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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: LAND JOBBING IN SELANGOR, 1874-1895

The advent of British rule in the Malay States was the catalyst of change. Such change invariably resulted in conflicts of interests on the part of the British administrators. This article focuses on one aspect of it: land jobbing, which is defined as speculation by individuals for personal profit. Conducted using qualitative methods, this research utilised a wide range of primary sources including Colonial Office (CO) and Arkib Negara Malaysia (ANM) records, government gazettes, and newspapers. This article looks at two areas. First, incidences of land jobbing involving high officials in the state of Selangor are stated. Secondly, the relationship between Swettenham and land jobbing in Selangor, which was not mentioned by Swettenham in his published writings, is examined. The findings help shed a valuable light upon the strengths and failings of “Indirect Rule” in the Malay States.

Keywords: *Frank Swettenham, Nineteenth-century, Malaya, Selangor, Land, Speculation*

Introduction

The introduction of indirect rule in the Malay States by the British was a watershed in the history of the region. The British introduced the Residential system which the officer accredited to a Malay court acted as a progressive influence on government organization and policy.¹ Many changes were made by successive batches of British administrators as they cemented their rule over the administration of the Malay States. Of these changes, the British were particularly concerned about the nature and ownership of the vast lands that made up the Malay States. One objective of the British administration was to open potentially productive areas for settlement by estate interests where investment could be attracted and otherwise by peasant cultivators or immigrants to the peninsula. W.E. Maxwell commented, “[t]he first thing to be done was to encourage population, and this was done by promises of land on easy terms.”² Toward this end, land was made available to peasant farmers free of any payment to the government during the first three years of occupancy, and in some instances cash advances were given as well.

Land regulations followed those of the Straits Settlements, but there were differences according to the customs and traditions of the local Malay population. The entire system of land registration, tenure, disposal and sale was considered by many to be inefficient. This was partly caused by the lack of trained surveyors, equipment and training. Maxwell deplored the crudeness of the system, noting “[i]n the Districts want of experience and of detailed instructions have prevented... District officers from doing as much as might be done...[managing] their land offices.”³ British officers frequently wielded great power over their respective districts, as there was not even enough staff to constitute a regular administration. The all-common round of illness and overexposure to the sun resulted in officers being dispatched back home on leave. This meant that those in station had to carry out the tasks of their compatriots, which contributed to overwork and even more exposure to the tropical climate, which in turn sent *them* home on leave, perpetuating the cycle.⁴

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that incidents of land jobbing occurred. In fact, conditions could not have been more conducive; the man-on-the-spot having such freedom of action, with oversight from the Governor being distant. Land speculation was so widespread that Major H.E. McCallum wrote in 1882 that,

officers are not allowed to do private work nor to engage in land speculations, the Resident appears, however, to have overlooked the fact that a great proportion of the lots recently disposed of by land sales in Kwalla Lumpor [sic] have been acquired by Government officers. Upon looking over the auction book, I found that this was the case and that the purchasers were not confined to the Public Works Department and that the names of the officers and subordinates generally appeared on its pages, the amount invested by some of the latter being altogether incommensurate with their salaries.⁵

His statements were echoed by the Colonial Secretary some years later, who commented tartly that,

Government Officers of all classes have trafficked largely in land in the State of Selangor, and when in many cases the names of officers' wives, children and other relatives crop up on the records, the fact that there had been the concealment to which I have alluded...It is a reasonable deduction that there are still certain officials who are infringing the recognised rules as to holding land and sometimes under shelter of the names of others...⁶

Land Jobbing in Selangor

To illustrate the prevalence of land jobbing, three cases are selected. These cases all involved highly placed officials in the Selangor Government, whose doings were the subject of correspondence between the Governor of the Straits Settlements and the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London. These involved:

- i. Bloomfield Douglas (Resident 1876-1882) and Dominic Daly (Head of Land Surveys and Superintendent of Public Works c.1876-1882)
- ii. Frank Swettenham (Resident 1882-1889)
- iii. Arthur Spence Moss (Government Railway Engineer 1888-1891)

