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Captain Speedy of Larut,

by

J. M. Gullick, M.A.

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This volume will consist of four parts. We very much regret that owing to printing delays it has become necessary for us to issue these parts in the following order, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4, Part 1. Please note, Part 1 will be distributed after Part 4. We apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause, but it is not possible for us to change the numbering, as the first part for each year has to carry the Society's Rules, List of Members etc., so that these appear at the beginning of the annual volume when it is bound.

CONTENTS

Volume 26, pt 3, published November 1953

(No. 163)

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Preface	p.	4
Introduction	5
A Victorian Rolling Stone (1836—69)	7
Larut up to the Treaty of Pangkor (January 1874)	18
Larut under Speedy (January 1874 to May 1876)	.. .. .	..	38
The Perak War (November 1875 to February 1876)	.. .. .	..	61
The Last of Speedy in Malaya (1876—1877)	.. .. .	..	72
Further Adventures (1886—1910)	.. .. .	..	83
Notes	.. .. .	..	91
Bibliography	.. .. .	..	103

The Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society dates from 1923. It is the direct successor, by change of title, of the Straits Branch, R.A.S., which was founded in 1878. Its objects are the increase and diffusion of knowledge concerning the territories of the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei. Membership is open to anyone interested in the Society's activities. The annual subscription is at present \$10 a year, and there is no entrance fee. Members receive free one copy of all journals published for the period for which their membership is valid. In addition they may buy single copies of back numbers at reduced rates. The latter include Sir Richard Winstedt's *History of Malaya*, Winstedt & Wilkinson's *History of Perak*, histories of the majority of the other individual states, in addition to other general works, and C. C. Brown's English translation of the *Sējarah Mēlayu*. Indexes to all the publications of the old Straits Branch of the Society (1878-1922) and to the first twenty volumes of the present series (1923-47) are available to members at \$2 and \$3.50 each.

Preface

My first encounter with Speedy as a character was in the passage quoted at the beginning of this paper, which I came on by chance while looking for something else. It seemed that a character so eccentric and controversial called for investigation.

The greater part of the material used in the present paper comes from Colonial Office records, now deposited in the Public Records Office in London. Some of it was obtained at the British Museum Library, and some at Somerset House. I am also indebted to Miss Sadka, formerly of the Dept of History at the University of Malaya, who kindly provided me with extracts from Sir Hugh Low's journal of his early days in Perak, which she is at present editing for publication. Dr Gibson-Hill gave me a great deal of information about Speedy's career before and after his time in Malaya, and was also responsible, directly or indirectly, for the collection of the illustrations. For all this help I am most grateful.

The majority of the illustrations reproduced here are taken from the files of the *London Illustrated News*, and we are indebted to the representatives of that journal for permission to make use of them. Two of the engravings in the text are from Major Fred McNair's book, "Perak and the Malays" (Tinsley Brothers, London, 1878). The photograph of Speedy on plate 2 is from Sir Frank Swettenham's "Footprints in Malaya" (Hutchinson & Co., London, 1942): it is reproduced from the original block kindly loaned to us by the directors of the company. The group on plate 3, a portion of the picture said to have been taken at Pangkor in January, 1874, has been taken from a print made available to us by the Straits Times Press. Plate 4 is from the photograph of Speedy in the Perak Museum, Taiping, by courtesy of the Ag Director of Museums, Federation of Malaya.

Kuala Lumpur,
November, 1953.

John M. Gullick

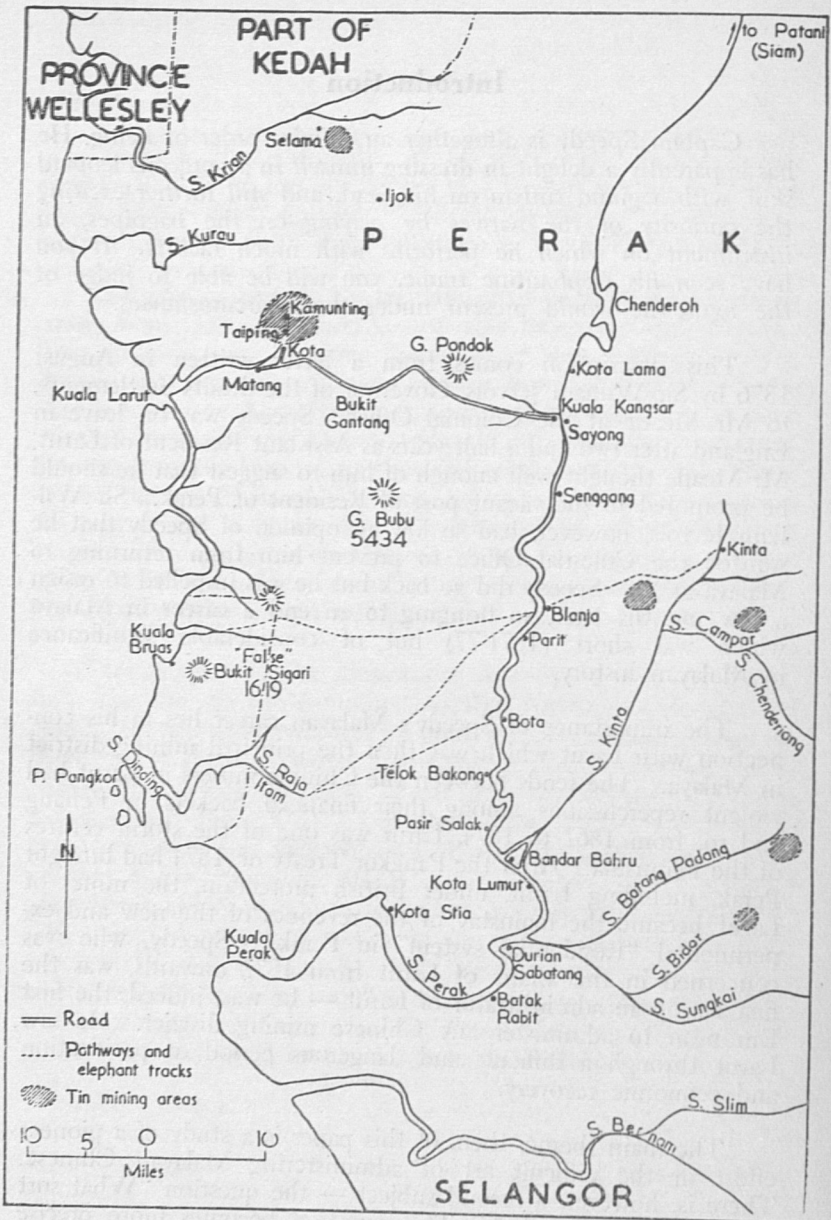
Introduction

Captain Speedy is altogether an inferior order of being. He has apparently a delight in dressing himself in a gorgeous leopard skin, with a grand turban on his head, and still further exciting the curiosity of the natives by playing on the bagpipes, an instrument on which he performs with much facility. If you have seen his elephantine frame, you will be able to judge of the figure he would present under those circumstances.

This description comes from a letter written in August 1876 by Sir William Jervois, Governor of the Straits Settlements, to Mr Meade at the Colonial Office. Speedy was on leave in England after two and a half years as Assistant Resident of Larut. Mr Meade thought well enough of him to suggest that he should be promoted to the vacant post of Resident of Perak. Sir William Jervois, however, had so low an opinion of Speedy that he wanted the Colonial Office to prevent him from returning to Malaya at all. Speedy did go back but he was impelled to resign a few months later, so bringing to an end a career in Malaya which was short (1871-77) but of considerable significance in Malayan history.

The importance of Speedy's Malayan career lies in his connection with Larut which was then the principal mining district in Malaya. The feuds between the Chinese miners in Larut had violent repercussions among their financial backers in Penang and so, from 1862 to 1874, Larut was one of the storm centres of the Peninsula. After the Pangkor Treaty of 1874 had brought Perak, including Larut, under British protection, the mines of Larut became the mainstay of the revenues of the new and experimental "Residential system" in Perak. Speedy, who was concerned in the affairs of Larut from 1872 onwards, was the first European administrator of Larut — he was, indeed, the first European to administer any Chinese mining district. He saw Larut through a difficult and dangerous period of pacification and economic recovery.

The main theme, then, of this paper is a study of a pioneer effort in the difficult art of administering Malayan Chinese. There is, however, a second subject — the question "What sort of a man was Speedy?" This question becomes more precise if one eliminates the aspects of his character which are not in dispute. He was undoubtedly a man of exceptional courage and physical strength who was at his best when playing a lone hand



Perak, circa 1877, from a map drawn by K. M. Foong.

in a situation of danger. He had a flair for gaining the liking of Asians. On the other hand, as Larut passed from turbulence to peace and prosperity, it became clear that Speedy lacked many of the qualities of a good civil servant. He was too much of a restless individualist to concentrate on the details of routine or to submit willingly to supervision; an expansive personality who did not count the cost. "Large, lazy, undisciplined and extravagant with public money", said the Colonial Office. But admit all these things about Speedy and there is still the unsettled question of his integrity. Sir William Jervis not only ridiculed Speedy, as we have seen, but also suggested by innuendo that he was an adventurer whose loyalty was on offer to the highest bidder. The grounds for this suspicion need examination, for it conflicts with the opinion of the other men who employed Speedy in positions of trust and thought well of him. To throw some light on this question of character, and because Speedy lived always adventurously, this paper includes some account of his career before and after he was in Malaya. When the reader comes to the end he can decide for himself what verdict he will pass on Speedy.

1. A Victorian Rolling Stone (1836—71)

Tristram Charles Sawyer Speedy was born at Meerut near Delhi in India on the 26th November 1836. He was the son of James Speedy, a Lieutenant in the 3rd Regiment of Foot (The Buffs). James Speedy, born at Dublin in 1811, had entered the Army at the age of 17 and had joined his regiment in 1828 in Bengal, where it remained until 1835. In October 1835 James Speedy married Sarah Squire and took her to Agra for their honeymoon, perhaps to see the glories of the Taj Mahal. He rejoined his regiment at Meerut to which it had moved at the beginning of 1836. There, in November of that year, Tristram ("Charlie") Speedy was born. There was at least one other child of the marriage—a younger son, James Havelock Speedy.

Of Tristram Speedy's upbringing and education nothing is known. During his early years his father, James Speedy, remained with the 3rd Regiment in peaceful garrison duties in northern India until 1841 when he and the regiment went off to the gruelling and unsuccessful Afghanistan campaign of 1841-2. In 1843 James Speedy returned on leave to the United Kingdom. If his wife and family had not preceded him, they must have come with him in 1843. James Speedy took two years accumulated leave and rejoined his regiment when it returned to the United Kingdom in 1845. He was promoted to Captain by

seniority after being a Lieutenant for sixteen years.

At 34 with a wife and at least two children to support James Speedy's prospects were not very hopeful. It would take him at least another ten years to rise to senior Captain in the regiment. Even then he might have to wait for promotion—each regiment had only two major's posts. His regiment was likely to be stationed at home for some years to come as it had only just arrived back after thirty years abroad. James Speedy himself could go abroad again meanwhile by becoming a substitute for an officer in another regiment who did not wish to go abroad. If he went abroad, the living might be cheaper; there was the possibility of distinction in some frontier war; in any case a tropical climate would thin out the seniority list above him more rapidly. In March 1846 Captain Speedy exchanged with a captain of the 8th (The Lincolnshire Regiment) and went abroad with his new unit in the following month. Tristram Speedy was then nearly 10 years old and presumably he stayed at home. James Speedy served with the 8th in Bombay and Sindh until 1850 but his health was no longer good. He returned to England and, after a period of leave, took command of the regimental depot. Years later, at the end of his military career, he had achieved the rank of Major.

Before leaving James Speedy it is interesting to note that he was a sufficiently good linguist to be chosen twice in his Army career to act as regimental interpreter. His son inherited this gift for languages.

There is only one glimpse of Tristram Speedy as a boy. Many years later he met by chance at Suez a lady who reminded him that when he was fifteen and she four years old he had held her up in a crowd to watch a show. The small act of kindness of the boy was not uncharacteristic of the man. (Speedy, 1884:7).

Tristram Speedy decided to follow in his father's footsteps. In June 1854 at the age of 17 he too was commissioned an ensign—in the 41st Regiment then in England. Within three weeks he had exchanged into the 81st (The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment) which he went out to join at Meerut, his birthplace, in October. For a year he was the only ensign in the regiment. But he was promoted Lieutenant in 1855. In the same year his regiment moved to the Punjab, the most recently conquered province of British India where there was a large garrison.

By moving to the Punjab the 81st missed the outbreak of

Journal Malayan Branch [Vol. XXVI, Pt. 3

the Indian Mutiny at Meerut and elsewhere further east in 1857. In the Mutiny campaign it fell to Speedy's regiment, as to many others, merely to march long distances in the appalling heat of the Indian summer. There were no railways in that part of India in 1857.

In 1858 the regiment moved to Peshawar and took part in the "Eusoffian Expedition" (presumably on the North West Frontier). For this campaign Speedy gained his second medal—the Mutiny had yielded the first. In August 1858 he was seconded to be Adjutant of the 10th Punjab Regiment. By December 1860 he was evidently weary of Army life for he sold his commission and retired. This restlessness is a characteristic which appears several times later. The Commanding Officer of the 10th Punjab gave him a favourable report and praised his "patience and good temper with the men." Speedy's capacity to get the best out of Indian sepoy was to stand him in good stead during the exhausting jungle marches of his early days at Larut. During his time in India he learnt to speak Hindustani (Urdu).

At the time when he left the Army Speedy gave as his reason for doing so his intention of settling in New Zealand. But before he could carry out this plan a more attractive proposition came his way. We are told—

He came to Abyssinia in order to make some arrangements with King Theodore for the disciplining of his troops. The King's mind being occupied with other matters, he left on good terms with His Majesty. I found him at Kassala, elephant shooting.

Speedy's obituary in the *London Times* confirms this passage by stating that he was for eighteen months "the guest of King Theodore." Swettenham (1942: 38), on the other hand, says that Speedy had been "a prisoner in Abyssinia." Swettenham, recording hearsay after an interval of seventy years, is almost certainly wrong. It is true that Abyssinian Kings were in the habit of detaining visitors against their will. But Speedy appears to have won the trust and confidence of Theodore, who was in general a brutal autocrat. Swettenham probably confused Speedy with other people who did become prisoners in Abyssinia and whose fate comes into Speedy's story. Speedy was at Theodore's court from the spring of 1860 to the autumn of 1861. ⁽¹⁾

The situation in Abyssinia and the Sudan at this time was confused. Abyssinia was nominally a single kingdom but was in fact divided. The King of Abyssinia was generally at odds with

1. See notes at the end of this Journal.

the major chiefs (who bore the title "Ras") of the various regions. Egypt and the Sudan were dependencies of Turkey. The Sudan was virtually unadministered and its frontiers with Abyssinia undefined. The Muslim fighting tribes of the eastern Sudan raided their weaker neighbours among the Coptic Christian Abyssinians for captives to be sold in the slave markets of Arabia. The Malay word for an African is "habshi"; a form of the Abyssinian "Habash" — so much did Abyssinians predominate among the African slaves who reached the East.

The European Great Powers had not begun the "scramble for Africa" but they were watching carefully the activities of each other's nationals in north east Africa as elsewhere. The number of Europeans there was small and of mixed composition. There were missionaries, chiefly German and Swiss; Levantine, Syrian and Greek merchants; and a handful of adventurers, prospectors for minerals, explorers and professional ivory-hunters. If Speedy was shooting elephant around Kassala early in 1863, he was probably making his living by selling the ivory. The trade of north east Abyssinia passed through Massawa, a port on the Red Sea coast which was then part of the Sudan (now in Eritrea). At Massawa the British government had a consul.

The British consul at Massawa in 1863 was a Captain Cameron. Cameron believed (like Livingstone) that the only way to stop the export of slaves was to prevent the capture of slaves inland. Cameron had no jurisdiction to intervene. It was a risky business — his predecessor, Consul Plowden, had been murdered in 1860. But, with the assurance of the Victorian Englishman abroad, Cameron just travelled about and gave orders as he thought necessary. Early in 1863 Cameron came to Kassala, a trade centre in the eastern Sudan, and there met Speedy.

Cameron needed a deputy and Speedy agreed to be his vice-consul. To start Speedy on his new duties Cameron instructed him to investigate and report on the undefined frontier between Abyssinia and the Sudan; to settle various questions with the native chiefs around Massawa; and to go to Bogos (around Keren in what is now northern Eritrea) to stop slave-raiding against the Christian tribes whom Cameron had "taken under British protection." Speedy entered into the spirit of Cameron's plans and suggested that he should also go on a mission to the dangerous Shangalla tribe. Even Cameron blanched at this proposal. "The service is not quite safe," he reported, "but I have left it to himself."

The Foreign Office, roused by protests from the Turks, sent orders to Cameron that he should confine himself to his consular

duties at Massawa. These orders came too late to save Cameron who had by then been imprisoned by an indignant King of Abyssinia.

Speedy was not the man to sit in useless impotence on the Red Sea coast at Massawa, of which it has been said that "in summer the heat lies over Massawa like a curse." In January 1864 he resigned his vice-consular appointment and went off to New Zealand.

To go to New Zealand was an old plan of Speedy's which had been shelved in 1861. He may have been the more tempted to go there in 1864 by news that men with military training and experience were now much in demand in New Zealand. In mid 1863 the resentment of the Maoris at European settlement on what they claimed as Maori land had flared up into a war in North Island. There were British regular battalions in New Zealand but the whole male European population of North Island between the ages of 16 and 55 was made liable for service in auxiliary units. Most of the settlers were not required to do more than "Home Guard" duties. But some 1,500 of them were recruited for full-time service in "militia" units. Of the militia an official report of 1863 remarks—

considerable trouble was also experienced in obtaining officers of character and ability with military knowledge. A great number were required and the range of choice was small.

The need was met by bringing in men who, like Speedy, had begun as regular army officers and had retired young.

The writer has been unable to find any information of Speedy's career in New Zealand and Australia. But he is known to have left Massawa in January 1864 with the intention of going to New Zealand. On his marriage certificate in 1868 he described himself as a Captain in the New Zealand Militia. He was in Australia at the end of 1867 when he was recalled to Abyssinia. It seems a fair inference that he spent the years 1864-1867 first in New Zealand and then in Australia. The Maori War was virtually over by 1865 and he may then have tried his luck as a settler or prospector in New Zealand or Australia. It is not stated what he was doing or where he was in Australia when found there in 1867.

While Speedy was away in Australasia relations between Great Britain and Abyssinia had deteriorated. King Theodore, weary of European interference, took prisoner a number of

Europeans in addition to Cameron. They were mostly Swiss missionaries, but there was a proportion of British subjects among them. There was indignation in England. When diplomacy failed the British Government decided to send a military expedition to liberate the prisoners who were held in chains in the King's fortress at Magdala, 400 miles inland from the coast.

It was one of those nineteenth century demonstrations of British imperial pride—Palmerston's famous *civis Romanus sum* speech would have suited this affair also. At the time indignation was so great that no one counted the cost. When the bill for the expedition came in afterwards, the total was so much more than had been expected that there was a special Parliamentary investigation.

It was decided that the troops should be drawn from India. General Napier, who commanded the army in Bombay Presidency, was selected to lead the expedition. General Napier, who had been a Lieutenant Colonel RE in the Panjab in 1855, had distinguished himself in the Indian Mutiny campaign. The aphorism that "genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains" would have fitted Napier. He was a brilliant and immensely thorough organiser.

The Middle East, North Africa and Spain were combed for mules to provide transport for some 15,000 troops with an equal number of followers advancing over roadless, mountain country. Napier was always ready to experiment—the latest products of the patent medicine industry, Macdougall's deodorising powder, Warburg's fever drops, were ordered; a new type of mule saddle was considered; as an experiment six Army photographers were taken. This expedition into an unknown country attracted much scientific interest. A Swiss professor of mineralogy volunteered to accompany it.

Napier well understood the importance of the political side of his problem. He needed men who knew the country and the languages and he asked that everyone who might be useful as an interpreter in the various Abyssinian dialects should be rounded up. The Foreign Office no doubt suggested Speedy as a former vice-consul who knew Abyssinia well. Speedy was found in Australia and accepted an offer of an interpreter's appointment at a salary of £100 p.m. It seems clear from his marriage certificate (which came after the Abyssinian War) that he was not re-commissioned in the British or Indian Army for this expedition. He went with it as a civilian. His courtesy rank of Captain, which he retained for the rest of his life, derived only from his service with the New Zealand Militia.

On 2 January 1868 Napier's troops began to disembark at Zeila in what is now British Somaliland. It was a bare sandy beach. Under Napier's directions two piers were constructed, each 900 feet long. Twelve miles of railway line were laid from the piers to the site selected for the base camp. Steamers were anchored off shore and worked their condensing plant continuously to produce 200 tons daily of fresh water from the sea. These water supplies were stored in reservoirs specially constructed ashore.

Swettenham (1942: 38), writing seventy years afterwards, relates that Speedy had told him that—

His knowledge of the place and the people was considered so important that Lord Napier's expedition was kept waiting for a fortnight until Speedy joined them.

If Swettenham's recollection, uncertain on other points connected with Speedy, was here correct, this tale was a piece of Speedy bombast. Napier had several interpreters already, but he had no time to spare. He had to reach Magdala quickly before King Theodore took it into his head to remove or kill the prisoners. He had to get his expedition back from the Abyssinian highlands before the heavy rains broke in early summer. Napier's advance from the coast began on 25 January. In view of the preparations which had to be made at Zeila, an interval of three weeks was the shortest which could be expected

Speedy's first recorded appearance as Napier's personal interpreter was on 5 February. It is quite likely that Speedy, travelling from Australia, did not reach Napier's headquarters till the beginning of February. Most of Napier's Amharic-speaking interpreters were foreign missionaries or Levantine merchants whom he deemed unsuitable for confidential political work of a rather military nature. Speedy was the only one who combined a military training and an unimpeachable record with a knowledge of the language and the political situation. Speedy with one or two other officers, not all of whom spoke Amharic, was employed on missions to Abyssinian chiefs. They rode out long distances ahead of Napier's column with only nominal escorts of half a dozen sepoys. It was dangerous work—one of Speedy's colleagues, Dufton, was cut to pieces by hostile tribesmen. The work also had its lighter side. In the course of one mission Speedy and his companion were entertained to a vast meal in Abyssinian style by a district chief (a Dejatch). Their host held them in argument for three and a half hours until early morning, urging that Napier should alter the line of his advance so that the Dejatch might entertain the whole force to a "grand dinner".

This political work was of great military importance. Napier could not hope to keep open 400 miles of communications if the country behind him were hostile. He could not advance quickly nor hope to defeat King Theodore if all the Abyssinian chiefs rallied behind their king. Napier's policy, therefore, was to win over the many chiefs who were at enmity with Theodore, and to convince them that this foreign army in their country would liberate them. The most important of the disaffected chiefs was Ras Kassa, who controlled a large part of northern Abyssinia. After preliminary negotiations between Speedy and other officers and the lesser chiefs supporting Ras Kassa a meeting was arranged between Napier and Ras Kassa in person. Napier was able to obtain Kassa's promise of benevolent neutrality and a measure of support.

Early in April Napier's column, advancing through the Abyssinian mountains, came close to King Theodore's stronghold towering on the rock of Magdala. Up to that point there had been no opposition to Napier's advance. On 10 April Napier engaged Theodore's forces before Magdala and defeated them but not decisively. Theodore's nerve was badly shaken. He opened negotiations for an armistice but then broke them off and prepared to defend his immensely strong position at Magdala. But Theodore's forces were as demoralised as himself. When Napier began the assault on Magdala on 13 April there was no resistance. The fortress was taken and Theodore found shot dead by his own hand. The prisoners had been liberated unhurt.

It was no part of Napier's task to impose a settlement in Abyssinia. He immediately began to withdraw his forces towards the coast. But he felt a moral responsibility to give protection to the widow and young son of the dead King Theodore. If they fell into the hands of Theodore's many enemies, they would have been killed with the cruelty which Theodore had so often shown to others.

The captured queen was a pathetic figure. Her father had been a chief in opposition to Theodore and had been defeated and captured by Theodore. The King had then taken the chief's daughter to wife while keeping the chief and his sons in chains. Napier says that the queen "had been treated with... the utmost harshness and cruelty by her husband". She showed no grief at his death. When she fell into Napier's hands she was already very ill. She died of tuberculosis of the lungs a month later.

Theodore's son was thus left an orphan in Napier's charge. His name was Alamayu (also spelt Alamaio, Almaya, Allumayu,



Captain T.C.S. Speedy in Abyssinian costume at the time of his return from Napier's expedition (From a woodcut published in the *Illustrated London News*, in 1868).

and Alamayuhu). At this time he was eight years old. Speedy, remembered that Theodore with all his faults had been his friend, offered to look after the boy and Napier agreed.

The Abyssinians were no longer united behind Napier in their hatred of Theodore. Their natural inclination to plunder the foreigner made Napier's withdrawal much more difficult than his advance had been. But by 18 June 1868 the last soldier had been embarked at Zeila. In retrospect Napier's military organisation and diplomatic skill have made his task look easy. But in fact it was a brilliant conquest of enormous difficulties.

Napier himself was created Baron Napier of Magdala and his campaign was justly acclaimed in England. In writing his official despatches on the campaign Napier said—

It would be difficult to enumerate all Captain Speedy's services—his familiar knowledge of the Amharic language and the character of the the Abyssinians have rendered him invaluable as an interpreter and envoy. He was already well known by character, and he was immediately accepted as a guarantee of good treatment and mutual confidence.

Napier travelled from Zeila to Suez on the *Ferooz*. The *Times* correspondent, travelling with his headquarters, wrote—

One very illustrious passenger by the *Ferooz*, the late Prince of Abyssinia, is beginning to earn a claim to his name Allumaya ("I have seen the world"). He is on his way to England under the care of Lieutenant Speedy. He has taken very kindly to English customs, wearing a sailor's dress, of which he is evidently very proud, and handling a knife and fork at the dinner table with as much gravity and decorum as if he had been to the manner born... He seems a very intelligent, nice little fellow, and was a great favourite on board.

Within five months of his return to England Speedy married. He had apparently not been in England since 1854 and presumably he met his wife for the first time only in 1868. He must have been a glamorous figure (and perhaps knew it)—a handsome man of 32, six foot five inches tall and well built. After many years in far-away places he returned to England sharing the reflected glory of Napier's achievement; his picture, in Abyssinian costume, in the *Illustrated London News*. His wife was Connelia Mary, younger daughter of Benjamin Cotton, a well-to-do landowner at Freshwater, Isle of Wight. The marriage took place at Freshwater on 15 December 1868. Allumaya was a groom. Mrs. Speedy will be mentioned several times hereafter. It seems to have been a very happy marriage.

Both Speedy and his wife were devoted to young Alamayu. Swettenham first met them in 1871. He noted (1942: 38) that "the boy was in good hands, for Speedy and his wife were very fond of him." Alamayu was formally the ward of the British Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer was appointed his guardian *ex officio*. There was a government allowance for Alamayu's upbringing but, until he should be old enough to go away to school he was left in Speedy's charge.

After a few months in England Speedy obtained an appointment as District Superintendent of Police at Oudh in India. Mrs Speedy and Alamayu went out with him in 1869. Speedy spent two years (1869-71) at Oudh. During this period he was a companion of the Duke of Edinburgh (the second son of Queen Victoria) on a shooting trip in Nepal. Presumably Speedy was selected to accompany the Prince because of his experience of big game shooting in the Sudan. Jung Bahadur, chief minister of Nepal, gave Speedy a kukri with an ivory handle which became a treasured possession (Speedy, 1884: 167).

