duties. A number of officers demonstrated outstanding talent or inclination in Secretariat work such as Hepburn. His career was wholly centred in the Secretariat, initially as a Principal Assistant Secretary, and later he was promoted as Development Secretary in 1951 and Financial Secretary in 1958. Another transferred officer, J.A.Williams,¹⁰² first started out as a District Officer stationed in Kuching and later served many years there. Hence his administrative career did not extend beyond the capital.

At the other end of the service was a group of officers who remained in the outstations throughout the entire length of their careers. Two former Brooke officers, A.F.R.Griffin and H.P.K.Jacks, showed this trend in their careers. Griffin joined the Brooke Service in 1934 and after the end of the Japanese occupation, resumed his service under the colonial government. He had wide field experience serving in numerous stations throughout Sarawak. In June 1955, he assumed the post of Resident of the Second Division, later becoming Resident of the First and Third divisions in January 1958 and July 1959 respectively. Jacks was briefly diverted from his field career in 1951 when he was seconded to the Supreme Court as Registrar and Official Assignee. In May 1956, he

¹⁰²See Table 13 for his previous administrative experience before his transfer to Sarawak.

became Resident of the Fifth Division, a position he held until his retirement in 1959.

Most of the other Administrative Officers, however, belonged to the third group and remained in the field for the earlier part of their service and then later in Kuching. It became almost a norm for junior officers to serve in the field while middle-ranking officers assumed important posts in the Secretariat. A.R.G.Morrison joined the Administrative Service in 1947. After having served as a District Officer in various divisions for seven years, he was posted to Kuching where he held several Secretariat appointments ranging from acting Development Secretary to acting Financial Secretary before being seconded to the Information Service department in 1960. J.Pike's career also showed a similar pattern; after several years in the outstations, he worked from 1956 onwards in the Secretariat, initially as a Principal Assistant Secretary in the Finance department and later becoming the Under-Secretary for Finance and Planning in 1962 before succeeding Hepburn as Financial Secretary. Likewise, A.R.Meikle served the first ten years of his career as a District Officer in the field after which he was transferred to the Secretariat and became Secretary for Local Government in 1961. A.J.N.Richards and G.A.T.Shaw¹⁰³ also worked in the Secretariat during the later part of their administrative careers.

¹⁰³Shaw joined the Malayan Customs in 1940, was transferred to Sarawak in 1948, served as a District Officer in Kuching and was later posted to the Fourth Division. Between March 1951 and November 1953, Shaw was seconded for duty in Brunei. He was well-versed in Secretariat duties and acted as the Deputy Chief Secretary on many occasions. He remained in Sarawak after independence and was appointed the State Secretary in September 1963.

Although there were no marked changes in the practices of the Administrative Service during the latter half of colonial rule, we see the entry of more and more local officers into the Service. At the same time, the number of new expatriate recruits dwindled to only four while there was a big increase in the number of overseas officers leaving. This, of course, inevitably varied the composition of the Service.

Conclusion

The preceding discussion illustrates the many changes experienced by the Administrative Service during the period covering the years, 1955 to 1963. These changes were, in essence, not substantial and reflected the continuation of practices and precepts laid down by the colonial government in the late 1940s. Service conditions remained similar, although there was an enormous increase in gross emoluments and rates of inducement pay. Any existing divergence with colonial administrative practice was continually bridged so that by the end of colonial rule, the standards of efficiency in government were comparable to the average British colony. Moreover, the Colonial Office's direction of policy from London ensured that Sarawak did not veer too greatly from other colonies. The guidelines outlined in the 1946 White Paper, *Organisation of the Colonial Service*, was closely followed in the revision of service conditions in Sarawak.

In the 1950s, there was a growing trend towards political advancement and self-government in the British colonies. Sarawak responded to these new demands by ensuring that expatriate officers in its public services were not greatly affected by any constitutional changes leading to independence. As part of the preparation for self-government, local officers were encouraged to enter the Administrative Service, which was once the preserve of expatriate staff, and by the early 1960s, local officers constituted almost half of the total number of personnel. However, the Service was still dominated by expatriate officers because of the senior and influential positions they held. Hence by 1963, although the Service had changed in composition, its character remained basically unaltered. It was only after independence that the full effects of the localisation of the Service could be realised. Nonetheless, the colonial government did lay the groundwork for a policy of localisation of the Service and this forms the theme of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

LOCALISATION AND THE SARAWAK ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE,

1946-1963

During the seventeen years of colonial rule, Sarawak saw its senior¹ Administrative Service, once the preserve of expatriates, being gradually localised with the entry of an increasing number of native and Chinese officers. Localisation of a colony's civil service or the process in which the colonial government apparatus reverted to native control had been widely pursued by other colonial dependencies and became more evident in the aftermath of the Second World War. Localisation was also an important concomitant of decolonisation as it was essential for the local inhabitants of a colony to be given the necessary training in order for them to manage their government upon achieving independence. However, localisation programmes in the colonies often did not get into full swing until self-government itself was imminent; thus, this invariably gave rise to a situation in which a colony attained political independence while simultaneously having a civil service with an overwhelming expatriate presence.

This chapter seeks to examine Sarawak's experience with regard to the localisation of its Administrative Service. It

¹The term 'senior' is used here to distinguish the Administrative Service from the Native Officers' Service, the latter often referred to as the junior administrative service.

will, first, briefly discuss general trends in localisation seen in other colonies, second, provide an insight into the junior administrative service under the Brooke Rajahs and its development during the first half of colonial rule, third, elucidate and review Sarawak's localisation policy with particular reference to its Administrative Service.

General Trends

As early as the 1920s, there had already existed a realisation of the need to train and equip natives in order eventually to manage the administrative machinery of government. Among the African colonies, localisation was often nationalistically referred to as 'Africanisation'. There were some early attempts at localising the civil service in West Africa even before the 1940s. The Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, drew up a plan for Africanising the civil service in 1925, which aimed to increase the number of local officers holding 'European Appointments' from 27 to 231 between 1926 and 1946.² The plan was too ambitious and premature for the conditions existing in the Gold Coast then and was plagued with enormous difficulties. By 1946, there were only 87 Africans holding

²Memo by M.G.Smith, 'The Africanisation Policy of the West African Governments', 13 March 1953, CO 554/400, also cited in A.N.Porter and A.J.Stockwell, *British Imperial Policy and Decolonisation, 1938-1964, Volume 2, 1951-1964*, London, 1989, p.209. See also 'Africans and the Public Service, A Gold Coast Statement', *Corona*, July 1954, p.260.

substantive appointments.³ It was not until after 1945 that there was any real effort on the part of the British policy-makers to rethink policy and organise a comprehensive localisation scheme.

One of the first measures suggested, apart from improving educational facilities and making education more widely accessible, was the creation of an intermediate native junior administrative service. This would provide the training ground whereby natives could be taught administrative work under the guidance and tutelage of expatriate District Officers. The training of natives for positions of greater responsibility required a long period of time and, inevitably, could not correspond to the accelerating rate at which some colonies were moving towards self-government. As a result, progress in localisation lagged behind constitutional changes effected in the colonies in preparation for independence.

It had been acknowledged that for self-government to become a reality, the natives should desirably run the machinery of government, and thus as independence approached, the pressure for localisation intensified. Moreover, the inadequate educational facilities in the African colonies, for example, meant that there were few local persons with the necessary qualifications eligible for the senior administrative posts

³See introduction by Anthony Kirk-Greene in *Tales from the Dark Continent. Images of British Colonial Africa in the Twentieth Century*, ed., C.Allen, London, 1979, p.xvi.

or the specialist training required for positions in the technical departments. The British policy-makers took great pains to emphasize that localisation did not mean the physical substitution of expatriate officers with native ones, but that in localising a post, the replacement should be a native who was as equally qualified as his European predecessor.

While it was realised that the pace of localisation in the African colonies had to be expedited in order to accommodate the political demands for self-government, the Colonial Office also noted that the training of natives involved the acquisition of knowledge and practical experience over several years. The acceleration of localisation at an early stage would only result in lowering the level of efficiency of the civil service. This prospect could not come at a more inconvenient time than when a colony was preparing for self-government and when the strain on the government and the public services for increased educational facilities, social services and economic development was enormous.⁴ Another difficulty was the possibility of a mass exodus of experienced expatriate personnel if localisation was allowed to get out of hand.⁵

What was then put forward as the objective by the Colonial Office, was a gradual change-over from expatriate to qualified local officers in the civil service as soon as the

⁴See memo by M.G.Smith, op.cit.

⁵See Chapter 6, p.277.

latter became available. Although the emotional demand for the localisation of senior posts in government was understandable, it was stressed that some colonies, if not most, lacked the resources to effect the complete localisation of the senior posts on the eve of independence.

An intensive crash programme for promoting the practical training of local officers, providing assistance and overseas scholarships for tertiary education, diplomas and in-service courses, was also drawn up. Funds allocated under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945 were released to finance these scholarship schemes. Nevertheless, despite the existence of these programmes, it was likely to be some time before there were enough qualified Africans with the necessary experience to assume senior government posts.

In the early 1950s, notable gains in localisation had been achieved in the West African colonies and there was a rapid increase in the number of natives holding high-ranking positions. However, progress was uneven throughout Africa as seen in the much slower pace of localising civil service posts in the colonies of East Africa.⁶ This stood in marked contrast to the West Indies where great strides had been made in localising the government bureaucracy and where about half

⁶'Native-born Administrators and the Colonial Civil Services', memo by the Secretary of State for the Colonies (James Griffiths), 17 July 1950, CAB 129/40, cited in Porter and Stockwell, *British Imperial Policy and Decolonisation, Volume 1, 1938-1951*, London, 1987, pp.348-350.

of the senior government posts were held by local officers by 1950.

The Federation of Malaya had also made modest progress with 15% of Division I posts held by local officers in 1950. One writer suggested that the origins of Malayanisation could be traced to the creation of a junior administrative cadre, the Malay Administrative Service in 1910.⁷ Its recruitment was initially restricted to aristocratic Malays but admission was later extended to Malays of humbler parentage. It can be argued though, that the presence of a native junior administrative service such as the Malay Administrative Service, juxtaposed to the senior service, the Malayan Civil Service, did not necessarily indicate the existence of a well-defined localisation policy or even a clearly emerging conception on the part of the British colonial administrators. Rather, the main objective of establishing a junior administrative service was to allow the Malays a share in the administrative process and provide support to the British senior officers, who were increasingly tied down with desk work.⁸ The first Malay graduate, Mohamed Yusuf bin Abdur Rahman, was not admitted to the Malayan Civil Service in

⁷R.O.Tilman, 'Nationalization of the Colonial Services in Malaya', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, no.2, 1962, p.183. Tilman in this article dealt with the wider context of Malayanisation but he also stated that the term had a narrower connotation and normally referred to the localisation efforts of the 1950s.

⁸Yeo Kim Wah, 'The Grooming of an Elite: Malay Administrators in the Federated Malay States, 1903-1941', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol.XI, no.2, September 1980, p.287, and J.de Vere Allen, 'The Malayan Civil Service, 1874-1941: Colonial Bureaucracy/Malayan Elite', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.12, no.2, 1970, p.176.

1935, although he possessed qualifications similar to any prospective British Cadet.⁹ Mohamed Yusuf was made to enter the junior administrative service for which the normal entry qualification was a Senior Cambridge certificate. There appeared to be a reluctance to admit natives into the senior service directly even if they had the relevant qualifications. Entry of natives into the senior service was only by means of promotion from a lower division or from the Malay Administrative Service. By 1941, a total of 25 Malay Administrative Service officers had been promoted to the Malayan Civil Service.

The presence of an educated and suitably trained native administrative elite augured well for Malaya's efforts at localisation after the end of the Japanese occupation. It was then decided that the pace of Malayanising the senior civil service would be determined by the availability of qualified and experienced local officers. After 1945, Chinese and other non-Malay residents were also admitted into the senior service and, by 1953, the ratio of Malay to non-Malay officers was four to one.¹⁰ Malayanisation was given official backing in 1956 when the London conference of that year put forward a detailed programme for localising the civil service, just one year before Malaya became self-governing in 1957.

⁹See Yeo Kim Wah, p.305 and Tilman, 'The Malay Administrative Service, 1910-1960', *The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, vol.VII, April-June 1961, p.151. Mohamed Yusuf graduated with an Honours degree in Jurisprudence from Oxford University.

¹⁰Tilman, 'Nationalization of the Colonial Services in Malaya', p.186.

Like Malaya, Sarawak also evolved its own junior administrative service, the Native Officers' Service, and it had been in existence long before Sarawak attained its status as a Crown Colony in July 1946. The next section gives a brief account of the development of the junior administrative cadre in Sarawak under the Brooke Rajahs.

The Development of the Native Officers' Service before the Japanese Occupation

Rajah James Brooke, on consolidating his control in Sarawak in the 1840s, realised that owing to the small number of Europeans present then he had to rely on the native races to administer the country. He perceived that his rule as Rajah would also gain greater legitimacy if he identified the natives with his government. Rajah James thus appointed a number of Malays from the perabangan class and descendants of Arab immigrants and gradually placed his trust in these local 'aristocratic' families. The early assistants to British officials were given the title of 'Native Officer'.¹¹ Just as in the recruitment of European Cadets, with its emphasis on securing candidates of good family background, Rajah James and his successor, Rajah Charles, had a preference for employing the sons of well-established Malay families or *anak baik-baik*, as Native Officers. This is evident in the

¹¹see Chapter 2, pp.79-82.

following reference from Rajah Charles's journal, *Ten Years In Sarawak*; "as with a European so with a Native, the man well-born and well to do takes a great pride in his work.." ¹²

Native Officers during the reign of Rajah James and Rajah Charles were usually recommended by the Residents and received their letters of appointment from the Rajah. Unlike the *penghulu* or the *tuai rumah*, Native Officers were given a monthly allowance and the more senior posts later became pensionable. They were assigned administrative duties such as the settling of minor court disputes, policing of outlying areas, accompanying the Residents or District Officers on their visits to outstations and even participating in expeditions against belligerent Ibans. In each division, there was stationed a senior Native Officer, normally an experienced and competent Malay. In spite of Rajah Charles's preference for recruiting the sons of traditional Malay families as his Native Officers, he did not hesitate to appoint Ibans or Bidayuhs when he thought that the circumstances demanded it.

Some of the more trusted and able Native Officers were given sole charge of smaller stations without much supervision from their European superiors. Undoubtedly, Native Officers were answerable to the Residents or District Officers, but there were occasions, particularly under the reign of Rajah

¹²C. Brocke, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, vol. I, p. 329. See also Sabihah bt. Osman, 'Malay-Muslim Political Participation in Sarawak and Sabah, 1841-1951', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 1983, p. 45.

Charles, when they had direct access to the Rajah.¹³ Once posted to a station, the Native Officer was seldom transferred elsewhere and hence he was able to develop an unrivalled knowledge of the region and cultivate good relations with the native chiefs of villages and longhouses within his area of supervision. As a result, Residents came to rely on the Native Officers for advice on local affairs.¹⁴

Rajah Vyner continued Rajah James's practice of recruiting Malays but there were a number of exceptions to this rule, particularly during the last few years of his reign. Lucas Chuat, an Iban from the Engkilili district was gazetted a Native Officer in 1932.¹⁵ A few years later, another Iban, Francis Ansin, was also recruited and, by 1941, there were 7 non-Malay Native Officers working for the Brooke government.¹⁶

Under Rajah Vyner's rule, the number of Native Officers grew sufficiently large in numbers and developed into a distinct junior administrative service. When the Secretariat of Native Affairs was created in 1929, the Native Officers' Service came under its authority. The Service, during this period, emulated some of the practices of the Malay Administrative Service of the Malay States. The introduction of a Special Appointment Class for exceptional long-serving Native

¹³See Chapter 2, p.80.

¹⁴Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p.286.

¹⁵See *Sarawak Establishment List*, 1934. It is not clear when Lucas Chuat joined the Service.