Douglas' case was the result of a full-scale investigation ordered by Governor Sir Frederick Weld (1880-1887). Douglas' case was brought to light by the accusations of a disgruntled subordinate, Mr. James Innes, who had resigned on the grounds that his claims to seniority was ignored. Upon his return to England, Innes wrote an accusatory article detailing instances of misgovernment in the Malay States.⁷ While most of Innes' accusations were rebuffed by the Colonial Office, the charges were serious enough to warrant the Colonial Office issuing instructions to Governor Sir Frederick Weld to conduct an investigation. The persons appointed to undertake this duty were Captain H.E. McCallum, the Assistant Colonial Engineer, and Frank Swettenham, the Assistant Colonial Secretary for the Native States.

Interestingly, the charge of land jobbing and speculation was not the main concern of the governor. In addition to the above, Douglas was also accused of general misgovernance, forcing the Sultan to purchase items from Europe, and of refusing to pay the Sultan his allowance.⁸ The subsequent investigation failed to indict Douglas of the latter two charges, but found that he was guilty of land jobbing. The land speculation occurred where the Superintendent of Public Works, Dominic Daly, had surveyed and presided over leases of land claimed by Yap Ah Loy, the Kapitan, in Kuala Lumpur. As Daly, who also happened to be Douglas' son-in-law, also held the posts of Head of Surveys and Superintendent of Public Works, it would have been a matter of course to conduct the surveys and issue the leases. It later transpired that the Resident had purchased some town allotments at an auction which he himself had presided over. What made things worse was the fact that these allotments were surveyed by Daly, who also acted as auctioneer. However, in 1880 the Governor himself had approved of Daly's process to distribute land in Kuala Lumpur.⁹ In a letter sent by Daly to the Resident in 1880, there were points that would have raised the alarm. For instance, one paragraph describes

4. The parts tinted pink [in Kuala Lumpur] are also claimed by him [Yap Ah Loy], but from their important position - in the prospect of the future extension of the town, as it is growing in the direction of the Podoo and Pataling [sic] mines- I would propose that these pink blocks may be reserved by the Government for town allotments...the Capitan China receiving a liberal compensation for the same.¹⁰

This arrangement was approved by the Governor without hesitation, despite the fact of the conflict of interest whereby the proposed lots were surveyed and disposed of by Daly and Douglas.

The conflict of interest had been ongoing for a long time; in 1878 Daly had also acted as an agent for a Mr. Robert Tooth of Manila, in applying for a concession of 10,000 acres of land at Damansara Road for a sugar plantation,

on the same terms as were granted with the sanction of His Excellency the Governor to Mr. Tooth for the tract of country...taken up in Perak...In the meantime I hope that you will receive this application as valid, in the event of other parties asking for the same land...All costs of survey will be borne by Mr. Tooth, and the surveys will be commenced immediately when the concession is granted.¹¹

However, what was not known at the time was that both McCallum and Swettenham disliked Douglas, and this probably could have influenced the tone of their reports to Weld, which was severe on Douglas. This dislike is revealed in a letter back in 1878 that McCallum sent to Governor Sir William Jervois (1875-1877). McCallum writes that, "Douglas- the southerly windbag of Klang as he is called- is very pompous and regards Swettenham as his mortal enemy for constantly hauling him over the coals."¹² The investigation was hard on Douglas, with McCallum condemning his administration as "there is really no organisation at all... The Public Works and Survey duties are carried out by the same officers...but the knowledge of building construction, design and estimates...is of very limited dimensions."¹³ As a result, Douglas was dismissed from his post as Resident, but on account of his age Governor Weld petitioned for him to be given a pension or gratuity.¹⁴