Until 1868 the Straits Settlements had been a dependency of the Government of India. In that year control was transferred to the Colonial Office. Many of the senior staff ("covenanted officers") in the Straits Settlements up to 1868 had been men recruited to the Indian government services and posted for long or short periods to the Straits. At the time of the transfer most of these officials claimed their right to be returned to India. The process of withdrawing them proved difficult as the Colonial Office could not quickly provide suitable replacements. The authorities were thus likely to accept the offer of any police officer in India who would volunteer for permanent transfer to the Straits in replacement for an officer who wished to come back. But it is a pure guess that this was the way in which Speedy came to Malaya. His own motives are equally a matter of surmise. It may have been his ever-present desire to move on to the next place. Police work in Oudh may have been tedious. Certainly two Indian summers in the plains had proved rather an ordeal for Mrs Speedy.

At all events Speedy came to the Straits in 1871, bringing Mrs Speedy and Alamayu. Either on his arrival or at least at some time well before the autumn of 1872 he was appointed Superintendent of Police (i.e. head of the contingent) at Penang. There he began his connection with the affairs of Larut.

At the end of 1871 the British Government insisted that Alamayu must return to England to be sent to a public school.

Alamayu reached England at the end of December, 1871. His departure brought to an end his happy association with the Speedy household. He reappears in the story but for the next eight years he was in England, while Speedy and his wife, except for a few months in 1876, were abroad.

2. Larut up to the Treaty of Pangkor (January 1874)

The basin of the Perak River is the centre of the traditional political system of the state. The Sultan, the chiefs of the royal house and the great commoner chiefs all lived along the Perak River, drawing their revenues from tolls on the traffic of the river and its tributaries. The western limit of the Perak valley is not, however, the frontier of Perak, beyond lies Larut—"a narrow tract of country, lying between the Perak watershed and the sea, it may be said to have come within the sphere of influence of the old river-state rather than to have formed part of the state itself. . . . Of the principal Perak chiefs, only one—the Panglima Bukit Gantang—had any footing in Larut at all, and he was simply a sort of warden of the marches guarding the pass that gave access to a large and isolated district." (Wilkinson 1908: 89).

Remote and unattractive as was the western coastal belt of Perak, Malays from Kedah settled there in small numbers during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The estuary of the Kurau river, north of Larut itself, was the centre of this settlement; the Malay settlers lived by padi cultivation. To the Malay rulers of Perak any centre of population was a potential source of revenue. Before the middle of the nineteenth century, when export duties on tin became the main revenue of Perak, the Sultan relied much more on an annual impost of 70 gantangs of padi from every Malay household in the State to which by custom he was entitled. The Sultan could not, of course, collect taxes or exercise any of the functions of government by direct action throughout Perak; communications were too poor to support any centralised system of administration. In each district a territorial chief collected his own taxes and assisted the Sultan to collect the royal revenues or collected them for him. Inevitably the Sultan relied on the Dato' Panglima Bukit Gantang to collect his taxes at remote Kuala Kurau since it was within the Dato's sphere of influence. The Dato', like other Malayan chiefs, employed kinsmen and followers to assist him in revenue collection and other functions of government. It was by these opportunities that a chief attracted a retinue. So it happened that about 1840 the Dato' Panglima Bukit Gantang began to employ one Long Jaafar to collect taxes at Krian and Kurau. (2)

Long Jaafar was not, as Swettenham (1948: 123) says, a Malay trader of mixed Indian blood. He was (Wilkinson, 1908: 90) the son of a minor chief, the Dato' Paduka Setia, and his maternal grandfather was a minor Sumatran chief. Long Jaafar married the grand-daughter of the family patron, the Dato' Panglima Kinta. But about 1840 he attached himself to the Dato' Panglima Bukit Gantang, whose daughter had married Long Jaafar's brother. There are variant versions of this genealogy of Long Jaafar (Purcell, 1948: 103; and Swettenham, 1951: 47) but here it suffices to be certain that he was a minor aristocrat under the patronage of the Dato' Panglima Bukit Gantang to whom he was connected by ties of descent or marriage.

As a tax collector Long Jaafar included in his territory the empty country of Larut, then said to have had a total population of three Chinese, as well as Krian and Sĕlama. Rich deposits of tin were found at Larut in the 1840's at the time when the success of Chinese mining at Lukut in Selangor attracted attention to the advantages of Chinese technique over the Malay system. Malays were accustomed to wash for tin (the "lampan" method) in the beds of streams; the summit of the technique was to dig a channel and divert a stream through it; soil containing tin ore was dug out and thrown into the fast-flowing water, which washed away the earth and left the tin ore. It was a technique of limited application but it suited the Malay practice of intermittent mining; they obtained tin ore without much preliminary unproductive work and they could give it up and go back to it later without inconvenience. The open-cast ("lombong") method, used if not invented by the Chinese, produced much more tin but required both capital and continuous working. A site was selected by divination and trial boring; the overburden was removed to a depth of 10 feet or more; tin ore could then be dug out in large quantities. But this method required capital investment to support the labour force during the working period before the tin stratum was reached. Moreover, in order to prevent flooding or subsidence of the sides, the excavation had to be baled out or pumped out daily. For pumping work it was necessary to build chain pumps of trimmed planks up to 100 feet long and to divert streams to operate water wheels by which the chain pumps were driven; all this equipment involved a further capital outlay. This description may serve to explain why Chinese mining ousted Malay—only a labour force engaged in continuous work could justify the preliminary capital outlay and keep the the mine in good order once it had been opened.

Long Jaafar encouraged the immigration of Chinese miners into Larut, financed by Chinese capitalists in Penang. The experiment was such a fantastic success, so much beyond rational

expectation, that within a few years it had become the subject of fairy tales. The story was told how Long Jaafar had discovered the tin deposits of Larut by noticing the colour of the sand at the bottom of a stream in which he was bathing. The first workings were at Klian Pauh (Taiping); the discovery of further deposits at Klian Bahru (Kamunting) was attributed to the recapture of an elephant which escaped from Klian Pauh into the jungle and was found again with its flanks smeared with tin ore.

The Larut mines were indeed a vast success⁽³⁾: at their peak before 1872 they employed 40,000 Chinese and produced \$1 million worth of tin for the miners and \$200,000 in revenue for the Malay chief in a year. But the reasons for this success were more prosaic than the legends. First, in an age of piracy by sea and robbery on land, the Larut mines were fortunately sited only ten miles from the coast and a short voyage from Penang. In contrast to the Kuala Lumpur mines the Larut tin could reach its market without much risk of blockade or loss. Secondly, Long Jaafar exploited to the full the method of revenue collection known as tax-farming. The sources of his revenue were an export tax on tin leaving Larut, import taxes on spirits, opium and other supplies for the mines, and the profits of organised gambling to which the Chinese miners were particularly addicted. The most obvious method of revenue collection was to employ staff on wages or commission to collect taxes on behalf of the Malay chief. The drawbacks of this method were the difficulty of finding literate, competent and moderately honest employees; the language difficulty of Malay tax-collectors among Chinese miners; the risk of defiance or evasion by Chinese; and finally the possibility that if the tax rates were pitched a fraction higher than in some other chief's territory the Chinese would quit their existing mines and then move on to the other chief's tin fields.

The alternative method of revenue collection, which was retained by British administrators in the Malay States up to about 1900, was to "farm" the taxes.⁽⁴⁾ The Malay chief entered into a contract with a tax farmer, usually Chinese, by which the farmer collected and kept the taxes, whatever they might amount to, and paid a fixed monthly sum to the chief during the period of the contract. In mining districts tax farms were almost always let to the capitalists who financed the mines. These mining capitalists (*towkay labur*) supplied the opium and spirits consumed by the miners; controlled the camps in which the gambling booths were situated; and exported the tin. With such physical control of the commodities subject

to tax they could collect the taxes at almost no expense at all. Moreover they could make large profits out of tax farming by increasing tin production. The fixed sum payable to the Malay chief was calculated on the basis of the mining population and the volume of tin production at the beginning of the contract period. The mining capitalist/tax-farmer could then, by importing more miners, increase the tax revenues from all sources and keep the whole increase for himself. There was a further advantage. The direct profits of mining operations were usually shared between capitalist and miners in agreed proportions. The capitalist who was also a tax farmer could open new mines on marginal land; these mines might yield no direct mining profits divisible with the miners but the output increased the tax revenues for the exclusive benefit of the capitalist.

The Malay chief in time obtained benefit from letting the tax farm to mining capitalists. The contract was usually for a short period of six months or a year. When the contract came to be renewed the chief could claim a new fixed monthly payment related to the higher volume of production. Mr (later Sir Hugh) Low made this report on the farming of tin export duty at Larut in 1879,

The chief object which the Government has had in view in agreeing to this proposition is to encourage capitalists to take an interest in the country by giving them an opportunity of securing advantages and profits proportionate to the amount of capital they may introduce... the principle is well known in Native States and it was by such means that Larut was originally developed, the Farmers at one period having introduced, it is said, forty thousand persons.

But Low used some of the revenue from tax farms to maintain a trained police force of 700 and was thus able to hold in check the *imperium in imperio* constituted by the Chinese capitalists of Larut. Even so Low had riots at Larut in 1879 over tax farms. Long Jaafar and his son, as will be seen, were less wise.

The increasing wealth and power of the Malay chief of Larut was marked by a corresponding rise in political status. In 1850 Long Jaafar was given a grant from the Sultan empowering him to administer and develop Larut; this grant marked his promotion to the grade of territorial chief; he was now independent of the Dato' Panglima Bukit Gantang. Sultan Jaafar, who acceded in 1856 or 57, confirmed his predecessor's grant, for no Sultan was automatically bound by the acts of a previous Sultan. In 1857 Long Jaafar died and his son, Ngah Ibrahim (also called "Wan Ibrahim" by Swettenham), obtained a grant confirming to himself his father's territory together with the right to legislate and to conduct relations with foreign powers. Henceforth he

could be called "the Raja of Larut" and in the 1870's English lawyers were to argue whether these additional powers constituted him a sovereign ruler independent of the Sultan of Perak. Finally Ngah Ibrahim in 1863 rendered services to the Sultan of Perak and was rewarded with the title of "Mentri". From then on he was entitled to be addressed as "Tengku", a title not indicative in Perak of royal descent—a point which escaped British negotiators at Pangkor in their anxiety to explode what they thought were his pseudo-royal pretensions to be an independent ruler. Ngah Ibrahim became known as the "Mentri of Larut". This title was immediately recognised as inaccurate. The Mentri was one of the four principal chiefs of Perak; the office happened to be held by the territorial chief of Larut but he was Mentri of Perak, not of Larut. However it is convenient to follow the well-established misnomer and to refer to him as "Mentri of Larut."

By 1862 the inherent weakness of the Mentri's position at Larut began to be apparent. It is a well-known story (Purcell, 1948: 103 et seq; Wilkinson, 1920: 108 et seq) how the Chinese miners brought to Larut loyalties and feuds in which they were divided more or less according to the district of south China from which they came. In these warring "secret societies" their leaders were the heads of the mining industry. Wilkinson wrote "The great headmen who controlled the mines began to resent any interference with the profits which they made out of their truck systems; they forced the Mentri to forgo the gambling farm and to allow the mine owners to pocket the gains from both sources." The Mentri, like most Malay chiefs, did not keep a large standing defence force or police with which he could have controlled the Chinese headmen and their obedient followers. In the 1860's the Mentri had about 40 men. In time of need he could raise a levy among his Malay subjects, but this process took time, especially as the arms and provisions had first to be imported from Penang. The Mentri had two strongholds—at Matang, near the mouth of the Larut river, and at Kota near the Bukit Gantang pass by which the route passes between Larut and Kuala Kangsar on the Perak river. His fort at Kota was described (McNair, 1878: 235) as "one of the best built places in Perak" and protected by a "stout fence of split bamboo". He employed two Malay headmen to regulate the occupation of mining land and to settle minor disputes. But the Mentri had no effective control over the Chinese. Irving who visited Larut in 1882, reported that "my impression is that in the main they (sc: the Chinese) govern themselves".

In ordinary times the Mentri hoped to control the Chinese by playing them off, one against the other. The secret societies,

already mentioned, constituted two groups. The earliest mine workings had been at Klian Pauh, near the site of the modern Taiping, and about 10 miles from the mouth of the Larut river. Klian Pauh was the centre of those Chinese, mostly Hakka and Hokkien, who belonged to the secret societies known as the Hai San or "Five Districts" (Goh Kwan). Since this group had at one time been the only Chinese mining community in Larut, they enjoyed some precedence; the Mentri himself was said (Irving in the report cited above) to have been a member of their society and, until the Ghi Hin victory of 1872, he always let the Larut tax farms to the Hai San headmen. The other faction, known as the Ghi Hin ("Four Districts"—Si Kwan), were predominantly Cantonese; their mines were at Klian Bahru, two miles north of Klian Pauh.

The essential functions of these two groups were finance and defence. Each group was financed in their mining at Larut by a corresponding financial group in Penang and they looked to Penang for their orders. In the quarrels which were common enough in the brothels, drink shops and gambling booths of Larut, the miners could count on the immediate support of all fellow members of their society who were within earshot when they raised the peculiar call for help of the society. If the quarrel was between men in the same society, the leaders would arbitrate and punish when the fracas had subsided. If the quarrel was between members of opposing groups, civil war might result.

The more serious causes of friction underlying the local brawling were that each group, Hai San and Ghi Hin, wished to have exclusive use of the Larut tin fields, of the water for water-wheel pumps which was so scarce in the dry season, and to have the tax farm of the whole Larut area. In 1862 there was first serious quarrel. The Hai San drove out Ghi Hin from Larut. The Ghi Hin headmen in Penang appealed to the Government of the Straits Settlements. Governor Cavenagh imposed a blockade on the coast of Perak to force the Sultan, as sovereign of the whole State, to pay compensation to the Ghi Hin. The Sultan employed one of his chiefs, Laxamana Mohamed Amin, to negotiate a settlement. The Laxamana arranged that the Mentri should pay the required sum of \$18,000 and should allow the Ghi Hin to return to their mines. The Ghi Hins acquiesced in their slightly subordinate position at Larut until 1872. Meanwhile the centre of conflict shifted to Penang and led to the Penang secret society riots of 1868. The report of the enquiry into these riots disclosed that there were two Muslim societies, predominantly Malay, in alliance with the two Chinese factions. The Red Flag was aligned with the Hai San and the White Flag with the Ghi Hin. There is reason

to believe (Purcell, *op. cit.*) that by the late 1860's some of the Malay chiefs in Perak had become supporters if not members of the two "Flag" groups.

Despite the instability of the situation at Larut the Mentri conceived ambitions of rising still higher in the world and of becoming Sultan of Perak. In view of what happened in Johore in the nineteenth century, it was not so unreasonable for a powerful commoner chief in Perak to aspire to the royal throne. It is here necessary to digress in order to explain how the succession question had developed in Perak up to 1871.

In the nineteenth century members of the patrilineal royal dynasty of Perak held three major royal offices—the Sultanate and the offices of Raja Muda (Heir Apparent) and Raja Bendahara (Chief Minister). When a Sultan died the chiefs of Perak met to choose a successor. The theory of the system presupposed that the Raja Muda would be chosen as the new Sultan; that the Raja Bendahara would become the new Raja Muda; and that the eldest son of the late Sultan would enter the succession sequence by becoming Raja Bendahara. In practice the chiefs did not always adhere exactly to this strict succession system. But up to 1871 they had always chosen the Sultan from among the members of the royal house, i.e. each Sultan had been either the son or the grandson in the male line of a previous Sultan. So long as this general practice prevailed, the Mentri, as a commoner, could not become Sultan.

In the twenty years up to 1871, however, the traditional political system of Perak began to disintegrate. Two stages can be distinguished. In the 1850's the chiefs broke the power of Sultanate. Thereafter, although there were Sultans, their writ did not run as effective authority throughout Perak. Each chief was more or less independent in his own territory. It was partly because of this decline of the Sultanate that Long Jaafar had been allowed to build up an almost independent position in Larut. The second stage of the disintegration occurred in the 1860's. The chiefs, deprived of the stabilising influence of effective central authority, began to form two local groups of up-river (Ulu) chiefs and down-river (Hilir) chiefs. The villages around Kuala Kangsar were the heart of the Ulu faction; Bandar and Duniam Sabatang (near the modern Telok Anson) were the main centres of the Hilir. The cause of the struggle was the disputed right to collect taxes on tin exported down the Perak river. For, while Long Jaafar was developing the mines of Larut, more modest but still considerable development was taking place along the eastern tributaries of the Perak river, where it was said

there were 6,000 Chinese miners by 1870. Kinta was the most important of the Ulu mining centres; the Batang Padang and Bidor valleys were the mining areas of the Hilir chiefs. But the tin mined in the Ulu had to pass the toll stations of the Hilir chiefs if it were exported down the Perak river, the only convenient route. Moreover the Sultan was entitled to a duty of \$6 per bahara (400 lbs) on all tin exported from Perak; if the Sultan lived in the Ulu he found it difficult to obtain his dues on the tin exported by the Hilir chiefs.

In the twenty years of conflict up to 1871 certain chiefs emerged who were to dominate the scene in the 1870s.' In the civil war of the 1850's two men distinguished themselves—one was Raja Yusuf, son of the reigning Sultan, the other was Mohamed Amin, a Malay with some Arab blood who belonged to the family which usually held the office of Laxamana. In 1857 the Sultan died and the chiefs refused to elect their late opponent, Raja Yusuf, to the office of Bendahara to which he would have succeeded in the ordinary way. It was probably at this time that one Raja Ismail became Bendahara (Cowan, 1951: 13). Ismail, son of the marriage of a grand-daughter of a former Sultan and a Sumatran chief, was not a true member of the patrilineal royal family. But Sultan Jaafar, who acceded in 1857, knew Ismail as a useful supporter in the past who had a large stake in the tin mines at Kinta. Sultan Jaafar was a Hilir chief; the wealthy and powerful Ismail would hold the Ulu for him. The chiefs probably agreed to elect Ismail as Bendahara merely in order to keep out Yusuf, a quarrelsome man and feared as a potential "strong Sultan"; no one intended that Ismail should ever become Sultan. Sultan Jaafar consolidated his position in the Hilir by deposing the old Laxamana and appointing Mohamed Amin in his place. Mohamed Amin was perhaps the ablest financier among the Perak Malays of the period. He and Sultan Jaafar went into partnership in developing the Batang Padang mines which were conveniently controlled from the Laxamana's stronghold at Durian Sabatang, where the Batang Padang river joins the Perak river. The new Laxamana also strengthened his position by marrying his daughter to the Mentri of Larut.

In 1865 Sultan Jaafar died and was succeeded by Sultan Ali who reigned in relative impotence at the up-river village of Sayong. Ismail remained Bendahara; the office of Raja Muda, rendered vacant by the accession of Sultan Ali, was given to Raja Abdullah, son of Sultan Jaafar; Yusuf was again passed over. Abdullah had been brought up as an adopted member of Sultan Ali's family and had also married into it; he was related to Ismail as a classificatory grandson. But upon becoming Raja Muda he

seems to have severed his ties with the Ulu chiefs and become identified with the down-river faction to which his family belonged.⁽⁶⁾ As Raja Muda he was by custom entitled to the revenues of opium, gambling and spirits throughout Perak. He attempted to collect these dues at Larut, where they had not apparently been collected before by any previous Raja Muda. Thus he quarrelled with the Mentri. Abdullah's principal supporter, the Laxamana, became involved in a dispute with the up-river chiefs. The Laxamana had by virtue of his office general jurisdiction over the Perak river as far upstream as the tide reached. But he exceeded his rights by usurping the collection of revenues in the area to which Bendahara Ismail was entitled. Other quarrels developed. One Panglima Perang Samaun, an adherent of Ismail, killed the Shahbandar (Swettenham, 1895: 112) a down-river chief, and then attacked Batak Rabbit, whose headman was a partner with Raja Muda Abdullah (as heir of his father, Sultan Jaafar) and the Laxamana in the mines of Batang Padang. The place of the murdered Shahbandar was taken by his brother, a notable fighter who thirsted for vengeance.

When Sultan Ali died in 1871 Perak was divided between two opposing groups. There were the up-river chiefs, whose figure-head was Ismail though the Mentri was the most important member of their faction. They also included the family of Sultan Ali, the chiefs of Kinta and even, by geographical location, the disappointed Yusuf. The downstream faction had Raja Muda Abdullah as their claimant to the throne with the Laxamana as the most powerful of his adherents. As regards alignment with the Chinese factions, the Mentri was said to be a member of the Hai San and the Temenggong, an up-river chief, was reported to be a member of the Red Flag allied to Hai San. Raja Dris, a down-river aristocrat and a cousin of Raja Abdullah, is likewise said to have been in sympathy with the White Flag (Purell, *op. cit.*). Abdullah himself entered into an alliance with the Ghi Hin in the 1872-3 period and helped them against the Mentri.

On the death of Sultan Ali, Raja Muda Abdullah should by custom have gone upstream to the late Sultan's village to claim the succession to the Sultanate and, if elected, to conduct the funeral. But he feared that he would be attacked if he ventured into the hostile upstream territory. In Abdullah's absence the Mentri secured the election of Ismail as Sultan. Swettenham believed that in doing so the Mentri planned not merely to oust Raja Abdullah but also to create a precedent for the election of a Sultan who was not of truly royal blood. Ismail was an elderly man and the Mentri hoped to succeed him.

Sultan Ismail was recognised as Sultan by all the leading chiefs except Abdullah, Yusuf, and the downstream protagonists, the Laxamana and the Shahbandar. The story of the long-drawn struggle between upstream and downstream factions over the river revenues may be completed here, even though it anticipates the general sequence of events. Soon after his accession Ismail used one of the chiefs, the Raja Mahkota, with the scales of office, to collect the royal revenues in Lower Perak. The Laxamana soon drove out this interloper. Foiled in his attempt to collect his revenues in the opposition territory Ismail then diverted the output of his Kinta mines so that it could be exported without the indignity of paying duty at the Laxamana's customs house at Durian Sabatang. The alternative export routes were overland through Larut, which was closed by the fighting from 1872 onwards, and down the Dindings river. So it was that in April 1874 Swettenham (1951: 35) at Pangkor noted that Ismail was exporting 600 baharas, two years' output from his mines by way of the Dindings. At some time before 1874 Ismail also sent one of his chiefs Raja Ngah (later Tunku Panglima Besar) to build a fort and customs house at the point where the Kinta river runs into the Perak river. This move carried the fight right down to the upstream limit of the Laxamana's territory and Kuala Kinta toll-house was a sore point with him. When J. W. W. Birch became British Resident of Perak in November 1874, the Laxamana gave him a very garbled account of the Kuala Kinta affair and Birch rushed off and burnt down this post. Birch afterwards realised that he had been fooled into antagonising the upstream chiefs just when the delicate negotiations for the surrender of the regalia were about to begin and he made his peace with Raja Ngah.

Despite the accession of Ismail, Raja Muda Abdullah asserted his own claim to be Sultan. In order to break the resistance of the upstream chiefs he planned to oust the Mentri from Larut⁽⁷⁾. If he could do this, he would have the revenues of the richest district in Perak and he would break the power of his strongest opponent. In 1873 when the Mentri was at odds with the Ghi Hin, Abdullah allied himself with them, promising them sole possession of the Larut mines if they would pay taxes to him as Sultan. Even before this, in early 1872, Abdullah had begun to pay particular attention to Krian, which became almost his headquarters from 1872 to 1873. It is not certain⁽²⁾ whether Krian was any longer under the Mentri's effective control, though Kurau further south was certainly held by the Mentri through his loyal adherent, Penghulu Mat Ali. It seems likely that Abdullah was intruding at Krian upon territory which the Mentri claimed as his but which he could not hold owing to his troubles with the Chinese of Larut.

The Malay settlements around Kurau and Krian were of particular significance. In the later 1870's they were the recognised strongholds in Perak of the Red Flag and White Flag societies (Perak State Council Minutes of 20/10/1879). It was in Kurau that the Mentri raised Malay levies to fight in the last phase of the Larut civil war. By moving into Krian Abdullah was threatening one of the Mentri's sources of military power. He may also have been taking control of the White Flag, allied to the Ghi Hin, in the fight against the Red Flag and the Hai San, allied with the Mentri.

It is not clear how much effective control Abdullah obtained in Krian. He purported to farm the collection of Krian padi tax to a Eurasian called Bacon. But it is known that in some areas (? Kurau) the penghulus continued to collect the tax on behalf of the Mentri. In the negotiations at Pangkor in January 1874 Abdullah told Braddell that the Laxamana had collected \$6,000 per annum for him at Krian retaining a commission of 10%.

As a further move to strengthen his position Abdullah appointed Raja Yusuf to be Raja Muda. In making this appointment Abdullah purported to act as Sultan. But he did not act constitutionally. A Sultan had to convene a meeting of the chiefs of Perak and obtain their concurrence to the appointment of a Raja Muda. In fact Abdullah appointed Yusuf to the office without any meeting or formality. Yusuf eventually secured general recognition, but only in later years when he enjoyed British favour and support. Yusuf's motive in accepting the office from Abdullah was, of course, a desire to enter the succession sequence in whatever way he could. Yusuf, although friendless, was a valiant fighter. Abdullah kept Yusuf with him in and around Krian during the years 1872-3 to command the Malay faction which supported Abdullah.

Trouble broke out again among the Larut Chinese in February 1872. A boundary dispute was exacerbated by a quarrel over a woman. The Ghi Hins were victorious, and after a week's fighting the Hai San survivors withdrew to the Mentri's fort at Matang. The Mentri spent some \$15,000 in hiring junks to transport the Hai San to Penang. He then came to terms with the Ghi Hin. The Hai San, deserted by the Mentri, tried unsuccessfully to induce the British authorities in the Straits Settlements to intervene. They then set about recruiting fighting men from China and accumulated munitions. By early October 1872 they were ready to embark men and stores on junks at Penang.

No doubt the Ghi Hin supporters in Penang reported all these preparations to the government authorities in the hope that they would prevent the convoy from sailing. Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor of Penang, had no authority to impose an embargo though he was prepared to use what influence he had to prevent further fighting in Larut. On 15 October Captain Speedy, Superintendent of Police at Penang, boarded a junk in Penang harbour and found that her cargo consisted of 10 cases, each containing 20 muskets, 6 guns and 900 lbs of gunpowder. Her papers were made out for a voyage to the mouth of the Perak river, not to Larut, and Speedy let her go. The Governor in Singapore was indignant when he knew of it but Speedy replied that the junk was on the point of sailing and he had received no instructions how to act; her papers were made out Perak—"she was doing on a more extensive scale what native vessels had been doing unquestioned for years, namely taking arms and ammunition for sale in the numerous native States". One can sympathise with Speedy. If his superiors wanted him to enforce an embargo on the export of arms, it was for them to begin by imposing such an embargo.

Lieutenant Governor Campbell, learning that the flotilla of junks had sailed, decided to follow it to Larut. On 18 October Campbell and Speedy in the *Fair Penang* anchored off Larut and found there several junks, including the one ostensibly bound for Perak which Speedy had examined at Penang. "They had on board," reported Campbell, "200 picked China men, armed with muskets and bayonets. They had thirteen four-pounders ready for action and they had powder, and ball, and bullets in plenty. They had, moreover, a large number of spears, and the apparatus for using stink-pots; and close by on shore several China men were observed moving about on a tongue of land which they had cleared and protected with an abattis. The leading Captain was armed with a loaded revolver. The *Fair Penang* anchored close to the junks, and Captain Speedy and a few of his men boarded them." Let Speedy himself carry on the story. "I went on board and found her prepared for action — cannon loaded and primed, matches burning. I recognised the Taikong, or Chinese captain, and asked why he had not gone to Perak. He laughed and said 'Oh, I can still go there.' This answer is typical of the Chinese attitude. They persisted in prevarication and said that they were traders who armed themselves because of the risk of attack by pirates." But behind the desire to evade the issue there was a good deal of menace. Campbell noted that "the junk's people were stout fighting-looking men.....they were civil in their manner but seemed very determined." Speedy persisted in examining

the junk and found in the hold two Chinese captives—"their limbs were cut and bruised by the tightness with which they had been bound and by blows. At Captain Speedy's request they were at once given up to him. They seemed half dead with fear and told him they were to have been decapitated that night." With this minor concession Campbell and Speedy had to be content. They returned to Penang, by no means the last European officials to be defied by the Chinese of Larut.