¹⁶Apart from Lucas Chuat and Francis Ansin, the other Iban and Bidayuh Native Officers appointed prior to the Japanese occupation were Gilbert Emai, Michael Toyad, Michael Sadin, Benedict Empam and Hermanus Assan anak Penghulu Jalin.

Officers followed closely the Malayan experience. What was lacking in Sarawak, however, was the presence of pro-Malay British administrators such as E.W.Birch and R.J.Wilkinson, who were constantly pushing for the educational advancement of the Malays.¹⁷ Education in Sarawak under the Brookes, on the other hand, was in a dismal state, and apart from the establishment of a limited number of Malay primary schools, it was largely left in the hands of the Christian missions and private Chinese establishments.¹⁸ There was, therefore, no equivalent in Sarawak of the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar. Yet, although the Maderasah Melayu in Kuching fell short of the stature of the Malay College, it did provide introductory courses for Probationer Native Officers.¹⁹

By 1933, there were five classes of Native Officers. A Probationer usually entered the Service with a Standard 7²⁰ on a salary of \$30 a month, but if he had the rare qualification of a Senior Cambridge certificate, he could begin at \$36. After completing two years of probation and upon his confirmation in the Service, the Native Officer was appointed a Class II officer with a salary of \$40 a month. As soon as he passed his law examinations and became a Fourth Class Magistrate, he was put on the time-scale of \$50-A5-80/bar/85-A5-100. When the Native Officer crossed the bar and passed

¹⁷Yeo Kim Wah, p.292.

¹⁸See Chapter 5, pp.174-175.

¹⁹Sanib Said, 'Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966', M.A. thesis, University of Malaya, 1980, p.45. The Maderasah Melayu was started in 1931.

²⁰The entry requirement of a Standard 7 was not strictly imposed and many who were admitted to the Service, had the equivalent of a standard 5 or 6 education.

his Lower Standard examinations, he would be promoted to Class I.²¹

In 1934, a senior Brooke official, C.D.Le Gros Clark,²² who was then Secretary for Chinese Affairs, was commissioned to report on various aspects of administration, including the Native Officers' Service.²³ His findings were published as *The Blue Report* in 1935. Le Gros Clark made several observations which threw light on the state of Native Officers in the 1930s. His comments on the low level of performance by Native Officers were probably shared by other officers in the administration, and they contrasted sharply with the high commendation paid by Rajah Charles to his exemplary Native Officers, particularly Abang Aing, who became a trusted friend.²⁴ Le Gros Clark painted a grim picture of Native Officers and lamented that "very few of the duties now performed by European officers can be taken over by Native Officers".²⁵ He further added,

..I doubt whether, with few exceptions, we could trust..Native Officers to undertake these duties without the closest supervision. Not only is their standard of education low, but many of them seem to suffer from an inferiority complex due, in great part to psychological reasons. Their reluctance to undertake responsibility, to make decisions, their apparent lack of initiative, all these may, I think be traced largely to the fact that they are ignorant of the laws of the country, are unable to read the regulations, and as a result, are entirely in the hands of the court writer..²⁶

²¹*Sarawak Civil List*, Kuching, 1933, pp.1-6.

²²See Chapter 3, p.118, fn.64.

²³Le Gros Clark's recommendations on Iban administration are discussed in Chapter 3, pp.119-120.

²⁴See Chapter 2, p.80.

²⁵C.D.Le Gros Clark, *The Blue Report*, Kuching, 1935, para.14.

²⁶*Ibid.*

Le Gros Clark postulated two main reasons in an attempt to explain the apathy of Native Officers. The first was the fact that they were not delegated enough responsibilities or given authority to act for even minor cases; this probably stifled their motivation. Native Officers were only assigned the powers of a Fourth Class Magistrate. Second was the absence of any form of government assistance for the education of the natives beyond the mere provision of primary schools. Le Gros Clark suggested that from then on, Native Officers be given more responsible duties such as the supervision of local contracts, the management of the constabulary and prison work. The magisterial powers of Native Officers were also increased to those of a Third Class Magistrate. Courses for Native Officers then held at the Maderasah Melayu, should be upgraded and prospective recruits encouraged to go for the Junior and Senior Cambridge classes. Le Gros Clark even envisaged a training college for Native Officers modelled on the Kuala Kangsar Malay College, which produced recruits for the Malay Administrative Service. Another measure proposed was the opening of the Service to other non-Malay natives. Despite his tireless efforts in producing the Report, Le Gros Clark's recommendations went unheeded.

What emerged from his observations was the slackening performance of the Native Officers in the 1930s. Moreover, the Senior Service then had expanded in numbers and became increasingly bureaucratized. While the Senior Service was

gradually undergoing a transformation, the Native Officers were not given enough attention by the Brooke government.

Thus, it was a Native Officers' Service, very much affected by apathy and ineptitude that the British colonial government inherited after the war. The following discussion looks into the attempts made to restore confidence to the Service.

The Native Officers' Service, 1946-1956

After Sarawak became a Crown Colony in 1946, the Native Officers' Service underwent many improvements and within four years saw its first member promoted into the senior Administrative Service. The conditions of service, in response to the Trusted and Bain Commissions, were revised with the aim of attracting the best candidates for recruitment. A one-year training course was also introduced and entry qualifications to the Service raised. One notable feature of this period was the creation of a parallel junior administrative service to accommodate the non-Malay natives and Chinese whom the colonial government felt should be given an equal opportunity for a career in administration.

As with the senior Administrative Officers, Native Officers were, in 1946, given the option of transferring to a new set of conditions in view of the change of government. During this early period, it was made compulsory for new recruits to

attend a one-year training course before being appointed Probationers. These courses were held at the Maderasah Melayu, Kuching, and covered school subjects as well as native customs and a brief introduction to the laws of Sarawak. The student Native Officers, as they were then known, also had to observe other Native Officers discharging their duties.

To qualify as a student Native Officer, a Standard 7 education was required. But owing to the dearth of candidates with the appropriate qualifications as the British system of education was disrupted during the Japanese occupation, those with Standard 5 were also accepted. According to Datuk Peter Tinggom, who was appointed a student Native Officer in November 1947, most of his colleagues then had attended either Standard 5,6 or 7 and only one person had the Junior Cambridge certificate.²⁷ Student Native Officers were entitled to a monthly stipend of \$25 including free board and lodgings.

The colonial government sought to encourage more Ibans and Bidayuhs to join the Service and at the Residents' Conference in May 1947, it was proposed to recruit more Dayaks than Malays as Native Officers with a ratio of two to one in favour of the former.²⁸ However, the suggestion was thought to be premature then, owing to the political restiveness of the

²⁷Interview with Datuk Peter Tinggom anak Kamarau, 18 January 1985, Kuching.

²⁸Minutes of the Residents' Conference, 30 May 1947, CO 537/2240.

Malays as a result of the cession controversy and the fact that the Service had always been a Malay preserve under the Brooke Rajahs. In the 1947 batch of student Native Officers, 7 out of 15 recruits were non-Malay natives with 4 Ibans, 2 Bidayuhs and 1 Kenyah.²⁹ Although the usual channel for entry into the Service was to be first appointed as a student Native Officer, transfers from other departments were also permitted, as seen in the case of Mohd.Fauzi Abdulhamid, who transferred from the Trade and Customs Office in 1946.³⁰

TABLE 14

Revisions in the Salary of Native Officers³¹

	<u>Brooke Scale</u>	<u>Jan.1947</u>
Special Appointment	\$220x10-300	no change
Class I	\$105x5-150/bar/160x10-200	\$200x15-310
Class II	\$50x5-80/bar/85x5-100	\$150x10-200
Class III	\$30x3-45	\$80x5-120
Probationer	\$30	\$50

Under the British colonial government, Native Officers enjoyed a substantial improvement in their remuneration and conditions of service. In a salary revision (see Table 14), which was effective from January 1947, the allowance of Probationers jumped from \$30 under the Brooke government to

²⁹The four Ibans were Datuk Peter Tinggom, Raymond Reggie Adai, Edward Jerah and Peter Siburat; the two Bidayuhs were Dunstan Sirau and William Veno, and the sole Kenyah, Tingang Malang.

³⁰Saravak Gazette, 31 January 1980 and interview with Datuk Hj.Mohd.Fauzi Abdulhamid, 9 January 1985, Kuching.

³¹Compiled from data given in Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, 1947, p.16.

\$50.³² The Service had earlier seen a slight modification of structure in 1939 and the main feature of this change was the introduction of a Class III to substitute for the lower end of Division II. Hence, the Probationer, on being confirmed, would be promoted to Class III instead of Class II as was the case before 1939. The difference in remuneration between the pre-war period and the 1947 revisions is evident in Table 14 above.

In 1948, acting on the recommendations made by the Trusted Commission, the colonial government revised salaries. The increase in remuneration for the junior service was, according to Trusted, aimed at recruiting a "better class of officer".³³ There were no significant changes in the other conditions of service apart from the loss of free quarters previously enjoyed by Brooke Native Officers. The consequent salary revision was, in part, directed to ease the burden of housing costs and rents. The Trusted Commission proposed a substantial increase in the remuneration of Native Officers holding the Special Appointment to \$350x15-500, while Probationers enjoyed a \$15 increase in their allowance. Other classes of Native Officers also benefitted from the new revision and their salaries were amended to the following; Class I - \$240x10-330, Class II - \$160x10-220 and Class III - \$95x5-135.³⁴ Under the new scheme, a Probationer had to pass the Lower Standard examination before being confirmed in the

³²Minutes of Residents' Conference, 6, 7 and 9 December 1947. CO 537/2240.

³³Report of the Borneo Salaries Commission, 1947, p.16.

³⁴Ibid.

Service and the Higher Standard examination as a condition for promotion to Class II.

Between 1948 and 1956, there were further consolidations to the salaries of Native Officers and the next major revision, as well as a structural reorganisation, came in 1956 after the Bain Commission Report was endorsed by the Council Negri. Table 15 below summarises the changes effected by the Bain Commission.

TABLE 15

Changes in the Structural Organisation and Remuneration
of Native Officers, 1956³⁵

	<u>Pre-Bain</u>	<u>Bain Report, 1956</u>
Personal Grade ³⁶	Div. II J4 (\$504x21-630)	Div. III C4 (\$690x30-870)
Class I	Div. III J15 (\$350x21-476)	Div. III C3 (\$510x25-660)
Class II	Div. III J27 (\$238x14-322)	Div. III C2 (\$330x20-490)
Class III	Div. III J53 (\$140x7-196)	Div. III C1 (\$250x15-310)
Probationer	Div. III J75, 80 & 91 (\$84, 105, 119x7-133) ³⁷	Div. IV D1 (\$170x10-200) D1A (\$135x5-160) ³⁸

As a result of Bain's recommendations, the Sarawak civil service was reorganised into five divisions and most classes of Native Officers came under Division III, except for the Probationer Officer, who was re-designated as belonging to

³⁵Compiled from entries in Bain, Report of the Commission on the Public Services of the Governments of Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei, 1956, p.84 and 'Revision of Salaries and Terms of Service', Secretariat Circular no.10, 1956, Appendix A.

³⁶Native Officers previously holding the Special Appointment were, in the mid-1950s, known as Personal Grade Appointees.

³⁷Those with Form II education entered at J91(\$84) while recruits with Form IV and V started at J80(\$105) and J75(\$119) respectively.

³⁸The entry requirement was normally an Overseas School Certificate. Scale D1A was intended for those with less than the standard qualifications.

Division IV.³⁹ From 1956 the senior Administrative Service was separated into two divisions; Cadets and Classes II and III came under Division II, while Class I Administrative Officers remained in Division I.⁴⁰ Prior to this change, all classes of officers in the Administrative Service, including Cadets, were within Division I. With the Bain proposals, the entry qualification to the Native Officers' Service was raised to the Senior Cambridge or Overseas School certificate. Owing to the small number of school leavers with the minimum qualifications, those with less than the standard academic requirements were allowed to join the Service, but they had to enter on the D1A scale with a lower starting point of \$135x5-160 instead of the D1 with a time-scale of \$170x10-200.

Under the colonial government, Native Officers also found themselves delegated with more authority. Before 1941, they could only exercise magisterial powers of up to Fourth Class. In the 1950s, it was not uncommon for capable Native Officers to be appointed First or Second Class lay magistrates. Junior Native Officers were also given sole charge of important stations and they were thus given positions of responsibility early in their career.⁴¹ More Native Officers during this period were allowed to act for District Officers on leave and, in this capacity, held wide discretionary powers.

³⁹See Chapter 6, p.262, Table 7.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹These junior Native Officers were often holding Class II or III appointments.

Towards the end of the 1940s, the colonial government began seriously to consider opening up the Native Officers' Service to local residents other than natives, particularly the Chinese and Eurasians. What influenced the government was probably the sizeable Chinese population of 145,000 (1947) in Sarawak, accounting for 26% of the total population and making them the second largest ethnic group after the Ibans.⁴² Moreover, it was felt in some quarters that the Native Officers' Service was becoming an anachronism in the 1950s as it had strong associations with the paternal character of Brooke government and was dominated by the perabangan Malays.

In October 1949, the matter was brought up at a discussion of the Supreme Council. Although some doubts were cast as to the feasibility of opening up the Native Officers' Service to the Chinese at that point in time, the Council nevertheless agreed, in principle, that Sarawak Chinese and other local residents should be given an opportunity to take up administrative work on terms and conditions equal to the natives. The Supreme Council had noted recurrent tensions between Malays and Chinese in Malaya and were mindful of the hostile attitude the Malays might have if Chinese were admitted into their sacrosanct ranks.⁴³ One way to circumvent these difficulties and avoid adverse reaction from the Malays

⁴²In 1947, the percentage population of the major ethnic groups in Sarawak was as follows; Malays-18%, Chinese-26%, Ibans-35%, Bidayus-8%, Melanaus-6% and others-7%. See J.L.Noakes, *A Report on the 1947 Population Census*, Kuching, 1950.

⁴³Letter from R.G.Aikman to all Residents and Heads of departments, 21 December 1949, Kuching District Office File and Sarawak Gazette, 7 December 1949.

was to create a parallel junior administrative service, which would be open to all Sarawak residents, existing alongside the Native Officers' Service.

It was two years later, in 1951, that another junior administrative service was started and it was known as the Sarawak Administrative Officers' (S.A.O.) Service.⁴⁴ Its recruits were not restricted to natives, which meant that, for the first time, Chinese could be admitted. The Native Officers' Service, however, was not to be discontinued, but further recruitment into it would be halted and it was allowed to lapse with time until the retirement of the last few serving Native Officers. The function of the S.A.O., according to the Chief Secretary, C.W.Dawson, would correspond closely to that of Native Officers; the only difference between the two services was that recruitment to the S.A.O. Service was not confined to the Malays and other natives.⁴⁵ Dawson further elaborated that the government hoped to see the two services being eventually amalgamated and racial distinctions, as a prerequisite of entry, abolished.

The opening of the S.A.O. Service to all races did not, however, see a flood of Chinese entering it. A few Chinese transferred to the new Service from other departments, as seen in the following instances; Lo Yik Fong, an officer in

⁴⁴Officers of this new service were known as Sarawak Administrative Officers (S.A.O.) and should not be confused with the senior Administrative Officers in Divisions I and II of the Administrative Service.

⁴⁵Council Negri Proceedings, 21 November 1949 and Sarawak Gazette, 7 December 1949.

the Legal Department, opted for a transfer to be an S.A.O. in 1953. Another officer, Chin Ting Ming, who joined the government service as an interpreter in 1952, transferred to the S.A.O. Service a year later. Despite the efforts of the colonial government to encourage Chinese to become junior administrators, it was discovered that a number of Chinese recruits left the Service in the 1950s for the more lucrative private sector.⁴⁶

During the mid-1950s, there was a tendency for Native Officers in Class II to be promoted into Class I but re-designated as an S.A.O. upon promotion. Both Peter Tinggom and Mohd.Fauzi Abdulhamid found themselves transferred to the S.A.O. Service as a result of their promotion to Class I.⁴⁷ These transfers or re-designations speeded up the process of natural attrition of the Native Officers' Service and most of those officers remaining in the 1950s were very senior, approaching their retirement. Thus, the creation of a substitute junior administrative service, the S.A.O. Service in 1951, duplicating the purpose and functions of the Native Officers' Service, ensured the declining importance and eventual dissipation of the latter.