The second case involved Frank Swettenham, who succeeded Douglas after the latter's dismissal in 1882. Swettenham's case was brought up by Acting-Governor Sir J.F. Dickson, who stated that "the only weak point being that he [Swettenham] himself is not supposed to have been altogether clear of land-jobbing."¹⁵ From Dickson's investigations, it transpired that Swettenham, who had taken over the post of Resident from Douglas, had purchased leases for town lots in Kuala Lumpur and had resold them some years later. According to the official report conducted by Mr. Talbot, the Acting-Colonial Secretary,

in the case of leases Nos. 359-364...and Nos. 242-244... Leases Nos. 359-364 were issued to one Yap Ah Loy on the 12th September 1883 and were transferred to Mr. F.A. Swettenham on the same day... The fact that these leases were transferred by Yap Ah Loy to the person by whose authority they were issued (for they were signed by Mr. F.A. Swettenham as British Resident) on the very day of their issue seems to call for remark... With regard to leases 242-244 they were issued on the 24th of July 1883 to one Sum Ah Peng. There is no entry on the duplicate leases of their ever having been transferred by Ah Peng... There are entries however, in the Registers of Transfers from which it would appear that on the 12th September 1883 these three leases were transferred to Mr. F.A. Swettenham for \$1,100 and were transferred by him for a further consideration not stated to Messrs. Sword and Mulinghaus on March 3rd 1887.¹⁶

In Dickson's eyes, Swettenham had erred greatly in involving himself in such activities. Dickson noted that, after the Douglas affair, the Secretary of State for the Colonies had sent a despatch in 1882 prohibiting all similar land transactions in future. To this Dickson observed that "no reply appears to have been sent from Selangor." This was in contrast to the prompt acknowledgement by the Resident of Perak, Sir Hugh Low, who enclosed a General Order dated 18 September 1882 to all officials in Perak repeating the message. Swettenham similarly ignored another minute from Governor Weld on the same topic, sent on 15 March 1883. Weld wrote that "[t]he Resident personally should not buy state land, nor any land without reference to the Governor, and he should not take shares in companies whose interests may directly or indirectly be affected by his official position." Whereas Low had sent an answer concurring in the Governor's missive as early as 15 April 1883, again Swettenham failed to reply.¹⁷

Unlike Douglas, Swettenham was not punished by dismissal but merely rebuked for merely being "unwise" and "imprudent". Evidence in Swettenham's favour was found in the shape of a private letter from Governor Weld, permitting Swettenham to engage in the activity. This letter was to be the crucial factor in establishing Swettenham's relative innocence, and hence is quoted at length.

I see no reason why Mrs. Swettenham should not take shares in the Brick-Making Company, and there is no prohibition to govern against buying land from private persons. I should not therefore see any way to object to a Resident doing so, but I think that if the Resident also became owner of a lot of dwelling houses, the only ones almost in the State, he might lay himself open to remarks which though untrue might lower the Service. Could not Mrs. Swettenham buy the land

and a trustee manage the building and letting for her.¹⁸

To Governor Smith and the Colonial Office, this letter, which Swettenham produced saying “it is the merest accident that I have preserved it”, was undoubted proof that Swettenham had acted with the consent of his Governor. Lucas of the Colonial Office wrote that “[i]t is clearly a case where Mr. Swettenham acted with the sanction of his superiors, but I think it is equally a case where he acted imprudently as he himself admits, and I think Sir Frederick Weld was at least as imprudent for suggesting that it is preferable...”.¹⁹ The unfortunate Dickson was the one singled out for strong admonition; Governor Sir Cecil Clementi Smith (1887-1894) observing that “I have never known a similar case so treated in my long experience of public life”²⁰ while the Colonial Office noted that Dickson’s manner was “offensive to an officer of Mr. Swettenham’s standing and excellence of service”.