At the time when the Hai San expedition landed, the Ghi Hin leaders were away from their stockades attending a meeting convened to discuss the appointment of a Capitan China. The Ghi Hin rank and file, surprised and leaderless, were quickly overcome by the professional fighters whom the Hai San had enlisted. It is said that a thousand Chinese were killed in the first day's fighting and three thousand in all. The Ghi Hin fled, leaving many of their women in the hands of the Hai San. The Mentri changed sides again and was rewarded with a share of the captured women.

It was now the turn of the Ghi Hin to enlist mercenaries and to mount a counter-attack from Penang. In December 1872 the Ghi Hin forces landed at Sungai Limau down the coast, marched across to cut the communications between the mines and the mouth of the Larut river and then invested the Mentri's fort at Matang near the river mouth. The Mentri had 100 armed Malay followers of his own in his stockade and the Dato' Temenggong, of the Red Flag persuasion, provided 80-90 more. The Mentri also sent to Sultan Ismail for help. Ismail deputed the Dato' Panglima Kinta and the chief of Kuala Kangsar to go and mediate. Ismail himself came as far as Bukit Gantang to be ready for consultation. The mediators went on to the Mentri's stronghold at Matang and invited the Ghi Hin leaders to parley with them. The Ghi Hins came to the meeting in strength and the Malays, fearing an attack, opened fire. The Ghi Hins, angry at this treachery, refused to parley any more. The Mentri and the Malay mediators then left the Matang fort, which the Ghi Hin promptly occupied. Ismail and the Mentri met at Bukit Gantang but there was nothing more to be done. Ismail went back to his residence at Bēlanja on the Perak River. The Mentri could no longer maintain himself in the Chinese area of Larut. He moved to "Krian", probably to Kuala Kurau next door to Abdullah in Krian proper.

The Ghi Hins were not strong enough to drive out the Hai Sans. But, holding the fort at Matang, they could blockade them. A road ran from Matang, where the jetty was, to the

mines at Klian Pauh. Some way along this road a side road branched off to Bukit Gantang where was the Mentri's second fort (appropriately called Kota). The point where the road branched was called Simpang. The Ghi Hins held the fort at Matang and built a stockade at Simpang in order to control the road up to that point. Beyond Simpang the Hai Sans held the area of the mines.

The once prosperous Larut had been devastated by the fighting. "The villages and every isolated house had been burnt down, almost every mine had stopped work, and the combatants had stockaded themselves in what they considered the most advantageous positions" (Swettenham 1948: 124). Sir Andrew Clarke called Larut "one huge cockpit, where nothing but fighting and murder, and violence and piracy were going on."

The Straits Settlements authorities first tried to break the deadlock by stopping supplies to the Ghi Hins. Ships of the Royal Navy intercepted junks carrying supplies to the Ghi Hin forces. The Ghi Hins began landing supplies at remote places on the coast and then moved them overland. Supplies, however, ran short and the Ghi Hin resorted to piracy on trading vessels to obtain supplies. They "fitted out a number of long and fast fishing boats, which, with guns and fighting platforms fore and aft and double-banked oars, were used to prey on all native craft navigating the Straits of Malacca in the immediate vicinity of of the coast of Perak" (Swettenham 1948: 124). British gunboats could not follow such craft into the shallow creeks and lagoons of the Larut coast. Landing parties were ineffectual and costly in casualties. The ordinary trading vessel could not resist these pirate attacks. Half a dozen pirate boats, each with 50 men, poured in a heavy fire on the unfortunate vessel and then closed in to board. In March 1873 an embargo was at last placed on the export of arms from the Straits Settlements but this came too late to stop the damage.

Meanwhile the Mentri was in semi-exile in Krian. By his many changes from side to side he had lost all authority and goodwill among the Chinese of both factions. An official report of 1873 remarks that "much hostility has been displayed against him." If the Mentri was ever to regain possession of Larut, he must have a force behind him strong enough to defeat the Ghi Hins. For it seems that the Mentri, when neither Chinese faction was in full possession of Larut, sided with the Hai Sans, his original favourites. In any case the Ghi Hins were in league with Abdullah. But to raise a strong force the Mentri must have a leader. He had spent a good deal of his time in Penang, where he

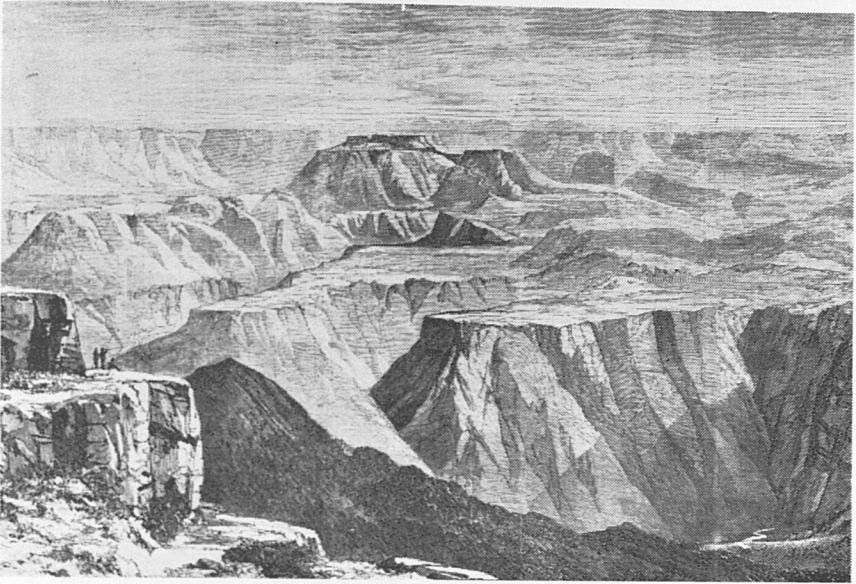
had a house, and he must have been in constant touch with the Penang situation on which so much in Larut depended. He knew therefore that Speedy, the police officer who had been dealing with the Penang repercussions of the Larut struggle, had made a favourable impression on the Chinese. Here it is convenient to anticipate a little by referring to the petition presented in September 1873 by 100 Chinese of Penang to the Government, requesting that Speedy should not be allowed to resign from the Police. Petitions about government officers are always suspect if they praise the officer; so often the petition has been inspired by the officer. But in this case Speedy had already left Penang when the petition was received and he had nothing to gain by it. The relevant passage reads:—

He has given universal satisfaction, since his connection with them; his loss as Superintendent of Police, as the Official Municipal Commissioner and as a sincere friend to the welfare of the poor among them will be deeply felt. The Police was never more respected—nor better known among the people—he has but to show himself amid a crowd, or riotous mob—and the disturbance was quelled at once, and the injured had their cases patiently heard, and their redress at once given; he is accessible to all, at all hours, both at his home as well as his office — and the people respect him both for his stern efficiency, as well as his straight-forward impartiality.

Anson, Lieutenant Governor of Penang, in forwarding the petition to Singapore said that he agreed that Speedy was impartial and readily accessible but he did not share the petitioners' high opinion of Speedy's efficiency as a police officer.

The Mentri invited Speedy to meet him in his office in Penang. Mat Ali, penghulu of Kuala Kurau, was also present and said afterwards (as a witness before the Commission of Enquiry into the murder of J. W. W. Birch) that Speedy undertook to raise a force for the Mentri if the Mentri would advance \$15,000. Mat Ali did not say what consideration the Mentri offered Speedy to induce him to resign his permanent appointment in the Straits Settlements Police. It was generally believed that the Mentri offered a salary plus one third of the revenues of Larut if the Ghi Hins could be driven out. Jervois estimated that Speedy would have received £10-15,000 p.a. but it suited his argument to make the figure as large as possible. Speedy accepted the terms, whatever they were, resigned his police appointment, and left for India on 27 July 1873 to recruit sepoy.

It is interesting to speculate what were the feelings of Speedy's colleagues and superiors in the government about his taking service with the Mentri. Anson was understandably furious with Speedy for resigning at short notice (he had wanted to go in four days but was made to serve out his month's notice)



A distant view of Magdala, the scene of the close of Napier's advance into Abyssinia, April 1868.



Major General Colborne's flotilla moving up the Perak River from Pasir Salak, nightfall, late in November, 1875. (Both pictures from woodcuts published in the *Illustrated London News*).



“Captain T. C. S. Speedy, Basha Felika”, reproduced from Sir Frank Swettenham’s *Footprints in Malaya* (Hutchinson & Co., London, 1942), from a block kindly loaned by the publishers. The date of this portrait is not certain, but it seems likely that it was taken after Speedy’s return from Napier’s expedition to Abyssinia, and shortly before he came to Malaya.

and so leaving Penang without a chief of police at a critical moment. But, as will be seen, Anson a month later threw all his influence into backing Speedy in India. Logan, the Solicitor General in Penang, drafted an agreement between Speedy and the Mentri but they did not use it, preferring an informal agreement in Malay. In the official references to Speedy's action there is no criticism (except for his hasty resignation). From what happened afterwards it seems clear that officials in Penang and Singapore had come to the opinion that there would have to be some intervention to break the deadlock in Larut. They did not know that the British Government was about to sanction official intervention in the Malay States. Meanwhile Speedy's private venture was a welcome initiative.

While Speedy was away in India there were developments in the Larut situation. Everyone concerned with Larut was by mid 1873 heartily weary of the war. The Ghi Hins who said they had spent \$380,000 on the war were excluded from the mines; the Hai Sans were blockaded and cut off from the only outlet to the sea and Penang where they obtained supplies and sold tin. The Mentri had been expelled from his territory. Raja Muda Abdullah had laid out \$16,000 of borrowed money in supporting the Ghi Hins and had gained nothing. Common adversity brought the Mentri and Abdullah to a reconciliation and they settled down together at Krian with a third partner in misfortune, Raja Yusuf. In August 1873 Anson called the Mentri and Abdullah to a conference in Penang which was also attended by the headmen of the Ghi Hin and Hai San. The terms of a settlement were agreed and Abdullah and the Mentri went off to Larut in a British warship to call off the Ghi Hin blockade. But the Penang headman of the Ghi Hin was evidently not sincere in purporting to accept the agreement, for he evaded going to Larut with them. The Ghi Hin leader at the mouth of the Larut river would not take orders from Malay chiefs in the absence of his Penang principal. Soon after this Abdullah was arrested by the British navy on a charge of piracy: he was almost immediately released but he attributed his arrest to the machinations of the Mentri. The reconciliation between them broke down. Abdullah sent Raja Yusuf, "with a handful of men", to Larut to stiffen the Ghi Hin resistance to Speedy when he should arrive there. Yusuf seems to have stayed at Bukit Gantang for a time without taking action and he withdrew when the Mentri's allies approached (v.p. 34). Abdullah went off to Singapore to solicit the support of the financial potentate, Kim Cheng. He was able to gratify his passion for European-type uniform by obtaining a second-hand uniform made for the Sultan of Trengganu and he bought a splendid sword for \$300. Otherwise the trip to Singapore was profitless.

The failure of the attempted settlement of August 1873 convinced Anson that it was necessary to throw British support behind the Mentri. On 3 September, Governor Orde, on Anson's advice, recognised the Mentri as the ruler of an independent state. On 9 September the Straits Settlements Government lifted its ban on the export of arms because this restriction was hampering the Mentri and the Hai San more than their opponents. About this time an enquiry reached Singapore from the Government of India—was it in order to permit Captain Speedy to recruit sepoy for service under the Mentri of Larut? The reply went back that the Mentri was a friendly and independent ruler and that Speedy, detained in Calcutta, should be allowed to sail for Penang with his force.

Speedy reached Penang, but did not land, late in September. He brought 110 Punjabis and Pathans and some guns manufactured by the famous firm of Krupp. There was a rumour that 250 more men were to follow from India but they never arrived. One supposes that Speedy exaggerated his numbers as a form of psychological warfare.

“On the 29th September Captain Speedy sailed for Larut with a flotilla of two steamers and fifteen small sailing craft to convey arms, munitions and stores to the Hai San miners of Larut” (Wilkinson, 1908: 124). He avoided the mouth of the Larut river, held by the Ghi Hins, landed elsewhere on the Larut coast and marched inland to join forces with the Hai Sans who still held the mines.

The arrival of Speedy's force was the signal for a big effort by the Mentri's coalition. The Hai Sans at the mines were in poor shape and Speedy's arrival just saved them from collapse; they could not take part in the first phase of the attack. The Mentri had, however, sent to Sultan Ismail for help. Ismail was able to raise some 500-600 Malays who were sent to Bukit Gantang. Mat Ali, the Mentri's headman at the Malay settlement of Kuala Kurau on the coast north of Larut, was given money to purchase muskets and gunpowder in Penang with which to equip a levy of the Kuala Kurau Malays. His instructions were to bring his men round in boats by sea to the mouth of the Larut river and so take the Ghi Hins in the rear, while Speedy assaulted their inland strong-point at Simpang. It is not known exactly what happened. Mat Ali's attack miscarried but he heard the guns firing at Simpang. Anson, voyaging off the mouth of the Larut river, received news that Speedy “had driven the Sin Nengs (i.e. the Ghi Hins) from their strongholds near the mines”; this reference can only apply to the capture of Simpang. This action took place in November 1873.

The Ghi Hins were now in a desperate position. Two months before, in September 1873, a naval party had landed at

the mouth of the Larut river and had destroyed two Ghi Hin stockades and three junks in reprisal for a piratical attack. "The first stockade, consisted of a low earthwork for the protection of rifle and musket men. The guns, seven in number, protected by palisades and logs of wood, four to five deep. Three junks, armed with five to seven guns each. The second stockade of rammed earth, with a double palisade, was unarmed, but seven guns were found in a large sampan." These were formidable losses and the Ghi Hin seem to have withdrawn some distance inland from the mouth of the Larut river.

After the capture of Simpang, Speedy and the Malays were pressing the Ghi Hins back against the coast. The British Navy cut off their supplies from Penang. The Hai San, now recuperated, penetrated to the seaward side of the Ghi Hin position and occupied points at the mouth of the Larut river from which the Ghi Hin had been driven out by the British Navy. The Hai San built a fence of stakes across the Larut river at its mouth leaving only a narrow central gap which was closed by an iron chain. Beleaguered on two sides and completely blockaded the Ghi Hin nonetheless remained defiant. They still had 2,700 men under arms in Larut.

Speedy, though he had already taken a strongly defended position at Simpang by frontal assault, evidently could not rely on his heterogenous and ill-disciplined allies to throw themselves against the last Ghi Hin position. Frontal attack was considered too expensive in casualties by both Malay and Chinese commanders in the wars of this time. The approved tactics were for the stronger force to surround and starve its opponent into submission, not provoke a fight to the death. Moreover it was urgently necessary to get the mines started again so that tin exports could pay for the cost of keeping the Mentri's forces in the field. The Mentri was already heavily in debt and his credit was exhausted. So the Mentri and Speedy made no attempt to expell the Ghi Hins by force from their pirate bases on the coast but concentrated their troops on holding the mines. Anson reported on 4 December 1873, after a visit by sea to the mouth of the Larut river, that:—

So long as the Mentri and his party can rely upon the assistance of this Government to defend the coast from attacks by sea, and to prevent ammunition and provisions being supplied to their enemies, they will give no assistance in suppressing piracy, but will greedily give their whole attention to recovering possession of the mines.

This comment, although an incomplete appreciation of the difficulties of the Mentri's forces, is more to the point than the verdict of Jervis in 1876 that Speedy made "but little progress" towards expelling the Ghi Hins from Larut. The full effect of

Speedy's blockade of the Ghi Hins did not appear because an armistice supervened. It will be seen that the Ghi Hins agreed to the armistice because of the blockade.

Late in 1873 Sir Andrew Clarke, the new Governor of the Straits Settlements, arrived in Singapore after receiving in London the famous despatch of 20 September 1873 which he construed as authority for immediate intervention in the Malay States. Clarke and his advisers fully realised that much of the instability in Perak generally was due to the fighting in Larut and they did not convene the famous Pangkor conference until assured that a settlement was in sight for the Larut war.

Clarke's immediate programme for a settlement at Larut began with the despatch of Pickering to Penang to negotiate there with the leaders of the Hai San and Ghi Hin parties. Pickering, the future founder of the Chinese Protectorate, was still a very junior official; he held an interpreter's appointment. But the value of the one European official who could speak Chinese was already recognised. Pickering was sent to Penang with personal instructions from the Governor which were not, at first, disclosed to Anson, much to his indignation. On 4 January 1874 Pickering telegraphed from Penang to the Governor "Sin Nengs (i.e. Ghi Hin) will gladly sign an agreement and give boats and everything to your disposal in seven days. Meantime they beg for Speedy to hold his hand; boats being given up they cannot escape death; agreement broken let Speedy do his worst." On the following day Pickering telegraphed again "They say that Speedy is a good man and does not want to kill them" and that they would accept British arbitration to settle the mining dispute at Larut.

Clarke's next move was to send McNair and Dunlop to Larut by way of Penang. Dunlop, Commissioner of Police of the Straits Settlements, was employed on various missions to the Malay States in these years. Major McNair, whom we shall meet again, was a former Indian Army Officer who was now Colonial Engineer (i.e. Director of Public Works) in the Straits Settlements; he was one of the recognised experts on Malay affairs. McNair and Dunlop were told at Penang that the Ghi Hin at Larut were in desperate want of food. They sailed for Larut with a cargo of food but the Hai San, at the mouth of the Larut river, refused to let them enter. Speedy was away inland. So they returned to Penang.

Clarke gave instructions for the meeting to be held at Pangkor. The general terms of the Pangkor settlement of Malay affairs in Perak were that Clarke more or less imposed Abdullah as Sultan of Perak; the Mentri was put under considerable pressure to accept Abdullah as Sultan and to forego his claim to be

an independent ruler. There was much misunderstanding of the Mentri's position under the grants of 1857 and 1863. Clarke did not know that his predecessor, Orde, had recognised the Mentri as an independent ruler in September 1873; Orde had dealt with the matter at Penang and the papers were held there; Anson was not invited to attend the Pangkor meeting. Raja Yusuf and Sultan Ismail were not at Pangkor. Ismail's position in view of the recognition of Abdullah as Sultan was left for future consideration. Finally the most important of the administrative provisions of the Pangkor Treaty were that there should be a British Resident of Perak, with an Assistant Resident at Larut. The British Resident's advice was to be asked and acted upon in all matters except Malay custom and Muslim religion.

Speedy and the Mentri's Penang lawyer came with the Mentri to Pangkor on board his steamer the *Bětara Bayas*. Immediately after the Pangkor conference the Mentri and the lawyer began to concert plans (which, however, came to nothing) for appealing to the British Government to set aside the Pangkor Treaty. It is understandable that Speedy should attend on his employer at Pangkor. It led, however, to the unfortunate impression that Speedy was identified with the Mentri's schemes for throwing off the new British regime in Perak. This suspicion flared up in the mind of Jervois in 1876 and we shall return to it. At Pangkor Speedy took no part in the formal meetings and nothing is known of his attitude at the time.

Some twenty Chinese leaders of the two Larut factions also came to Pangkor to negotiate a settlement under British auspices. They agreed to accept British arbitration on the disputed questions of "mines occupied", and "business conducted" (presumably this is a reference to the import of mining supplies and the related question of tax farms); they also agreed that "all future arrangements for the supply of water for the several mines shall be subject to the orders and regulations of the British Residents to be stationed in Perak and Larut."

Both Chinese factions "entreated that a British officer should be put in the mines to govern the people on the principles of justice." Evidently they did not want the Mentri to govern them any more. As has been stated, the Pangkor treaty with the Malays did provide for an Assistant Resident at Larut.

Clarke thought it essential to appoint an Assistant Resident of Larut at once for "one hasty shot might have again plunged the whole country into civil war." The post required a man who had the confidence of the Straits Settlements Government, of the Malay chiefs and of the Chinese headmen. "Captain Speedy," said Clarke in his despatch to London, "essentially fulfills all these

conditions. During his tenure of office in Penang he had great opportunities of making himself acquainted with the character both of the Chinese and the Malays". Clarke added that he believed that Speedy as a government official would have the confidence of his recent enemies, the Ghi Hin.

Thomas Braddell, the Attorney General, who wrote the official report on the Pangkor negotiations, puts the matter in a less flattering light:

As Captain Speedy's position as a partisan Chief of armed men was no longer tenable at Larut, and as he and his fighting men must be disposed of in some way, he was asked to accept service under the Government.

But Braddell goes on to mention the considerations which Clarke included in his despatch. When, in 1876, Jervois came to write about Speedy's appointment as Assistant Resident of Larut there is the gibe which might be expected—"in January 1874, it was considered necessary, as it were, to buy him up."

Clarke proposed to the Colonial Office that Speedy's salary should be £2,000 p.a., which was about double the salary of a Straits Settlements government official of the same status. In proposing this salary Clarke does not refer to Speedy having to give up a vast salary paid by the Mentri for the good reason that the Mentri had never, during Speedy's brief employment with him, been able to pay what he had promised. The arguments which Clarke does use are that the cost of living at Larut would be high because supplies would have to be imported from Penang and that Speedy would have to face danger and privation. He might have added that it was a temporary appointment, a factor which always increases the salary above that of a permanent post. The Colonial Office eventually approved a salary of £1,500 p.a. for Speedy's post.

We do not know whether Clarke discussed the salary of the post with Speedy before deciding what he thought was adequate. But the salary question was one of the small things which rankled with the permanent officials in Singapore. Here was Speedy, a very junior and undistinguished colleague until a year ago, now specially selected for a more responsible post and given a much larger salary than any of them. "Captain Speedy is certainly an expensive article at £1,500 a year", wrote Jervois in 1876; one wonders who first coined the sneer.

3. Larut under Speedy (January 1874-May 1876) ⁽⁸⁾

Speedy's tenure of the post of Assistant Resident of Larut can, from his point of view, be divided into three periods. From late January to early November 1874 there was no Resident of Perak and Speedy held an almost independent command at

Larut. From November 1874 to November 1875 Birch was Resident of Perak and Speedy was both subject to more supervision and was also called away occasionally from Larut to help Birch in Perak proper. In the final period up to May 1876 the Perak War and its consequences dominated the situation. The Perak War is discussed in the following section of this paper. Very little is known of Speedy's administration of Larut after the end of 1875.

In late January 1874, when he assumed duty as Assistant Resident, the most important and urgent objective of government policy was to restore mining production and so to obtain the revenue without which government could not exist. To achieve this objective three things were necessary. The disputes outstanding from the long-drawn Chinese civil war in Larut must be settled. Law and order must be established throughout Larut. Financial policy and other government measures must be framed to induce the Chinese to maximise output.

The task of settling disputes about mining claims and other legacies of the civil war was entrusted to a Commission whose awards the Chinese had agreed at Pangkor to accept. The Commission consisted of Dunlop and Pickering (v.p. 36), Swettenham, and Ah Kwee and Ah Yam, headmen of the Hai San and Ghi Hin respectively. The tasks of the Commission, in cooperation with Speedy, were to settle disputed claims to mining land, to disarm the Chinese and destroy their stockades and to restore the women, and other captives. The Commission arrived in February. During the war each side had at one time or another had exclusive possession of the whole mining area, which was about four miles square. There were cases where mines had been opened by one side and worked later by the other. Some mines were as much as seven years old. The Commission soon gave up the attempt to settle claims individually on the basis of the past history of the mine. They divided the whole mining area into two; north of the line was awarded to the Ghi Hin group whose former mines were mainly within that area; south of the line was awarded to the Hai San. The Commission intended that the new boundary should be marked on the ground by a fence. But Speedy found it impossible to erect a fence for lack of tools. Birch, on a visit to Larut in April 1874, advised him to have a ditch dug instead (Swettenham, 1951: 44). At the time the Commission thought that this judgement of Solomon satisfied both sides but it appears (Purcell, 1948: 112) that the Ghi Hin, whose area was the poorer mining land of the two, were not reconciled to leaving the Hai San in possession of the richer land. It may have taken some years of mining for the Ghi Hin to find out that they had the poorer land. At all events trouble did not break out again over this issue until 1879 after Speedy had left.

There was also a danger of dispute within the two main areas between established miners and newcomers, if new grants of mining land were made in respect of land not yet worked. Speedy instituted a sort of moratorium on grants to newcomers until early 1875 so that established miners could assert their claims by occupation. Even so, in mid 1875, there is evidence that disgruntled Chinese miners appealed to Sultan Abdullah against grants to newcomers.

On water supplies, which had been a fertile source of quarrels in the past, the Commission made no award. This was an inevitable omission because the diversion of river water into channels to the mines varied from year to year as new mines were opened and old mines abandoned. Trouble arose when miners upstream left insufficient water in the river for the use of mines lower down. Speedy held the balance between miners by providing that each new diversion of the water supply required government approval. As the volume of mining production increased he began to fear that the total water supply would be inadequate to meet the demands on it. A few years later it was reckoned that most mines in Larut worked only 180 days in the year owing to lack of water during dry spells. Birch, on a visit to Larut in 1875, commended Speedy to give "personal superintendence" to the use of water on mines to prevent waste.

Swettenham (1948: 178) summed up the achievement of the Commission as follows:—

The results of a month's hard and ceaseless travelling in boats and on foot was the complete destruction of all stockades, the collection of a large quantity of arms and ammunition, the rescue and restoration to their own people of forty-five women and children, held captive and hidden away in remote places in the jungle, and the settlement of the dispute as to the ownership of the mines, with the delimitation of areas within which the rival factions should in future be allowed to take up land.

In order to demolish the main Hai San stockade at Taiping the Commission had to round up eleven headmen and threaten to use force (Swettenham, 1942: 36).

The work of the Commission was watched with interest by the Chinese financiers in Penang who held back from putting money into re-opening the mines until March when the Commission's awards were known. It took two or three months to restore old mines or open new ones and it was not until the middle of the year that large scale exports were resumed. A "laudable rivalry" developed between Hai San and Ghi Hin miners as to which faction would export tin first (Swettenham, 1951: 15).

Speedy's forces for the maintenance of law and order consisted of a "Residency Guard", i.e. a personal escort, of 25 peyos and a police force of about 160, including 10% of Chinese

among its uniformed constables. The Larut establishment provided for a British Assistant Superintendent and a British Inspector but both these posts were still vacant in 1875. Speedy's only responsible subordinate in the Police was an Indian Inspector whose efficiency impressed Birch.

In 1874 there were several pressing problems in the field of law and order. Both Ghi Hin and Hai San had imported "fighting men" from China in the war of 1872-3. The British negotiators at Pangkor had wished to get these men shipped back to China but, reported Braddell, "none of the so-called fighting men wished to be taken away...the probability being that they would be employed as coolies, perhaps their original occupation." The rank and file may indeed have gone meekly to work as miners. But their leaders, referred to as "Panglimas" in the Anglo-Chinese Malay which served as an administrative *lingua franca*, were determined to get the rewards which they had been promised by the headmen who recruited them. These rewards were to be a share in the profits of the mines when the war was won. Swettenham, in Larut in April 1874 (1951: 45), tells how Ah Kwee, headman of the Hai San, had a complicated dispute with some Panglimas who claimed a share in his mining ventures. Speedy was working for a compromise in the hope that the dispute would blow over. But the Panglimas of the Hai San faction continued to make trouble and Speedy, in his report for 1874, says that "several petty outbreaks" occurred. In June 1874 Speedy's patience was exhausted. He banished ten of the leading trouble-makers and resorted to what Pickering, in a report of 1876, called "wholesome severity towards the rest of the malcontents." There was no more trouble from this element in Larut.