⁴⁶Interview with Datuk Abang Hj.Zainuddin Adi, 14 January 1985, Sibul.

⁴⁷Datuk Peter Tinggom was promoted to Class I in March 1957 while Datuk Hj.Mohd.Fauzi Abdulhamid became a Class I officer in October 1955. Jarit Meluda was one of the few Native Officers who refused to be transferred to the S.A.O. Service.

Early Promotion of Local Officers into the Administrative Service

In the late 1940s, the colonial government entertained the idea of allowing the entry of local officers into the senior Administrative Service, which had long been dominated by expatriate officers. There were two possible channels of entry, one was by means of direct admission and the other was through the promotion of local officers from a lower division. Direct entry was felt to be premature at that stage as most local officers were still without the requisite tertiary qualifications for admission. Hence, the only viable alternative was the promotion of competent local officers from a lower division.

The government had noted that there was a handful of local officers with potential in the Junior Service and Native Officers' Service, who had long years of experience and possessed outstanding qualities, and, in 1948, the government decided to promote gradually these officers into the senior Administrative Service.⁴⁸ The precedent for promotions of this kind had already been set by the Federated Malay States where junior administrative cadres were promoted to the Senior Service even before the Japanese occupation.⁴⁹

⁴⁸*Crown Colonist*, February 1950.

⁴⁹The first member of the Malay Administrative Service to be promoted into the Malayan Civil Service was Hamzah bin Abdullah in 1921. Hamzah, however, was not the first Malay member of the latter service; Raja Chulan of Perak entered the Service in 1903 and 16 years later was joined by his younger brother, Raja Kechil Tengah Said Tauphy. See Tilman, 'The Malay Administrative Service', p.146, fn.5.

The first batch of local officers promoted to the Senior Service in Sarawak in November 1948, were two Chinese, Tan Yam Thong from the Legal Department and Kho Soon Ewe, who was a junior Secretariat officer. The latter was the first local officer promoted into the senior Administrative Service and, on his promotion, he became a Principal Assistant Secretary in the Secretariat. In 1949, Dawson reiterated the government's commitment to throw open, in increasing measure, the senior grades of the civil service to "suitably qualified local persons".⁵⁰ By 1950, there were 9 local officers in Division I⁵¹ of the civil service.⁵²

The first Native Officer to gain promotion to the Administrative Service was Abang Hj. Abdulrahim Hj. Moasili, who was appointed an Administrative Officer, Class III, in June 1950. Abang Hj. Abdulrahim's appointment was closely followed by Abang Openg in April 1951.⁵³ Prior to his promotion, Abang Openg was a Special Appointment Native Officer, a post he had held since 1940. Morshidi Osman, another Native Officer, joined the Administrative Service in 1952.⁵⁴ It was not until three years later that there were

⁵⁰*Sarawak Tribune*, 7 December 1949.

⁵¹It must be noted that, following the Bain Commission's recommendations in 1956, only senior officers such as Residents and heads of departments belonged to Division I.

⁵²*Sarawak Tribune*, 7 December 1949.

⁵³Datu Abang Openg Abang Sapi'ee joined the clerical service in 1924 and later transferred to the Native Officers' Service in 1932. He had been a member of the Council Negri since 1940 and was acting District Officer, Limbang, before his entry into the senior service in 1951.

⁵⁴Morshidi Osman was seconded to the Information Service in January 1951.

further promotions of Native Officers to the Senior Service; Abang Mustapha Abang Hj. Abdulgapar, Abang Zainuddin Abang Adi and Hermanus Assan⁵⁵ were admitted into the Administrative Service in October 1955. By 1957, there were 9 such Native Officers. While there was a gradual increase in the number of local officers swelling the ranks of the Administrative Service, expatriate recruitment appeared to have tapered off. In 1956, only three new expatriate Cadets were recruited, and the last to join the Service before 1963 was M.J. Christie in 1958.

Local officers promoted into the Administrative Service were initially appointed as Class III officers and were on the same salary and conditions of service as their expatriate counterparts within the same class. These local officers were placed on the lowest end of the Administrative Service time-scale. Under the Bain scale, local officers therefore began on \$750, which was also the starting point for Administrative Cadets, newly-appointed to the Service. Native Officers shortlisted for promotion to Division II were usually Class I officers instead of the Personal or Special Grade appointees.⁵⁶ Other Class I officers, who were not given the opportunity of promotion into the Senior Service, were appointed to the Personal Grade as a consolation.⁵⁷ Hence,

⁵⁵Hermanus Assan began his career as a Native Officer in 1941, just three months before the Japanese invasion.

⁵⁶In the mid-1950s, the post of Special Appointment was known as Personal Grade while the S.A.O. equivalent was Special Grade.

⁵⁷Interview with Datuk Peter Tinggom, 18 January 1985, Kuching.

promotion of Class I Native Officers to Division II was not automatic and was dependent on an officer's performance.

In practice, some of the conditions of service appertaining to Division II officers did not apply to local officers and this prompted the remark that the "Senior Service for the Asians is not quite the same as the Senior Service for the Europeans but is a pocket edition of the real thing".⁵⁸ Extra perks which came with the Service such as expatriation pay and the children's education allowance were intended for 'induced' officers. Furthermore, only officers recruited from abroad were entitled to a furlough of an average of seven months on full pay after every three years of resident service. Local officers were allowed leave of up to four weeks each year depending on their length of service.

There was also the criticism that local officers were often not given the same responsibilities as their expatriate colleagues. Although they were Class III Administrative Officers, local officers were posted to outstations as Assistant District Officers, normally the task of expatriate Administrative Cadets on probation, and it was not until 1957 that local Administrative Officers were appointed as District Officers. Another resentment was the fact that most of the local officers promoted in the early 1950s, entered the Administrative Service during the latter half of their

⁵⁸Sarawak Tribune, 19 August 1950.

careers and sometimes near their retiring ages and, thus, had little likelihood of progressing beyond Class II.

The Localisation Programme of the Colonial Government

Although the replacement of expatriates by local officers in the Senior Service began as early as 1948, it was only towards the latter half of the 1950s that the colonial government began to draw up a programme for the localisation of Sarawak's civil service. From 1956 onwards, localisation or 'Borneanisation',⁵⁹ as it was then popularly known, received the constant attention of the British policy-makers in the Colonial Office. In a correspondence to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in February 1956, the Governor of Sarawak, Sir Anthony Abell, maintained that the time was ripe for Sarawak to embark on its own localisation programme. He felt that progress should be measured and well-paced so as to keep the high standard and level of efficiency of the government service.⁶⁰ Abell further proposed that localisation should be carefully guided and would naturally begin with the lower rungs of the Senior Service and then proceed upwards. As an illustration, in the case of the Administrative

⁵⁹Among the terms the Colonial Office thought suitable to describe Sarawak's localisation programme were firstly, 'Malayanisation', but owing to the specific reference of the term to Malays, it might have caused the displeasure of the non-Malay natives. Another term suggested was 'Asianisation' and was, in the mid-1950s, used unofficially in North Borneo. 'Borneanisation' was finally agreed upon as the most appropriate term. C.Howard to G.C.Whiteley, 15 March 1956, CO 1030/233.

⁶⁰Governor of Sarawak, Sir Anthony Abell, to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 15 February 1956, CO 1030/233.

Service, replacement of expatriate personnel by local officers would start at the level of Division II, Class III.

The localisation programme of the colonial government in the late 1950s was seen to consist of two main stages; the first deliberative phase involved the appointment of a Select Committee study and the endorsement of the Committee's findings and recommendations by the Council Negri. The second stage was more concerned with the establishment of implementing instruments, that is, the Public Service Commission and the Training Branch.

As a first step towards the objective of localisation, the Governor urged heads of departments to study the possibility of local officers taking over vacancies in their respective departments. These heads of departments were also advised to consult with the agencies concerned for overseas training so that vacancies could be related to the material likely to be available for recruitment or promotion in future. With this feedback, the government could then decide on the best possible course for localising a particular department.

A Select Committee was then appointed by the Council Negri in May 1957, charged with the task of considering the various reports submitted by the heads of departments and given the following terms of reference;

..to consider when, and to what extent, under what conditions and generally in what manner public servants recruited outside Sarawak should be replaced by persons locally recruited and to make

recommendations and to report back to the Council.⁶¹

The members of the Committee comprised the Deputy Chief Secretary, A.R.Snelus, as chairman, and Abang Hj.Mustapha, Khoo Peng Loong, Abang Hj.Abdul Razak, Ong Kee Hui, Umpi Rantai and Yeo Cheng Hoe as ordinary members. During its various meetings held between July 1957 and November 1959, the Committee studied various possible ways of localising the civil service and in its Report stressed that the integrity and efficiency of the Sarawak civil service should be upheld. The rate of localisation would also be dependent on how soon local officers with the necessary tertiary qualifications could be made available.⁶²

One of the major concerns of the Committee was determining the entry qualifications for Division II. It was acknowledged that localisation could proceed at a much faster pace if local officers, without the minimum qualifications, were promoted. However, this would have risked lowering standards and could have resulted in a breakdown of efficiency. Moreover, if under-qualified local staff were arbitrarily promoted and held senior posts by virtue of their length of service, there might not be vacancies for qualified local candidates in later years. The Committee thus felt that the present entry requirements for Division II should remain. The

⁶¹Council Negri, 'Report of the Select Committee to Consider the Replacement of Officers Drawing Inducement Pay', Part I, Annexure to Sessional Paper, no.4, 1960, para.1,3. Also see Sarawak Tribune, 16 December 1959.

⁶²William S.Wu, 'Polycommunalism and Nativisation: A Comparative Study of Bureaucratic Transition in Sarawak and Sabah', Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1972, pp.261-263.

other alternative for entry into Division II was by selective promotion of local officers from Division III, and it was recommended that this method of entry, as long as it did not prejudice the promotion prospects of local graduates, be maintained. While scholarships were available for Sarawak students to embark on their tertiary studies abroad, the Committee suggested expanding and developing the range of awards for those who failed to reach university entrance requirements.

Localisation of the government service should also reflect a more balanced racial representation, that is, recruitment should not be confined to any particular ethnic group. There was no stipulation of any ratio, in contrast to Malaya, where the ratio of recruitment of Malays to Chinese in the civil service in the 1950s, was four to one. What was thought to be important in Sarawak's case was that it was in her interest and would aid in the preservation of racial harmony if all persons domiciled in Sarawak were given equal opportunity to enter the civil service. The Committee noted that this practice had already been applied in the recruitment to the S.A.O. Service. The Public Service Commission, when constituted, and the Scholarships Committee would be given directives on recruitment.

The Select Committee also sought to define precisely the term 'local officer' in order to avoid confusion. According to the Committee, a local officer referred to one of the following

categories of persons; first, those who were born in British Borneo, second, those born outside British Borneo, but whose parents were domiciled in British Borneo and third, those born outside British Borneo but who had adopted residence in British Borneo. The use of 'British Borneo' instead of 'Sarawak' meant that residents of North Borneo and Brunei were also regarded as local officers and this was perhaps indicative of the move towards a British Borneo Federation then.

Even with the implementation of the localisation programme, Sarawak would still have to continue to rely on the services of experienced expatriate officers, but it was more likely for expatriate officers to be found in the higher echelons of the Service than at the lower end of Division II. Although there were no more new expatriate recruitments made to the Administrative Service after 1958, a number of officers were transferred from other colonies. F.D.Jakeway took up his appointment as Chief Secretary in 1959, while C.A.R.Wilson, a former Hong Kong officer, joined the Service as a Division Class II officer in 1961. None of the expatriate Administrative Officers was made redundant or pressured into retirement as a result of localisation before Sarawak joined Malaysia in August 1963.

It would be worthwhile at this juncture to survey briefly the nature of the scholarships and training schemes in Sarawak prior to the first formal enunciation of the localisation

programme. From as early as 1949, suitable Sarawak students and serving officers were given the opportunity to obtain further education overseas.⁶³ This scheme was put into operation with Sarawak's limited financial resources as well as assistance from the Colonial Development and Welfare fund and several United Nations agencies. The Colombo Plan member countries also contributed by providing educational and other training facilities for Sarawak candidates.

In the early years of the scheme, the awards given were mainly in the form of in-service training courses for junior administrative officers. These were mainly for attendance of public administration courses overseas for a period of six months to one year. In the mid-1950s, there was a steady increase in the number of officers and students sent abroad. In 1955, 6 S.A.O.s and Native Officers left for Australia on an Australian government scholarship to attend a course on government administration, and, in 1956, 9 junior administrative officers went to the United Kingdom for similar courses.⁶⁴ By 1959, 22 junior administrative officers had completed various short courses abroad while 3 Sarawak students bound for a career in administration, returned from overseas after obtaining university degrees.⁶⁵

Thus, the Training Branch, which was established in 1960 as a result of the Select Committee's recommendation, was not

⁶³Sarawak Tribune, 1 July 1961.

⁶⁴Sarawak Tribune, 3 September and 4 October 1956.

⁶⁵Council Negri Proceedings, 25, 26 and 27 August 1959.

entirely a new innovation. It was also vested with similar powers to allocate scholarships and administer in-service training courses. A local officer, Chin Shin Sen,⁶⁶ was given personal charge of the branch, which also had a scholarships committee. As mentioned earlier, acting on directives given by the Select Committee, the Training Branch refrained from giving preference to any particular race in the award of scholarships or training schemes. To a question in the Council Negri raised by Yeo Cheng Hoe on the progress made under the localisation programme, the Deputy Chief Secretary, G.A.T. Shaw, informed him that the government was fully committed to the policy of training local officers. Towards this end, many officers were sent on short courses and the total number awarded for each year had steadily increased. In 1959, 29 went overseas for diplomas and other courses and the number jumped to 42 in 1960 and 71 in 1961.⁶⁷

The Training Branch also started an induction course for prospective recruits to the S.A.O. Service to ascertain their suitability for a career in administration. Previously, in the 1940s, recruits to the Native Officers' Service were required to attend a one-year course prior to being appointed Probationers. This practice was later discontinued and the

⁶⁶Chin Shin Sen joined the clerical service in 1930 and his outstanding ability marked him out for early promotion. In 1948 he worked in the Secretariat as an Assistant Secretary and earned his promotion to the Senior Service in 1951. The fact that a local officer was appointed to head the Training Branch was perhaps testimony to the colonial government's commitment towards localisation.

⁶⁷*Sarawak Tribune*, 3 May 1962. Yeo Cheng Hoe was then an unofficial nominated member of the First Division.

induction course was an attempt to re-introduce the training programme on a more comprehensive basis.⁶⁸ The courses, which were designed and arranged by the Head of the Training Branch, Chin Shin Sen, were intended to give new recruits to the Service an insight into the administrative responsibilities of an S.A.O.⁶⁹ Graduates recruited to the S.A.O. Service were also given access to courses such as the Second Devonshire.⁷⁰ Two graduate S.A.O.s, Abang Yusof Abang Puteh and Bujang Mohd.Nor, attended the Second Devonshire at Cambridge in 1961.

A Public Service Commission was established in Sarawak in November 1961 following the recommendation of the Select Committee and its first chairman was R.L.V.Wilkes.⁷¹ According to the then Governor of Sarawak, Sir Alexander Waddell, the localisation of the civil service was of prime importance and the decision to set up a Public Service Commission was to ensure the impartiality of the civil service.⁷² In view of the prospect of self-government, the subject of appointments, promotions (including localisation), award of scholarships should be removed from the political field and entrusted to an independent body.

⁶⁸Sarawak Tribune, 2 April 1960. It was not clear when the earlier course for student Native Officers was scrapped.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰See Chapter 5, p.225, for a description of the Second Devonshire course.