The third case of land jobbing involved Arthur Spence Moss, the Government Engineer for Railways. This final case showcased the extremes of greed, as Moss’s speculation in land was carried out in direct defiance of direct orders to civil servants not to engage in land jobbing. In the aftermath of the Swettenham affair, the Colonial Office realised more concrete measures needed to be done to curb such accounts of jobbing. Although notices to that effect were issued in 1882, 1883, 1885, and 1888 by either the Secretary of State or the Governor, it was felt that these notices were too vague and lenient.²¹ As such, a very explicit notification was given in the Government Gazette of 29 March 1889 prohibiting officers from acquiring land in the Colony and Malay States, other than a house with garden for his own occupation.²² Officers were requested to report their holdings to the Colonial Secretary within three months for the Governor’s consideration or risk dismissal.

Spence Moss had “put all he had into land” before 1889.²³ As far back as 1885, Moss had been granted permission by the Selangor Government to occupy Government Reserve land in Java Street, Klang, in exchange for a quit-rent of \$7.56.²⁴ The transaction went unqueried until June 1891.²⁵ Besides that, he had also purchased several town lots in High Street, comprising leases 543, 544, 545, 546, and 547. These were purchased from Mr. Bristow, Chief Clerk in the Selangor Postal Department for a Mr. Tambusamy on 29 December 1885 for the sum of \$608.00.²⁶ Moss’ purchases were legal at the time, as Swettenham’s own example had served as a convenient loophole. However, the despatch of 29th of March 1889 had put a stop to it. In the 1889 enquiry, Moss had only declared a tiny portion of the land he actually owned, while concealing the rest. His “official” land interests appeared to consist of a town site of 54,722 square feet, and 5 acres of fruit gardens obtained by country allotment, both of which were located in Klang.²⁷

Despite the official prohibition, Moss continued speculating in land. He was particularly well placed to do so as his post of Government Railway

Engineer meant he had inside information on which lots would rise in price due to the construction of the Selangor Railway, which he was responsible for. As such, he used that knowledge to secure parcels of land near the proposed railway lines. Moss continued his now illegal practice, but under the pretext of buying land in the name of his brother-in-law, a Mr. Marshall. In that manner, he purchased five lots of land in Kuala Lumpur alongside the trace over which an extension of the railway was to be built, and a further seventeen lots on the waterfront of Klang town on the site where the railway wharf was to be built.²⁸

To conceal his wrongdoings, he had the transfer registered in the name of his brother-in-law who lived in England. Part of the funds were borrowed (at 18 per cent) from Tambusamy Pillai, a Kuala Lumpur moneylender. Further laundering was enabled by selling some of the land to the Selangor Government, Loke Yew, and a Mr. Campbell. The conflict of interest was extremely marked, as Loke Yew was one of the lessees of the Selangor railway; while Campbell was the contractor for building the extension. Loke Yew's evidence showed that he bought four lots of land from Moss, and that Moss sold one of the lots to get money to pay a money lender, Tambusamy Pillai, who in turn deposed to having lent Moss \$2,000 and taken a promissory note from him. The sales to Loke Yew were towards the end of 1889 and beginning of 1890, and though Mr West, the agent, gave Loke Yew the title deeds, the latter paid some of the money direct to Mr Moss, or at any rate to the money lender on Mr. Moss's order. Later, Lucas of the Colonial Office commented that "the head of the Railway Department was engaged in land transactions with one of the lessees of the railway months after the final prohibition of land speculation."²⁹

Moss' energy and achievements in the construction of railway lines within Selangor, plus his exertions to work despite frequent bouts of illness, concealed his land jobbing.³⁰ Furthermore, it was taken for granted that he was a member of the Ceylon Public Works Department, and presumably knew the code of conduct for European officials not to engage in land jobbing.