Speedy's tentative handling of the early stages of this trouble did not escape criticism. Europeans found the Larut Chinese undeserving of kid-glove treatment—"they are of all men the most rude, conceited and ignorant, with no confidence in Europeans", said Low (quoted by Purcell, 1948: 114). Swettenham (1951: 46) relates how in April 1874 Birch, who had never been in Larut before and who spoke neither Malay nor Chinese, made an enquiry in Ah Kwee's case and told the other party to go away and be peaceful law-abiding tin-miners—which was to ignore their claim against Ah Kwee. "After this Speedy, unadvisedly as we thought, began to argue the point with them again but Mr. Birch spoke to him." Swettenham was in Larut again in June 1874 and relates (1951: 75) the complaint of a Mr. Betts "that the Chinese were getting awfully insolent, that if he told them to do anything at the mines they at once went

to Speedy to complain, and he treated them like gentlemen.”
 One more extract from Swettenham's Journal (1951: 50):—

He (sc: Speedy) is I think still given to temporising with the Chinese, and as long as he does that I don't believe he will get the mines satisfactory worked or the place permanently settled, and I'm sure he won't be regarded with respect sufficient to keep the Chinese from even thinking of disturbance, and which I am humbly of opinion to be his first care to ensure, a *sine qua non* of his position as Resident amongst a turbulent crowd of Chinese, especially when you consider how many lives, how much of our prestige, and how fine a country depend on it. I should recommend him to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest and practise Forster on Decision of Character.....

Swettenham in April 1874 was a very immature administrator who took as his model Birch who, a month before, had advocated administering Asians with “some stronger hand than is ever to be found among themselves.” A few pages earlier in Swettenham's Journal (1951: 48) the story is told how the Mentri kept Birch waiting and “Mr. Birch gave him before the crowd a blowing up which I think he will remember, at least he ought to if anything can move him.” The modern reader will prefer Speedy's method to Birch's. It has also to be remembered that Speedy, although his knowledge of Chinese affairs went deeper than most of his European colleagues, did not apparently speak Chinese.⁽⁹⁾ He had to deal with the Chinese of Larut through the medium of Malay, a language foreign to both. In hearing a dispute the best way was to let them go on talking, talking, talking, while he sifted out the facts and their significance.

After the short-lived trouble with the “fighting men”, Speedy had to deal with the more enduring and deep-rooted problem of Chinese secret societies among the miners. As the population of Larut swelled from 4,000 in January to 27,000 in December 1874, the mine headmen organised the labourers whom they imported into the societies which they controlled. For the time being everyone was “quite contented” (Swettenham, 1951: 44) and absorbed in the race to export the tin. But Speedy observed (in his report for 1874) that in the Straits Settlements the periodic secret society riots were so serious that it became necessary to call in troops to restore order. The Straits Settlements Government was still groping towards a policy on this problem. Since 1869 secret societies had been required to register but that was all. Speedy knew, however, that in China itself and in the Netherlands East Indies secret societies had been made illegal. Speedy decided to follow this latter policy. In his report for 1874 he says:—

I therefore deemed it an important point to make the establishment of any lodge of this kind in Larut, penal; and in this view I have been entirely supported by the Chinese head-men of the country, who,

although themselves probably compulsirily belong to lodges in Penang, yet one and all concur in saying that they are but productive of evil, and never of good. Two attempts have been made during the year to establish lodges in Larut, but having received timely information, I have been happily enabled to crush each attempt in the bud. In one case the secretary of a lodge was arrested, and a quantity of documents, seals etc, relating to the working of the society were seized. In the other instance, four men were arrested for having issued a circular calling on members (who had shortly before been enrolled) to attend a meeting. Since the suppression of these two attempts, in which I had the hearty cooperation of the Mentri, nothing further has been attempted with regard to secret societies.

It will be seen that Speedy's two successes were against newly established societies. It is probable that he was being fooled in the same way as British administrators in Selangor were tricked by Yap Ah Loy and other headmen of secret societies in Kuala Lumpur. The Selangor headmen, too, assured the British that although they had been obliged to join lodges of the secret societies in the Straits Settlements there were no lodges in Selangor. In fact there were lodges which held their meetings in the houses of the leaders secretly. The headmen of the established societies had an agreement not to give the British authorities information of each other's activities but made use of the British, and gave the impression of cooperating in the campaign against all secret societies, by informing against any new societies which tried to break in on their territory. (Purcell, 1948: 116; and Middlebrook, 1951: 117). The Hai San and Ghi Hin groups continued to exist in Larut but lived in comparative amity until the riots of 1879 (Purcell, 1948: 112).

The failure of British administrators, including Speedy, to end the existence of Chinese secret societies distracts attention from their partial success in other respects. The secret society headmen, Ah Kwee and Ah Yam in Larut and Yap Ah Loy in Selangor, were used by the British as recognised channels of authority in dealing with the Chinese even though the basis of their authority was not understood. The British did at least realise that these headmen were the wealthiest and most influential members of the local Chinese community. Accordingly they continued the practice of Malay rulers by giving them official status under the title of "Capitan China"⁽¹⁰⁾; they also appointed them to be members of the State Councils established in 1877. In sum the secret society headmen were co-opted into the administrative system, not driven into opposition against it. Secondly, as a more long-term result, the establishment of a police force as the basis of law and order diminished the "defence" function of secret societies (v.s. p.22). If the new police force had not been so largely non-Chinese in personnel, it would have been more effective in this respect. But

after 1874 no Chinese depended solely on his secret society to protect his life, as he had done before.

The greater part of the population of Larut was concentrated in the mining areas but there was a scattered population, Chinese in the south and Malay in the north, along the coast of Larut. The Chinese on the coast had profitted greatly by the piratical activities of 1873 and it took many years to eradicate this evil completely. Low, writing of the situation in 1879, mentions "the lawless Chinese fishermen and wood-cutters who lived in the creeks and backwaters of Larut, the ramifications of which were at that time unexplored, and gave shelter to pirates, murderers, and criminals of all kinds from Penang and the neighbouring countries." Speedy did his best to control this area by taking out patrols of his Indian police for a fortnight at a time "marching through jungle and swamp, scarcely ever in dry clothes."

It will be remembered that the Malays of Kurau had been armed to take part in the Mentri's campaign of November-December 1873. To strengthen their base they had also built stockades, equipped with guns and swivel cannon, on either side of the mouth of the Kurau river. Speedy, of course, knew of these preparations and, after the armistice had made them unnecessary, he visited Kurau, collected up the arms and had the stockades destroyed.

There was also trouble inland at Sēlama. The evidence is too scanty to provide the basis of a continuous narrative but it appears that one Che Karim, a Rawa chief, came to Sēlama, then uninhabited, at the beginning of 1874 or a little earlier. He originally had some sort of an understanding with the Mentri, in whose territory Sēlama was. The Treaty of Pangkor raised the status of Sultan Abdullah and depressed the prestige of the Mentri. Accordingly, two months after the treaty, in March 1874, Che Karim obtained a grant from Sultan Abdullah empowering him to take up land at Sēlama and to open tin mines there. Abdullah was no doubt glad to assert his royal power in the territory of the Mentri. The Mentri, for his part, tried during 1874 to expell Che Karim from Sēlama. It seems probable, therefore, that the Mentri was behind Raja Mat Saman, "a notorious lawless character", who was "extorting blackmail on all the produce" of Sēlama in October 1874. Che Karim's settlement must have been the target of these deperadations.⁽¹¹⁾ Birch, supported by Speedy and his sepoy, moved to Sēlama in October 1874. "The pirates, although they had vaunted up to the last moment that they would fight, escaped into the jungle, where they were hotly pursued by the native police, and sixty were captured and forwarded to the Sultan of Perak for punishment." But Sultan Abdullah, like most Malay notables, had little taste for punishing people too poor to pay fines. He let them go.

Apart from these semi-military operations against bands of free-booters and pirates, Speedy's police had also to deal with ordinary crime. In his report for 1874 Speedy notes that the Malays were addicted to occasional cattle-theft and even highway robbery. As for the Chinese, "stealing is their chief weakness and they are also much given to assault, being a most combative and quarrelsome people, quick to take offence and ready to strike; they require careful watching and firmness and decision in dealing with them" (Speedy was at one with Swettenham there).

A Court was set up in Larut and the Treasurer, Marples, also acted as Magistrate. He and Speedy thought it right to apply the Straits Settlement Penal Code, being untroubled, like other administrators in the Malay States at that time, by any doubts as to whether Straits Settlements law automatically extended to the Malay States.⁽¹²⁾ In 1874 770 offenders were tried, including 168 accused of assault, 156 of theft and 97 of unlawful assembly. 69 were sued for breach of contract and 46 for trespass. There was a problem what to do with convicted offenders. An old gaol building (presumably the Mentri's) had been taken over but it was still being renovated in February 1875 when Birch, intent on detail, remarks "the old gaol has been renewed, and is now only waiting for some doors. I have asked Captain Innes to have them made of open bars of iron, as I did not think the ventilation of the cells sufficient, and the warders could not, with the other doors, look into the rooms." Meanwhile, another observer tells us, "flogging is a rather more frequent punishment than in our courts, but until the new gaol is ready, there is, to say the least, a strong additional reason for it in the want of prison accommodation." After all this comment it is rather a surprise to find that only 34 offenders were "whipped", not flogged, in 1874; 8 of them had been convicted of assault and 16 of theft.

On the whole Speedy's measures for law and order seem to have produced satisfactory results. He did not, however, in the short space of two years establish an adequate system of political intelligence. When the Perak War broke out in November 1875 Speedy did not know that the Kuala Kurau Malays were preparing to revolt and he did not know that the Chinese headmen in Larut had been in communication with the Malay chiefs implicated in the revolt in Perak proper.

As a second point, the quality of Speedy's police force was not high. His Indian police, especially the elite of the Residency guard, were excellent so long as Speedy, who understood them and their language, was in charge. After Speedy left they became "badly disciplined owing to having been without an officer in command who could either speak their language, know their sympathies or properly direct their movements." The Malay

element in the police force was necessarily recruited from among the mercenaries who had been employed in the forces of Malay chiefs before 1874. For many years it was found impossible to recruit police from among the law-abiding peasantry of the Malay States. The rag, tag and bobtail had to be taken for lack of better material. We hear, for example, of "18 Mandiling men under Raja Desah, one of Captain Speedy's men" in the Perak War. Of the Malays in the Perak Police generally it was said in 1877 that "large numbers of them, especially of the Malays, were useless from sickness and other causes" (such as opium smoking, criminal records etc).

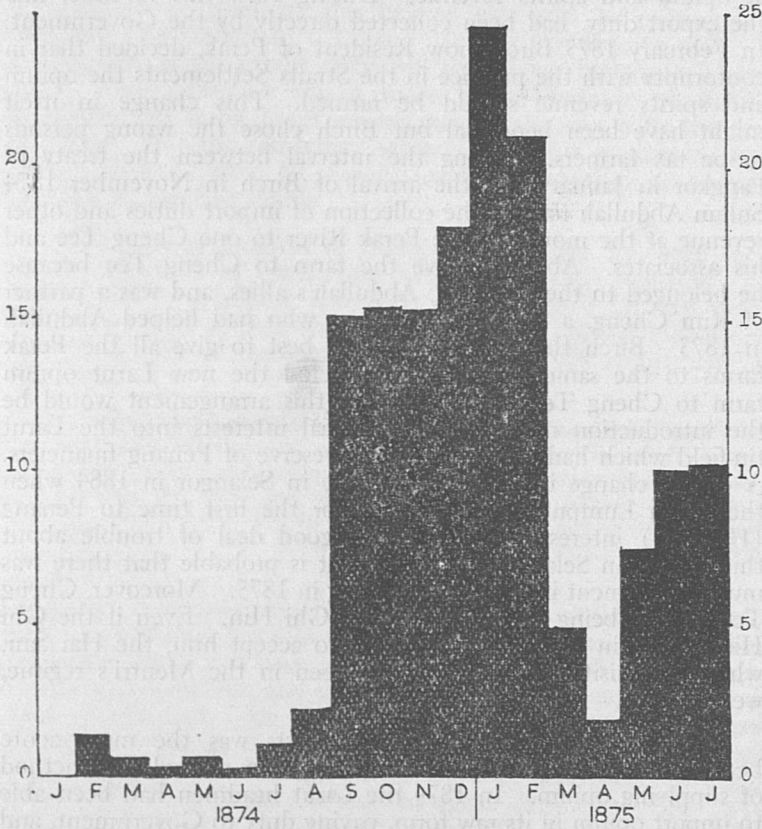
Police equipment was necessarily makeshift. Even at the end of 1876 the police were clothed in "uniforms of the most varied description" and they carried "arms of a miscellaneous character".

Finally there was the problem of disposing the small police force to best advantage. Speedy kept half his force concentrated at Taiping, where however there were no police barracks. Taiping was the centre of the mining area and the most likely centre of trouble. From Taiping the police could if necessary sally forth as a striking force. But Speedy was under constant pressure to detach small numbers of men to man police posts elsewhere. Swettenham (1951: 76) complains in June 1874 that Speedy has not yet opened Police stations at Bukit Bĕrapit on the route to Kuala Kangsar and at Kuala Kangsar itself. As the crisis in Perak proper deepened in the third quarter of 1875 Birch warned Speedy that he would be required to station a detachment from Larut at Kuala Kangsar. On the other hand the police officers who took over from Speedy in 1876 complained that in the whole of Perak "the men were cut up into small bodies and divided among a number of unimportant stations." It is interesting that these officers preserved the same proportions as Speedy in 1874, i.e. half the police were concentrated in main centres and half dispersed in rural police stations.

The relation between tax-farming and economic development has already been explained (v.s. p. 19). It might, therefore, have been expected that tax-farming would have been preserved as the basis of financial and economic policy in Larut. In fact the farming of the tin export duty was abandoned from 1874 until 1879, when Hugh Low reintroduced it, and the farming of opium and other import duties was badly bungled.

There is no information of the reason why it was decided to introduce direct government collection of tin export duty in 1874. It was probably not Speedy's decision alone though he may have recommended it. There was a European Treasurer (Marples) and also a Harbour-Master/Customs-Officer (Peterson)

in Larut to enforce efficient government collection of the duty. It was felt that the farm system gave rise to abuses. Birch remarked that "the revenues are being collected on fixed principles and without that "squeezing" to which the people have been so long accustomed." It may have been difficult at the beginning of 1874 to obtain a satisfactory offer from prospective tax-farmers



Graph 1. Totals of monthly revenue from tin workings at Larut from January 1874 to July 1875, inclusive. The totals are shown in thousands of dollars.

because Larut was at a standstill and the prospects of recovery were then uncertain. Finally, it may have seemed wise to keep in government hands a right of revenue collection which had caused so much trouble in the past. The result of excluding Chinese capitalists from participation in the indirect profits of their own investment was financial instability. If the circumstances of mining impelled them to reduce production, there was

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no stabilising factor of the tax farm to work the other day during the remainder of the current farm period. Graph 1 shows how sharp the fluctuations were in the first eighteen months of British administration in Larut.

An example of the instability of the situation was soon provided by the upset due to the mishandling of the collection of opium and spirits revenue. During 1874 this revenue, like the export duty, had been collected directly by the Government. In February 1875 Birch, now Resident of Perak, decided that in conformity with the practice in the Straits Settlements the opium and spirits revenue should be farmed. This change in itself might have been beneficial but Birch chose the wrong persons to be tax farmers. During the interval between the treaty of Pangkor in January and the arrival of Birch in November 1874 Sultan Abdullah had let the collection of import duties and other revenue at the mouth of the Perak River to one Cheng Tee and his associates. Abdullah gave the farm to Cheng Tee because he belonged to the Ghi Hin, Abdullah's allies, and was a partner of Kim Cheng, a Singapore financier who had helped Abdullah in 1873. Birch thought it would be best to give all the Perak farms to the same combine and offered the new Larut opium farm to Cheng Tee. The result of this arrangement would be the introduction of Singapore financial interests into the Larut tin-field which had hitherto been a preserve of Penang financiers. A similar change in reverse was made in Selangor in 1884 when the Kuala Lumpur farms were let for the first time to Penang (Hokkien) interests. There was a good deal of trouble about this change in Selangor in 1884 and it is probable that there was much resentment in Larut and Penang in 1875. Moreover, Cheng Tee besides being an outsider was a Ghi Hin. Even if the Ghi Hin miners in Larut were prepared to accept him, the Hai San, whose perquisite the tax-farm had been in the Mentri's regime, were hostile.

The conflict between these interests was the more acute because the introduction of an opium farm altered the method of supplying opium. In 1874 the Larut headmen had been able to import opium in its raw form, paying duty to Government, and then to retail cooked opium to their mine labourers at prices which yielded them a large profit. In this way they made a trading profit even if they could not have the farm. On the other hand an opium farmer would have the monopoly of the import of raw opium and of its retail sale in the cooked form. The Larut headmen would thus lose their trading profits in opium to Cheng Tee as well as surrendering a farm to which they considered themselves exclusively entitled.

Swettenham (in an unpublished official report)⁽¹³⁾ says that the Larut miners regarded the new arrangement "with great aver-

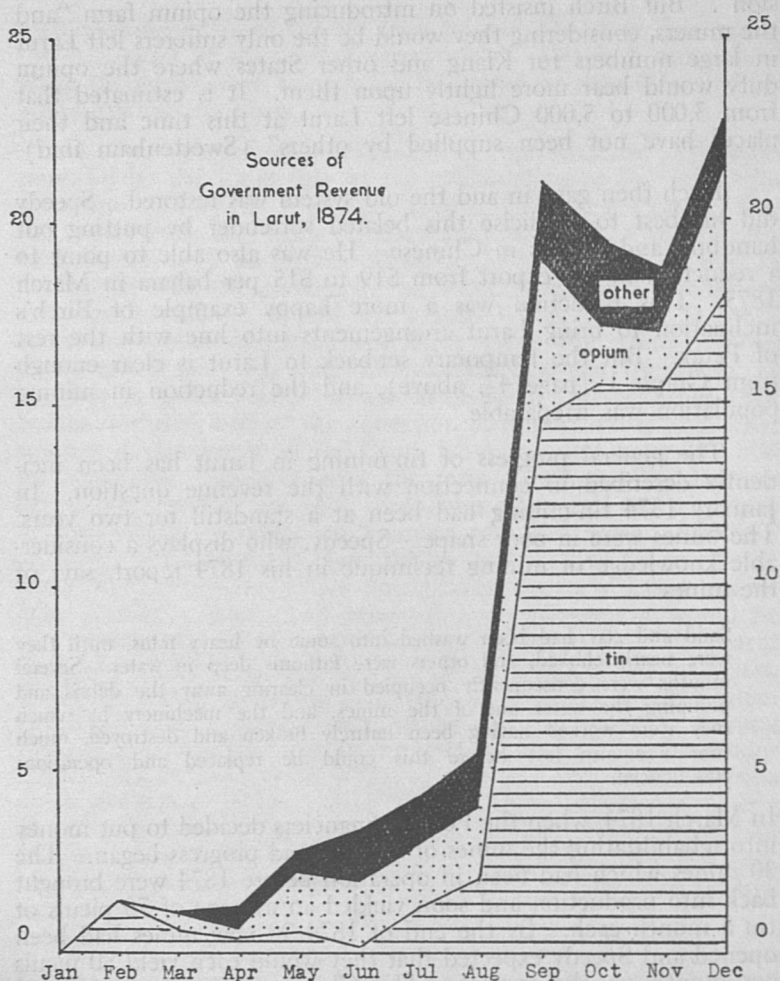
sion". But Birch insisted on introducing the opium farm "and the miners, considering they would be the only sufferers left Larut in large numbers for Klang and other States where the opium duty would bear more lightly upon them. It is estimated that from 3,000 to 5,000 Chinese left Larut at this time and their places have not been supplied by others" (Swettenham *ibid*).

Birch then gave in and the old system was restored. Speedy did his best to publicise this belated surrender by putting out handbills and posters in Chinese. He was also able to point to a reduction in tin export from \$19 to \$15 per bahara in March 1875. This reduction was a more happy example of Birch's inclination to bring Larut arrangements into line with the rest of Perak. But the temporary set-back to Larut is clear enough from Graph 1 (page 47, above), and the reduction in mining population was irrepairable.

The general progress of tin-mining in Larut has been incidentally described in connection with the revenue question. In January 1874 tin-mining had been at a standstill for two years. The mines were in poor shape. Speedy, who displays a considerable knowledge of mining technique in his 1874 report, says of the mines

Sand and clay had been washed into some by heavy rains, until they were nearly choked, and others were fathoms deep in water. Several months were consequently occupied in clearing away the debris and pumping the water out of the mines, and the machinery by which they were worked having been entirely broken and destroyed, much time was also lost before this could be replaced and operations commenced.

In March 1874, when the Penang financiers decided to put money into rehabilitating the mines of Larut, rapid progress began. The 30 mines which had been in operation before 1874 were brought back into production and soon yielded an average of 70 piculs of tin a month each. By the end of 1874 90 new mines had been opened and Speedy expected that they would each yield 50 piculs per month on the average. The Chinese population of Larut rose to 27,000, a figure not reached again until after 1880. The arrival of Chinese New year in February 1875 brought production of tin to a peak. In a spurt to raise money for the customary payment of debts the miners exported in January 1875 one and a half times as much tin as the average of the three months before (v. Graph 1). Then came a series of set-backs. The opium revenue debacle of April 1875 has already been described. In the autumn of 1875 the outbreak of the Perak War and the arrival of troops in Larut caused the Chinese to take alarm. Many of them left Larut. The price of tin, which had been \$60 per bahara in 1874, dropped sharply at the end of 1875 and this fall



Graph 2. Sources of Government revenue in Larut during 1874. Figures are in thousands of dollars.

further damped down production. Pickering estimated the Chinese population of Larut at only 15,000 in 1876. Low estimated it at 9,000 in 1877. In 1879 the price of tin rose and the Chinese population increased again to 17,000.

The volume of tin production had increased rapidly in 1874 to about 2,500-3,000 piculs p.m. in the last quarter. After fluctuating in 1875 it settled down to about 3,000 piculs p.m. in 1876. Owing to the fall in price at the end of 1875 export duty

had to be reduced again in January 1876 from \$15 to \$10 per bahara.

The relative economic recession of 1875 brought out a conflict of interest latent in the profit-sharing arrangements between mining financiers and their labour force. The standard arrangement was that the financier "grub-staked" the miners, i.e. he provided the food and other necessaries which they consumed while opening the mine. By way of interest on this advance he was allowed to debit the miners for supplies consumed at prices considerably above the open market level. Jervis said that the prices were 2-300% above the general level but he gave no particulars. When the mine got into production the ore was smelted usually once in six months. The financier had the exclusive right to buy this tin, sometimes at a price below the general market level. The expenses and the sums debited to the miners for supplies were deducted from the proceeds of selling the tin and the remaining profit was divided between the financier and the miners in previously agreed shares. If the mine yielded no profit the financier bore the whole loss, i.e. the miners repaid their advances for goods supplied as far as the funds available would go but they did not have to pay off any deficiency. If this was small the financier could often recoup his loss from profits of supplying food etc at much more than it cost, and from buying tin at lower than the market price. These trading profits of the financier were not divisible with the miners. The importance of the trading profits in mining finance can be gauged from the fact that Larut miners were prepared to leave Larut rather than give up the opium trade to Birch's farmer.

When the price of tin dropped, as in 1875, the miners' prospects of having any mining profits to share at the next smelting grew less rosy. They knew, however, that the financier (*towkay labur*) would very probably break even or show a profit over all by reason of his trading profits. This seemed unfair and they hit back by a "go-slow" movement.⁽¹⁴⁾ Skinner, an official in the Singapore Secretariat, visiting Larut in February 1875 says "we reached the mines about 8.30 a.m. The miners are supposed to work till 9 a.m. but they had already stopped, and were proceeding to amuse themselves eating, smoking and gambling till the afternoon—the laziest workmen I ever saw." The miners had, of course, no inducement to work hard since there would be no profits. By slowing the tempo of work they reduced the amount of tin produced by their labour during a given period. Since they consumed the same amount of food in this time, the effect was to raise the cost of producing tin. An increase in costs led to a corresponding increase in the losses of the mine. The financier, who bore the whole loss of the mine, might then find

Revenue of Larut—1874.

Articles, &c.	Jan'y.	Feb'y.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Total.														
Tin at \$19 per bhara...	...	1,349	65	642	06	372	10	519	09	1,37	26	1,192	19	2,075	61	14,873	98	15,550	59	15,436	77	16,038	80	70,227	43		
Opium \$4 per ball	450	240	1,850	1,840	1,710	1,920	4,080	75	1,441	65	1,448	40	8,417	24	8,269	50	450	...	200	...	250	...	8,269	04	
Gambling Farms	134	885	50	370	400	450	...	200	...	470	...	...	...	...	...	200	...	...	200	...	...	1,937	05	
Tolls on Roads	167	05	244	268	200	200	938,862	02

MISCELLANEOUS.

Tax on Gardens	...	...	...	...	10	9	49	60	42	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	181
Mining Licenses	...	...	...	...	14	250	68	47	6	25	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	177
Tax on Houses	...	...	...	58	37	265	89	238	277	10	1	50	196	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,444
Figs	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	112	75	218	...	118	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	655
Port Clearance and Harbour Dues	...	...	...	132	24	25	132	170	151	35	808	...	136	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,255
Magistrate's fines	...	...	...	67	41	14	7	151	65	296	95	...	188	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	837
Licenses on Carts	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	87	50	109	...	22	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,255
Boats' Registration	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	852
Boats' Registration	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	265
Gambler	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	852
Tobacco	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	265
Wood and Fishing farms	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	852
Imports, Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	852
Exports, Hides and Horns	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	852
Stamp on Opium	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	852
Manifests	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	852
Charcoals	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	852
Krian Revenue	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	852
Sundries	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	852

Brought down from the above for Tin, Opium, Gambling farms and Tolls on Roads Revenue... \$ 7,692.57
 Total... \$ 101,564.69

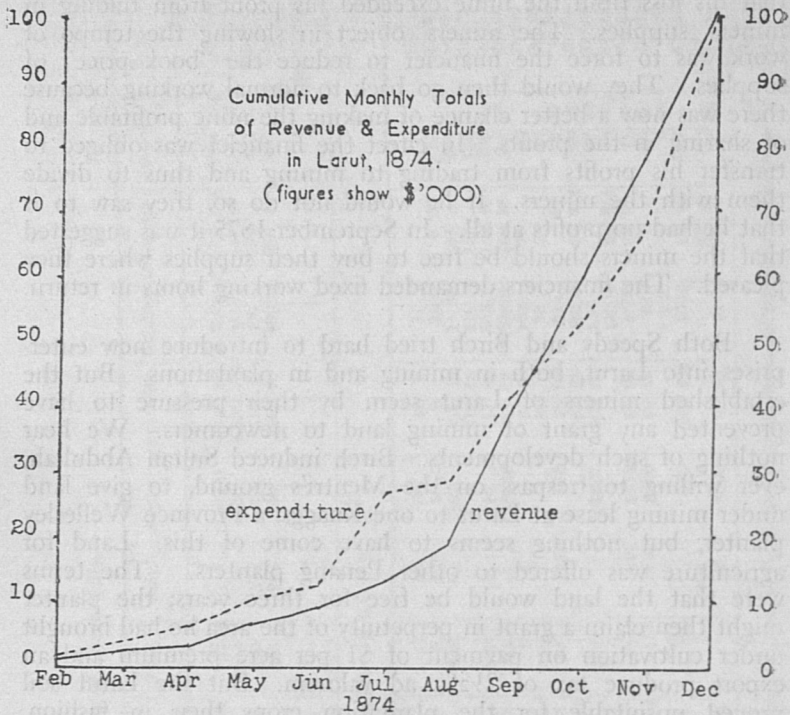
The Revenue of Larut, Perak, for 1874: Appendix B to Speedy's Report, as published in the Straits Settlements Government Gazette for 3 April, 1875, p.296.

that his loss from the mine exceeded his profit from trading in miners' supplies. The miners' object in slowing the tempo of work was to force the financier to reduce the "book price" of supplies. They would then go back to normal working because there was now a better chance of making the mine profitable and of sharing in the profits. In effect the financier was obliged to transfer his profits from trading to mining and thus to divide them with the miners. If he would not do so, they saw to it that he had no profits at all. In September 1875 it was suggested that the miners should be free to buy their supplies where they pleased. The financiers demanded fixed working hours in return.

