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TRANSFORMATION IN
MALAYA

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To
DUDLEY LAYTON
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A map of Malaya is at the end of the book

Introduction

IN a New Year broadcast over Radio Malaya on 1st January 1955, his first New Year's Day as High Commissioner, Sir Donald MacGillivray said:

"Compared with many countries in the world Malaya is a country of smiles, a happy place to live in. It has a fruitful soil and much mineral wealth, and it supports a rapidly increasing population, the great majority of whom are well-fed, reasonably housed and living in contentment and harmony with their neighbours. These are good things which are denied to many in this world. In Malaya they are still to be enjoyed, in spite of Emergencies and in spite of floods. They are things to be grateful for, but never to be taken for granted. They are the basic treasures and their store has not been impaired in 1954."

In his farewell broadcast on 31st May 1954, the day before he laid down the office of High Commissioner and left the country, General Sir Gerald Templer said:

"My time is nearly up. I don't think we've made many enemies, certainly not among the simple kindly folk of the kampongs and new villages and labour lines and slums. They are really the people who matter most. They want the benefits of good and fair and uncorrupt government. We have become devoted to these people in Malaya and to their happy and delightful children. We won't ever forget them."

I have quoted these two passages at the outset of this book because they go a long way towards answering the question