Moss' doings aroused the suspicions of W.E. Maxwell who had replaced Swettenham as Resident in 1889. In the 1889 Selangor Annual Report, Maxwell had actually reported that "[i]n anticipation of the completion for the Klang Railway Extension, there was some speculation in land at Klang, and town-lots commanded good prices. A considerable impulse to trade should be the result of the facilities which will be given to shippers and consignees, when the railway and wharves are in working order."³¹ Initially, Maxwell had simply accepted Moss' purchases of land at face value, on the grounds that these purchases went unquestioned by Swettenham and his *locus tenens* Mr. Belfield. Maxwell's suspicions were aroused where "his conduct in reference to the contract for sleepers for the Ulu Selangor Railway [was unsatisfactory]... There were other cases also which showed me that I could not depend upon getting from Mr. Moss a direct answer to a question or upon having my orders loyally carried out."³²

Unlike Swettenham, the fate Moss faced was dismissal. After an enquiry in Selangor, which Moss chose to be absent, he was found guilty and dismissed the service. Governor Smith, in conveying the news to London, had nothing much more to say except he thought Maxwell's judgements justified, as Maxwell had previously complained of Moss' "want of that spirit of loyalty and reasonable subordination", but in view of Moss' excellent services to the State, he recommended that Moss should be allowed to resign honourably and that he be paid a gratuity.³³ In the Colonial Office, an official concluded

It seems to me therefore that he did break the rules with regard to officers dealing in land; on his own showing he broke them literally, for the purchases were not complete till after the 29th of March, while that he broke the spirit of the instructions is abundantly clear... I can come to no other conclusion than that he speculated in land contrary to rule written and unwritten; that he preferred his own interests to those of the Government; that he had business dealings with men from whom of all others he should in business matters have stood aloof; and that he is wholly unfit to be trusted as a Government servant.³⁴

Swettenham and Land Jobbing

In the three cases above, one name emerges, that of Frank Swettenham. He was the investigator in the first, defendant in the second, and an indirect participant in the third. Swettenham's involvement in the government of Selangor was long and deep. In August 1874 he was sent by Governor Sir Andrew Clarke (1873-1875) as an informal adviser to Sultan Abdul Samad. By the end of the year he had become Assistant Resident at Langat. From 1876 to 1881 he was Assistant Colonial Secretary for the Native States and from 1882 to 1889 he served as Resident of Selangor. This section examines the relationship between Swettenham and the land jobbing that occurred around him.

Based on Swettenham's actions, it seems clear that he encouraged his officers to hold land, despite warnings to the contrary. This was pointed out by the Colonial Office;

In my opinion the Governor should be told that, in addition to the general orders on the subject, every officer who is recruited for the Public Works or Railway Departments in these States should be told point blank that any trade or land dealings on their part will be met with instant dismissal... This case may probably be held to reflect on Swettenham, and not that he himself was lately accused of land jobbing, at I do think that whatever rules prevailed, he ought to have been able to prevent land jobbing of this kind. On the other hand, whatever he did in the matter, he did with the full concurrence of

his Governor, just as the two purchases which he himself made in 1883 were also made with the concurrence of the Governor. There is absolutely nothing in common between his purchases in 1888 and Mr Moss's wholesale land jobbing in 1889 in direct aversion of Government instructions. Still, while there is nothing to reflect on him personally, I think that as Resident he should have kept his officers more under control, and managed to make himself aware of these very discreditable dealings.³⁵

To understand why Swettenham acted the way he did, it must be understood that Swettenham clearly believed that officials holding land was beneficial for the development of the State. As he noted in his own defence, "I hoped it would prove a good investment – I had the consent of the Governor; the ground then was purely waste land and there was no semblance of a town on the right bank of the river and I wished to show my belief in the future of the place."³⁶ Wilson has pointed to the Utilitarian ethics and "humanitarian" bent of the early British administrators, which manifested itself in the dismissal of traditional forms and apparatus of government in favour of a Westernised style of administration. He notes however that "[t]his type of government demands, however, a substantial and constantly increasing revenue", which was an issue for the British administrators in the state at the time.³⁷ By setting an example for the purchase of land, Swettenham probably hoped that such an attachment to land by officials would spur them to improve the State's material progress, while contributing to its coffers at the same time.