Both Speedy and Birch tried hard to introduce new enterprises into Larut, both in mining and in plantations. But the established miners of Larut seem by their pressure to have prevented any grant of mining land to newcomers. We hear nothing of such developments. Birch induced Sultan Abdullah, ever willing to trespass on the Mentri's ground, to give land under mining lease at Larut to one Knaggs, a Province Wellesley planter, but nothing seems to have come of this. Land for agriculture was offered to other Penang planters. The terms were that the land would be free for three years; the planter might then claim a grant in perpetuity of the area he had brought under cultivation on payment of \$1 per acre premium and an export produce tax of 2½% ad valorem. But the Larut soil proved unsuitable for the plantation crops then in fashion. After a flurry of interest early in 1874, the planters faded out.

Speedy also interested himself in Malay padi cultivation and other peasant production. There was a very small export trade in hides, horn and native coffee. In writing of agricultural subject Speedy uses a great deal of botanical Latin. When he refers to wet rice it is "padi sawah (*oriza sativa*)" and so on. One wonder whether he really had any knowledge of botany or whether some botanical reference book was drawn on for effect. This latter supposition is consistent with the fulsome opening paragraph of Speedy's 1874 report in which he speaks of "the restoration of peace in Perak, so ably effected by His Excellency's wise administration."

The large influx of Chinese in 1874, accompanied by a small but appreciable Malay immigration, led to a boom in house construction in Larut. At the end of 1874 there were 72 sawpits at work in Larut. There were complaints from Penang that all the carpenters had migrated to Larut and that the few who remained were demanding higher wages because rates were so high in Larut. Speedy controlled this development by laying



Graph 3. Cumulative monthly totals of revenue and expenditure at Larut during 1874. Figures show thousands of dollars.

out a site for a new town in each of the two mining areas. The town in the Hai San area he called "Thaipeng" ("Everlasting Peace" in Chinese) in the hope that the name would be an augury. The Ghi Hin town took the Malay name of the locality, Kamunting. Swettenham (1951: 44) describes the new towns which were rising in April 1874. There were already 250 houses in Taiping—"very nice-looking houses they are, too, all alike, going up on both sides of what will shortly be a good street." There were 200-300 houses at Kamunting also. Birch, too, reported that the Assistant Resident was "busily laying out streets and building lots, and that many respectable and substantial houses had already been constructed." By the end of 1874 the population of Taiping was 5,000 including 1,000 shopkeepers; Kamunting had 4,000 people and 300 shops. McNair, taking a view of Taiping from the Residency hill in 1875, described it (1878: 29) as "a busy place, with long thatched buildings by the hundred. Fences and water-courses intersect the land, and here and there supplies of water are dammed up for the purpose of working tin."

It proved difficult to maintain satisfactory cleansing arrangements in the teeming new towns. In February 1875 Birch noted that the street drains were extremely dirty. It was even more difficult to introduce hygiene into the Mentri's village of Kota which was "a simply vile place to be in at present, full of open drains which make it anything but a healthy place." The other Larut town of the old era, Matang, was "in a tumbledown state and ought to be pulled down and rebuilt." There was cholera in Larut in the spring of 1874 and the death-roll was said to have reached 65 (Swettenham, 1951: 74).

The other main administrative problem arising from the mining boom was the construction and repair of roads. Before 1874 the Mentri had built a road seven miles long from the landing place at the mouth of the Larut river inland towards the mines. Two and a half miles from the coast a branch road went off for six miles to Kota and Bukit Gantang. These roads had been built on the "corduroy" principle by putting logs into the mud transversely across the line of the road. By 1874 the original roads were in bad condition. The logs had rotted and great holes appeared down to the mud below. Swettenham (1948: 178) said, of the arrival of the boundary commission in February 1874, "the path was no path! it was a "Slough of Despond", as indeed we found to our cost. It had been raining at intervals all day, and the track where it was not an unbroken stretch of water, was a succession of holes, at least two feet deep, and full of water." The stretch of road near the river mouth was the worst of all, perhaps because the lower ground being undrained was always swampy.

Where the road was passable the usual means of transport was a cart drawn by oxen, or less often by buffaloes, and capable of carrying a load of half a ton. Where there were no roads elephants could carry half a ton of tin, or less of more bulky things, in rattan panniers slung on either side. The mining boom greatly increased traffic. Speedy estimated that nearly 100 carts a day were passing between the mines and the coast during the second half of 1874.

Speedy had neither money nor technical staff in the first half of 1874 for a major programme of road reconstruction. Even road metal was difficult to come by. Plenty of stone was dug up in the course of mining but it was not easy to cart stone in quantity for eight miles down to the stretch of road nearest the coast which was most in need of repair. Speedy's repairs took the form of depositing cart-loads of stone into the pot-holes as they appeared. On the inland stretch of road, which was

probably drier and in better condition, this patching seems to have answered well enough. Skinner, visiting Larut in 1875, says that all but the coastal stretch was in such good order that a pony trap could cover it at seven miles an hour, "a pace hitherto unknown in these States." But patching the quagmire near the coast was useless. Swettenham said "Speedy has in a manner repaired about a mile of the worst of it, but it is very badly done, hardly any metal, what there is being large unbroken stones and any amount of sand, so that the part done six weeks ago is beginning to get into holes" (Swettenham, 1951: 75). Birch remarked that "want of system is not to be wondered at but in road making it is very costly." However by the beginning of 1875 Speedy had obtained a European supervisor and, funds being then available, a complete reconstruction of the road from the coast inland was begun.

Even in 1874 Speedy was able to construct a new length of road, extending the Mentri's communications further inland to Taiping and beyond. In this case the road metal from the mines was near at hand and laterite was obtained from the cuttings. The branch road to Kota was repaired "under the Mentri's supervision on contract." During the Perak War the road carried on from Bukit Gantang to Kuala Kangsar and a telegraph line was installed from Taiping to Kuala Kangsar for military use.

1874 \$100,000

B	R & B	Estab	M	Perak	O
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1875 \$226,000

Bdgs	Roads and Bridges	Establishments	Mentri	Contribution to Govt of Perak	Other
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Graph 4. Proportions of Government expenditure at Larut in 1874 and 1875 under main headings.

The expenses of maintaining law and order, collecting revenue and providing roads took a large part of the limited funds available for administrative work in Larut (v. Graph 4, above). European Government staff in Larut in 1874-75 apparently consisted of Speedy (Assistant Resident), Marples (Treasurer and Magistrate), Geddis (Inspector of Mines), Revening (Inspector of Roads), Peterson (Harbour Master) and Maillé (Medical Officer and Forestry Officer). Maillé, mentioned by Swettenham (1951:74) in June 1874, is not included in the establishment list attached to Speedy's report at the end of the year; he may have left in

the course of the year. The salaries of these officers and their clerks, the incidental expenses of the government system, the cost of the police force, the Mentri's allowance and an expensive programme of road construction left very little money for other purposes. The situation was the more difficult because the revenue was almost all derived, directly or indirectly, from mining production and this was subject to violent fluctuations (v. Graph 1 and pp 49-53). Few new services could be undertaken without engaging staff. Staff, once engaged, increased the fixed expenditure of government which could not be reduced in the short run or for short periods. Speedy spent most of the funds remaining after meeting the commitments already described in erecting government buildings and quarters. Buildings cost \$12,000 in 1874 and \$14,000 in 1875. He had no engineer to supervise this programme and the work was not well done. It seems to have been a case of erecting cheap, temporary buildings, in order to have something, and then having to rebuild within a few years. The Mentri's gaol, renovated in 1874, had to be replaced by a new building in 1877. Birch noted in 1875 that "the public buildings might all with advantage be improved, and could all be made to look neater and cleaner at very little cost." But the Taiping government buildings were better than any others in Perak and Selangor in the period 1874-5.

The Mentri played practically no part in the government of Larut at this time. After the humiliations of the Pangkor meeting he retired to Kota and sulked (Swettenham, 1951: 44). For a time he toyed with the idea of sending Mr Woods, his Penang lawyer, to England to try to induce the British government to repudiate the Pangkor treaty. But he gave up this idea, perhaps because it would cost a great deal of money which he could ill afford. As Malay opposition to Birch hardened in the rest of Perak the Mentri became drawn into the plots which led to the murder of Birch.

The Mentri found his position at Larut galling for two reasons. He saw the revenues of Larut restored to their former level, but his own share of them was modest. He received \$8,566 in 1874 and \$21,221 in 1875, between 8 and 9% of the total Larut revenue in each year. At the time he was said to owe some \$350,000 in war debts. A substantial part of these debts were to the Ghi Hin as compensation for damage suffered in the Larut War; the rest were debts incurred in war expenditure proper. The Mentri's creditors obtained judgement against him in the Penang High Court and he knew that he would be arrested for debt if he went to Penang (Swettenham, 1951: 44). The Government of Perak eventually took over the Mentri's debts

after his banishment. An official investigation yielded a total of \$167,000 in proven debts. At all events in 1874-75 the Mentri was complaining to other Malay chiefs that Speedy kept him short of money.

A more serious matter because it attracted criticism in England⁽¹⁵⁾ was the virtual exclusion of the Mentri from the work of government. Lord Stanley and other critics seem to have supposed that the Mentri was a sovereign in Larut, precisely what the negotiators at Pangkor had been at pains to deny. If the Mentri was merely the territorial chief of Larut, Speedy did no more than many other British administrators of the period in governing Larut without close consultation with him. Both Swettenham (1948: 195) and Jervois approved this aspect of affairs in Larut. Jervois wrote to the Colonial Office that "the functions of the Resident as regards the district of Larut, where the population is almost wholly Chinese, and Malay authority is powerless, must differ to some extent from those which he will exercise in Perak proper, which is mainly inhabited by Malays." Speedy's error lay in making no pretence about his "direct administration" of Larut in his report for 1874, which was published to the world in the *Straits Settlements Government Gazette* for 3 April, 1875.

The Mentri complained about Speedy in the course of a conversation with ex-Sultan Ismail—"I gave him pay and he worked under me and how has he treated me since?" Publicly the Mentri blustered (Swettenham, 1951: 103) saying to Malays that he could dismiss Speedy when he liked. The Malay chiefs in the rest of Perak found it difficult to understand (Swettenham, 1951: 121) what the real position of the Mentri in Larut was.

Speedy was fortunate that the Malay population of Larut was small and included no chiefs of consequence except the Mentri. Hence he encountered few instances of debt-bondsmen and slaves running away from chiefs—a source of much friction between Birch and the chiefs of Perak proper. Speedy, like Hugh Low later on, was punctilious in respecting this Malay custom so long as it remained the law of Perak. Slaves who came to Speedy for sanctuary were returned to their owners. This contrast with the behaviour of Birch attracted some comment among the Malay chiefs of the rest of Perak.

When Speedy first lived in Larut he made his headquarters at or near the Mentri's village of Kota. In June 1874 he had moved to live in temporary quarters opposite the Residency which was then being built on the present site overlooking Tai-

ping (Swettenham, 1951: 44, 74). In later years Mrs Speedy, when roughing it in the Sudan, decided that an Arab house in Suakin was "palatial after the Malay hut and the wooden shanty at Larut." (Speedy, 1884: 16).

The new Residency was finished early in 1875. It was an example of one of Speedy's failings—an inclination to do himself well in respect of amenities provided from public funds. Birch called it "a very commodious residence"; Jervois said it was "a large and very comfortable house"; Skinner found it "very roomy and comfortable." McNair (1878: 175) says that the Residency was built of adze-squared timber and that some of the woodwork of the verandah, rails, floors and doors was actually planed—"a wonderful novelty in Perak". Much of the woodwork was painted; this work had been done by Chinese artisans whose workmanship was "far more costly and finished" than that of the Malays. McNair (*ibid*: 29) gives this general description—

The Resident's house here is a large native structure upon an eminence. It looks, with its wooden supports, palm-thatched and extensive verandahs, precisely adapted to the climate; and here the eastern element shows out strongly, in the Chinese going and coming in their peculiar costume and parasol-shaped hats, while the Resident's police, swarthy Sikhs in white puggarees, stand about awaiting orders or on duty.

Except for the size of the building it does not sound such a very extravagant structure. It was no doubt built to last. It was the headquarters of the government in Larut as well as Speedy's house. But one must accept the unanimous comment of contemporaries that it was larger and otherwise more expensive than they would have expected. The contrast between the Residency and the shoddy government buildings (v.s. p. 57) does Speedy no credit.

In the same spirit of "no expense spared" Speedy established a considerable stable. We have mentioned the smart pony trap which transported Mr Skinner at the unprecedented speed of seven miles an hour. During the same visit Skinner and his fellow guests were mounted on three ponies from the "government stables." When Birch was expected on a visit at about this time (early 1875) Speedy was able to send six elephants to meet him. Speedy sometimes toured Larut on an elephant, remarking in his 1874 report that "the elephant is regarded as a princely possession."

Speedy was an excellent host. Even in his makeshift early days at Kota he managed to entertain the boundary commission "royally" (Swettenham, 1948: 178). On another occasion when

Swettenham dined with Speedy he remarks (1951: 75) "we had as usual some rather severe arguments after dinner." Elsewhere again Swettenham (1942: 39) relates how Speedy "told us strange stories" of the explorations of Burton and Speke. It is characteristic (v. Note 1 ad fin) that these stories were quite untrue in so far as Speedy claimed to have shared these adventures.

Speedy disliked being outdone by his guests. When the boundary commission came to Larut in late January 1874, Speedy had his first meeting with Pickering, the Chinese expert. He was mortified to discover that Pickering could speak Chinese and play the bagpipes—both accomplishments which Speedy envied him. He immediately said that he (Speedy) could speak Chinese though Swettenham doubted whether he really could. Speedy also obtained some bagpipes from Penang and tried to emulate Pickering, who in his earlier days in Formosa got into the habit of playing on the pipes for the entertainment of the Chinese. Of Speedy's piping Swettenham says (1942: 39) that "his appearance and marching were impressive but the sounds he drew from the bag and pipes were merely discordant noises, and I think his duties left him no time in which to perfect himself as a piper." This incident is probably the basis of the derisive passage quoted at the very beginning of this paper. But it is evident that Jervois was wrong in saying that Speedy "performed with much facility."

The turban and the leopard skin mentioned by Jervois may be a reference (characteristically full of envenomed exaggeration) to Speedy's liking for wearing Abyssinian dress. Here at least Swettenham (1942: 39) more or less confirms Jervois—"He (Speedy) was a very unusual character with a great fondness for 'dressing up.'" Mrs Speedy (1884: 108) provides another example of Speedy's personal eccentricity of attire; Speedy had a thick gold key chain made by a Chinese goldsmith.

Mrs Speedy apparently remained in Penang when her husband resigned from the Police in 1874, but she joined him at Larut before the middle of 1874. She accompanied him on some of his tours in Larut and much enjoyed bathing in the jungle streams (Speedy, 1884: 19). On these trips they lived in tents—equipment on which Speedy had ideas of his own. He and Mrs Speedy planned to make two tents to their own design, which had been worked out by cutting out pieces of paper on a small scale. They cut out canvas on the full scale and put it together with the aid of Mrs Speedy's sewing machine (Speedy, 1884: 5). The tents were a success and the sewing machine still worked afterwards.

Speedy's younger brother was with him in Larut apparently for about 18 months. Swettenham (1951: 44) mentions shooting with the younger Speedy at Kota in April 1874. In September 1875 Jervois, en route for Kuala Kangsar, stopped his carriage at "young Mr Speedy's house" at Kota but the owner was away seriously ill in Penang. This unnamed brother of the Larut period is probably the same person as the brother, James Havelock Speedy, whom Mrs Speedy mentions in her will as settled in New Zealand.

During the period which ended with the Perak War Speedy seems to have enjoyed the confidence and the good opinion of his superiors. Sir Andrew Clark, in a despatch of December 1874, told the Colonial Office that Speedy had been successful at Larut. Birch, reporting on a visit to Larut in February 1875, remarks that "British administration in Larut has been very successful and it may be made still more so now." Birch also used progress in Larut as an argument to persuade ex-Sultan Ismail to accept the new regime in Perak proper. Even Jervois took Speedy with him on his tour of Perak in September 1875. He would hardly have done so if he had then regarded Speedy as disloyal and useless.

4. The Perak War (November 1875 to February 1876)

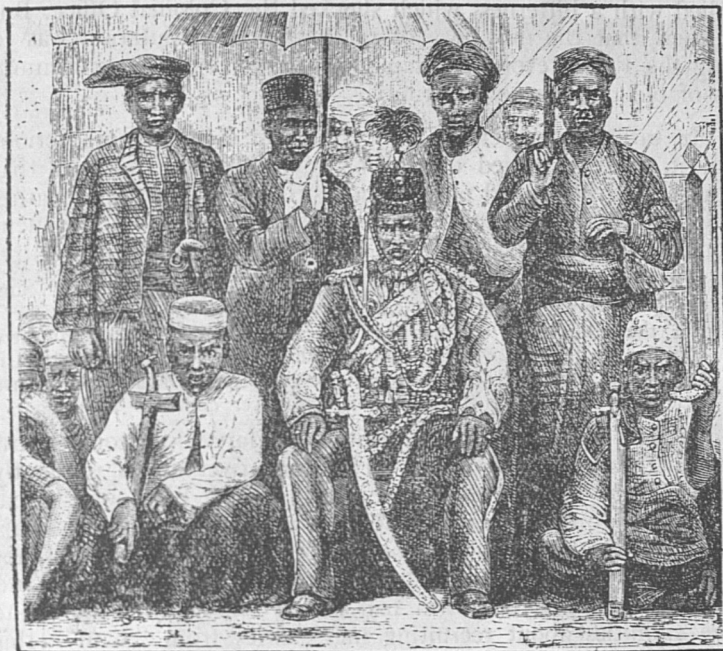
Birch was murdered on 2 November, 1875, at Pasir Salak on the Perak River. The Maharaja Lela, chief of Pasir Salak, was directly implicated in the murder. Sultan Abdullah, ex-Sultan Ismail and every major Malay chief of Perak, except Raja Yusuf, was eventually found to be morally, if not legally, implicated in a plot to throw off the Pangkor treaty regime. Abdullah, the Laxamana and the Shahbandar had authorised or connived at the plan to kill Birch. But these ramifications of the plot, although suspected at the time, were not established by investigation until a year afterwards.

Birch was in a fashion fortunate to die when he did and so escape the blame which was heaped on his head after his death. The original reason advanced to explain the Malay revolt was that Birch had antagonised the Malay chiefs by his brusque and autocratic handling of Perak affairs. The assassination at Pasir Salak was described as the spontaneous and almost accidental result of a scuffle begun by Birch's clerk, Mat Arshad. It was a convenient view of the matter to take for then neither the Governor nor his advisers in Singapore could be held to blame. They asserted that they had merely carried on the policy introduced by Sir Andrew Clarke and approved by the Colonial Office. A

tactless Resident had got himself killed and there was no more to be said. The Straits Settlements Executive Council duly recorded its view that Birch had been "overbearing" in his manner and that he had "showed a want of respect for Malay custom."

The Colonial Office, however, were not convinced. It seemed to them from the outset that the murder of Birch and the resultant war were due to a drastic change of policy initiated by Governor Jervois without reference to London. The evidence taken by the Commission of Enquiry into the Perak disturbances bears out the Colonial Office view. The Malay chiefs did indeed resent the humiliations which they suffered at the hands of Birch. But their main grievance and concern was that the British authorities, through Birch, were trying to take the government of Perak out of their hands. Sultan Abdullah said of Birch that he "was in fact acting as if had superior authority to him (Abdullah) instead of being under him"

The explanation of these conflicts is that the Pangkor treaty meant different things to different people. Sultan Abdullah told his intimates that he had signed the treaty because it was the only way of establishing his position as Sultan. He took it that the Resident would be someone to carry out his orders for a salary of \$300 a month (the pay of a junior official). The Colonial Office took the Pangkor treaty to mean what it said, i.e. a British Resident was by his advice to assist the Sultan to govern and collect his revenues in an orderly fashion. Sir Andrew Clarke and Birch may have begun with the same intention but they soon came up against practical difficulties. First, the Malay chiefs were opposed to reforms which took revenue collection, the source of their power, out of their hands. It could be argued that these rights of revenue collection were "Malay custom" and so preserved by treaty from British interference. Secondly, the Sultan, even if willing, was quite unable to carry out the reforms proposed, because he had no civil service or other machinery of central government. The Perak revenues would not stand the expense of importing British executives in addition to British advisers. The advisers therefore became executives in order to implement their own advice. These difficulties, though implicit in some of Birch's reports which were forwarded to London, were never explicitly explained to the Colonial Office, who remained under the impression that Birch was trying to get his advice accepted. In fact Birch was trying to obtain executive control. This was the impossible situation (but unrealised in London) which Jervois inherited from Clarke. Jervois did indeed carry on where Clarke had left off, but in doing so he resorted to measures so drastic that they caused a revolt.



Sultan 'Abdu'llah with some of his chiefs: detail from an engraving published in "Perak and the Malays", by Major F. McNair (London, 1878), and apparently based on a photograph taken by McNair in 1875.

The events leading up to the final crisis may be briefly related. Birch first tried to govern by obtaining specific authority from Sultan Abdullah for the introduction of particular reforms by Birch. Abdullah withheld his approval by evasion and delay. At this point, in May 1875, Sir William Jervis succeeded Sir Andrew Clarke as Governor. Jervis, advised by Birch, concluded that a way must be found of introducing the reforms without affording Abdullah the opportunity of refusing his consent to each one piecemeal. Accordingly Sultan Abdullah was asked to delegate to British "Queen's Commissioners" general authority to govern Perak in his name. He was told that if he refused to sign the necessary proclamation, the British Government would recognise Yusuf as Sultan instead of him. After some resistance Abdullah signed the proclamation and soon afterwards gave his approval to the plan, previously discussed only in vague terms, for the killing of Birch. The murder took place when Birch came to post the proclamation at Pasir Salak.

When the news reached London the Colonial Office censured Jervis in very plain terms for introducing the "Queen's Commissioners" scheme without any reference to them. Jervis

replied with a bitterness which shocked the Colonial Office. But he knew that the only way of redeeming his reputation was to bring the Perak revolt to a rapid conclusion with the minimum loss of blood, treasure and time.

In early November 1875 the situation seemed more serious than it actually turned out to be. The British assumed that because the Malays had provided a *casus belli* they were preparing to fight a war. But one of the witnesses at the subsequent enquiry gave this account of the Malay chiefs' intentions:—

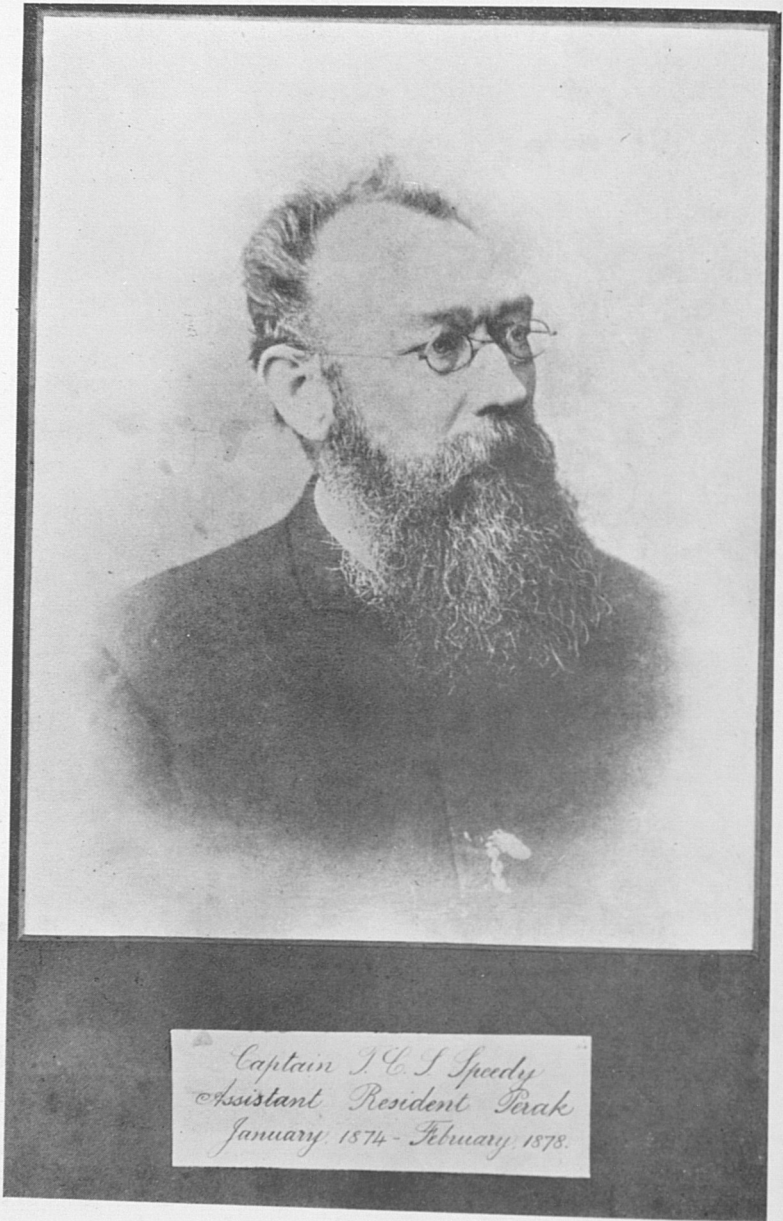
When it was proposed to kill Mr Birch a question was raised "Supposing Mr Birch to be dead will not many other white men come?" But the Chiefs said "When Mr Birch is dead it will be finished, and the white men won't interfere with us for a long time—that is always the way with white men. Several times already they have wished to interfere in Perak but it has never come to anything."

The Malays reckoned that no British military force could penetrate to the interior of Perak. The down-river chiefs prudently removed their families to remote places before Birch was killed. They hoped to disclaim responsibility for the act of the Maharaja Lela, who was technically an up-river chief. If they could not brazen it out they would retreat into the Batang Padang and Bidor valleys until the storm had blown over. They did make some enquiries about recruiting mercenaries from "Siam" (this may have been Kedah, then a Siamese tributary) and the Laxamana hoped to get 300 Malays from Pahang. But nothing came of these plans.

The Mentri of Larut, less happily placed geographically, made more active preparations. His faithful henchman, Penghulu Mat Ali of Kurau, was given \$1,000 to purchase munitions. Even Sultan Abdullah, now reconciled with the Mentri, sent Mat Ali 20 muskets, but no ammunition, as a mark of royal approval. With the Mentri's money Mat Ali bought 15 or 20 kegs of gunpowder, a koyan of rice and two piculs of lead for making bullets. He also prepared ten large boats. His task was to come round by sea and attack the British customs post at Kota Stia on the Perak River. There were vague rumours that the Mentri was recruiting troops. Birch in his Journal for October 1875 records two reports that the Mentri had recruited Indian soldiers and had a gun. There was a rumour in Penang in November 1875 that the Mentri had 6-700 men and that Ah Kwee, the Hai San headman in Larut, had 7-8,000 men. This rumour obviously relates to potential, not actual strength, but it is an interesting addition to one or two other hints that both Abdullah and the Mentri had sounded the Chinese in Larut and invited their support. There is a curious and isolated statement by a witness at the subsequent inquiry to the effect that Raja Ngah,



Detail from a copy of the group said to have been taken at the meeting at Pangkor in January, 1874. Speedy, seen in profile, standing on the steps to the right of the picture, was then thirty-seven years old. The figure in front of him, lolling against the rail with studied, cabbish nonchalance is clearly Swettenham; and the man seated on the left, the Governor, Sir Andrew Clarke. The identity of the two figures seen in the centre of this section is less certain. The one in front, leaning slightly forward, is said to be J. W. W. Birch, but there is no evidence that he was at the Pangkor meeting. The man standing on the step with Speedy is identified as Major Fred McNair on one copy of this picture but it is hardly likely that he would have worn a light, civilian suit on such an occasion: possibly it is Robert Carr Woods, Jn, the Mentri's lawyer from Penang.