⁷¹See Chapter 6, p.255, fn.34. Wilkes was also the chairman of the Scholarships Committee.

⁷²Personal correspondence with Sir Alexander Waddell, 24 October 1992.

The Public Service Commission (P.S.C.) came under the purview of the Governor and its main aim before 1963 was to tender advice to the Governor with respect to appointments, transfers, promotions and discipline. The Governor was, however, not bound by the Commission's advice but, in practice, he invariably accepted the recommendations of the P.S.C.⁷³ It was not until Sarawak's entry into Malaysia that the Sarawak P.S.C. was vested with any executive powers. The Commission acted as an agent of localisation in the manner that it made decisions on the training of local officers and on the further recruitment of expatriate personnel should the circumstances demand. The P.S.C. also liaised closely with the Training Branch and the Scholarships Committee as regards promotion, recruitment and the award of scholarships.

The Inter-Governmental Committee (I.G.C.) Report, published in February 1963 in preparation for Sarawak's entry into Malaysia, was firmly committed to localising the civil service.⁷⁴ There was also considerable fear that with the creation of Malaysia, officers from Peninsular Malaysia might dominate Bornean affairs and that Malayanisation would, in fact, replace Borneanisation, that is, candidates from West Malaysia would fill vacancies in the senior civil posts in the Federalised departments in Sarawak.⁷⁵ Hence, the I.G.C.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Council Negri, 'Malaysia, Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee, 1962', Sessional Paper, no.1, 1963. See Annex B, p.25. The Report states that 'Borneanisation' was a "major objective of policy". See Chapter 6, p.254.

⁷⁵Council Negri Proceedings, 8 and 9 March 1963 and Sarawak Tribune, 11 March 1963.

Report called for the rapid acceleration of localisation and recommended that priority be given to the promotion and appointment of local Sarawak officers in both the State and Federalised departments. The Report also devoted attention to the issue of an exodus of expatriate officers upon independence. Too rapid a departure of expatriate officers would only open the Sarawak civil service to the prospect of being dominated by the more qualified West Malaysians and hence the Report instituted compensation schemes for expatriate officers so as to induce them to stay on after independence.⁷⁶ The purpose of these schemes was, according to Sir Alexander Waddell,

..not so much, if at all, to protect expatriate interests, but to ensure that a sufficient number was retained after independence to ensure a smooth take-over and to allow Sarawak students in training overseas to complete their training and return to take their places in the public service.⁷⁷

The discussion has thus far centred on the localisation programme and its various implementing instruments. It is worthwhile at this point to analyse the trends and changes with regard to promotion and recruitment to the Administrative Service since the programme came into effect in 1960.

⁷⁶See Chapter 6, pp.283-286, for an elaboration of the compensation schemes for expatriate officers.

⁷⁷Personal correspondence with Sir Alexander Waddell, 24 October 1992.

Recruitment and Promotion of Local Officers since 1960

It was noted earlier that local officers had been promoted to the Administrative Service since 1948. With the endorsement of the Select Committee Report on localisation, one would anticipate an increased rate of recruitment and promotion of local officers into the Administrative Service, the former domain of the expatriates. In 1957, 22% of the members of the Administrative Service were local officers promoted from a lower division (see Table 16). By 1960, the percentage had risen to 27% and, in 1963, local officers accounted for 44% of the members.

TABLE 16

Racial Composition of Local Administrative Officers⁷⁸

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Malay/Melanau</u>	<u>Other indigenous groups</u>
1953	5 (11%)	2	3	-
1955	5 (10%)	2	3	-
1957	12 (22%)	3	7	2
1958	14 (26%)	4	8	2
1959	12 (24%)	4	7	1
1960	13 (27%)	4	7	2
1961	15 (33%)	4	8	3
1962	17 (36%)	5	7	5
1963	21 (44%)	6	11	4

Table 16 shows that the racial composition of local Administrative Officers had also changed from 1953 with 2

⁷⁸Table 16 has been compiled from entries in the staff lists, 1953, 1955, 1957-1963.

Chinese and 3 Malays, to reflect a more balanced representation of the other races, particularly the non-Malay indigenous groups, by 1963.

These local officers owed their entry into Division II to promotion from Division III, and before 1963 there had been no direct recruitment of local officers to the Administrative Service. In the 1950s, the colonial government insisted on the minimum qualifications of a B.A.(Hons.) degree with an extra postgraduate year in such courses as the First Devonshire as a condition for admission into the Colonial Administrative Service. Due to a shortfall in the supply of qualified candidates in the years following the end of the Second World War, army officers without any university education were recruited into the Administrative Service in Sarawak. This was perhaps evidence of the flexibility of the government in response to the prevailing circumstances.

One would assume then that if there had been a local officer with a university degree, he would have been given the encouragement to attend the First Devonshire, after which he would have gained immediate admission into the Administrative Service as a Cadet in Division II. However, in the case of Arni bin Lampam, a local Malay graduate, the colonial government appeared to show a wavering stance on its resoluteness towards localisation. Arni bin Lampam graduated from the University of Malaya, and, in 1957, joined the S.A.O. Service in Division III instead of being appointed an

Administrative Cadet. Arni had to work his way up for four years as an S.A.O. before gaining his promotion to Division II as a Class III Administrative Officer in 1961.⁷⁹

In September 1960, the government issued a statement indicating the qualifications required for entry into Division II and mentioned that its overriding concern was the maintenance of a high level of efficiency in the civil service. The statement stressed that candidates seeking entry into Division II as Administrative Cadets would need to have a basic Honours degree and an additional one-year attendance of the First Devonshire. However, with respect to local graduates, the statement confirmed that they had to be initially admitted to the S.A.O. Service but at a higher salary point than those with the Overseas School certificate. If their performance was satisfactory, and subject to passing the Lower and Higher Standard examinations, they would be sent overseas for a one-year course, the equivalent of a Second Devonshire.⁸⁰ There were two other local officers with B.A. Honours degrees; Abang Yusof Puteh and Bujang Mohd. Nor were admitted into the S.A.O. Service in February 1960, and both were promoted to Division II in July 1962.

The issue of local graduates being denied entry into Division II as Administrative Cadets became a sore point with some members of the Sarawak Government Asian Officers' Union, who accused the government of not being committed to

⁷⁹Sarawak Government Staff List, 1962.

⁸⁰Sarawak Tribune, 28 September 1960.

localisation. Its president, Abdul Rahman Yakub, expressed his dissatisfaction and maintained that "...there is no shortage of administrators among the local personnel to take up Division I and II posts, yet there are comparatively few in these jobs..."⁸¹ Thus, local graduates had to content themselves with a rather tedious process of entering Division II, that is, by promotion from Division III, and then being appointed as a Class III Administrative Officer with a salary of \$750, which was normally intended for expatriate Administrative Cadets newly recruited. The government's decision to restrict entry of local officers to Division II solely by means of promotion from a lower division was, therefore, not dictated by the absence of any local graduates.

It is difficult to ascertain the line of thinking behind the Select Committee's decision not to admit local graduates directly into Division II. I suggest several probable reasons. First, there could have been a reluctance on the part of the colonial government to allow local graduates to take over vacancies which had initially been reserved for experienced local administrators due for promotion from the Native Officers' Service or the S.A.O. Service. Second, policy then could also have been dictated by the Colonial Office; the prospect of Sarawak attaining self-government might have seemed a distant possibility in 1959/60 and there was, therefore, no urgency to change prevailing practice.

⁸¹*The Straits Times*, 8 February 1963.

Third, there could have existed the idea that degrees from regional universities were inferior to those awarded by British institutions.

It has been mentioned earlier that the local officers who were promoted before the mid-1950s, were usually men in their forties.⁸² On gaining their promotion, they were appointed as a Class III officer and it would normally take a highly competent officer an average of 12 to 15 years to reach the second bar of the Division II time-scale⁸³ and draw a salary of \$1,300. Kho Soon Ewe, promoted in 1948, was the only local Administrative Officer before 1963 who had managed to cross the second bar before his retirement in 1960. Abang Hj. Abdulrahim bin Abang Hj. Moasili drew \$1,120 and Chin Shin Sen, \$1,190, before they retired. From the mid-1950s, there was a noticeable change in the average age of local officers promoted into the Administrative Service. Between 1960 to 1963, local officers promoted were much younger than previously, with an average age of 35, and just a few months after Merdeka, officers as young as 29, with only 9 years' experience were being promoted into Division II.⁸⁴

In Chapter 6, I noted the presence of a typical pattern or general trend in the career of expatriate Administrative Officers. Their careers often reflected a balance between field administrative experience and Secretariat duty. A new

⁸²See p. 329.

⁸³The Bain time-scale for Division II Administrative Officers was \$750x30-870/930x30-1,050/bar/1,085x35-1,260/bar/1,300x40-1,420.

⁸⁴Saravak Tribune, 12 November 1960.

recruit usually spent a short stint of up to two years in the various branches of the Secretariat to acquaint himself with the process of decision-making and he also had ample exposure to the intricacies of managing an outstation. Later in his career, the expatriate Administrative Officer might find himself transferred to Kuching to take up a senior post in the Secretariat.⁸⁵ This particular career pattern was not discernible among the local Administrative Officers. Once attached to the Secretariat, the local officer was liable to remain in that post throughout the length of his career. Kho Soon Ewe served as a Clerk of Councils for the 9 out of 10 years that he was an Administrative Officer and before that he was a Principal Assistant Secretary. Chin Shin Sen was a Secretariat official throughout the entire length of his career in Division II, first working in the Economics department and later transferring to the Training Branch. On the other hand, it would appear that former Native Officers, such as Abang Hj. Abdulrahim and Abang Openg, who became District Officers, were not given the opportunity to try their hand in Secretariat work.

What was also evident from the careers of local officers was the unfortunate convergence of Chinese Administrative Officers in the Secretariat and the Malays and other indigenous groups as field administrators. This was more distinct before the mid-1950s and became less pronounced after 1958. Several reasons accounted for this development.

⁸⁵See Chapter 6, p.298.

Firstly, the Native Officers' Service had confined recruitment to natives, and Chinese recruits were admitted to the S.A.O. Service from 1951 onwards. Hence, the natives had wide experience in handling outstation work. Secondly, the Secretariat saw its expansion in the post-war years which created a demand for junior officials, and the government began employing mostly Chinese to fill the vacancies as Assistant Secretaries. It was perhaps more by design than chance that the Chinese formed the predominant group among junior local officers in the Secretariat. Owing to their experience in Secretariat duties, it was inevitable that the junior Chinese Secretariat officials continued to work in the Secretariat upon their promotion to Division II.

This apparent monopoly of a certain branch of administration by a particular ethnic group, however, did not persist for long, especially after the first batch of Chinese S.A.O.s was promoted into the Administrative Service and was appointed to district offices. Lo Yik Fong was one of the first Chinese S.A.O.s to gain promotion into the Administrative Service in 1961 and was assigned to the post of Assistant District Officer in Sibuluan. A year later, two other Chinese S.A.O.s, Chin Ting Ming and Peter Huang Tiong Sung, were promoted and became District Officers. Malay Administrative Officers were, after 1960, given the opportunity to undertake Secretariat duties and Arni bin Lampam became a Principal Assistant Secretary in the Secretariat in 1961. In September 1963, just one month after independence, another Malay Administrative

Officer, Abang Yusof Abang Puteh, was appointed a Secretariat official in the Resources and Works department.

Thus, between 1960 and 1963, the localisation programme of the colonial government had brought about important changes in the Administrative Service. Not only was there a steep increase in the number of local officers being promoted, but Chinese officers also began to make their mark as District Officers. What remained as a thorny issue during this period was the fact that local graduates were denied direct admission into the Service.

Conclusion

Although localisation was officially sponsored in 1959, the process had begun eleven years earlier with the promotion of the first local officers into the Senior Service. Since then, the Administrative Service had made great strides in localising Classes II and III of the Service. On the eve of Sarawak's entry into Malaysia in August 1963, nearly half of the Administrative Officers were local men. Consistent with government policy then, localisation of the Service proceeded with the lower rungs of the Service first. Before 1963, none of the local officers promoted had managed to progress beyond Division II and it was not until 1965 that the first local Residents were appointed.⁸⁶

⁸⁶The local Residents were Datuk Peter Tinggom, Datuk Arni bin Lampam and Datuk Yao Ping Hua.

It must not be overlooked, however, that the colonial government had laid the foundations for a successful localisation programme after 1963 in providing improved educational facilities and making education more widely available to all communities, particularly the natives.⁸⁷ The positive results shown in this area might not be as apparent as the number of Division I and II posts being localised. For it was only after ten to fifteen years that the results of progress made in education materialised.

It 1948, there were 347 primary and 17 secondary schools in Sarawak with a total student enrolment of 33,000 and with natives accounting for 25% of the student population. In a matter of 12 years, the number of schools had more than doubled to 809 primary and 36 secondary schools and the number of students jumped to 97,000 with the percentage of native enrolment also increasing to 30%.⁸⁸ One result of the colonial government's educational policy was that the Chinese readily took advantage of these opportunities and, in 1959, they formed 85% of the students in secondary schools. With the creation of the S.A.O. Service, specifically to introduce the Chinese to a career in administration, and the presence of a large and growing number of educationally well qualified Chinese as opposed to the natives, there was a strong

⁸⁷The colonial government opened numerous schools in the rural areas and the provision of education was made a local authority responsibility. A teacher training centre in the English medium was started in Kuching in 1947.

⁸⁸R.S.Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, Boston, 1967, p.160.

possibility that the Chinese might dominate senior posts in the Administrative Service in future. But developments in 1963 and the independence of Sarawak within Malaysia put an end to these fears. In the 1963 State Constitution of Sarawak, the natives were given protection and the Governor was empowered to safeguard the special position of the natives and reserve offices in the public services for them.⁸⁹

⁸⁹State Constitution of Sarawak, 1963, para.39. Specific quotas were not mentioned.

CHAPTER 8

THE CHANGING ROLE OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS UNDER COLONIAL RULE, 1946-1963

With the end of the Second World War and the beginning of colonial government, there emerged new and different circumstances in Sarawak which had an impact on the traditional role of Administrative Officers.¹ The main features of the new political, social and economic milieu were improved communications, the greater emphasis placed on development, the provision of a more extensive programme of social services and the growth of local government institutions. These factors inevitably had a direct bearing on the functional parameters of Administrative Officers. Although the context in which the Administrative Officer operated under colonial rule differed somewhat from that which existed under the Brooke Rajahs, the work done by District Officers or Residents did not involve a radical departure from the past. Rather, what was seen was a decline or modification in some of their traditional functions while simultaneously taking on new responsibilities.

Under Rajah Charles and Rajah Vyner, the Residents and District Officers were allowed greater discretionary powers,

¹The term 'Administrative Officers' here is taken to refer generally to Cadets, District Officers and Residents. This chapter concentrates on the work done by Administrative Officers in the field.

and had, on occasion, virtual control of their districts or divisions without much interference from the central government. However, as communications improved and control from Kuching became stricter, particularly in the 1930s, the authority of general Administrative Officers in the field dwindled. The Secretariat, since its creation in 1923, also grew in importance during Rajah Vyner's reign and kept the outstation officers in check. Any dissenting District Officer in a remote outpost could be easily reprimanded by the Chief Secretary. The frequent transfers of Administrative Officers also prevented them from carving out their own spheres of influence. Furthermore, towards the end of the 1930s, much of the work done by Administrative Officers, such as the responsibility for public works and forestry, were gradually being transferred to specialist and technical officers. The number of these latter officers grew steadily and by 1941, they almost equalled that of general administrators.²

This chapter attempts to review the general trends in the various changes of functions of Administrative Officers under colonial rule. Their work was varied and multifarious and the first half of this chapter will highlight only a number of their more important duties. The latter half will deal with the growth and development of local government in Sarawak and its consequent impact on the role of Administrative Officers in district administration.

²R.S.Milne and K.J.Ratnam, *Malaysia - New States in a New Nation. Political Development of Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia*, London, 1974, p.259.