Swettenham would also have been aware of the social significance of land to the Malay inhabitants, by which surplus land could be sub-let for a return in the traditional system.³⁸ To the Malays, ownership of land was synonymous with power as rulers and chiefs could impose various taxes on land owners and cultivators.³⁹ The appointment of W.E. Maxwell as Commissioner of Land Titles, and the order by Governor Weld in 1882 to improve local district administration, reflected the administrators' growing fixation with establishing, surveying and registering a comprehensive system of land and land ownership for potential prosperity. Unlike the lucrative tin mining industry, which was largely conducted by the Chinese *kongsis*, and which the British had no direct control, land administration offered a way for direct administration without the drawback of being overly dependent on the alliance system with third party stakeholders.

Swettenham's preference for land ownership by British officials also sheds light on his attitudes towards land administration. In this he came into conflict with Maxwell, who was seen as the preeminent land tenure expert in the region. Both men clashed over the type of system to be introduced to the Malay States. While agreeing that existing Malay forms of tenure should be replaced, Swettenham favoured a system derived directly from English

practice which included cadastral surveys, registration of titles, and 999-year leases agricultural lands fixed “in perpetuity”.⁴⁰ In contrast, Maxwell favoured the Torrens System of land tenure, which included the registration of titles, but assessed land rents periodically, allowing the government to profit from the enhancing value of land. Wilson notes that Maxwell’s proposals won out, “but not before extensive areas of land (particularly in Selangor and Perak) had been alienated under other systems.”⁴¹ Therefore, it can be implied that by encouraging his officers to hold land, Swettenham was intending to commit them to a course of being long-term landowners with a stake in the State. That the spectre of conflicts of interest could occur was perhaps unnoticed or unimportant to him. Perhaps he felt that by owning land “in perpetuity” officials would be made more dedicated to their roles as administrators.

As a result, Swettenham’s avowal of land ownership among officials produced a strong and indelible example to his subordinates, who were more than happy to oblige their chief. In June 1888, Governor Smith put forth an enquiry to Selangor asking for a list of officers and subordinates who had interests in mining and agricultural pursuits and those who owned town lots.⁴² The list compiled for the Governor showed that more than 50 officials and subordinates in Selangor owned land. This ranged from as little as $\frac{3}{4}$ acres in the case of Yeo Guan Hup, Chief Clerk in the Klang District, to a massive 100 acres of agricultural land along Ampang Road by the Superintendent of Police, H.C. Syers. The report was dependant on the honesty of the respondents, and the knowledge their superiors had of them. For instance, a Mr. Yap Swee Hin serving in the Hulu Selangor district replied to the query, replying that “I have asked the Forest Ranger and the Postmaster and they say they have no shares in mines or any landed property. I had a town lot but it is sold now.”⁴³ Most of the respondents owned around 4 acres, together with a corresponding town lot. The former was used as a fruit and vegetable garden, while the latter were usually dwelling houses for their own occupation.

Conclusion

From the narrative above, it can be seen that by and large British officials in Selangor engaged in land jobbing throughout the years despite increasing instructions from Singapore and London not to do so. In two of those cases, it came out that the top man in the State, the Resident, was also involved. It would not be impossible to believe that their subordinates would follow suit, knowing that their superior could do so and remain unchecked for years. As Lucas again observed

There is perhaps some ground of extenuation in the fact that land jobbing had been so long allowed. Mr Moss says in one or two places, in effect ‘I see now I was wrong but I wish it had been pointed out

to me' or 'it ought to have been pointed out to me at the time', and though this seems a miserable excuse on the face of it, I really believe there is something in it, and that speculation in land was so common that the ordinary moral sense was blunted.⁴⁴

Swettenham has to bear a large share of the responsibility in allowing the practice of land jobbing to flourish so much in his state. In hindsight, sending him to adjudicate Douglas' case was unwise, as it allowed personal feelings to come into play. It appears more a case of advancing his own personal goals and in getting rid of a rival than in the pursuit of fairness. As events turned out, Swettenham did not prove more innocent than those he was judging in the matter and it was only his unrivalled experience and standing within the corridors of power that saved him from dismissal.