The portrait of Speedy in the Perak Museum, at Taiping. It is undated, but probably belongs to the middle eighteen-nineties, when he was nearly sixty years old. The beard seems a little fuller, and though grizzled is not as light as in the photograph taken in Egypt in 1897.

whose toll-station Birch had burnt at the end of 1874 (v.s. p. 27), had in July 1875 entered into an agreement with Khoo Tean Teck of Penang and Ah Kwee of Larut to fight for them at Larut. This Khoo Tean Teck had been condemned to death for his part in the Penang secret society riots of 1867 but was pardoned and subsequently became prominent in Perak as a tax farmer (Purcell, 1948: 113). For what this scanty and unreliable evidence is worth it points to that alignment of Malay factions and Chinese secret societies which had been apparent in 1873. The Chinese of Larut, though discontented with some aspects of British policy, were not willing to give the Malays support unless the Malay revolt was likely to succeed. The Malays achieved no successes and the Chinese remained passive spectators. Their reluctance to provide labour for British military requirements at Larut, to which we shall come in due course, may have been due partly to their inclination to be neutral.

The news of Birch's murder reached Speedy at Taiping during the night of 3-4 November. Speedy at once sent all the police he could spare hot-foot to Kuala Kangsar to Swettenham, who was known to be in the up-river district, posting proclamations. The relief party did not find Swettenham, who had escaped down-river in his launch by night, and they brought back a report that he was dead.

On the morning of 4 November Speedy called a meeting in the Court house of the headmen of the Chinese, Malay and Tamil communities. Although ignorant of Mat Ali's preparations at Kurau, Speedy had his doubts about the Mentri, whom he ordered to remain within a one mile radius of Taiping. Speedy reported to Jervois that "the Chinese are to a man favourably inclined to the British rule" and he added that "I am quite able to cope with any Malay force that may attempt to enter Larut." It may be mentioned here that, soon after this, Mat Ali of Kurau gathered one hundred men at his house and entertained them to a feast in preparation for the attack on Kota Stia. But the sight of British gunboats, patrolling the coast in larger numbers than usual, persuaded the Malays of Kuala Kurau to stay at home.

Jervois moved his headquarters to Penang in November and spent much time in Perak, especially on the Perak River, during the next two months. In early November he assigned to Speedy the task of cutting all communications between Larut and the Perak River around Kuala Kangsar. A police officer in Province Wellesley reported on 14 November that "Captain Speedy's strict watch keeps the Kuala Kangsar division quiet."

Jervois anticipated determined resistance from the Malays and he decided that a larger force was needed to break it than he had in the Straits Settlements. While troops were being shipped to Malaya from India and China, an effort was made to open the higher reaches of the Perak River by dislodging the Maharaja Lela from his stronghold at Pasir Salak. A week after Birch's death Captain Innes, who was acting as Resident of Perak, launched a small composite force of British soldiers and sailors and Malay irregulars against Pasir Salak. The operation was badly handled. Innes lost control of the various parties and he himself was killed while trying to find Swettenham and the Malay scouts. The attack was repulsed with heavy casualties relative to its small size. The failure of this attack was attributed to the lack of a gun rather than to faulty tactics (Swettenham, 1948: 208). The presumed need to use artillery against Malay positions dominated military thinking during the rest of the campaign. A second consequence of the Maharaja Lela's stand at Pasir Salak was that the military planners were confirmed in their expectation of a hard campaign. In fact the Malays, other than the Maharaja Lela, never stood and fought at all. Sultan Abdullah, the Laxamana and the Mentri pretended that they were staunch allies of the British. Sultan Ismail and the Maharaja Lela, once he was dislodged from Pasir Salak, retreated deeper and deeper into Upper Perak. The British columns ploughed after them, using larger numbers than were required or could be supported on their lines of communication. They were at times completely immobilised by the impossibility of dragging artillery across roadless country. The one satisfactory operation of the campaign was Swettenham's patrol from Bēlanja to Kinta at the head of a small force of Malay irregulars.

While the troops were on their way from India and China Jervois and Major General Colborne prepared a strategic plan for using them. The troops from China, plus a contingent of sailors, were to form a "southern column" and advance up the Perak River. Colborne took personal command of this column. Jervois attached to it two government officials under the title of "Commissioner" and "Assistant Commissioner" for liaison and intelligence work. Dunlop and Swettenham respectively held these posts. This column was about 700 strong.

The force from India was to form a "northern column" under its commander, Brigadier General Ross, C.B. This column would land at Larut and advance inland to the Perak River at Kuala Kangsar. It would then turn down-river and join forces with the southern column in the final phase of the campaign. Part of this force was later diverted to repel Tunku Antah from Sungei Ujong in Negri Sembilan. It seems that only 300 men landed

at Larut. McNair and W. E. (later Sir William) Maxwell were the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner attached to this column.

The southern column had no great difficulty in taking Pasir Salak. It was then able to advance fairly rapidly by boat as far upstream as Bēlanja. But from Bēlanja the troops set out to march overland to Kinta, to which Sultan Ismail had withdrawn. By early December the southern column was hopelessly bogged down only six miles from Bēlanja. Here General Colborne wrote "I found the road most difficult, particularly for the guns."

Before the northern column reached Larut, Speedy and the military advance party reconnoitred the route to Kuala Kangsar and planned the necessary arrangements. It was only 27 miles from Simpang to Kuala Kangsar and it was estimated that the troops could cover this distance in three days' marching. Jervois reported:—

Native labourers have been employed in improving the road, and there will now be no difficulty in supplying provisions and stores. An adequate supply of provisions has been laid in, camping grounds have been selected, stockades erected, "kajangs" and "ataps" supplied for shelter in the field, huts and store-rooms erected.

The road extended only one third of the distance, i.e. as far as Bukit Gantang. Transport was likely to be the critical problem. Speedy, however, recruited 300 Chinese labourers and expressed confidence, perhaps rashly, that he could obtain more if required. The Mentri, ostentatiously helpful, offered men and 25 elephants.

The first detachment of the northern column sailed from Penang for Larut on 29 November. Then there seems to have been some hitch in the arrangements. Jervois in a despatch said that the northern column "experienced difficulties with respect to transport" and Swettenham (1948: 209) also mentions delay over transport. McNair (1878: 385) merely says that "the northern column duly crossed the country from Larut to Kuala Kangsar." The column did in fact reach Kuala Kangsar within a fortnight of landing in Larut.

Brigadier General Ross sent artillery with his first detachment. It seems a reasonable guess that he would not commit his troops to the unknown interior unless he could support them with guns if necessary. Troops could march 27 miles in 3 days but the transport of artillery over the last 20 miles of roadless country must have taken longer. Ross asked Speedy to provide many more labourers for road construction so that the road could be carried though to Kuala Kangsar. Speedy was unable to meet requisitions in full and eventually labour was imported from the Straits Settlements to build the road. The result of it all was that Ross reached Kuala Kangsar in ten days instead of three. At



'Che Mida, with her husband, Nakoda Trong, and four of their attendants: reproduced from an engraving published in "Perak and the Malays", by Major McNair (London, 1878), and apparently taken from a photograph by McNair made in 1875.

Kuala Kangsar Che Mida, the hospitable sister of the local chief, offered Ross the use of her house, including her bed which was adorned with hangings and pillows worked with a skill in embroidery for which she and her handmaidens were famous. The Brigadier, however, insisted in sleeping in his cot.

Brigadier General Ross was not in a gracious mood. By the time he reached the Perak River at Kuala Kangsar, the southern column had already turned eastwards from Bĕlanja towards Kinta. Ross had not missed any fighting, for none had occurred in the ten days of his advance from Larut to Kuala Kangsar. But he was too late to join forces with Colborne's column and he was now left behind with some rather strained communications behind him. Ross's frustration was not eased when Colborne, who had come to a halt a short distance from Bĕlanja, asked him to make an independent advance from Kuala Kangsar to Kinta. For Ross also was unable to advance any further until a road had been completed behind him. It did not comfort him that his force was performing a very useful function in keeping up-river Perak quiet while operations went on elsewhere. Swettenham (1900: 213) remarked that it was "very annoying to the later arrivals" to miss the fighting.

In these circumstances Ross made a scapegoat of Speedy. If Speedy had provided a sufficient number of labourers in time, the northern column would not have been delayed. Speedy, whose habit it was to treat the Chinese "like gentlemen" (v.s. p. 41), did not impress Ross as an effective administrator. Ross complained to Jervois and, a year later, Jervois repeated the story to the Colonial Office:—

Brigadier Ross informed me that the so called influence of Captain Speedy did not exist, and he was powerless to induce the headmen to obey his orders or requisitions.

Since Jervois thought the matter worth reporting to the Colonial Office, it is necessary to consider it further. Jervois gives no hint that he obtained specific particulars of the complaint from Ross, that he ever investigated it or that he called on Speedy for an explanation. Nonetheless he quoted it as "evidence" of Speedy's deficiencies as an administrator.

The facts are that Speedy had provided 300 labourers and had promised more. He had induced the Mentri to offer men and 25 elephants. The arrival of troops in Larut had caused alarm and many Chinese were leaving (McNair, 1878: 30). It is not known whether Speedy was authorised to offer wages equal to the earnings of a Larut tin-miner, probably the highest paid labourer in Malaya. There is evidence that the Chinese everywhere had an objection to working as labourers in this campaign. Jervois, after repeating Ross's complaint about Speedy, adds "I had great difficulty in raising elsewhere supplies of coolies." The Resident of Selangor, engaged at the same time in operations in central Selangor, reported great difficulty in getting labourers at the Chinese mining centre of Kuala Lumpur. At Malacca, also in November 1875, an expedition was being prepared against Tunku Antah who had invaded Sungei Ujong in Negri Sembilan. A British administrator tried to recruit 350 labourers to act as porters with the expedition and obtained only 24, of whom 14 were Malays. The Resident of Sungei Ujong, Captain Murray, accompanied the expedition against Tunku Antah and in the official report was praised for "his indefatigable exertions with regard to the Chinese coolies."

Finally McNair, the civil Commissioner with Ross's force at Larut, went out of his way in his memoirs (1878: 29) to praise Speedy for his administration of Larut, and especially for his "energy".⁽¹⁶⁾ In the course of 400 pages of his book McNair praises only two of his colleagues, Birch and Speedy. Birch, as we have seen, was made the scapegoat after his death for the consequences of a misguided government policy. Both McNair and Swettenham considered this criticism of Birch unfair. McNair was still a serving officer of the Straits Settlements Government

at the time when his book was published. He could not contradict official statements about Birch. The only reply which he could make was to assert his good opinion of Birch.⁽¹⁷⁾ In these circumstances it is an instructive parallel that the only other colleague whom McNair singles out for praise is Speedy. He may well have intended this praise as an oblique answer to the criticism by Jervois against Speedy. McNair certainly knew of the criticism for he quotes extensively from the published despatches among which it was included. McNair also knew the true facts of the situation for which Ross blamed Speedy, for McNair was the senior government representative at Ross's headquarters at the time.

It is also pertinent to consider the character of Jervois who accepted the criticism of Speedy by Ross and, by repeating it to the Colonial Office, lent it the weight of his authority as Governor. Swettenham says that Jervois allowed "personal feelings" to enter into official business (Swettenham, 1948: 213). Elsewhere Swettenham tells a story about Jervois which would be incredible if it did not come from such an authority. Swettenham (1942: 63) states that, as Assistant Commissioner with Colborne's force, he drafted a report on the capture of Pasir Salak (v.s. p. 67). Dunlop, as the Government Commissioner with Colborne, signed the report. Jervois arrived soon afterwards and instructed Swettenham to redraft the opening paragraph of the report to state that the attack on Pasir Salak had been made on instructions from Jervois. Swettenham demurred, pointing out that such a statement would be untrue. Jervois then said that he could not possibly allow a report to go forward to London describing the first success in the Perak War, unless the report gave him the credit for planning the action. Swettenham escaped from this awkward interview by saying that Dunlop had signed the report and Dunlop must agree to its being altered. Jervois then had an interview with Dunlop and Dunlop agreed to alter the report as the Governor wished.

Dunlop's report (enclosure 9 to Straits Settlements Despatch of 2/12/1875) as printed does say that the attack was made "in accordance with instructions from His Excellency." Moreover Dunlop's statement is supported by attaching some brief instructions from Jervois dated a week before the action took place. It must be assumed, if Swettenham is believed, that Jervois forged these instructions afterwards. Jervois was ever attentive to well-finished detail — as an engineer cadet at Woolwich he had drawn plans so excellent that they were framed as models for others.

To return to the complaint by Ross against Speedy. Jervois was particularly anxious to avoid anything which reflected on the efficiency of his handling of the Perak War. He must have been furious with Speedy as he could not suppress what Ross had said.

If he agreed with Ross and condemned Speedy without troubling about the truth of the matter, the blame rested on Speedy and Jervois's precious reputation was not appreciably diminished. If, on the other hand, Jervois insisted upon an inquiry to determine whether Ross was justified in his complaint, there would be recrimination and very likely one of those furious quarrels between high military and civil officers which happened all too often at that time in the colonies. The general result would be to cast doubt on Jervois's capacity to back up the Army in the Perak War.

The last question is whether Brigadier General Ross is likely to have made a fair-minded appraisal of the facts before criticising Speedy. This issue may be judged from the case of Panjang Meru. Panjang Meru was a Malay guerrilla whose activities had somewhat embarrassed Ross and had caused some of the Malay porters to desert. Panjang Meru was captured. Ross had him hung out of hand without any sort of trial. For this act Ross was later formally censured by the War Office.

The Perak War prolonged itself until February 1876. As a result of Swettenham's initiative in taking a patrol through the jungle to the outskirts of Kinta it was found to be unoccupied. Colborne's forces moved on to Kinta in the middle of December 1875. The campaign then degenerated into a manhunt for fugitive Malay chiefs. Brigadier General Ross was destined after all to have an "operation". The Malay village of Kota Lama, near Kuala Kangsar, was a notorious haunt of predatory Malay chiefs and had caused some difficulty to the British forces. Panjang Meru was a Kota Lama man. On 4 January 1876 troops of Ross's column moved into the two halves of Kota Lama, which straddled the Perak River. Speedy, despite his differences with Ross, was in charge of the political side of the operation. He called on the inhabitants to surrender their arms and the troops then began a house-to-house search. At first there was no resistance and the British relaxed their watchfulness. Ross and a group of headquarters staff officers came up to watch the search. They were attacked by a party of Malays. There was a short but exciting melee in which Ross's Brigade Major was killed. The attackers were quickly driven off.

Early in December 1875 a naval landing party scoured the Larut coast. In the Chinese village of Tanjong Pandang they found six small brass guns, fifteen rifles and blunderbusses (including four modern Snider rifles) and 2-300 rounds of Snider ammunition. Next it was the turn of Kuala Kurau which yielded eight guns, fifty-two other fire-arms as well as some k ris and spears. Mat Ali, about whom the searchers evidently had previous information, was arrested and taken away.

After the Perak War the Maharaja Lela and the others who had directed or participated in the killing of Birch at Pasir Salak were tried for murder and convicted. The evidence obtained by the Commission of Enquiry showed that Sultan Abdullah, the Laxamana and the Shahbandar had abetted the murder. Only a court of Perak could try them for a murder committed in Perak. Sultan Abdullah could not be tried by a court of Perak since he was the sovereign of the State. Accordingly, Abdullah, the Laxamana and the Shahbandar were exiled, together with the Mentri and Sultan Ismail. Raja Muda Yusuf eventually became Regent. Raja Dris, Abdullah's cousin, became Bendahara. These two were the dominant Malay figures in Perak during the next decade.

5. The Last of Speedy in Malaya (1876 - 1877)

The war left a heavy legacy of debt. Perak owed about \$750,000, equal to nearly three years' revenue. The British Government refused to station troops permanently in Perak and it was necessary to double the size of the police force in order to assure security as the troops withdrew.

J.G. Davidson, who had been appointed Resident of Selangor 1874, was brought up to act as Resident of Perak after the war until a decision was taken regarding a permanent appointment. Jervois advised the Colonial Office that Davidson should remain in Perak. But he resigned within a few months owing to ill-health and the State's financial worries. W. E. Maxwell then acted as Resident in the latter part of 1876, until the arrival of the new Resident, Hugh Low, who had previously spent many years in Borneo. Low was Resident from 1877 to 1889, and is regarded as the founder of the "Residential system" in Perak. Sir William Jervois was succeeded by Sir William Robinson as Governor early in 1877.

During the period of reconstruction in Perak much depended on the revenues of Larut, which amounted to three-quarters of the revenues the whole State. Despite the low price of tin Larut revenue kept up well. In 1875 it had been \$226, 233 with the duty on tin at \$15 per bahara. In 1876, with the duty reduced to \$10, it was \$215,568. But a regime of strict economy was necessary, especially in Larut where more than half the Perak expenditure was incurred. Speedy, like many a modern District Officer, had to see his district denied urgently needed improvements in public services, in order that there might be a surplus to meet expenditure on even more essential purposes in a less productive area. Speedy would, however, have been in a stronger position if all his expenditure in Larut had been sound and economical. By the standards of the Perak financial crisis of 1876 his management of

Larut finances did not meet that test. Douglas, the Colonial Secretary, was sent up from Singapore to Larut in the first half of 1876 and he reported that Speedy was being extravagant.

At the end of May 1876 Speedy applied for six months' leave in the United Kingdom "on the score of urgent private affairs." Mrs. Speedy's father had died and the settlement of his estate was "somewhat complicated." As a result of Mrs. Speedy's inheritance, the Speedys were now "very comfortably off" (Jervois) and Speedy was no longer under financial compulsion to continue his administrative career.

During Speedy's absence W. E. Maxwell was appointed Assistant Resident of Larut. Maxwell, and the Resident, Davidson, were instructed to look into Larut expenditure. They reported that substantial economies could be made.

Meanwhile correspondence had been going on between Singapore and London about the appointment of a permanent Resident of Perak. Davidson was merely "acting." The Colonial Office, who had until now heard nothing but good of Speedy, suggested that his claims should be considered. In the course of a despatch of 19 August 1876 Jervois rejected this suggestion. He argued that the duties of the Resident of Perak required him to be an expert in Malay affairs. Speedy was a Chinese rather than a Malay affairs expert.

Jervois had by this time made up his mind that he wished to be rid of Speedy. It was essential to employ in Perak officers who could be relied on to practise the most rigid economy, and Speedy was extravagant. Moreover Speedy's large salary of £1,500 per annum was a heavy burden on the State finances. An administrative reorganisation was in prospect into which Speedy could not conveniently be fitted. The Resident, previously stationed in Lower Perak to be near Sultan Abdullah, was now to move to Kuala Kangsar to be near the Regent. At Kuala Kangsar the Resident was linked with Larut by a telegraph line and only 30 miles of road. He could and should keep this important revenue producing area under his personal supervision. The Assistant Resident was to be moved from Larut to Lower Perak, a Malay area for which Speedy was not really suitable. If Jervois had confined his argument to these considerations, one would not quarrel with him. But unhappily he proceeded to bolster up his case with allegations against Speedy personally. None of these allegations had been put to the test of an official investigation. They were not communicated to Speedy, nor was he given any opportunity to defend himself.

On the same day as he wrote his despatch about the new Resident of Perak, Jervois also wrote a personal letter⁽¹⁸⁾ to

Mr. Meade at the Colonial Office. In his letter Jervois made the following points. Firstly, Speedy was an eccentric who paraded in a turban and leopard skin playing the bagpipes. Secondly, at the time of the Pangkor treaty Speedy was appointed Assistant Resident of Larut only because he was already employed by the Menteri in command of a private army and it was necessary to "buy him up". Thirdly, his administration of Larut had been extravagant. Fourthly, Marples, the Treasurer, had done all the work at Larut. Fifthly, the Chinese had rebuilt the economy of Larut by their own unaided efforts. Lastly, Speedy's salary of £1,500 a year was more than he or the post in Larut was worth; £750 would be ample. Jervois finished his letter with the hope that as Speedy now had a private income, he could be induced not to return to Malaya. All these points, except the one about Marples, have been discussed earlier in this paper. Marples undoubtedly deserved all the credit for the satisfactory position of the Treasury and the Court and he may well have been asked to do most of the office work. But, in many references to the administration of Larut, Marples is not mentioned by Birch, Swettenham, McNair, Skinner, or indeed by anyone except Speedy and Jervois.

Meade replied that if Jervois wished to be rid of Speedy he must state his case in a despatch. The Colonial Office, however, saw that there was little future for Speedy, as a temporary officer who had lost the confidence of his Governor. In the middle of September 1876 matters came to a head when Jervois telegraphed to ask that Speedy should not for the time being return to Malaya. At first the Colonial Office proposed merely to extend Speedy's leave until the matter had been thrashed out. But, on second thoughts, it seemed to them best to try to get rid of Speedy at once. He was a temporary officer and could be dismissed merely by notice. But they felt that they could not do this "without incurring the reproach of indulging in a sharp practice as far as I am aware but little resorted to by Government."⁽¹⁹⁾

It was decided therefore to try to persuade Speedy to resign. Jervois, in his letter to Meade, had opined that "eventually" a salary of £750 a year would suffice for the Assistant Resident's post. On this flimsy authority the Colonial Office decided to tell Speedy that his salary would be reduced from £1,500 to £750 a year. One of them minuted later — "We reduced it as low as we could in the hopes of getting rid of Captain Speedy." Moreover they told Speedy in their letter to him that this information was given to him "in case you should not think it worthwhile to incur the expense of returning to the Straits." But doubts still persisted at the Colonial Office. One of the junior officials minuted "But suppose he offers to keep the place at the

lower figure?" His senior replied "Then I would let him go back and watch him closely." In their anxiety about Speedy's reactions they forgot to send a copy of their letter to him out to Jervois.

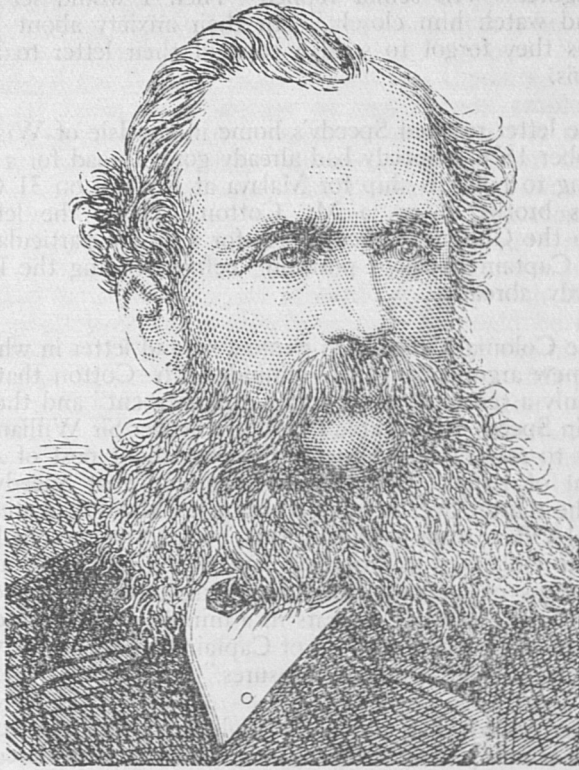
The letter reached Speedy's home in the Isle of Wight early in October, 1876. Speedy had already gone abroad for a holiday, intending to take his ship for Malaya at Brindisi on 31 October. Speedy's brother-in-law, a Mr. Cotton, opened the letter and came to the Colonial Office to ask for a "more particular definition of Captain Speedy's position" before sending the letter on to Speedy abroad.

The Colonial Office then wrote a second letter in which they used a new argument. They reminded Mr. Cotton that Speedy held "only a temporary and acting appointment" and they added "Captain Speedy is best able to judge whether Sir William Jervois is likely to recommend him for the permanent post of Assistant Resident of Larut." They again suggested that Speedy should think the matter over before returning to Malaya. Later on the Colonial Office were confident that both letters reached Speedy before he embarked at Brindisi. Speedy did not reply and there is no means of knowing what he thought of the matter. The Colonial Office attitude appears in a minute, "We have done our best with soft words to get rid of Captain Speedy and have failed. It remains to take stronger measures."

After Speedy had sailed the Colonial Office received a despatch in which Jervois stated at length why he considered Speedy to be an unsatisfactory officer.⁽²⁰⁾ In the course of the despatch Jervois states, without specifying particulars, that Speedy was unbusinesslike, lazy, undisciplined and extravagant. Without the evidence, if there was any, one cannot assess the truth of these charges. He may have neglected his office work and argued the point with his superiors; out of such things can come a reputation for being unbusinesslike, lazy and undisciplined. He was certainly rather extravagant.

In the despatch Jervois also produces the complaint of Brigadier General Ross that Speedy had failed to provide the labourers he required and that he had no influence with the Chinese or would not use it. This allegation has already been considered.

The first half of the despatch is made up of a completely new and most serious charge against Speedy. Jervois explains how in 1873 the Mentri employed Speedy to assist him in his efforts to recover control of Larut and how he was reported to have offered Speedy a one third share in the revenues of Larut, worth



Col. Sir William Francis Drummond Jervis, R.E., C.B., K.C.M.G:
 [From a woodcut published in the *Illustrated London News*].

£10,000-£15,000 p.a. The Pangkor treaty disappointed the hopes of both men. Jervis then writes:—

It is not difficult, therefore, to imagine that Captain Speedy would not have been sorry to witness a course of events which would terminate British intervention and so restore his former relations with the Mentri of Larut.

He concludes by saying that the Mentri was suspected of being a leading figure in the Malay revolt of 1875.

All this passage is most carefully worded. Jervis does not say outright that he knew or suspected that Speedy was in league with the Mentri in anti-British activities in 1875. He merely states that in 1873 Speedy resigned from the British service to work for the Mentri for a large reward. He then suggests by innuendo that the situation of 1875 was a parallel one and that Speedy was again likely to have been in league with the Mentri. The reader will note that the key sentence, quoted above, is introduced by the phrase "it can be imagined". This phrase

relieves Jervois of the need to produce evidence. The situation of 1875 was not, of course, a parallel with that of 1873. In 1873 Speedy resigned openly, with the knowledge and probably with the approval of his superiors, to assist in the restoration of the Mentri to Larut, an objective of British policy at that time. Jervois suggests that it is a repetition of Speedy's conduct in 1873 to suppose that in 1875, while remaining a British official, he secretly worked to assist a Malay chief to overthrow the British regime in Perak.

The whole slur is a farrago of improbability which need not detain us long. The evidence taken by the Commission of Enquiry is mentioned by Jervois in the next sentence of the despatch. This evidence included (v.s. p. 58) the fact that in 1875 the hostility of the Mentri to Speedy was well known. Certainly Speedy must have known of it. Could Speedy reasonably have expected that the Mentri would first overthrow the regime in which Speedy was serving and then re-employ Speedy on the old terms? Speedy had seen Indian mutineers and Abyssinian irregulars go down before British troops. He knew the determined policy of his superiors now that British rule had been extended to the Malay States. Did he really expect either that the Malays would defeat British troops or that the British Government would withdraw from Perak? "Imagination" is the appropriate word for this part of Jervois's despatch.

In the course of many minutes on this despatch the Colonial Office officials never allude to the charge of disloyalty. Perhaps they did not find it convincing. Jervois evidently doubted whether they would regard the despatch as wholly an objective statement of fact. He ends it:—

I need hardly assure your Lordship that my only object in writing thus confidentially respecting Captain Speedy is a desire to remove a difficulty in carrying out the policy of Her Majesty's Government with respect to Perak.

Conscience pricked a little.