A Review of Some Changes in the Work of Administrative Officers

Before the establishment of colonial rule, the economic potential of Sarawak was left largely unexploited and social services were kept to a minimum. The colonial government, therefore, had an immense task to develop Sarawak's economic competitiveness by providing much-needed infrastructure and enhancing living conditions. After 1946, the word 'development' attained a special significance. Various development schemes were initiated in an effort to increase the production of rice and other foodstuffs and broaden the base of Sarawak's exports.³ With the emergence of development programmes came the concept of the District Officer as a coordinator of various projects in his district.

Since the District Officer traditionally wielded authority and influence in his district, he was naturally given a role in the rural development process. The main thrust of development programmes in the rural areas was concerned with making education and health services accessible to the local inhabitants and also introducing better techniques for the planting of rice. There were also several attempts to introduce cash crop cultivation such as rubber (which had

³See Chapter 5, pp.176-177, for a brief mention of the First Development Plan. The Second Development Plan covered the years 1955-1960. See Morrison, 'Development in Sarawak in the Colonial Period: A Personal Memoir', pp.39-40.

already been encouraged by Rajah Vyner's government), oil palm, pepper and coffee.

One of the concerns of the colonial government was the age-old custom among the Dayak groups of the practice of shifting cultivation and the planting of hill rice, which was considered wasteful owing to its lower yield and the adverse effects it had on the soil. Moreover, for hill rice cultivation to be successfully carried out, there should be less population pressure on land. According to Derek Freeman, who wrote the *Report on the Iban of Sarawak*, the ideal population-land ratio for shifting cultivation was six bilek families per square mile.⁴ Most communities practising shifting cultivation exceeded this ratio. For example, in 1957, D.S.Cottrell, a District Officer in the Third Division, noted that in the Binatang sub-district, the population-land ratio was, on average, 13 bilek families per square mile.⁵

Hence, one of the immediate concerns of the colonial government was to introduce alternative forms of rice cultivation. Where swamp land was plentiful, Ibans were encouraged to plant swamp padi. The following example illustrates the nature of the duties of District Officers with respect to agriculture. In 1955, the District Officer of Bintulu, Peter Scanlon, was approached by a number of Dayaks seeking his advice on how to increase their padi output.⁶ In

⁴*Sarawak Gazette*, 'Divisional reports for the second half of 1957', 31 March 1958.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Sarawak Gazette*, 31 March 1955.

response, Scanlon suggested that they should plant swamp padi and proposed a suitable site where they could farm, provided that members of the Dayak household agree to construct bunds, dams and other necessary facilities. Scanlon then secured the help of the Agriculture Department to provide assistance to the Dayaks concerned.

Although officers from the Agriculture Department were directly responsible for explaining the technical aspects and difficulties of adjusting to a new form of rice cultivation, District Officers had an important function in trying to persuade the local villagers in their district to make the change. The District Officer also liaised with the field agricultural assistant and often worked closely with him in promoting new agricultural techniques among the native villagers.⁷ In the early years of colonial rule, when the officers of the Agriculture Department were thin on the ground and agricultural assistants were not adequately trained, District Officers were given greater responsibility in improving agriculture. The nature of a District Officer's duties was dependent on the particular needs and circumstances of the station he served. In the Lower Rejang, for instance, he would direct his efforts to wooing Ibans away from shifting cultivation. On the other hand, in the Lawas, a District Officer would focus his attention on the extension of wet padi cultivation using buffaloes for ploughing. By the early 1960s the government had launched

⁷Sarawak Gazette, Report by the Acting District Officer, Bau, R.A.Young, 31 January 1955.

assisted schemes for padi cultivation and its success was notable in the Baram at Long Banyau.⁸

District Officers also brought village leaders, such as *penghulus*, on periodic tours of community development projects which were started in Sarawak in the 1950s. One of the earliest schemes to involve a whole community was stationed at Budu in an Iban area. The Budu project was started in 1953 and was concerned with the 'total education' of the population, including the provision of education for the children, improving methods of agriculture and extending rural credit.⁹ By 1958, there were at least three other community development projects; they were based in the regions of Entabai,¹⁰ Pedawan and Long Lama.¹¹ These schemes were under the direction of their project coordinators who reported directly to Kuching; hence District Officers were not immediately involved in the implementation of the programmes.¹² The tours of the community development schemes often made a deep impression on the *penghulus*, who would then relate their experiences to their own longhouse inhabitants.

⁸Sarawak Gazette, 31 July 1962.

⁹J.K.Wilson, 'The Budu, Entabai Iban Team Community Development Schemes, Sarawak, 1953-1968', typescript, n.d., Mss Ocn s 236.

¹⁰The Entabai scheme was started in 1957 at Nanga Entaih near Kanowit.

¹¹The Budu scheme was initially managed by J.K.Wilson and when he left later to operate the Entabai scheme, T.W.McBride was given responsibility for the Budu scheme. Rev.P.H.Howes managed the project at Pedawan while the Long Lama scheme was under C.H.Southwell. The Lemanak community development scheme under E.H.Jensen was started in 1961.

¹²Personal correspondence with Dr Erik Jensen, 13 October 1992.

From the late 1950s, each district had its own development committee on which the District Officer served as chairman. Officers from the Agriculture Department, Public Works and other technical departments would also sit on the committees and together the members would plan suitable programmes for that particular district. One of the objectives of these committees was to work out ways of stimulating interest among the local people in cash crops and moving them away from subsistence farming. Rubber was widely promoted then and those who planted rubber were awarded subsidies and assistance in the form of planting material and fertilizers. The rubber planting scheme was given greater impetus after the arrival of the new Director of Agriculture, James Cook, who had many years of experience in Malaya.¹³ By 1960, more than 40,000 acres of rubber had been planted.¹⁴ Moreover, with the introduction of high-yielding rubber which gave good returns, more villagers became interested in participating in such schemes. District Officers were usually assigned to persuade as many people as possible to become smallholders. It was also left largely to the District Officer to organise meetings with village elders and impress upon them the advantages of such schemes. Other cash crops introduced were coconut and coffee.¹⁵

¹³See Morrison, 'Development in Sarawak in the Colonial Period', p.39. Cook transferred to Sarawak in 1956.

¹⁴Address to the Council Negri by the Governor, Sir Alexander Waddell, 6 December 1960.

¹⁵The planting of pepper was also encouraged but owing to the depressed pepper prices in the 1950s, there were not many participants in the pepper schemes.

In a sense, the District Officer's role in development is difficult to define specifically. He was required to draw attention to any particular problem in his district. For example, if he anticipated that harvests were going to be dismal for a particular year, he would immediately alert the Agriculture Department. If he saw the need for any particular project, he would attempt to "sell" his ideas to the relevant department in Kuching. As the prospect of independence came nearer, the government tried to accelerate the process of development. This often placed the District Officer in a quandary; he knew too well that the increased pressure could eventually be counter-productive, given the slim subsistence margins which most rural people operated.

The maintenance of law and order comprised one of the primary responsibilities of an Administrative Officer. As with his other duties, his magisterial and police functions declined after 1946; this was due in part to the expansion of the police force and the increasing number of police officers posted to districts throughout Sarawak, who relieved District Officers of most of their policing duties. But there were occasions when the District Officer could exercise overriding police powers, particularly in instances of rebellion or rioting, as seen in the Fifth Division during the Brunei revolt.¹⁶

¹⁶Milne and Ratnam, *Malaysia - New States in a New Nation*, p.256.

During the first few years under colonial government, it was observed that court duties placed a heavy burden on the time of Administrative Officers as the number of cases multiplied. Moreover, the administration of law had become complex and it was increasingly felt that expert supervision of the lower courts was becoming a necessity. The Chief Justice of Sarawak also suggested that it was opportune to separate judicial from administrative functions. In 1947, the Chief Secretary proposed the appointment of two circuit judges to take over the bulk of court responsibilities from Residents,¹⁷ but it was not until the mid-1960s that full-time magistrates were introduced in Sarawak.

In 1951 a joint judiciary of North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei was set up with the aim of ensuring greater efficiency among the three territories in the administration of justice and the uniformity of practice.¹⁸ As a result of this arrangement, a Chief Justice and two High Court Judges resided permanently in Kuching. There were, in addition, three stipendiary magistrates allocated for Sarawak, two stationed in Kuching and one in Sibu.

Administrative Officers as well as the junior administrative service, such as Native Officers, had long been responsible for lay magisterial duties in the lower courts. In 1951 the classes of lay magistrates were reduced from four to three. The new First Class magistrates corresponded to the former

¹⁷Minutes of Residents' Conference, 21 May 1947, CO 537/2240.

¹⁸Sarawak Tribune, 22 November 1951.

District Court magistrates and the duties of the Second and Third Class magistrates were similar to those of previous Third and Fourth Class magistrates. The unlimited jurisdiction of First Class magistrates was also abolished. Although this modification reduced the powers of the District Officer in the lower courts, it did not reduce his workload. The District Officer often sat with local assessors and gave fairly rapid decisions.¹⁹ Another casualty of the changes in the 1950s was the Resident's loss of his judicial functions; these were taken over by High Court Judges.²⁰

Travelling constituted an important and often rewarding part of the work of District Officers. It was also imperative for a newly-arrived Cadet to travel as much as possible in the district to which he was posted in order to learn the language and customs of the local people. Similarly, a District Officer was also required to possess an indepth knowledge of the district under his jurisdiction and he could only claim this if he had travelled extensively and visited the native inhabitants living in remote villages. Funds for travelling were available from the District Office and they covered a small travelling allowance, the upkeep of outboard engines and boats and the salaries of junior officers accompanying the District Officer.

The duration of travelling tours depended on the size and circumstances of the district. For example small districts,

¹⁹Personal correspondence with A.J.N.Richards, 17 February 1992.

²⁰Personal correspondence with D.C.Walker, 3 February 1992.

like Kanowit and Bau, could be "better travelled" than the large ones. Some travelling tours, particularly to Iban or Bidayuh longhouses, would usually take only one week while a visit to the Murut(Lun Bawang) longhouses in the Upper Trusan might have taken about six weeks. But on average a District Officer would spend one week per month travelling.²¹ Most of the travelling done in the remote outstations was by river or on foot and many of the larger districts had their own motor launches. A District Officer was normally expected to visit all the longhouses and villages in his district at least twice a year.²²

Indeed, the value of travelling was in the informal social contact established by Administrative Officers while staying in longhouses and *kampongs*. One former District Officer remarked that travelling was akin to "taking the government to the people".²³ An Administrative Officer, when visiting a village or longhouse, had to take a simple census and explain any new government policies affecting the people. He often found himself translating the Agriculture Department's ideas and plans into something which could be assimilated and handled by the local people. His other duties included the

²¹In Chapter 5, p.219, I mentioned the absence of resthouses for travelling District Officers in Sarawak and the fact that Administrative Officers stayed "with the people", whether in longhouses or *kampongs* while on their duty tours.

²²Milne and Ratnam, *Malaysia - New States in a New Nation*, p.260.

²³Morrison, 'Fairland Sarawak, Some Recollections', typescript, Mss Pac s 92, p.46.

checking of visitors and the presence of unlicensed traders and settling disputes.²⁴

Richard Morris, a former Administrative Officer, recalled that he was required to undertake the "tin"²⁵ system census while on his travelling tours. According to him this census recorded every pintu (household) in the longhouse, indicating the names of the head of every household and his dependents, their approximate ages, the number of people in each pintu and "the possession of a shotgun, an outboard motor or sewing machine..which might indicate the economic situation".²⁶ The District Officer also took down information regarding illnesses, births, deaths and the number of people absent. After the census was completed, he would then discuss government policies and hear requests or complaints on a variety of subjects. Any disputes would also be settled during these travel tours. In order for travelling to yield substantial results, a District Officer would have had to stay in a particular district for at least two to three years. Yet frequent transfers of officers to different stations was widely practised and as soon as an officer had established close rapport with the local people living in his district, he was usually transferred to another station.

²⁴E.N.Brown, *The Work and Life of a District Officer in Saravak*, (pamphlet), Kuching, 1955, p.2.

²⁵J.C.B.Fisher was largely responsible for originating and improving the "tin" system. Its name was derived from a four gallon kerosene tin which was used for the census.

²⁶Personal correspondence with R.H.Morris, 5 January 1992.

However, there was a tendency for Administrative Officers under colonial rule to devote attention to the upriver or ulu areas during their travels and emphasis was placed on visiting Dayak areas to the exclusion of the Malay *kampongs*.²⁷ The Malay areas were left to the Native Officers or S.A.O.s and the Chinese settlements to their *Kapitans*. This could perhaps be attributed to the practice of the Brooke government, which concentrated attention on the Dayaks, particularly the Iban areas in the 1930s as a result of the higher incidence of Iban rebellion. On the other hand, circumstances had changed after the Japanese occupation when it was the Malays who were opposed to cession, and certain Malay groups later participated in the Brunei revolt of 1962 which spilled over into Sarawak. The success of the communist revolution in China in 1949 and the political troubles fomented by the Chinese during the Malayan 'Emergency', also indicated that visiting Chinese settlements in the rural areas was equally important.

The above discussion has focused mainly on the work of District Officers and Cadets. A Resident in colonial Sarawak had similar duties to the District Officer but on a larger scale. He was responsible for coordinating policies within his division and ensuring that these did not run counter to the general guidelines laid down by Kuching. Residents also sat on various committees concerning their divisions. A.R.Snelus, who was Resident of the First Division in 1952,

²⁷Personal correspondence with A.J.N.Richards, 17 February 1992.

reported that his administrative duties were hampered by the requirement to attend numerous meetings of a large number of committees. For instance, in the fourth quarter of 1952, he attended 30 meetings of 9 different committees in his official capacity and 5 meetings of 3 other committees in an unofficial capacity, apart from the time set aside for the Residents' conferences and meetings of the Council Negri.²⁸

The Resident acted as a bridge between the various districts in his division and the Secretariat in Kuching. Correspondence to and from Kuching filtered through the Divisional Resident. He was likely to be a person who had had many years of service and may have done his stint at the Secretariat. Thus, he was well disposed to the task of liaising with the Secretariat officials. One consequence of the improvement of communications was the shifting of the focus of administration from the Divisional Resident to the Secretariat. Previously, the Resident had greater discretionary powers with regard to his division but with the development of the telegraph and radio telephone,²⁹ the Secretariat could be informed of every detail of administration in the field and hence had more control of divisional affairs.

²⁸Sarawak Gazette, 27 February 1953.

²⁹By the 1950s, there was already a complete network of V.H.F. radio telephone communications in Sarawak. Every station was connected to its divisional capital, which was in turn linked by a multi-channel network to Kuching.

The development of local government in Sarawak also brought about certain modifications in the role of Administrative Officers and the next section attempts to examine the growth of the local bodies and their subsequent relationship with District Officers.

The Growth of Local Government in Sarawak and Its Impact on the Role of District Officers

The experience of other British colonies showed that there was a tendency for a system of local government to take root during the closing years of colonial rule.³⁰ This was often not a natural occurrence but was superimposed on existing traditional native organisations or authorities by the British administration. Local government institutions were also introduced in Sarawak and proliferated under the colonial government. These local bodies were established for the purpose of allowing the people to participate in governmental decision-making. Some of the functions normally performed by the agents of central government, such as Administrative Officers, were devolved to these local authorities. From 1948 onwards, with the formation of the first local authorities in Sarawak, we also see the gradual transfer to the local bodies of services traditionally associated with Administrative Officers, particularly the District Officers and Cadets, such as the management of

³⁰R.Wraith, *Local Administration in West Africa*, Africana Pub.Corp., 1974, pp.18-22.

primary education, the collection of local taxes and the provision of rural public utilities.