The incidence of land jobbing in Selangor was in large measure a result of Swettenham's implicit concurrence with the practice. In contrast, no serious cases were reported from Perak, where Sir Hugh Low was Resident. Going beyond the subject of land, this incident highlights the immense power the Resident wielded in his own state. Swettenham was able to control and influence the tradition of serving officers in Selangor towards land ownership. The cases in Selangor showed how detection and correction happened years after their initiation. In this can be seen an obvious trend for centralisation, whereby power effectively devolved onto the man-on-the spot, the Resident. A strong Resident like Swettenham was able to direct proceedings in the state for many years, while withholding crucial information to his natural superior, the Governor.

The failure of prompt gubernatorial correction and detection also highlighted the weaknesses of the Residential System, where the Resident was given too free a hand in matters of general administration. The governors in Singapore realised that, with Weld declaring

the residential system...gives us all we want and suits the natives best, so long as we have the right sort of administrators; but I cannot conceal from myself that all depends upon administration and upon individuals. It is personal government with all its advantages, and also its obvious dangers.⁴⁵

The governors consoled themselves by declaring loudly that "the Governor has his hands free, and has the Resident on the spot...in constant communication". By this, "[s]o long as things go right, they take little or no responsibility, except that of selecting a Governor or a Resident that they can trust, and if anything goes wrong they can at the moment step in, and if they please censure or remove the Governor or Resident."⁴⁶ However, practical realities and the limits of knowledge about affairs in the Malay States effectively limited the governors'

actions until it was too late, when the damage had already been done. The trust placed in “personal government” was flawed, as it allowed officials to manipulate their positions for personal gain. To this Swettenham’s played a decisive part, as his role as Resident and later Resident-General effectively created a disruptive tradition of power where the doings of individuals in administration were valued instead of the systems and practices to which they were bound by order to obey.

Endnotes

1. Emily Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1874-1895*, University of Malaya Press, 1968, p. 49.
2. F.E. Maxwell, *Straits Settlements, Present and Future Land Systems*, Rangoon Government Press, 1883, p.2.
3. *Selangor Annual Report 1889*, p.15.
4. Complaints of overwork and sickness due to exposure to the sun was common during the period. For example, Reports of officials burdened or sickening by overworked was common right even until the turn of the century. Frank Swettenham reported in the Perak Annual Report of 1889 that “Owing to the difficulty of finding suitable candidates to fill vacancies (especially in the professional branches of the service) and the absence of Officers on leave, the work of the State was carried on with difficulty and only by unduly straining the energies and injuring the health of Government servants. Several of the Senior Officers broke down under the effects of climate overwork and had to leave the State.”
5. CO 273/114/10025, Enclosure McCallum to Weld, Report Upon the State Organisation, and Operations of the Public Works and Survey Department, Selangor, 22 April 1882.
6. CO 273/169/247817, Unknown enclosure, undated.
7. CO 273/117/9783, Enclosure The London and China Telegraph, 30 May 1882.
8. CO 273/115/17146, Minute by Meade, 24 November 1882.
9. Arkib Negara Malaysia (ANM), 1957/0001213W, Colonial Secretary to Douglas, 8 November 1880.
10. ANM, 1957/0001213W, Letter from Daly to Douglas, 18 November 1880.
11. ANM, 1957/0000596W, Letter from Daly to Douglas, 5 January 1878.
12. Papers of Sir William F. D. Jervois, Series 2, Letter from Henry E. McCallum to Jervois, 12 November 1878.
13. CO 273/114/10025, Enclosure McCallum to Weld, Report Upon the State Organisation, and Operations of the Public Works and