On arrival in Singapore early in December 1876 Speedy had an interview with Jervois. The Governor did not then know that the Colonial Office had told Speedy that his salary was to be reduced from £1,500 to £750 per annum. Jervois himself hesitated to be so extreme to Speedy as he had been in his letter to Meade. He therefore told Speedy that his salary would now be £1,000. Jervois commented later, "I could not understand how it was that he took so readily to a reduction of his previous pay by £500 p.a." When Jervois found out that the Colonial Office had announced a reduced salary of £750, this lower figure was adopted.

Jervois allowed Speedy to go back to Larut — a significant comment on the sincerity of Jervois's allegation that Speedy was

too disloyal to be trusted at Larut. But Jervois also told Speedy that he would be moved away from Larut within "a few months".

Speedy and his wife returned to Larut early in December 1876. Speedy was now answerable to W. E. Maxwell, who was acting Resident of Perak. It was Maxwell who had taken over from him as Assistant Resident of Larut when he had gone on leave in the middle of 1876. It was Maxwell who had, on express instructions from Jervois, reviewed all Speedy's arrangements and had effected many economies at Taiping. Speedy therefore returned to find that many of his pet extravagances had been eliminated and that the man who had made the changes was now his superior officer. Moreover Maxwell⁽⁸⁾ was an autocrat whose later career in Malaya included many quarrels with his colleagues. It is probable that Maxwell and Speedy fell out over many things. Hugh Low records one example in his Journal (16/5/1877) when he mentions that Maxwell had written "one of his outspoken minutes" on a petition recommended by Speedy and that Speedy was "no doubt wroth with Maxwell."

In April 1877 the new Resident, Hugh Low⁽⁸⁾, arrived to take over from Maxwell. Low, like Maxwell, was a strong administrator who insisted that his subordinates should conform exactly to his policies and decisions. In particular Low was a tartar for strict economy in public expenditure. It is unlikely that Speedy, no longer assisted by the advice of Marples after he left Larut, measured up to Low's standards in this respect. Low soon formed an unfavourable opinion of Speedy as an administrator: e.g. "I judge by all his minutes that he never takes the trouble really to study the question before him" (Low, Journal 16/5/1877). Moreover, as will be seen, Low was a trifle jealous of Speedy's influence with the Malays and Chinese.

Low's first impressions of Speedy were coloured by his disappointment at the stagnation of the mining areas of Larut. Low had read Speedy's administration report for 1874 before coming to Perak. When he saw Larut for himself two years after Speedy's report had been written, Low found that the houses of Matang were in a "ruinous and decaying state" and that "Kota and Taiping are very disappointing to one whose knowledge of the country was derived from Captain Speedy's sanguine accounts of its prosperity" (Journal 19/4/1877). The reasons for the decline of mining at Larut since 1874 have been given (Section 3). Speedy is hardly to blame except for being too much of an optimist.

When Low got down to inspecting arrangements at Larut in 1877 he was particularly dissatisfied with some of the subordinate staff and resolved to be rid of them ("the day of each will

come in its turn" — Journal 14/5/1877). Yet these were staff whom Maxwell had not thought it necessary to dismiss.

By the second quarter of 1877 preparations were in hand for Speedy's move from Larut to Lower Perak. It has already been explained that this move was in part made necessary by an experimental reorganisation of staff arrangements in Perak. It was also inspired by a desire to remove Speedy from control of the financially vital area of Perak to a place of less responsibility. Apart from the reduction of salary and responsibility Speedy was to be moved to a predominantly Malay area where his knowledge of the Chinese, modest but exceptional in those days, was wasted.

When Birch had established the first British headquarters in Lower Perak in November 1874, he had selected Bandar Bahru as the site for his Residency. Bandar Bahru was an important village and Birch hoped that Sultan Abdullah would live in the house which he intended to build for him there. (In fact Abdullah had preferred to remain at a distance). Birch may also have chosen Bandar Bahru because it was on an island in the Perak River and therefore more secure from attack. After the Perak War however there was no longer any danger of Malay attack. The disadvantage of Bandar Bahru was that it lay further upstream than the highest point navigable to steamers from Penang.

It was decided to establish a new headquarters in Lower Perak to which steamers could come direct. Durian Sabatang, the village of the exiled Laxamana, was selected. Insufficient notice was taken of the fact that the last lap to Durian Sabatang was risky for steamers. Low (Journal 1/6/1877) remarks—

The ships cannot go with any safety to Durian Sabatang and Speedy told me that the Captain of the "Phya Pekhet" says she shall never go past Telok Melintang again. The "Pluto" got ashore while the acting Governor was here.

In the 1880's when the inevitable move downstream was made from Durian Sabatang, Telok Melintang became Telok Anson.

A Eurasian called Bacon, who had been with Birch at Bandar Bahru, was put in charge of the arrangements for establishing a new administrative station at Durian Sabatang. But Low, soon after his arrival, noted (Journal 28/4/1877)

I wish I could get down to Durian Sabatang as I find there is great expenditure going on there without any proper supervision. I have notified Mr Bacon that we can do without him at the end of May. The Assistant Resident (sc: Speedy) has little or nothing to do (at Taiping) and ought to superintend this outlay himself.

Accordingly Speedy was moved to Durian Sabatang.

Taiping even in temporary decline was probably a more congenial station than Durian Sabatang. Speedy's eventual successor at Durian Sabatang was an administrator named Paul, who

was also transferred from Taiping. It was proposed that Paul's salary should be increased, not reduced, to compensate him for the loss of amenity. Paul's health broke down and he was replaced by one Innes, whose wife published a book about her life in Malaya under the significant title "The Chersonese with the Gilding off" (Innes, 1885). Mrs. Innes hated Durian Sabatang more than anywhere else. It had the reputation of a white man's grave; their house was a mere shed with a roof that leaked; there was no company for miles around except the Chinese shopkeepers, most of whom had criminal records; the dreariness of life on the mud-flat was relieved only by the irregular arrival of the steamer from Penang — in theory once a fortnight; etc. etc. Mrs. Innes is too bitter to be a reliable witness but Speedy and his wife can hardly have enjoyed Durian Sabatang after Taiping.

One of Speedy's first concerns in his new district was to lay out a town at Durian Sabatang and to build a new Residency for himself. Speedy's town planning at Larut in 1874 had been insufficiently careful of the requirements of public hygiene and his road construction had been rather slapdash (v. Section 3). The same faults appeared again at Durian Sabatang though Bacon, who made the first arrangements, must share the blame. Low visited Durian Sabatang again and noted (Journal 1/6/1877)

Speedy says 7,000 dollars have been already spent on the site of this new town and the road to the Residency. There is nothing to show for it but a few ditches of very small size. I went down the road, it was quite impassable for carts.... Why this road should have been constructed is a marvel to me.... The town is in so confined a space that some of the streets are only 12 feet wide, so that contagious disease or fire must run freely through the place.....

Speedy's residence, which is as good a house as he ought to require, is pretty well advanced: he can get into it within a month. He and I could not quite hit it off about the proper sites for public buildings and Chinese houses, every view he says will interfere with the comfort or privacy and outlook of the Residency. In fact the Residency is to his mind much the most important object we ought to look for at Durian Sabatang.

It appears that Speedy had at least two other British officials with him at Durian Sabatang. One was called Peterson and may have been the same as the Harbour-Master/Custom-Officer of that name at Larut in 1874. The other was Kerr who earned Low's good opinion as a better writer of reports than Speedy was.

Speedy's main political task in Lower Perak was to exercise tactful control over the Malay chiefs. The most prominent members of the Malay ruling class in Lower Perak — Sultan Abdullah, the Laxamana and the Shahbandar — had been exiled to the Seychelles before Speedy's arrival. Speedy had only to

arrange for the departure of Abdullah's family. It irked Low that Speedy was allowed to deal direct with Douglas, the Colonial Secretary in Singapore, over this matter.

The remaining Malay notabilities of Lower Perak were Raja Dris and a minor chief called the Raja Mahkota. Dris was a cousin of Sultan Abdullah and held control of the Kampar district. A few years before in 1874 Dris had been one of the favourite companions of Sultan Abdullah in his opium smoking and other dissipations. He had also been present at the meetings of the Malay chiefs at which the killing of Birch had been discussed. Ten years after Speedy's time in Lower Perak, in 1887 Dris became Sultan Idris of Perak (1887-1916). He had by then matured into a devout Muslim who spent several days in fasting and prayer before his installation as Sultan. He was also to become the Sultan whom Swettenham considered the ablest Malay ruler he ever knew. But Dris in 1877 was in transition from youthful dissipation to the wisdom of maturity. It was some time before Low realised the worth of Raja Dris.

In his first few months in Perak therefore Low was extremely suspicious of Raja Dris and the Raja Mahkota. He was also rather jealous of their intimacy with Speedy, who had probably known them since 1874. Some time elapsed before they came up to Kuala Kangsar to pay their respects to the new Resident and Low put the worst construction on this delay. But one of the difficulties of the Malay chiefs was that they no longer had any "public" revenues. They were now forbidden to collect their customary local taxes and they had not yet been given allowances from public funds. When Low invited Dris to Kuala Kangsar, Speedy allowed Dris 35 cents per day per head for his two boatloads of followers. If a chief of Dris's position had gone on a journey without twenty men or so, he would have been disgraced in Malay eyes at that time. Followers were an index of prestige. On the other hand if he took them they had to be fed. He was short of money and it was not unreasonable that the British regime which summoned him should meet his out of pocket expenses. Low was extremely critical of Speedy for allowing Dris this money for his followers. But in this case at least Low was probably wrong and Speedy right. When Dris arrived Low treated him and the Regent, Raja Yusuf, to a diatribe on Speedy's extravagance with which they politely agreed. (Low, Journal 16/5/1877).

I asked him (Raja Dris) about Raja Mahkota and why he had not been to see me, he says he is unwell, but had reported himself to Speedy. . . . I have been wondering why Dris and Mahkota did not come near me; now it appears they were attending on the Assistant Resident, no wonder he was so liberal in the matter of boat hire." (Low, Journal 17/5/1877).

Low might have recognised that the Malay chiefs were likely to hang around Speedy for occasional largesse so long as the State Government granted them no allowances in lieu of their former tax revenues.

Low even got involved in contradictory views of what the Malays and others thought about Speedy—

It is constantly forced upon my notice that Speedy is especially hated by all the Malays, who look upon him as having recklessly wasted the resources of the country; but the Chinese also tell me this. His popularity will fail now that I restrain his scattering hand. (Low, Journal 17/5/1877).

If one may judge by other passages from the Journal Low criticised Speedy to Malays and Chinese, making the point about “recklessly wasting the resources of the country”, and they agreed with him because it was diplomatic to do so. The whole basis of the criticism presupposes an idea of the duty to conserve public revenues. Such an idea was wholly foreign to Malay chiefs who had treated local taxes as private income so long as they could collect such revenues. Speedy was extravagant with public money. But it is most unlikely that Malay chiefs criticised any such extravagance which came their way. They did on the other hand, realise that Speedy was out of favour and that they now depended on Low’s goodwill for anything which they might receive.

One other event of Speedy’s time at Durian Sabatang was an outbreak of smallpox. Low (Journal 1/6/1877) was critical of Speedy for taking no action in the matter and for failing to report it to him. There were in fact only ten known cases in the district and the Malay population would have resisted (as it did elsewhere in the 1880’s) any attempt at mass vaccination — if indeed the vaccine was available. But the incident is typical of Speedy’s shortcomings as an administrator, i.e. he failed to come to grips with his problems.

Speedy resigned between mid September 1877, when he is found attending the inaugural meeting of the Perak State Council, and early December, when a despatch was written about the choice of his successor. The immediate occasion of his resignation is unknown to the writer. Enough reasons have been given to show why he should not think it worthwhile to go on. There is one other factor which may have entered into his decision. In December 1876 and in May 1877 the Colonial Office published two more instalments of official papers about the Malay States. These two “Parliamentary Papers” included, among much else, the letter written by Jervis to Meade about Speedy and his subsequent despatch. These two documents were part of a long series of correspondence about the choice of a new Resident of

Perak. It is charitable to assume that the Colonial Office published the Jervois letters about Speedy as part of this correspondence, without thinking what the consequences of publication would be for Speedy. Official papers published in London about Perak, a controversial subject, would soon become matters of common knowledge in the small European world of the Straits Settlements. Speedy could not vindicate his character by bringing an action for libel because both Jervois and the Colonial Office officials would use the technical defence of "privilege".⁽²¹⁾ He could not demand an official enquiry because no "disciplinary action" had been taken against him. Whatever the reason was, Speedy resigned at the end of 1877 and left Malaya for good.

At the outset of this paper the question was posed whether Speedy deserved the harsher things which Jervois said of him as Assistant Resident of Larut. The reader has now seen the evidence on Speedy — and on Jervois. For his own part the writer finds the following passage from Swettenham (1948: 243) a fair verdict on Speedy as an administrator:—

The Malay States were certainly fortunate in their earliest servants, and it is extremely probable that the work would not have been done so successfully by others with greater intellectual gifts or higher training: just as it is certain that the men who did so well then would not succeed now that everything has been systematised.⁽²²⁾

6. Further Adventures (1878 - 1910)

Speedy and his wife stayed in Penang until January 1878 when they took ship for Suez. Mrs. Speedy had set her heart on visiting Abyssinia. But travelling in that troubled country was too dangerous. The most she could persuade Speedy to expose her to was a shooting trip around Kassala, his ivory hunting base of late 1862. He was "utterly reluctant" even to go to the Sudan and Mrs. Speedy found it hard work to prevail upon him.

They reached Suakin on the Red Sea coast in February 1878 and they did not leave the Sudan again until July. During this trip Mrs. Speedy wrote a long series of letters home. These letters she later published as a book (Speedy, 1884). There is thus a most detailed record of their journey — the places they saw, the incidents and mishaps of travelling in wildest Africa, how hot it was and the interesting people they met. Mrs. Speedy rattles on for some 500 pages of print.

In the context of this paper the main interest of Mrs. Speedy's letters is the light which they throw on the characters of Speedy and his wife. One does not expect utter frankness in Victorian autobiography. With this reservation Speedy is found to be a model of "kind thoughtfulness" to his wife. He could

keep his temper well under control most of the time but there were occasional violent outbursts — in one case he thrashed a Sudanese porter with his bare hands. He liked to feel himself an important person — “Charlie was with the Pasha below in the highest post of honour!” — the exclamation mark is revealing. Mrs. Speedy evidently smiled inwardly now and again.

Mrs. Speedy stood the rigours and alarms of the journey without recorded complaint or fright. Lost in the native quarter of Kassala or left alone for ten days in the wilds of the Sudan, she bore these things with equanimity at the time and related them afterwards as rather amusing.

In the course of their travels they fell in with some Germans. At the outset Speedy had only a smattering of German. Within a week of being in their company he could speak with them fluently (Speedy, 1884: 73).

The trip was not a great success. The rifles which Speedy had picked up en route were not heavy enough. Mrs. Speedy contracted a persistent low fever. In the middle of 1878 they decided to return to England. They came home by way of Alexandria, Sicily, Naples, north Italy, Switzerland and the International Exhibition at Paris. They can hardly have reached England much before the autumn of 1878.

It will be remembered that Speedy parted from the Abyssinian prince, Alamayu, after escorting him to England at the end of 1871. In England Alamayu was sent to Cheltenham College in the care of its headmaster, Dr. Jex-Blake. In 1874 Jex-Blake became headmaster of Rugby School and took Alamayu there with him. At Rugby Alamayu's friend and mentor was one of the masters called Ransome. In 1878 Ransome left Rugby to become a professor at the Yorkshire College (now the University of Leeds). Alamayu had now grown to be “a fine, well proportioned youth about six feet in height.” He left Rugby at the same time as Ransome and went to spend a year at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. In October 1879 Alamayu went to Leeds to continue his studies under Ransome. He fell ill with pleurisy and died on 14 November 1879.⁽²³⁾

Alamayu's funeral took place on 21 November, 1879, at St. George's Chapel, Windsor. It was a bitterly cold day and there was an inch of snow on the ground. The mourners included representatives of Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in person (as guardian), Lord Napier and other notabilities, and Speedy and Ransome. Alamayu is buried just outside the main entrance to the Chapel. By order of Queen Victoria a brass plate to his memory was put up in the Chapel itself.

After 1879 the writer loses track of Speedy for four years. It seems unlikely that his restless spirit allowed him to stay at home.

It is at least known that he tried his hand at some form of business investment or enterprise. Thereby hangs a sad tale.

Speedy had never had any fortune of his own but Mrs. Speedy had inherited nearly £20,000 and a house at Southampton when her father died in 1875. Benjamin Cotton's original will, executed in 1860, left the greater part of his property in trust for his four children. The capital of Mrs. Speedy's fortune was thus to be managed by trustees. But in 1872 Benjamin Cotton executed a codicil to his will by which he released from the trust all but £5,000 of Mrs. Speedy's share. The greater part of her fortune thus passed to her without restriction and, under the law as it then was, became the property of her husband. Cotton did not alter the trust provisions affecting the shares of his two sons and his eldest daughter. One wonders what considerations moved him to trust Speedy's judgement in money matters so much more than his own sons!

It is not known exactly how Speedy lost the money. At the end of 1883 the Foreign Office approached Speedy on the question of his going again to Abyssinia (v.i. p. 86) and enquired delicately what financial arrangements would be acceptable. Speedy replied—

I have lately met with very serious pecuniary reverses and have absolutely no means whatever of undertaking any service gratuitously.

This catastrophe must have been recent for Lord Napier had told the Foreign Office that he believed Speedy to be "comfortably off." The £5,000 in trust now became the mainstay of the Speedy finances. Presumably they lived on the income of the trust fund, say £200 p.a., for the rest of their lives. Except for the two trips to Abyssinia to be mentioned hereafter there is no evidence that Speedy ever earned any income. When he died in 1910 his estate was valued at £227,34. Mrs. Speedy, however, left some £2,000, including a house, apart from her life interest in the £5,000 trust fund.

When Speedy reappears in the records in December 1883 he was living at Westbourne Park, London. He was to be called to Abyssinia for the third time. Napier's ally of 1868, Ras Kassa, had succeeded Theodore as King of Abyssinia, taking the title King John (Johannis). Britain had acquired a close interest in the disputed frontier between Abyssinia and the Sudan when Egypt and the Sudan came under a British protectorate in 1883. At about the same time El Mahdi began his famous revolt. The Egyptian troops at Kassala and adjacent posts were thereby cut off from the Nile valley. The only practicable route of withdrawal for them was through Abyssinian territory to Massawa on the Red Sea coast. In order to secure King John's agreement

to such a transit it was necessary to meet some of his demands. Apart from claims to the disputed frontier districts of Bogos and Gallabat, the King's main demand was for the cession of Massawa. The trade of northern Abyssinia necessarily passed through Massawa and there was much resentment at the oppression of Abyssinian traders by the Egyptian authorities at that port. Understandably King John wished to have control of it.

The Egyptian government was prepared to offer the cession of Bogos (but not Gallabat) and the establishment of a free port at Massawa (but not its outright cession). It was decided to send a mission to King John to offer these concessions in exchange for the right to withdraw the Egyptian troops from Kassala by way of Massawa. There was no permanent British diplomatic representative in Abyssinia. Vice-Admiral Hewett, commanding the Royal Navy in the Indian Ocean, was selected to lead the mission.

The Foreign Office asked Lord Napier if he could suggest a former member of his staff of 1868 as a political adviser for Hewett. Napier replied—

Captain Speedy knows the Abyssinians well and was well known and liked by King John and his people. He is, I believe, comfortably off and might not care to go. But he might like to taste adventure again! He would do very well.

The Foreign Office letter of invitation reached Speedy on 18 December 1883. Speedy replied in great haste that he was "most happy to offer my services." Two days later he wrote again to say all the things he had forgotten in the first onrush of enthusiasm. He asked for an interview with the Foreign Secretary but had to be content with being taken out to lunch by a Foreign Office official. In quick succession he bombarded the Foreign Office with three memoranda and a sketchmap of Abyssinia. The terms of his engagement were settled—£100 p.m. as in 1868 and £250 outfit allowance. He bought his outfit, including two tents—he had rather a special interest in tents. He also bought the Government's presents to King John, including a gilded revolver! On 28 December 1883 he left for Cairo. He had completed all his preparations in ten days, including the Christmas holidays. He was by no means a lazy man in matters which interested him.

In Cairo Speedy was attached to the staff of Sir Evelyn Baring (better known by his later title of Lord Cromer). In some of his telegrams to London Baring mentions Speedy's opinions as worth considering. The Foreign Office also had thought his memoranda worth printing.

At the end of March, 1884, Speedy left Cairo to join Hewett at Massawa. Hewett was a man of decision. As a midshipman he had served ashore in the Crimean War. At the siege of Sebastopol Hewett had charge of one of the guns of the naval brigade. A military staff officer rushed up and ordered him to spike his gun and withdraw as the Russians were upon them from the flank. Hewett replied that he would take no such orders from any but his naval captain. He slewed his gun round and began firing grapeshot at the Russians only 300 yards away. The Russians were checked; Hewett got the Victoria Cross.

Hewett did not like his diplomatic mission to Abyssinia with all its complications and conditions. "I cannot understand what my mission is to be—an officer of my rank must have the power to settle business." However the party left Massawa on 7 April. They had to go only as far as Adowa in northern Abyssinia and relatively close to the coast (it was at Adowa that the Italians were routed by Menelik in 1896). Hewett decided that a trip to the cool Abyssinian highlands would be a pleasant change for his staff. Some twenty naval officers came "for the ride". Afterwards they put in a claim for nearly £400 for uniforms damaged by hard travelling.

Near Asmara the mission just missed being ambushed by hostile tribesmen. They reached Adowa on 6 May, but King John was late at the rendezvous. He was reported to be taking a cure at the hot springs. Abyssinian letters, like Malay letters, are extremely formalised. Hewett, fuming at Adowa, was not mollified to receive the following—

This is the message of King John made by the Almighty King of Sion, King of Kings of Ethiopia. May it reach His Excellency Sir William Hewett commanding ships of war on the East Indian station.

How do you do? I and my army are, thank God, quite well. I am engaged here in a bathe. I have sent you Ras Alula to assist you in counsel, provisions and everything. As Your Excellency has come to make friendship between two kingdoms do not be in a hurry to go back. I am coming soon.

Written at camp Debbah Hadrah, 24 Miyazie 1876 (= 1 May, 1884).

In time however the royal bather arrived and the negotiations began.

The first meeting was not over cordial. Hewett relates— It is an Abyssinian custom to cover the nose and mouth with the robe or shawl when wishing to maintain a dignified superiority or to express contempt or displeasure.

He was thus received by King John. But later the King became more friendly. A treaty was eventually signed on the basis of the terms proposed by Hewett from his brief. In his report to the British Government Hewett said that

Captain Speedy was of the greatest assistance to me. His knowledge of the language and customs of the Abyssinian court and people were invaluable.

Hewett and his party returned to Massawa on 12 June, 1884. It was decided that Speedy should remain at Massawa "in charge of British and Abyssinian interests." His real function was to smooth over any differences between the Egyptians and the Abyssinians over the creation of a free port regime at Massawa. Hewett feared that the Egyptians might wreck his delicately negotiated settlement. Speedy's opposite number on the Egyptian side was Mason Bey, an American who had been appointed Governor of Massawa. Speedy and Mason worked together amicably.

Among Speedy's minor tasks at Massawa was arranging the shipment of the elephant which King John had sent as a present to Queen Victoria (who gave it to the London Zoo). The Foreign Office paid Speedy's salary at Massawa up to January 1885. Presumably he then returned to England.

From 1885 to 1897 is another gap in our knowledge of Speedy's career. He no longer had the money for foreign travel and it is quite probable that this fact obliged him to settle down in England. Moreover he was 50 in 1886.

There is however at least one more Speedy adventure which may belong to this period. In her will Mrs. Speedy mentions that her late husband had a sword with a Toledo blade in a steel scabbard inscribed "Al Captain Speedy del Conde Miramer." There is nothing but this one clue. What adventure in Spain or Spanish South America led a Spanish grandee to present an inscribed sword to Captain Speedy?⁽²⁴⁾

Speedy's fourth trip to Abyssinia came in 1897. King John had died in 1889 fighting the Mahdi in the Sudan. Menelik, the next king, built up a strong army. Having secured his position in the heart of Abyssinia he began to push outwards towards the territories which Abyssinia disputed with her neighbours. Britain, as protecting power in Egypt, had abandoned the Sudan to the Mahdi after the fall of Khartoum and the death of General Gordon in 1885. But in 1896 Kitchener began the campaign for the reconquest of the Sudan which was to end at the battle of Omdurman in 1898. There was also a British

post now established at Berbera on the Somali coast. Menelik's pressure towards the Sudan and Somali frontiers was thus a matter of concern. It was decided to send a mission to Abyssinia to settle the frontiers by agreement before Menelik's armies had gone any further.

Mr Rennell Rodd was selected to head this mission. Rennell Rodd (the future Lord Rennell) was a rising young diplomat on Cromer's staff in Cairo. Apart from Speedy he took with him six young Army officers, three of them guardsmen. One was a doctor; the others were each given a job—military and political intelligence, trade information, transport, astronomical observation and other survey work, and the inevitable clerical work of the mission. Speedy was taken as adviser on Abyssinian affairs and for local liaison and interpreting. Both on this mission and in 1884 there had also been an Abyssinian interpreter.

The mission left Zeila in British Somaliland on 18 March, 1897. After a journey by camel through the extreme heat of the Somali low country they reached Harrar in the Abyssinian uplands on 2 April. From Harrar to Addis Ababa they used 150 mules as transport. There were the usual difficulties—"the whole camp a confused scene of flying heels and scattered baggage."

They reached Addis Ababa on 28 April and were escorted into the capital with much ceremony. Rodd's mount was "a magnificent mule with embroidered trappings". He describes the procession—

The Abyssinian soldiery, with hundreds of waving banners, covering all the green hill-sides presented a most brilliant scheme of colour in their red and white shamucas, relieved here and there by the vivid colours of the silks shirts worn by those who have especially distinguished themselves in battle. They were divided into two bodies. Half of them preceded us with horns and flute-players. Then followed a detachment of the King's own guards, distinguished from the rest by having their rifles cased in red cloth; then the princes and officers and then four men of the Aden troop. In a clear space behind kept by more Abyssinian troops on either flank, the British mission rode in full uniform escorted by the Appanegus and the other officers referred to, with four more men of the Aden troop and their Jemadar behind, while thousands of Abyssinians brought up the rear.

At the palace the presents were handed over and the stage was set for serious business.

Menelik was a much more westernised monarch than his predecessors and Speedy's specialised knowledge of court etiquette was less essential than in the the past. Rodd reached some sort of agreement about the Somaliland frontier but abandoned the

attempt to settle the Sudan frontier. A treaty was signed on 14 May and by the end of the month the mission was already back at Harrar.

It seems that Speedy found the journey exhausting. His specialised knowledge, as we have seen, was not much in demand. Rodd's comment in his report on his mission was—

Captain Speedy being a much older man was not asked to undertake the more active duties of the road. It is remarkable that at his age he should have been able to sustain the fatigues of this long and hard journey. His knowledge of the language was sufficient to prove of much utility in cases where the direct intervention of a European was required, and the distribution of food and supplies to the Abyssinians, the division of fodder and general superintendence of the native commissariat were duties which his former knowledge of the country enabled him to carry out as no other member of the mission could have done.

One has the impression that Rodd allowed an elderly man to make himself useful about the place. Mentally and physically he could not keep up with his much younger companions.

Speedy lived on another thirteen years. His wife had bought a house at Chatsworth, Church Stretton, in Shropshire. Here Speedy died at the age of 73 in August 1910. Mrs. Speedy survived until 1917.

Notes

Sources. Four categories of source have been used in this paper:—

(1) The published works of individual authors are listed in the bibliography. References in the text are to the author's name, the year of publication and the number of the page.