Local government institutions had their early beginnings in Sarawak even before the Japanese occupation. The previous administration under Rajah Vyner, had introduced the instruments of a British-type local authority, but these early experiments were limited in terms of functions and restricted to the main towns.³¹ The Kuching Sanitary Board was formed in 1921 in response to the needs of the expanding urban areas. It was responsible for providing general services and administering the municipal areas of Kuching. Prior to this, the central government had provided local services for Kuching. This Board gradually developed and assumed more responsibilities, and in 1934 became the Kuching Municipal Board. The latter body also had nominated unofficial members. Similar bodies were also established in the other urban areas of Sibü and Miri. Apart from these attempts, local government institutions in Sarawak before the war were undeveloped.

Towards the end of Brooke rule, there was an effort made to introduce natives to the administration of their own affairs at a local level and legislation known as the Native Administration Order was passed in 1940 to bring this idea into effect.³² A village-type committee was envisaged as an

³¹John Woods, *Local Government in Sarawak, An Introduction to the Nature and Working of District Councils in the State*, Kuching, 1968, p.8.

³²*Sarawak Government Gazette*, 1 February 1940, Order no.N-5.

alternative to the authority of individual chiefs. However, owing to the lack of attention paid to the creation of supervisory bodies, the scheme was difficult to implement and the outbreak of the Pacific war in 1941 ensured its suspension. Moreover, this piece of legislation only provided for the establishment of native authorities and by implication did not include the possibility of participation of the large Chinese community. Perhaps another problem anticipated was the differing types of taxes paid by the various communities. The Malays and other native groups paid a head or door(family) tax while the Chinese were exempted from this direct system of raising revenue. Without the financial contribution of the Chinese, there would not have been enough funds to run the native authorities.³³

When Sarawak assumed its new status as a Crown Colony, the colonial government felt that the state would gain by emulating other British dependencies, which had experimented with local government institutions. Sarawak's population was essentially plural in nature and, in 1947, comprised several major ethnic groups, namely, the Chinese(145,000), the Malays(97,000), the Ibans(190,000), the Bidayus(42,000) and the Melanaus(36,000).³⁴ According to a former Chief Secretary, J.H.Ellis, the racial cleavages between the various groups were often widened by existing legislation, which imposed liabilities or prescribed rights limited to one or more ethnic groups. As a result of land legislation, certain

³³J.H.Ellis, 'Local Government in Sarawak', *Corona*, June 1950, p.212.

³⁴See Noakes, *A Report on the 1947 Population Census*.

ethnic groups were obliged to live within their allocated areas. It was important for these groups to work together and local government institutions could serve as a conduit for this purpose. Furthermore, allowing the local people to participate in the management of their own affairs would inevitably expose them to the art of self-government.

The first colonial Governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, was closely associated with the introduction of local government in Sarawak. From the time of assumption of his office, he emphasized the importance of educating the people to run their local affairs. Arden-Clarke also suggested that local government bodies could provide potential recruits for the Council Negri. He further added that in Sarawak, no attempt had been made to establish rural local bodies either on a territorial or ethnic basis with jurisdiction over an area larger than a group of villages or with any financial powers or responsibilities.

In his tract on the development of local government in Sarawak, Arden-Clarke cautioned against the setting up of authorities based on ethnicity as this would only retard the formation of a "national spirit".³⁵ In spite of this, the first five authorities formed under the Local Government Ordinance in 1948³⁶ were single ethnic group institutions.

³⁵Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, 'Note on the development of local government in Sarawak', typescript, 1947.

³⁶'An Ordinance to consolidate and amend the law relating to local government in rural areas', known briefly as the Local Authority Ordinance, 1948, *Sarawak Government Gazette*, 16 December 1948.

This could be attributed to the fact that it was easier to establish rural local government bodies based on existing and identifiable sources of authority such as the native village headman. Thus, the first practical step would be to constitute ethnic-based authorities among suitable groups of natives. It was hoped that these racial authorities would be a temporary expedient and whenever the political climate warranted, they would gradually include other groups and be instituted on a geographical basis.³⁷

The first few authorities established included a Bidayuh authority in the Bau district, two Iban authorities in the Simanggang area, and one near Sibu, and another comprising the Kayans and Kenyahs of the Tutoh area in the Fourth Division. Each of these had a council consisting of the headmen of villages within its jurisdiction and electing from among themselves a leader. As an illustration, the Batang Lupar Iban authority served an area inhabited by 22,500 Ibans in the Simanggang district and had a council drawn from nine *penghulus*.³⁸ At this early stage, Arden-Clarke advised against including Malays or Melanaus in any local authority experiment as he felt that they were being distracted by the cession issue. As soon as the early authorities had proven their potential, the Malays and Melanaus would gradually be encouraged to participate.

³⁷Ibid., para.4.

³⁸These *penghulus* not only acted as traditional representatives of the Ibans but were also salaried government officials.

A number of the former duties of District Officers were transferred to the local authorities. These "transferred services" included the collection of local revenue, the provision of primary education, agricultural extension, the issuing of various licenses and the conservation and improvement of public areas. Village officials such as the *tua kampong*, *penghulu* and, in some cases, the *kapitan china*, would no longer be paid by Administrative Officers but by local authority agents.³⁹ The Local Authority Ordinance of 1948 gave local authorities the power to make by-laws operative in their own areas with regard to the conduct of their day-to-day business. The Ordinance, however, ensured that the District Officers and Residents had overriding powers. Also, if a by-law or order issued by the authority ran counter to a similar order passed by the district office, the latter would prevail. The Resident and District Officer also had the right to revoke any order passed by the local authority. As far as possible, a local authority area corresponded to an administrative district in order to avoid the overlapping of jurisdiction between two district offices.

The early authorities had their own native treasuries and were given responsibilities for managing their own finance but with close supervision from the District Officer. The funds were accumulated by means of direct taxation and other minor sources of local revenue such as the fines and fees collected by the Native Courts. These sources of revenue

³⁹*Sarawak Tribune*, 1 December 1948.

were, however, inadequate and the government gave a substantial grant equivalent to the amount of local taxes secured.⁴⁰

Out of these funds, the local authority had to finance and manage rural health services and primary education. The initial activities of the local authorities were very much confined to the promotion of primary school education. Some local authorities were overly enthusiastic about spreading education and built numerous schools, thus overstretching their limited funds and resources. Many of these schools floundered as a result of the lack of trained teachers and, in part, contributed to the waning support the people had for the local authorities.⁴¹ It was perhaps this narrow scope of responsibility which proved to be the local authorities' undoing in the first years of their establishment. Additionally, the fact that these early local bodies were mostly ethnic-based authorities meant that they could only draw participation and interest from one ethnic group.

In the early stages of development, it was inevitable for Administrative Officers to play an important role in guiding these local authorities and in helping them cope with the intricacies of finance and administration. The District Officer had overall surveillance of the local authority in his district and ensured that it discharged its duties

⁴⁰See Woods, *Local Government in Sarawak*, p.8 and Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, pp.173-175.

⁴¹*Sarawak Tribune*, 22 October 1955.

effectively and heeded the advice of technical officers in the course of its work. At the outset, the District Officer acted as chairman of the local authority while the Native Officers or S.A.O.s became secretaries.

These agents of central government were also able to exercise considerable influence in other ways, one of which was through the link between the local authority and the Secretary for Local Government. Communication between Kuching and the local bodies usually went through the Residents and District Officers.⁴² Hence, any communication from the Local Government Secretary would be relayed to the local authority members by the Residents and District Officers, who would also pass on messages from the local bodies to central government. There was no direct channel of communication between the Secretariat and the local authorities. This method of communication did not cause any inconvenience when the District Officer served as chairman of the local authority, but constituted a source of irritation as soon as the councils became more independent and grew less reliant on the District Officer.

Between 1948 and 1952, more authorities were established and the tendency then was still to form ethnic-based councils. The number of people living within the jurisdiction of local authorities increased from 65,000 in 1948 to 187,000 in

⁴²Milne and Ratnam, *Malaysia - New States in a New Nation*, p.276.

1952.⁴³ During this period, it became evident that owing to the priority attached to the growth of local government in Sarawak, laws were rushed to the statute book which, in effect, gave comprehensive powers on paper but with little human or material resources to exercise them.⁴⁴ On the other hand, field administration remained relatively unchanged so that in reality, local authorities were competing with the other agents of the central government, a competition for which they were, of course, seriously handicapped.

At this juncture, it became apparent that it was more advantageous for local authorities to include more than one ethnic group within each local council. In the early 1950s, there was a noticeable shift towards the establishment of mixed authorities. These had already made an appearance before 1952, but they were more an exception to the rule. Former authorities based on a single ethnic group, like the one in Baram, were transformed into mixed councils. More mixed authorities were set up and by the mid-1950s, they had been established in Lawas, Kalaka, Lundu, Kanowit, Kapit, Sarikei and four other districts and at the end of 1955, mixed authorities had covered an area of 213,000 people. From 1957, ethnic-based authorities were no longer formed.⁴⁵

⁴³See *Annual Report for 1948, Kuching, 1949, p.2* and *Annual Report for 1952, Kuching, 1953, p.2*.

⁴⁴Ellis, 'Local Government', p.213.

⁴⁵M.B.Leigh, 'Local Government: Its Origins and Early Development', *Saravak Museum Journal*, vol.XXIII, no.44, July-December 1975, p.12.

The mid-1950s also saw local authorities being given greater responsibilities and they showed an increasing ability to undertake most of the duties assigned. While continuing to manage primary education and collect taxes, local authorities were now called upon to assist in such things as the implementation of development programmes, the provision of health services and were given responsibility for the construction of public works.⁴⁶ Some even took the initiative and extended public utilities to areas where such conveniences were unavailable, as seen in the efforts made in the Lundu and Kalaka districts. At Limbang, an agricultural project was also underway, but progress was slow owing to the inexperience of local council staff. Urban councils were also allowed a greater role in planning and general administration, as illustrated by the housing projects launched by the Kuching and Sibu councils.

Matters of forestry and land policy within the local area could now be addressed to the local councillors and their advice sought, although the administration of land and forests remained a central government responsibility. From 1956 onwards, the central government maintained only the main roads throughout Sarawak while local authorities, with government technical assistance, were assigned the tasks of planning, construction and the maintenance of secondary roads and paths. In anticipation of the growing importance of the role of local authorities, the Secretariat branches of

⁴⁶*Sarawak Tribune*, 22 October 1955.

Chinese and Native Affairs were scrapped and in their place was instituted a Local Government branch with a Secretary of Local Government appointed from among the senior Administrative Officers.⁴⁷

It has already been suggested that in the initial stage of the local authority's development, the District Officer provided invaluable assistance. During these early years, he served as chairman and ex-officio member of the council but as soon as more experienced personnel became available, the District Officer assumed the role of adviser and supervisor.⁴⁸ Eventually, he gradually withdrew from direct participation and would only render his help and advice when called upon to do so. The pace at which the District Officer relinquished his powers had to be carefully planned. If he moved too quickly, the local authority might fall apart owing to inexperience and inefficiency, and if he withdrew too slowly, local initiative could be stifled.

In April 1956, a local government conference was held in Sarawak in which local councillors and central government officials participated to discuss the manifold problems encountered by the authorities. The relationship between the central government and local authorities was also broached at

⁴⁷Woods, *Local Government in Sarawak*, p.9.

⁴⁸Colonial Office, 'A General Review of Progress in Local Government in British African Territories, Summer Conference on African Administration, Ninth session, 25 August-6 September 1958 at King's College, Cambridge', p.59. See also Royal Institute of Public Administration, 'Development of Local Government in the Colonies', Report of a Conference held at Cambridge University, 22 August-2 September 1955.

this conference. Sir Anthony Abell, then Governor of Sarawak, felt that it was desirable for a sort of partnership to be formed with the agents of the central government, particularly the Administrative Officers and the specialist and technical officers. Abell also maintained that the local authorities had developed sufficiently in stature and had successfully executed a number of projects, and thus it was time that they should gradually work towards the separation of local authorities from district administration.⁴⁹

By 1957, nearly the whole of Sarawak, with the exception of a small area in the Miri sub-district, was under the jurisdiction of local authorities.⁵⁰ With the growing experience of the local councillors and the increasing importance of their responsibilities, it was evident that the initial phase of development was complete and the councils now required placing on a more well-defined basis. It was observed in the 1950s that there had been some measure of overlap between district administration and the jurisdiction of local authorities and what was needed was a statutory definition of the powers of local councils. In 1957, legislation was passed enabling local councils to assume many of the functions of District Officers such as the issuing of licenses for village shops and the verification of weights and measures.

⁴⁹*Sarawak Tribune*, 12 April 1956.

⁵⁰At the end of 1957, the whole of Sarawak's population of about 600,000 was covered by local authorities, the only exception being a small area on the north-east coast between Miri and Brunei with approximately 5,000 inhabitants. See *Annual Report for 1958*, Kuching, 1959, p.198.

As a result, the District Officer found that most of his residual duties were taken over by the local authorities. This released the District Officers from the more tedious and routine duties which accounted for a large part of their time. But it must be stressed that the District Officer, even after 1957, was still able to exercise considerable influence on the local council as he retained his position as its chairman. Through this office, the District Officer could prevail on the councillors during meetings and it was not until 1963 that Administrative Officers ceased to be ex-officio members of local councils. Moreover, a sizeable portion of local authority funds in the form of government grants was channelled through the Residents and District Officers to ensure that the local council's finances were not mismanaged. In 1959, a Council Negri sessional paper introduced a system of 'matching' rate grants with the aim of extending the rating principle to the rural areas, thus allowing local authorities, in future, to raise a large proportion of their revenue.⁵¹ This legislation also provided a system of taxation which was not based on race as had previously existed. The roles of local authorities with regard to education, public health and public works were subsequently given greater weight, and it was also proposed to integrate Sarawak's community development programme with the local government structure.

⁵¹Annual Report for 1962, Kuching, 1963, pp.324-328 and Woods, *Local Government in Sarawak*, p.10.

While the local authorities were being provided with more powers, there was also a simultaneous effort to introduce the idea of electing local councillors. The local authorities had until the mid-1950s been managed by traditional community leaders and seconded government officials. In 1956, a new constitution for Sarawak was enacted which sought to make the legislative body, the Council Negri, more widely representative and increase the number of unofficial members. It was suggested that candidates for the Council Negri could be secured from the local councils. The election procedure was to be tested in each council beginning with the urban councils and eventually the whole of Sarawak would have their own elected councillors. Advisory divisional councils were also proposed and together with the urban councils of Kuching, Sibü and Miri would elect representatives to the Council Negri. In effect, they functioned as an electoral college for the election of members to the Council Negri.⁵² The first general election to elect representatives to all the local councils was held in 1959.⁵³

The above discussion has given a brief account of the growth of local government and the important part played by the District Officers in guiding the local authorities in the course of their duties. Indeed, it is a testimony to the perseverance and dedication of Administrative Officers that

⁵²The Resident became chairman of the Divisional Advisory Councils which were formed in 1957.

⁵³See Chapter 6, p.233.

local government in Sarawak reached maturity in such a short period.

Conclusion

During the seventeen years of colonial rule, local government institutions made inroads into rural administration in Sarawak. These local bodies gradually encroached upon many of the traditional functions of Administrative Officers, particularly in the collection of revenue, the provision of health services and primary education and the maintenance of public works. It was evident that as the local authorities became more independent and grew in stature, more responsibilities would be transferred from District Officers to the local councillors.

The presence of local representative bodies in each district signified the entrance of another player in district administration. Local authorities also manifested another source of central government authority but it must be remembered that a District Officer had ultimate control in his area of jurisdiction. Thus, he was no longer the sole authority and representative of central government in his district as was the case under Brooke rule. In the post-war period, Administrative Officers had to compete with other sources of authority, not only that of local government, but also those of the specialist and technical officers. While

the traditional functions of Administrative Officers declined, other equally important duties were assumed; one important example being the responsibilities given to general administrators in the field of development. The demands made on the District Officer as a result of the new circumstances under colonial rule shifted his role to one of coordinator and supervisor of a team of experts in his district.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

By way of conclusion, I shall set out briefly a pattern of evolution relevant to the Colonial Service and examine its applicability to the Sarawak Administrative Service. This entails an overview of the Sarawak Service at a macro-level and it allows us to view its development in more general terms.