- Survey Department, Selangor, 22 April 1882.
14. Arkib Negara Malaysia, 1957/0002388 W, Enclosure Kimberley to Weld, 18 May 1883.
 15. CO 273/169/24718, Enclosure by J.F. Dickson, 13 December 1890.
 16. CO 273/169/24718, Enclosure by E.W. Birch on the Opinion on a Sale of Land to be Purchased by Selangor Government in Kuala Lumpur, 18 October 1890.
 17. CO 273/169/24718, Enclosure by J.F. Dickson, 13 December 1890.
 18. CO 273/169/24718, Enclosure Weld to Swettenham, 28 May 1883.
 19. CO 273/169/24718, Minute by Lucas, 13 January 1891.
 20. CO 273/169/24718, Smith to Knutsford, 16 December 1890.
 21. CO 273/169/247817, Enclosure by J.F. Dickson, 13 December 1890; CO 273/173/13573, Minute by Lucas, 20 July 1891.
 22. Strait Settlements Government Gazette, Regulations made by His Excellency the Governor Regarding the Acquisition or Possession of Land and Engaging in Agricultural and Commercial Pursuits by Officers in the Public Service of the Straits Settlements and Protected Malay States, 29 March 1889, p.400.
 23. CO 273/173/13573, Minute by Lucas, 20 July 1891.
 24. Arkib Negara Malaysia, 1957/0024265W, Permit to Occupy Government Reserve District of Klang, Suburban Allotment No.12, 24 June 1885.
 25. ANM, 1957/0024265W, minute by S.D.O. Klang 9 April 1891; ANM, 1957/0024265W, Minute by Resident, 19 June 1891.
 26. ANM, 1957/0023468W, Minute by Acting Collector of Land Revenue Selangor, 30 January 1891.
 27. ANM, 1957/0023402W, Land Owned by Mr. Spence Moss in Klang; ANM, 1957/0011397W, Enclosure of Return of Officers who have Pecuniary Interests in Agricultural Operations in the Klang District, 14 June 1888.
 28. The Straits Times, 3 December 1955, Page 9.
 29. CO 273/173/13573, Minute by Lucas, 20 July 1891
 30. CO 273/173/13573, Smith to Knutsford, 1 June 1891.
 31. Selangor Annual Report 1889, p.12.
 32. CO 273/173/13573, Minute by Lucas, 20 July 1891.
 33. Straits Times Weekly Issue, 20 May 1891, Page 3. It noted that “Mr. A. Spence Moss Government Engineer for Railways, will probably go home at once for three months vacation leave. His health has somewhat suffered by the enormous amount of work he has had to undertake during the last eighteen months, and even a short absence in Europe is considered essential to him.” He was not fated to return.
 34. CO 273/173/13573, Minute by Lucas, 20 July 1891.
 35. Ibid.

36. CO 273/169/24718, Enclosure Swettenham to Smith, 6 January 1883.
37. H.E. Wilson, The Evolution of Land Administration in the Malay States: A Survey of British-Inspired Changes, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1975, 48, pp.124-125.
38. Wilson, The Evolution of Land Administration in the Malay States, pp.124-125.
39. Ibid. p.125.
40. Ibid, p.129.
41. Ibid. p.129.
42. ANM, 1957/0011396W, Enclosure Letter from Dickson to Swettenham, 8 June 1888. In addition, the following Arkib Negara Malaysia files deal with the enquiries put out by Swettenham to the various governmental departments and districts of Selangor. ANM Files nos, 1957/0011381W, 1957/0011384W, 1957/0011385W, 1957/0011386W, 1957/0011387W, 1957/0011388W, 1957/0011390W, 1957/0011391W, 1957/0011393W, 1957/0011394W, 1957/0011395W, 1957/0011396W, 1957/0011397W, and 1957/0011779W.
43. ANM, 1957/0011392W, Minute by Yap Swee Hin, undated. Yap Swee Hin, or Yap Swie Hin was the second clerk in the Ulu Selangor District Office at Kuala Kubu and gained a reputation for being extremely efficient in work. In the 1890 Selangor Government Gazette, the Acting District Officer praised Swee Hin, noting that “the office work is extremely heavy, and...for the whole year it has been mainly discharged by the second clerk, Yap Swie Hin. of this man’s industry and application I cannot speak too highly.”
44. CO 273/173/13573, Minute by Lucas, 20 July 1891.
45. Speech by Sir Frederick Weld, reported in Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute, 1884, p.294.
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