Robert Heussler, in his many works on British colonial administration, acknowledged several phases of development in the evolution of the Colonial Administrative Service. In his *Yesterday's Rulers, The Making of the British Colonial Service*,¹ Heussler identifies three broad evolutionary phases, namely, the exploratory phase, then one of settled administration and finally the phase of transferring authority to native leaders. Another writer, H.Ingrams,² also makes a similar assertion regarding the development of the Colonial Service. Ingrams has stated in his article 'Administration and the Oversea Service', that "broadly speaking, [the] 'oversea service' may divide into three phases which in practice have not necessarily been contemporaneous in different territories".³ I examine briefly the main features of Heussler's and Ingrams's basic paradigm below, but it must be noted that this division into phases

¹See for example, pp.6 and 33 and *passim*.

²H.Ingrams, 'Administration and the Oversea Service' in A.Creech Jones, ed., *New Fabian Colonial Essays*, New York, 1959.

³*Ibid.*, p.206.

only indicates the direction of evolution and should not be taken as a definitive classification.

The first stage can be described as the pioneer or exploratory period, associated with the establishment of British authority in a particular colony. During this phase, we can see the efforts made by the British colonisers to pacify local opposition and establish a system of law and order. At this time, the British presence was minimal and administration was largely experimental and improvised as circumstances warranted. Recruitment of administrative cadres during this initial phase was undertaken informally and service conditions varied from time to time. Owing to the small numbers of administrators available, they were spread thinly on the ground and were thus dependent on the collaboration, either voluntary or coerced, of indigenous rulers.

With the consolidation of British power and authority, the Service went through a second stage of development. The administration was now more organised and the functions and duties of officers were also defined. Recruitment procedures were improved and the terms of service regularised. Although the administrators increased in numbers, their strength was still inadequate and they continued to rely on native assistants. During this second phase, the division of the Service into distinct ranks such as Cadets, District Officers or District Commissioners and Residents, became evident.

Administrative matters were also seen to be more efficiently controlled by a central authority known as the Secretariat. According to Ingrams, the Service became more unified and developed its own esprit de corps.⁴

The third stage of evolution of the Colonial Service saw a rapid increase in the recruitment of Cadets. There was also stricter control of field administrators by the central government and the emphasis on accountability led to a vast increase in administrative paperwork. The colonial government expanded and became more complex in response to the ever-increasing demands placed upon it. Specialist and technical officers made their appearance and assumed some of the former duties of Administrative Officers.

The third phase witnessed the most numerous and rapid changes. These transformations gathered momentum particularly after the passing of the Colonial and Development Welfare Act by the British parliament in 1940, which signalled the beginning of an era of intensified development in the colonies. More officers would thus have to be recruited for the colonies to undertake these new tasks. Most colonies then were going through a process of gradual decolonisation and administrators were additionally preoccupied with the preparation and training of indigenous elites to take over the reins of government. This final phase thus bears witness

⁴Ingrams, p.208.

to the process of localisation of the Colonial Service with the entry of more and more native officers into its ranks.

I think it is worthwhile to see how the Sarawak Administrative Service fits into the above pattern of Colonial Service evolution, given the fact that Sarawak, during the first one hundred years of its history as a European-dominated territory, was under the rule of three Brooke Rajahs who administered the country independent of Britain. Another point which should not be overlooked is that the history of the Sarawak Administrative Service from the 1840s to 1963, involved two different sources of governmental authority, initially the Brooke Rajahs and, following the brief Japanese interregnum and British military control, a final period of British colonial administration.

The pioneer or exploratory phase can be seen to coincide with the rule of the first Rajah. Under the rule of Rajah James, we observe the problems associated with administering a newly-founded state. The first Rajah's government was limited, owing to the lack of financial resources and the small number of men available to administer Sarawak. Thus, as a result of these circumstances, Rajah James ruled by adapting to native political structures. Native elements provided support to a government which was managed by a few European administrators.

From 1848 onwards, the Rajah began to recruit more regularly but these early appointments to the Sarawak Service were informal and based on a system of patronage, relying on the recommendations of his close acquaintances and family connections. Rajah Charles followed this system of recruitment and he often interviewed personally prospective candidates. It was only during the reign of Rajah Vyner, the last Rajah, that the Colonial Office began to supply recruits.

Sarawak, under Rajah James, was administered with the assistance of a few European officers; subject to the authority of the Rajah, they had nearly complete autonomy and were allowed enormous discretion in their areas of supervision. However, during this early period, government was minimal and was concerned with the maintenance of peace and order. The early administrators were also under great pressure to administer native peoples about whom they knew little. They encountered various manifestations of opposition to Brooke rule in the form of the Chinese rebellion in 1857, the Malay revolt of 1859/60 during which two administrators lost their lives, and the various expeditions launched against Iban insurgency. Under Rajah James, service conditions of Administrative Officers were irregular and the salaries extended were low, but these improved in the 1860s towards the end of Rajah James's tenure.

The pioneer period of the development of the Administrative Service continued during the first two decades of Rajah Charles's reign. I would suggest the decade 1890 as signalling the beginning of the transition towards the period of consolidation. This is mainly due to the introduction of formal legislation by the late 1890s with regard to the terms of service and the fact that the numbers of personnel in the Administrative Service had grown sufficiently large by then.⁵

Nevertheless, under Rajah Charles, recruitment remained informal and he personally selected most, if not all his officers. He supervised all aspects of his administration and was able to exercise a strong influence on his European staff. Rajah Charles also skilfully directed administration and, under his guidance, the Service grew in stature. The terms of employment gradually improved and the Service increasingly attracted a number of very capable administrators. The functions of Administrative Officers increased and diversified, ranging from the collection of taxes, settlement of disputes, prisons work and magisterial duties. By the end of Rajah Charles's rule in 1917, the Service members had become unified. They began to exhibit a sense of esprit de corps and loyalty to the Rajah and also identified closely with the traditions of Brooke government such as personal rule.

⁵Ward in *Rajah's Servant*, p.33, maintained that there were almost 50 European members of the Sarawak Service by 1899. Out of this number, I estimate about 25 to 30 were Administrative Officers.

In its second phase of development, the Service further consolidated under Rajah Vyner, who ruled until 1941. Recruitment then began to follow the guidelines laid down by the Colonial Office and there was a noticeable increase in the number of university graduates admitted into the Service. From 1934 onwards, recruits to the Sarawak Service were recommended by the Colonial Office. Service conditions were continually revised and regularised and the lines of authority of the various components of the Service also began to be defined. Examinations for Service members were introduced and an extensive study of conditions of service was commissioned in 1936. The discretionary power of field administrators was increasingly checked towards the later years of the third Rajah's reign by a Secretariat, which had accumulated authority through the years. In fact, the Secretariat had grown sufficiently powerful by the late 1930s to contemplate centralising administration and curtailing the power of outstation officers. However, this attempt was nipped in the bud by the actions of the conservative establishment in the Service in 1939.

The Japanese occupation of Sarawak from December 1941 to August 1945 checked the efforts at consolidating the Administrative Service. When the Rajah ceded Sarawak to the British Crown in 1946, the Service found itself immediately transported into the final stage of development, that of laying the foundations for the transfer of the reins of government to indigenous leaders. During the brief duration

of colonial rule, Sarawak had to adjust to the impact of colonial rule and improve service conditions while simultaneously preparing for the consequences of colonial disengagement.

During this final phase before Sarawak was granted independence within Malaysia in 1963, the Service saw many attempts at improving the terms of employment. These were concerned mainly with fine-tuning the conditions of service such as the inclusion of expatriation pay and the award of various allowances. As a colony, Sarawak had access to the funds and resources of the British Empire. Additionally, Sarawak could stand to benefit from the expertise of experienced administrators from other colonial territories. Thus, numerous officers were transferred to Sarawak during the brief period of colonial rule. The presence of transferred officers from other colonies as well as new Cadets recruited after the war, who did not have first hand experience of Brooke rule, naturally affected the spirit of the Service or esprit de corps which Rajah Charles nurtured.

A perusal of the Administrative Service from 1946 to 1963, demonstrates that the first half of this period was preoccupied with the various adjustments made in relation to Sarawak's new status as a colony and the building up of the Service after the set-backs caused by the Japanese occupation. The latter part of colonial rule was involved mainly with the prospect of colonial disengagement and the

responses of the Service to this eventuality. What was noticeably absent was a middle period during which the Service could develop its new identity as a Colonial Service. Within a brief span of seventeen years, the Service had to contend with challenging tasks imposed by the enormous demands of political, social and economic development. The pace of change was indeed too rapid for a country like Sarawak, which had formerly been exposed to the leisurely rate of 'development' under Brooke rule.

The above discussion shows briefly the various stages in the development of the Sarawak Administrative Service based on the model provided by Heussler and Ingrams. What is evident in Sarawak's case was the existence of a long period of personal rule under the Brooke Rajahs. This factor inevitably gave rise to certain features which were unique to Sarawak but were not inherent in other colonies. One important characteristic was the autocratic nature of government in Sarawak, particularly under the first two Rajahs. The Brooke Rajahs had a tendency to concentrate power in themselves and this practice was clearly seen during the rule of Rajah Charles. As a result, unlike other British colonies, the institution of the Secretariat developed relatively late in Sarawak. Although established in 1923, it was only from the mid-1930s onwards that the Secretariat was able to exercise an important influence in administration.

What then is the role of general administrators after independence? One school of thought suggests that the institution of the Administrative Service can be compared to a scaffolding "which is used when a building is in progress, but which must be removed once the building has been completed".⁶ It is argued that, during the last phase of colonialism, Administrative Officers were preoccupied with the preparation of a colony for independence and once this had been achieved, the Service had therefore, to be dismantled.⁷ However, the proponents of this theory do not specify precisely when the 'scaffolding' should be taken down.

The other school of thought, with which I have sympathy, proposes a role for Administrative Officers after independence. Indeed, in retrospect, most colonies appeared to have retained the machinery of the Service in one form or another. It is also significant that on approaching self-government, the Administrative Service was the branch of government that had the most urgent need of nationalisation.⁸ The process of localising the Service in Sarawak began as early as 1948 and intensified a few years before independence. By 1963, local officers constituted nearly half of the number of Service members. Even after self-government was attained, most of the expatriate officers were retained

⁶Haridwar Rai, 'The Changing Role of the District Officer(1860-1960)', *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, vol.9, no.2, 1963, p.253.

⁷N.U.Akpan, 'The Scaffold and the Structure', *Corona*, September 1955, p.326.

⁸Ibid.

on a short-term basis in order to continue to provide their expertise and guidance. The fact that a now fully-localised Administrative Service has remained intact in Sarawak until today is strong evidence of its importance and continued vitality as the executive arm of government.

APPENDIX 1

List of Divisional Residents during the Reign of
Rajah Charles Brooke¹

First Division

H. Skelton	-	1873
W.M. Crocker	-	1875-1880
F.R.O. Maxwell	-	1881-1895
C.A. Bampfylde	-	1896-1903
H.F. Deshon	-	1903-1904
Sir P.F. Cunyghame	-	1904-1909
H.R.A. Day	-	1909-1910
I.K. Caldecott	-	1910-1915
A.B. Ward	-	1915-(1923)

Second Division²

J.B. Cruickshank	-	1 July-1 August 1875
Vyner Brooke (Rajah Muda)	-	1916

Third Division

J.B. Cruickshank	-	1873-1875
C.A.C. De Crespigny	-	1875-1884
H.B. Low	-	1885-1887
C.A. Bampfylde	-	1888-1896
H.F. Deshon	-	1896-1903
Vyner Brooke	-	1903-1904
C. Hose	-	1904-1907
J. Baring-Gould	-	1911-(1920)

Fourth Division

A.H. Everett	-	1885-1890
H.F. Deshon	-	1892-1894
R.S. Douglas	-	1912-(1920)

Fifth Division

H.S.B. Johnson	-	1915-(1920)
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¹Compiled from entries in the *Sarawak Civil List, 1925*, Kuching 1925.

²Rajah Charles took personal responsibility over the Second Division until 1916.

APPENDIX 2

List of New Recruits, 1934-1941¹

	<u>Date of Joining Service</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>University Qualifications</u>
J.R.Outram	28.5.34	22	B.A.Hons. (Cantab)
A.W.D.Brooke	1.5.34	22	
A.R.Snelus	24.7.34	23	B.A.Hons. (Cantab) Barrister-at-Law (Gray's Inn)
A.F.R.Griffin	24.7.34	23	B.A. (Cantab)
K.H.Digby	24.7.34	22	B.A.Hons. (Oxon) Barrister-at-Law (Middle Temple)
H.P.K.Jacks	3.2.36	22	M.A. (Cantab)
F.H.Wright	13.12.37	22	B.A.Hons. (London)
R.H.Backwell	31.8.38	23	B.A. (Cantab)
A.J.N.Richards	9.9.38	23	B.A.Hons. (Oxon)
W.G.Morison	9.9.38	22	B.A.Hons. (Oxon)
F.B.K.Drake	28.8.39	23	B.A. (Oxon)

¹Compiled from the Sarawak Civil List, Kuching, 1941. The information given here is accurate up to February 1941.

APPENDIX 3

Administrative Appointments, 1 January 1952⁺

	<u>Age on arrival</u>	<u>Date of birth</u>	<u>Date of first appointment</u>	<u>Appointment held on 1.1.52 and monthly salary</u>	<u>Tertiary Qualifications</u>	<u>Previous experience</u>
R.G.Aikman (m) (b)	21	28.8.05	13.12.26	Chief Secretary, \$1,550		
J.G.Anderson (b)	22	22.6.03	12.11.25	Senior Resident, \$1,200	B.A. (Cantab)	
J.C.H.Barcroft (b)	21	2.8.08	10.2.30	Senior Resident, \$1,200		
D.L.Brueen * (m)	25	3.2.22	6.2.47	Administrative Officer, \$650		
W.S.B.Buck (m) (b)	24	1.2.03	7.11.27	Chairman, Kuching Municipal Board, \$1,100		
E.W.Cousens * (m) (b)	24	13.6.16	28.10.40	Assistant Treasurer, \$775	A.C.A.	
T.P.Cromwell (m)	37	6.4.09	22.5.47	Secretary for Chinese Affairs, \$1,100	M.A. (Cantab)	Joined the M.C.S. in 1932. On secondment.
W.P.N.L.Ditmas (b)	20	22.2.08	4.1.29	Resident, \$1,100		
F.B.K.Drake (b)	23	7.4.16	28.8.39	Administrative Officer, \$750	B.A. (Oxon)	
J.F.Drake-Brockman * (m) (b)	21	28.9.19	5.5.41	Administrative Officer, \$700	B.A. (Oxon)	
J.H.Ellis (m)	39	15.1.09	18.2.48	Deputy Chief Secretary, \$1,250	B.A. (Oxon)	Joined the Colonial Service in 1931 and served in Nigeria until 1948. Transferred to Sarawak.
J.C.B.Fisher (m) (b)	21	22.2.11	21.3.32	Resident, \$1,100		
J.O.Gilbert (m) (b)	20	21.10.07	5.3.28	Resident, \$1,100		

A.F.R.Griffin (b)	23	4.1.11	24.7.34	Administrative Officer, \$850	B.A. (Cantab)	
I.Harper * (m)	28	22.8.18	19.1.47	Administrative Officer, \$675	B.A. (Oxon)	
B.A.St.J.Hepburn (m)	36	24.2.11	17.9.47	Development Secretary, \$1,100		Joined the Jamaican Civil Service in 1930 and in 1944 was appointed to the Colonial Administrative Service. On secondment.
H.P.K.Jacks (m) (b)	22	22.11.13	3.2.36	Administrative Officer, \$825	M.A. (Cantab)	
R.G.Keech (m)	30	26.11.19	6.10.50	Administrative Officer(?)	?	
G.Lloyd Thomas * (b)	22	26.12.18	5.5.41	Administrative Officer, \$700	M.A. (Oxon)	
M.M.McSporran	23	27.9.26	7.1.50	Cadet, \$525		
A.R.Meikle * (m)	31	3.12.14	7.6.46	Administrative Officer, \$725		
R.F.Mole (m)	33	10.8.14	31.1.48	Administrative Officer, \$775	B.A. (Oxon)	Joined the Burma Civil Service in 1937 and left in 1947.
D.F.A.E.D.Morgan * (m)	23	11.1.23	15.4.46	Administrative Officer, \$625		
R.H.Morris * (m)	31	7.2.15	15.4.46	Administrative Officer, \$725		
A.R.G.Morrison * (m)	32	24.8.15	6.9.47	Administrative Officer, \$700	M.A. (Cantab)	
L.K.Morse (m) (b)	20	9.2.08	12.3.28	Resident, \$1,100		
J.R.Outram (m) (b)	22	14.6.11	28.5.34	Administrative Officer, \$850	B.A. (Cantab)	
A.M.Phillips	25	28.2.25	6.10.50	Cadet, \$500	B.A. (Oxon)	
J.Pike (m)	25	7.1.24	14.1.49	Cadet, \$550	B.A. (Oxon)	

P.Ratcliffe *	30	26.6.19	5.5.50	Administrative Officer, \$675		Joined the Colonial Administrative Service in 1948 and served in Nigeria until 1950. Transferred to Sarawak.
A.J.N.Richards (m) (b)	23	3.12.14	9.9.38	Administrative Officer, \$775	M.A. (Oxon)	
G.Roberts * (m)	29	7.5.16	15.4.46	Administrative Officer, \$700		
P.Scanlon (m)	24	14.5.24	4.2.49	Cadet, \$550		
G.A.T.Shaw	30	25.10.17	20.3.48	Administrative Officer, \$725	B.A. (Cantab)	Joined the Colonial Administrative Service in Malaya in 1940. Transferred to Sarawak.
P.B.Smith *	20	1.10.25	24.9.46	Administrative Officer, \$575		
A.R.Snelus (m) (b)	23	19.5.11	24.7.34	Administrative Officer, \$850	B.A. (Cantab)	
I.A.N.Urquhart * (m)	27	19.12.19	19.1.47	Administrative Officer, \$700	Barrister-at-law M.C.	
A.C.Waine *	34	20.12.11	15.4.46	Administrative Officer, \$725		
D.C.Walker * (m)	27	12.2.20	16.1.48	Administrative Officer, \$650		
D.C.White (b)	21	30.7.10	13.6.32	Secretary for Native Affairs, \$1,100		
W.C.B.Wilson *	27	10.4.19	14.6.46	Administrative Officer, \$650		
J.Woods (m)	22	1.10.27	7.1.50	Cadet, \$475		
Abang Hj Abdulrahim bin Abang Hj Moasili (m)	17	15.5.08	1.3.26	Administrative Officer, \$630		
Abang Openg bin Abang Spi'ee (m)	22	1902	24.11.24	Administrative Officer, \$630		

Chin Shin Sen (m)	23	4.2.07	20.3.30	Principal Asst.Secretary, \$600
Kho Soon Ewe (m)	22	19.8.01	1.4.24	Principal Asst.Secretary, \$780

+ Compiled from entries in the *Sarawak Government Gazette, Sarawak Civil Service Staff List, 1948 and 1952* and *Sarawak Establishment List, 1 July 1953*.

(m) denotes a married officer.

(b) signifies former Brooke officers.

* officers belonging to the war-time group.

APPENDIX 4

Administrative Officers Appointed between January 1952 to December 1954

	<u>Post</u>	<u>Salary on 1.1.55</u>	<u>Date of first Appointment to Sarawak</u>	<u>Previous Experience</u>
N.T.Andrews	Administrative Officer	\$630	23.7.53	
D.J.Chandler	Administrative Officer	\$1,050	23.1.52	Sierra Leone:1947-1952. On transfer.
D.S.Cottrell	Administrative Officer	\$570	23.7.53	
M.J.Forster	Administrative Officer	\$990	28.3.53	British Solomon Islands: 1939-1950, Malaya:1950-1953. On transfer.
H.R.Harlow	Administrative Officer	\$600	23.7.53	
A.McClellan	Administrative Officer	\$780	11.2.54	Nigeria:1949-1954. On transfer.
R.J.Pole-Evans	Administrative Officer	\$510	9.8.54	
D.W.Rowbotham	Administrative Officer	\$570	5.8.54	
C.J.Thomas	Financial Secretary	\$1,620	3.7.52	Ceylon:1930-1933, Cyprus: 1935-1952. On secondment.
J.T.Weekes	Administrative Officer	\$900	4.2.53	Uganda:1946-1953. On transfer.
E.G.White	Administrative Officer	\$750	15.5.54	North Borneo:1950-1954. On secondment.
H.Williams	Administrative Officer	\$600	5.8.54	
R.A.Young	Administrative Officer	\$660	25.7.52	

APPENDIX 5

Sarawak Administrative Officers on Secondment to
Brunei, 1948-1959

Assistant Residents

T.M.Ainsworth(Class II)	-	Kuala Belait, 23.1.58-29.8.58
R.C.S.Bell	-	Kuala Belait, 1.10.49-5.3.51
D.L.Bruen(Class III)	-	Brunei Town, 14.12.56-6.6.58
W.I.Glass(Class II)	-	Brunei Town, 9.8.58-29.9.59 (thereafter transferred for service in Brunei)
I.Harper(Class III)	-	Kuala Belait, 12.3.49-30.9.49 Brunei Town, 20.10.49-26.6.50
H.P.K.Jacks(Class II)	-	Kuala Belait, 6.11.53-1.3.54
R.G.Keech	-	Brunei Town, 16.11.51-12.4.52
G.Lloyd-Thomas(Class III)	-	Kuala Belait, 2.7.56-2.12.57
M.M.McSporran(Class III)	-	Brunei Town, 7.4.52-26.6.53
R.H.Morris(Class III)	-	Brunei Town, 28.10.54-2.7.56
P.Scanlon(Class III)	-	Brunei Town, 24.9.50-1.12.51
G.A.T.Shaw(Class III)	-	Kuala Belait, 9.3.51-30.11.53
J.T.Weekes(Class III)	-	Brunei Town, 26.4.53-20.10.54

Residents

J.C.H.Barcroft	-	3.11.50-26.6.53
J.O.Gilbert	-	19.6.53-22.7.54, 29.6.56-12.7.58
D.C.White	-	12.7.58-29.9.59 (thereafter transferred for service in Brunei).

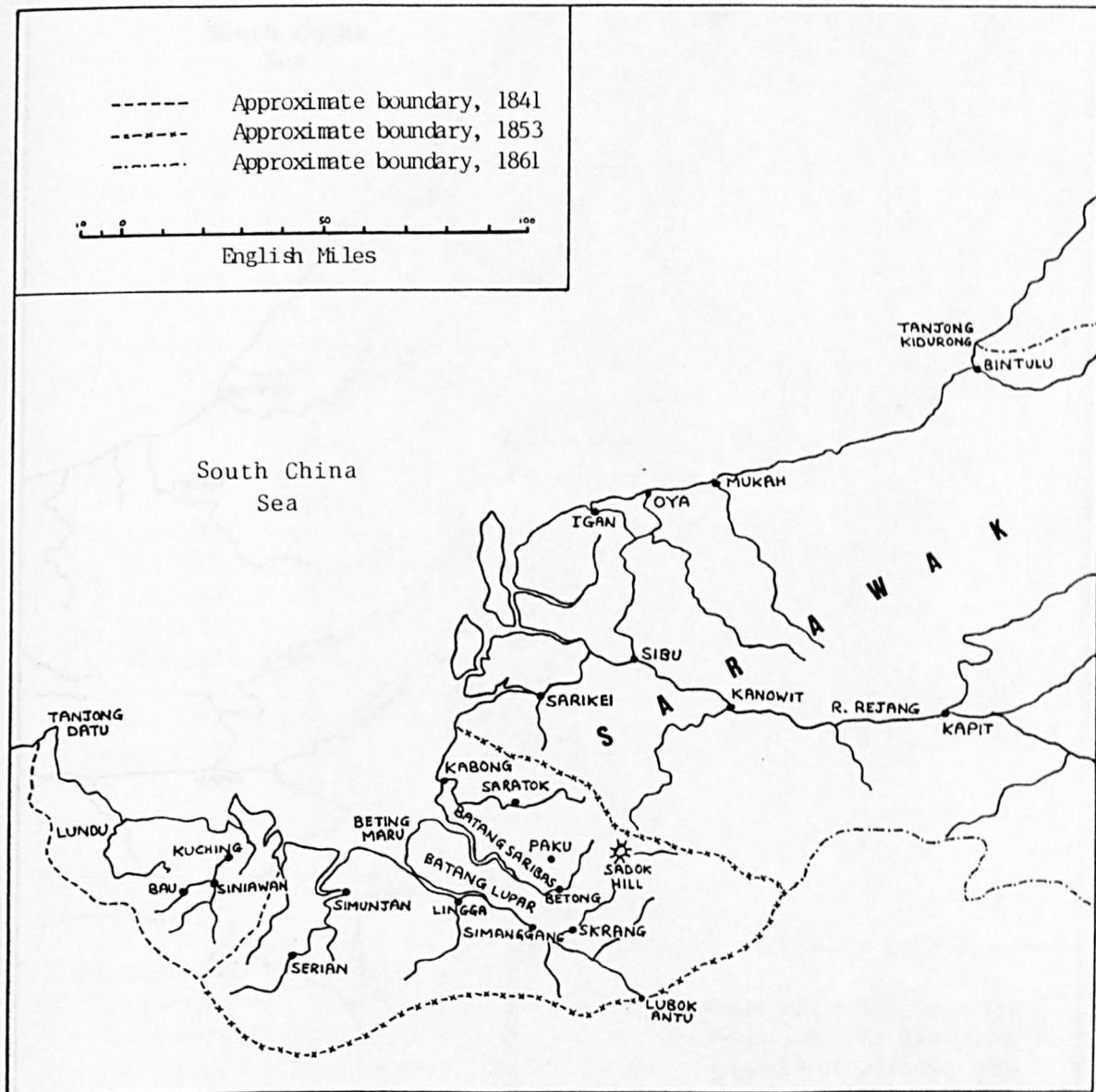
APPENDIX 6

Retirements, Transfers and Resignations of Administrative Officers, 1955-1963¹

- Aikman, R.G. - retired, 1955 (aged 50)
Ainsworth, T.M. - retired under the compensation scheme, 1963 (aged 43)
Andrews, N.T. - retired on medical grounds, 1957, (aged 30)
Buck, W.S.B. - retired, 1957 (aged 54)
Chandler, D.J. - retired, 1957 (aged 53)
Christie, M.J. - retired under the compensation scheme, 1963 (aged 30)
Cousens, E.W. - transferred for service in Brunei, 1959
Ditmas, W.P.N.L. - retired, 1956 (aged 48)
Drake, F.B.K. - ?
Ellis, J.H. - retired, 1958 (aged 49)
Fisher, J.C.B. - retired, June 1963 (aged 52)
Forster, M.J. - retired, 1959 (aged 43)
Gilbert, J.O. - retired, 1959 (aged 52)
Glass, W.I. - transferred for service in Brunei, 1959
Harper, I. - transferred for service in Northern Rhodesia, 1957
Jacks, H.P.K. - retired, 1959 (aged 46)
Jackson, A.T.R. - transferred for service in Hong Kong, 1957
McClellan, A. - resigned from H.M.O.C.S., 1957
Outram, J.R. - retired, 1956 (aged 45)
Phillips, A.M. - resigned from H.M.O.C.S., 1956
Snelus, A.R. - retired under the compensation scheme, 1963
White, D.C. - transferred for service in Brunei, 1959
White, E.G. - transferred for service in North Borneo, 1956
Williams, H. - transferred for service in Hong Kong, 1960

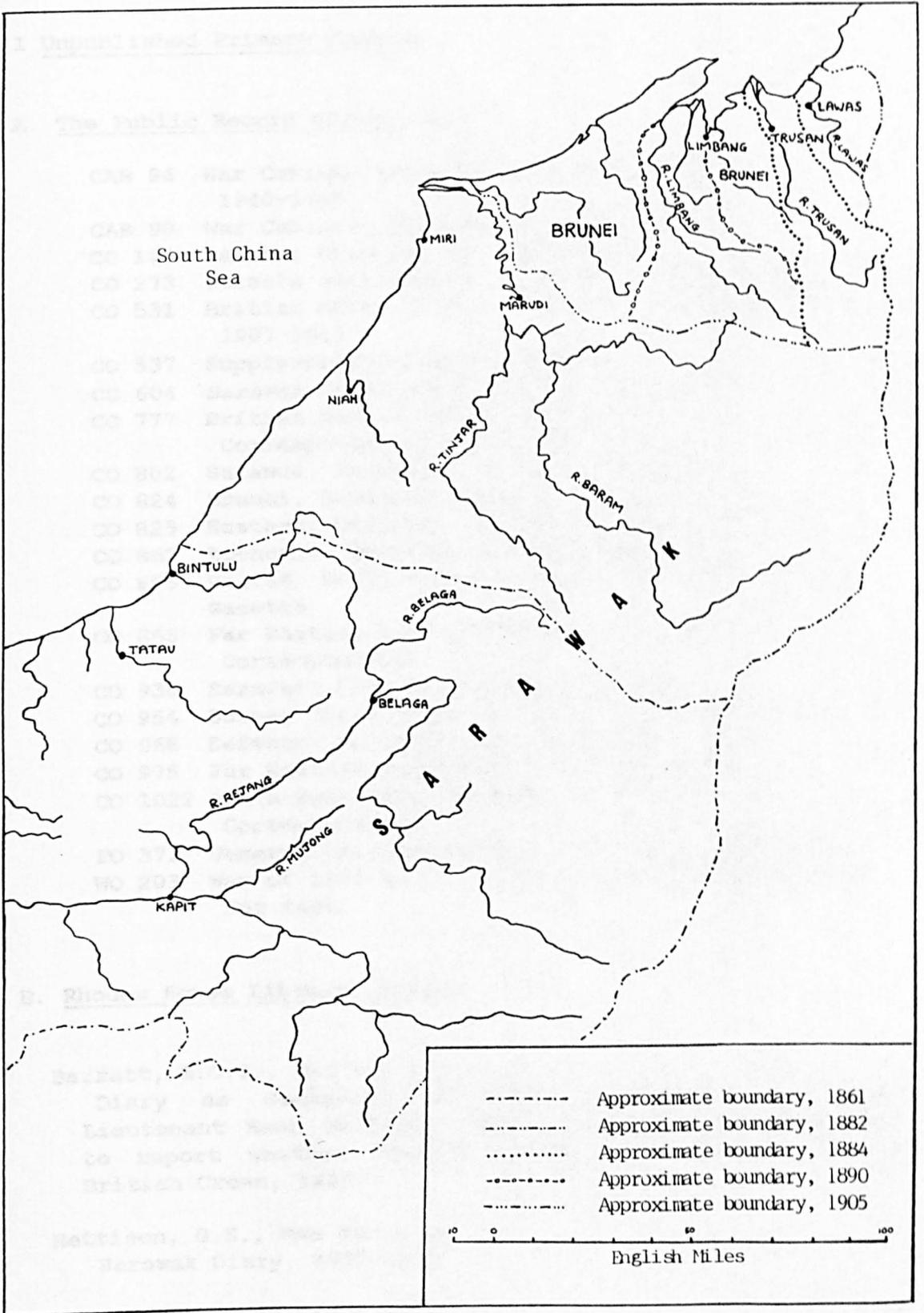
¹Compiled from entries given in the Sarawak Government Gazette, 1955-1963 and the staff lists for 1955, 1957-1963. The above list is not definitive. The staff list for the year 1956 is unavailable. J.C.H.Barcroft died in office in June 1958 at the age of 50.

MAP 1

Sarawak's Expanding Borders, 1841-1861

MAP 2

Successive Boundaries of Sarawak under Rajah Charles Brooke



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