(2) Most of the information about Speedy in Malaya comes from Colonial Office records published as Parliamentary Papers entitled "Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Certain Native States in the Malay Peninsula adjacent to the Straits Settlements" and issued in some seven parts covering the years 1872-77. The approximate date of the more important extracts has been given in the text since the printed correspondence is arranged and indexed in chronological order. The most important single document is Speedy's administration report for 1874 which was enclosed with a Straits Settlements despatch dated 6 April 1875.

(3) Some information comes from despatches still in manuscript at the Public Records Office, London (Series CO 273).

(4) Information of Speedy's career before and after his period in Malaya has been obtained from regimental muster rolls and other records, Foreign Office papers on Abyssinia, War Office records of the war of 1868, and Colonial Office records of the Maori Wars in New Zealand. Some of the New Zealand and Abyssinian records have been printed as Parliamentary Papers of the years 1864-8. The obituary of Speedy in the *London Times* of 11 August 1910, and passages on Alamayu in 1868 and 1879 have also been used.

Money and Weights. The Straits dollar was a silver coin in the nineteenth century, the sterling value of which moved with the sterling price of silver. In the 1870's the dollar was worth 4/-, i.e. \$5 = £1. The purchasing power of the dollar may be estimated from the fact that Javanese labourers in Larut were paid 25 cents per day. Junior European officials received salaries of \$2-400 p.m.

1. Speedy and the Explorers. It is here appropriate to mention Swettenham's statement (1942 : 39) that "he (Speedy) claimed acquaintance with Burton and Speke and told us strange stories of a journey made with those travellers in some remote regions of Hindustan and Arabia." If Swettenham correctly remembered what Speedy had said seventy years before, Speedy's contact with Burton and Speke must have been not later than 1863. Speke died in 1864.

Swettenham's recollections of what he had heard about Speedy's pre-Malayan period are not always accurate (v. p. 9, and Note 23). But in this case it may well be that Speedy had embroidered the truth. Speedy himself went abroad for the first time in 1854 and he was with the 81st Regiment and the 10th Punjab regiment until the end of 1860. Burton's travels in Arabia, Abyssinia and East Africa took place before 1860. In the 1860's Burton was a British consul in West Africa and South America. Speedy may conceivably have met Burton but not in the course of Burton's journeys of exploration. Speke's journey with Burton was likewise before 1860. But Speke and Grant set out to explore the sources of the Nile in 1860 and had reached Gondoroko, above Khartoum, by February 1863. At this time Speedy had just met Cameron at Kassala. It is unlikely that Speedy actually

meet Speke and Grant. It is more probable that Speedy did meet another explorer, Samuel Baker, who came to explore the Abyssinian tributaries of the Nile in 1861-2, when Speedy was at the court of King Theodore. Baker did meet Speke and Grant at Gondokoro in 1863.

The following hypothesis is consistent with these facts although it cannot be proved as certain. Burton was originally an Indian Army Officer. His exploit in making the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1853 in disguise must have been much discussed in army messes in India when Speedy first served there in 1854 and after. Later still, in 1863, Speke and Grant passed very close to where Speedy was. From Baker, and perhaps from Abyssinians who had known Burton and Speke, Speedy would have picked up a comparatively detailed picture of their experiences. In telling these stories over the dinner table at Taiping he could describe Burton and Speke's travels in such vivid detail that he perhaps did not have to try very hard in order to give the impression that he had been there with them.

2. The Padi Tax at Krian. Two separate questions require mention — the nature of the tax and the extent of the Larut chief's control of Krian.

Birch in a report on the customary revenues of Perak mentions the impost of 70 gantaags per household and its cash commutation. This report is included among the papers of the Perak Commission of 1876. As regards Krian it is clear that a padi tax was still collected in the 1870's. Maxwell (*JSBRAS*, 1884) had seen the tax collected by the Penghulus. Speedy (1874 report) states that the Mentri held an assessment of the total harvest in order to determine what his tithe should be. If there had ever been a fixed amount per household in Krian, as elsewhere in Perak, it had been commuted to a proportion of the crop before 1870.

Swettenham (Perak Administration Report 1890) denies that in Perak generally "there was any system of payment by tenths." The matter came up again in 1891 and Swettenham reiterated (*Despatch of 28/12/1891*) —

"I know most of the States of the Malay Peninsula, but I have never heard that in any of them it is a practice to pay tithes on the produce of the land to any Raja or governing power. I do not believe that it exists in any Malay State now; I am sure it is not an immemorial Malay custom; and the Sultans and chiefs of this State (Perak) assure me that they never heard of such a system being applied by Malays to agricultural lands in Malaya."

In view of this conflict of evidence the writer concludes that the tithe in Kurau was a local peculiarity. The Malays of that area were immigrants from Kedah and culturally they differed somewhat from Perak Malays (e.g. Swettenham 1895: 65, on "latah" in Krian and Kurau). Long Jaafar unquestionably collected the padi tax at Krian and Kurau in the early days (say before 1855). But it is uncertain how much control Long Jaafar and his son, the Mentri, had over Krian later on. The Perak State Council Minutes (27/6/1878) mention that Sultan Jaafar (who acceded in 1857 and died in 1865) employed the Dato' Panglima Besar to reside in Krian and collect the taxes for him. The Straits Settlements records of 1859-60 mention some

conflict between the Dato' Panglima Besar and the Mentri over this matter. At some time after 1871 (v. p.35) Sultan Abdullah employed the Laxamana to collect the padi tax for him at Krian. On the other hand Mat Ali, the penghulu of Kurau, was a staunch supporter of the Mentri, until his arrest at the end of 1875.

One may conclude that between 1860 and 1875 the Mentri claimed to control both Krian and Kurau but that he had secure control only of Kurau.

3. The Larut mines up to 1872. The 40 000 Chinese are mentioned in the extract from Low cited at p.21. C.J. Irving, who visited Larut in 1872 states that the Mentri then obtained \$ 19 per bahara in duty on monthly exports of 800 baharas, i.e. \$182,400 p.a. McNair (1878: 351) states that Larut tin exports were worth \$1 million in 1871 and (ibid, p.35) quotes Speedy's estimate of \$1¼ million in 1875. The price of tin was \$60 per bahara in 1874 but was subject to considerable fluctuation. In a report of 4 December 1873 Anson records some information given him by the Mentri about his management of the mines of Larut. The tax farmer (v. p. 20) allotted land for mining, giving areas of 8-20 orlongs according to the size of the labour force to be employed.

4. Tax Farming and Economic Development. Anson (report cited in Note 3) states that the Mentri used to obtain \$15,000 p.m. from the tax farmer when his revenues were at their peak. In August 1873 the tax farmer paid only \$1,000 p.m. The general analysis of tax farming in relation to economic development is based on statements by Low, a master of the technique, and on comparative material from Selangor in the 1880's. For other evidence from Low v. Perak State Council Minutes of 3/11/1879.

5. Tin Mining in the Batang Padang and Bidor Valleys. Much of the information comes from Birch's Journal and from his official reports, including the report cited in Note 2, and from scattered references in the evidence of the Perak Commission of Enquiry of 1876.

6. Quarrels among the Malay Chiefs. Most of this data, other than what has been published before, is gleaned from the depositions taken by the Perak Commission of Enquiry of 1876.

7. Malay Affairs in Larut up to 1875. The depositions of the Perak Commission of Enquiry include statements by Mat Ali, penghulu of Kuala Kurau, and Che Isa, a former employee of the Mentri. These are the main sources of the narrative of Malay affairs in Larut from 1872 to 1875 (including Speedy's campaign of November 1873).

8. Speedy's Colleagues in Perak. Much of the information in the last three sections of the paper comes from officials who were Speedy's superiors and colleagues. The two Governors mostly concerned with Speedy's work were Sir Andrew Clarke (1873-5) and Sir William Jervois (1875-7). Both were able and forceful men who had become Governors after distinguished careers in the Royal Engineers. The third Governor, Sir William Robinson (1877-9), was a civilian. The colleagues who came to Perak in Speedy's time and commented on his work were:—

(1) J.W.W. Birch entered the Ceylon Government service in 1846. In 1870 he became Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlements. In 1874 he asked to be appointed the first Resident of Perak. While Colonial Office approval was being obtained he came on a mission to Perak in April 1874. In November 1874 he became Resident and was murdered a year later.

(2) F.A. Swettenham entered the Straits Settlements Civil Service in 1870. He passed through Larut in April and in June (1874) in the course of missions to Perak. From about May to November 1875 he was Birch's assistant in Perak proper. He then served with distinction in the Perak War. He was later Assistant Colonial Secretary for Native States (1876-1882), Resident of Selangor (1882-9) and of Perak (1889-1895), Resident General of the Federated Malay States (1896-1901) and Governor of the Straits Settlements (1901-4).

(3) A.M. Skinner joined the Straits Settlements Civil Service in 1869. In 1873 he was responsible for dealing with papers about the Malay States in the Colonial Secretary's Office. In 1875 he came on a tour of the Malay States, reaching Larut in February of that year. He was Resident Councillor of Penang at the time of his retirement in 1897.

(4) Major F. McNair became Colonial Engineer (Director of Public Works) in the Straits Settlements after his retirement from the Indian Army. He was employed on various missions to the Malay States, notably as Commissioner attached to Ross's column at Larut in late 1875. In the period 1877-1880 the Governor, Sir William Robinson, had a panel of advisers to whom papers on the Malay States were referred for an expert opinion. McNair, C. J. Irving, Thomas Braddell and Swettenham made up the panel. McNair retired in 1884.

(5) Hugh Low came to Perak as Resident in 1877 after 30 years in Bornei. He was Resident of Perak until his retirement in 1889. He had married, in 1848, a natural daughter of William Napier, the Singapore lawyer and for a time Governor of Labuan.

(6) W.E. Maxwell began as a clerk in 1865 in the office of his father, the Chief Justice of the Straits Settlements. He entered the Civil Service in 1869. He served as Assistant Commissioner with Ross's force in 1875 and succeeded Speedy as Assistant Resident of Perak in 1877. In 1881 he was called to the Bar and later became the great expert on the introduction of the Torrens land system into Malaya. Later he was Resident of Selangor (1889-92) and Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements (1892-4). He left Malaya in 1894 to become Governor of the Gold Coast.

9. Speedy's Languages. Two general points must be made first. Speedy had a remarkable gift of picking up a conversational command of a language merely by hearing it spoken. He learnt to speak German in a week (p. 84). Secondly Speedy was proud of his "reputation for speaking many languages" (Swettenham 1942: 39) and often claimed more knowledge than he had — e.g. the contest with Pickering (p. 60) over Chinese.

Jervois, a hostile witness, says (v. Note 20 para 7) that Speedy could speak Malay and Hindustani. If he had not spoken these

languages well Jerois would have said so. Napier (p. 16) vouches for the fact that Speedy had a "familiar knowledge of the Amharic language." Swettenham did not think that Speedy could really speak Chinese (p. 60). Swettenham (1942: 39) also mentions that Speedy claimed to speak modern Greek and "various Indian dialects" and adds "but for good reason I doubt whether this knowledge was very profound." Modern Greek Speedy could have learnt in his easy fashion while at Kassala in 1862-3. Many of the merchants there were Greeks. Most of his time in India was spent in the north central area where Urdu (Hindustani) is usually spoken but he may have picked up some local dialects. During his trip to the Sudan in 1878 Speedy seems to have been independent of interpreters. It is therefore a fair guess that he knew some Arabic. Mrs Speedy mentions his German (v. p. 84), and rather implies that he knew French. It is not recorded whether he claimed to speak Maori. In sum, he probably spoke Malay, Hindustani and Amharic well. He had various sorts of smatterings of Chinese, Greek, some Indian dialects other than Urdu, Arabic, French and German.

10. Capitan China. The title probably originated in Malacca during the Portuguese regime (1511-1641). In the nineteenth century Malay Sultans sometimes conferred the title on headmen of Chinese mining communities as a token of government recognition of their authority. British administrators continued the practice until about 1900.

11. Che Karim. Che Karim sometimes referred to as Krani Karim, was a Rawa Malay who first went to Sëlama as "the Mentri's agent". His settlement at Sëlama had a chequered career up to about 1880 and there are many references to it in official papers of the period 1878-80.

12. The Law of the Malay States. This subject awaits thorough and expert investigation. So far as the writer knows no Sultan was ever asked in the 1870's to decree that specific Straits Settlement laws should be effective in his State. In the 1880's State Councils were asked to pass enactments in this sense. But from the start of the Pangkor treaty regime British magistrates seem on occasion to have applied Straits Settlements law.

13. Larut Opium Farms. The main sources of this passage are (1) "Memorandum on the Financial Condition of the Native States etc" dated 1877 by Swettenham; a copy was sent to London with Straits Settlements despatch of 2 March 1880. (2) Hugh Low's report on the Larut Riots of October 1879. (3) Minutes of the Perak State Council Meeting held on 20 October 1879. Low's account of the riots of 1879 is completely different from Dr Purcell's (1948 : 112) mentioned at p. 43.

14. "Go Slow" movements by Chinese miners. The explanation advanced is an hypothesis and is not fully established owing to lack of evidence. The Administration Report on Sungei Ujong for 1884 contains another reference to a "go-slow" movement during a period when tin prices were low. In 1885 the State Council of Sungei Ujong enacted a law requiring Chinese miners to work a

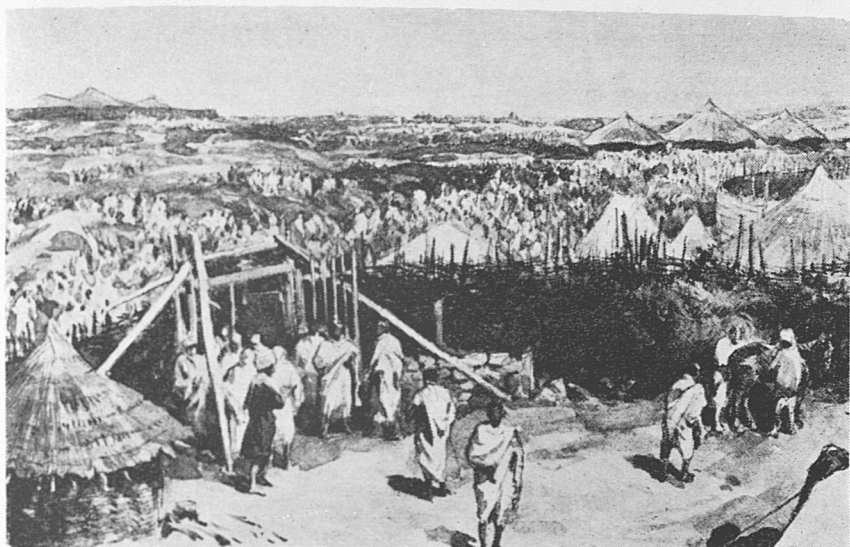
minimum of 8 hours per day instead of the 3 or 4 hours which they were then working. It is not recorded how the law was enforced. The customary contracts between Chinese miners and financiers did specify the hours which the miners were to work. Source 4 used in Middlebrook's "Yap Ah Loy" gives the Kuala Lumpur conventional working hours as 5.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. and 12 noon to 4 p.m. It is significant that such precise arrangements had to be made about working hours. It indicates a possible clash of interest between the parties

to the agreement.

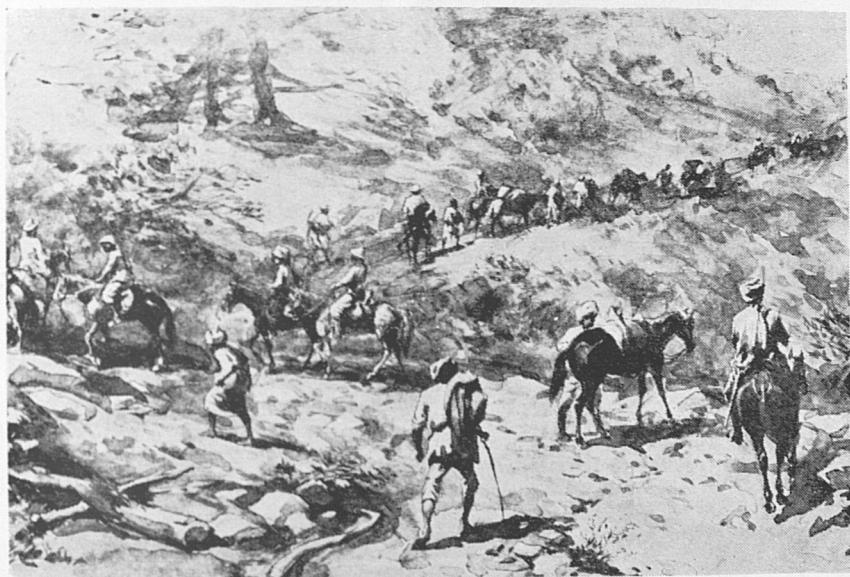
15. Criticism of Speedy in the United Kingdom. The commercial interests criticised Speedy because one third of his 1874 expenditure was on "Establishments." They may not have realised that this item included the cost of the Police and of the Perak State Treasury. Lord Stanley, in the course of a debate in the House of Lords on the Perak War in July 1876, commented that the Malay States suffered from the indifferent quality of government staff in Malaya. His examples are Braddell (Attorney General of the Straits Settlements), J.C. Davidson (Resident of Selangor and then of Perak) and Speedy. This list puts Speedy in very respectable company. Braddell and Davidson had both been members of the Straits Settlements Bar; both had distinguished and honorable records of public service. Lord Stanley also sent the Colonial Office a memorandum written by an official at the India Office in criticism of Speedy's report on the administration of Larut in 1874. The criticism is directed towards Speedy's "direct administration". The comparison is made between Speedy's handling of the Menti and the conduct of a British Political Agent in an Indian Princely State. The comparison reveals how much Lord Stanley's friend failed to understand the Larut situation.

16. McNair on Speedy. McNair's verdict on Speedy (1878 : 29) is:— "Captain Speedy, a gentleman who, by his energy, has produced peace among the rival factions of the Chinese, given protection and safety and fostered the mining community to such an extent that the mining towns are thronged, there are Chinese shops and the general air of the place betokens prosperity." Almost every word of this is an oblique contradiction of statements in Jervois's letter quoted in Note 18.

17 J.W.W. Birch. It was not necessary to defend Birch against the charge that his brusqueness had been the main cause of the Perak War. The official papers published in 1876 had refuted that view. But the official papers referred exclusively to Birch's overbearing manner and to no other aspect of his personality. His friends no doubt thought it necessary to depict his character in the round. Both McNair and Swettenham speak of Birch's devotion to what he conceived to be his duty, of his untiring energy and of his determination to improve the lot of the ordinary Malay peasantry. Swettenham also argued that by precipitating a trial of strength Birch (and Jervois) did Perak a good service in the long run. British administrators encountered much less resistance after 1876.. In the writer's view Birch in Perak should be seen as a man exalted by a sense of mission. He believed in the "strong hand" (p. 42); when told of Malay plans to kill him he said "If one Mr Birch is killed, ten Mr Birches will take his place." It is always difficult to reach a fair judgement on the intolerance (or should it be the "uncompromising idealism"?) of an honest zealot.



Above, King Menelik's men waiting to meet the expedition of 1897 on its approach to Addis Ababa. Below, a scene on the route into Abyssinia.



Two water-colour sketches published in the *Illustrated London News* depicting incidents in the Mission to King Menelik in 1897, which gave Speedy his fourth and last chance of visiting Abyssinia.



Speke in 1897 and his visit to Alexandria in Egypt in the course of his last visit to Abyssinia, and a member of Fitzmaurice's Mission to King Menelik. (Reproduced from a photograph in Speke to the Illustrated London News.)

18. The Letter to Meade. The full text is:—

Government House, Singapore,

August 19th, 1878

My Dear Meade,

With reference to my private note to you of 22/7/76 and to paragraphs 29 and 30 of my despatch No 297, which goes by this mail, I wish to refer to some points relating to the appointment of a Resident and Assistant Resident in Perak, which cannot well be discussed in the public despatch.

I should be very glad if Captain Speedy possessed qualifications which would enable me to recommend him for the appointment of Resident of Perak, for we should thus be able to economise in salaries, and appoint an Assistant Resident in Larut on a lower scale of pay than that which Captain Speedy receives.

In a case of this importance, however, the main point is to get the best man for the place, and there is no doubt whatever that Mr Davidson is that man. Besides his intimate knowledge of the Malay character and judicious mode of dealing with Malays, his legal training, his economical tendencies, and general aptitude for the conduct of business, are all qualities which tend to make him a good "Resident".

Captain Speedy is altogether an inferior order of being. He has apparently a delight in dressing himself in a gorgeous leopard skin, with a grand turban on his head, and still further exciting the curiosity of the natives by playing on the bagpipes, an instrument on which he performs with much facility. If you have seen his elephantine frame, you will be able to judge of the figure he would present under these conditions.

As regards the success of his administration in Larut, there is really very little to be said so far as he is concerned.

The real history of his being employed as Assistant Resident in Larut was, that being in the employ of the Mentri of Larut at the time of our intervention in January 1874, it was considered necessary, as it were, to buy him up. And it is to be observed that the fact of his having been in the Mentri's employ is not a qualification in favour of his being Resident of Perak.

When the quarrels of the Chinese in Larut ceased, their rivalry took the turn of competition in tin mining, and an excellent subordinate called Marples was appointed Treasurer etc and really took the lion's share of the work. The administration in Larut has certainly been anything but economical, and at my request Mr Davidson is now engaged with the assistance of Mr W. Maxwell in going into matters there with a view of reducing expenditure. I lately also sent Douglas to Larut to look into these matters, and he entirely corroborates the view as to Captain Speedy's want of economy in administering affairs there.

£1,500 a year is a great deal too much for the Assistant Resident in Larut. Eventually I think £750 will suffice. I have proposed £1,000 per annum for Mr W. Maxwell as *locum tenens*, for he is the best man I could select for the place, and he could not be in-

duced to take it for a less sum. He will, however, however, be going on leave early next year, and if Captain Speedy does not return, the salary may then be reduced to the lower figure.

Captain Speedy is certainly an expensive article at £1,500 a year, and it would be advantageous if he were to take it into his head not to return here. I am told that through his wife he is very comfortably off, and that there is no necessity for him to do so.

Believe me etc.,

(sgd) Wm. F. Drummond Jervois.

(Published in a Parliamentary Paper of December 1876).

19. The Colonial Office Minutes. These minutes come from files deposited at the Public Record Office for general information. They amplify the intention of documents which the Colonial Office saw fit to publish. The writer has therefore felt free to publish extracts from them.

20. The Despatch about Speedy. The full text is:—

Government House, Singapore,
18, October, 1876.

Right Hon Earl of Carnarvon etc.,

My Lord,

In my despatch No. 297 dated 19th August, I stated that I did not consider Captain Speedy qualified for the position of Resident in Perak, and in my cypher telegram of September 16th, I begged that he should not return to Larut, at all events for some time to come.

2. I have now the honour to state confidentially to your Lordship the reasons why, in my opinion, it would be disadvantageous were Captain Speedy to assume the post of Assistant Resident in Larut. In order to explain my views fully on this point to your Lordship, I must refer to the connexion which Captain Speedy had with the District of Larut previous to our intervention therein in the early part of 1874.

3. As your Lordship is aware, in August 1872, disturbances broke out in Larut between two factions of Chinese, known respectively as Si Kwans and Goh Kwans, and the struggle for supremacy was carried on with various success on either side. The Mentri of Perak (or Mentri of Larut as he was more generally called) first supported one side, then the other, and was consequently trusted by neither. In July 1873 he was using his influence on behalf of the Goh Kwans and at that time held out inducements to Captain Speedy, then Assistant Superintendent of Police at Penang, to enter his service.

4. At this time the Mentri was taking advantage of the disturbed state of Perak, to assert claims as independent sovereign of Larut, a position to which he had no title, as explained in paragraphs 68, 69, 74 and 75 of the memorandum by the Attorney General, which formed enclosure 7 of my predecessor's despatch No 43 of 24th February 1874. Relying, however, on being able to make good his claims, I am informed that the Mentri promised Captain Speedy, in addition to a fixed salary, one third of the revenue of Larut, if he succeeded in driving his enemies out of the district. Led by this inducement,

which would have given him an income of some £10,000 or £15,000 a year, Captain Speedy resigned his post in the police of the Straits Settlements, and engaged himself in the service of the Mentri.

5. Captain Speedy then proceeded to India, and enlisted a body of Sepoys to fight for the Mentri's cause. He made but little progress, however, towards driving out of Larut the faction of Chinese then opposed to the Mentri, when Sir Andrew Clarke intervened, and by entering into negotiations with the headmen of the conflicting factions, brought the disturbances to a termination. This step was immediately followed by the Pangkor Treaty, by which the Mentri's position was declared to be that of Governor only in Larut, and it was determined to accord him a fixed allowance out of the State revenues, as an officer of Perak subordinate to the Sultan. Captain Speedy was at the same time appointed Assistant Resident in Larut, at first on salary of £2,000, subsequently reduced to £1,500 a year.

6. Your Lordship will thus perceive that the engagement of Pangkor could not but be distasteful both to Captain Speedy and the Mentri; to the latter as being the fiat which rendered void any claims which he had previously advanced to the sovereignty of Larut, to the former as being the instrument which reduced the salary promised to him to about one tenth of what it would have been, should he ever have proved successful in the Mentri's cause. It is not difficult, therefore, to imagine that Captain Speedy would not have been sorry to witness a course of events which would terminate British intervention, and so restore his former relations with the Mentri of Larut. As to this chief, one result of enquiry into the causes of the disturbances in Perak has been to show that he has been caballing and plotting against us with much cunning ever since the engagement of Pangkor was entered upon, and that, behind the scenes, he has been one of the prime movers in the Perak outrages.

7. But irrespective of the considerations to which I have just referred, I think that Captain Speedy is wanting in many of the qualifications which are required in a Resident or Assistant Resident in the Native States. Doubtless, he is acquainted with both the Hindustani and Malay languages, and he possesses much physical power. It is also stated that he has considerable influence amongst the Chinese and Malays. If, however, the latter be the case, this influence was exerted to very little purpose in obtaining means of transport for the troops who passed through Larut at the end of last year. Brigadier General Ross, who commanded that force, informed me that the so-called influence of Captain Speedy did not exist, and that he was powerless to induce the headmen to obey his orders or requisitions. At that time I had great difficulty in raising elsewhere supplies of coolies, who, if Captain Speedy had the influence attributed to him, should have been easily obtained by him, in any number required, from amongst the Chinese in Larut.

8. I do not think that the facility with which Captain Speedy can acquire languages is any guarantee for the possession of other qualifications essential for the position of a Resident. From personal observation I must say that he does not appear to be a man of businesslike habits; he is decidedly lazy, and submits very unwillingly to the necessary discipline of the public service. He is, moreover, extravagant in the expenditure of public money. Your Lordship will

observe that Larut being at present the main source whence the revenue of Perak is derived, it is of great importance that economy should be exercised in that district, in order that as large a share as possible may be applied to meet the expenses incident to the Government of the whole State, and to repay the advances made by this Colony. Recent investigation has shown that considerable reduction may be effected in the expenditure in Larut.

9. The salary which Captain Speedy has drawn, viz £1,500 per annum (in addition to a large and very comfortable house) is a very high one for the duties performed, and when the Residency is finally established at Kuala Kangsar and the road between that station and Larut is available for carriages, an arrangement may be made by which the Resident at Kuala Kangsar may perform Residential duties for Larut. There will then be only one Resident and one Assistant Resident in Perak, the former receiving £2,000, the latter (at Bandar Bahru) £750 per annum. It is to be observed that there is a line of telegraph through Larut to Kuala Kangsar; and Bukit Gantang, where the Mentri of Larut lives, is nearly as close to Kuala Kangsar as it is to the Assistant Resident's house in Larut.

10. Taking all these points into consideration, I strongly recommend that, if possible, employment may be found for Captain Speedy elsewhere.

I need scarcely assure your Lordship that my only object in writing thus confidentially respecting Captain Speedy is a desire to remove a difficulty in carrying out the policy of Her Majesty's Government with respect to the State of Perak.

I have etc.,

(sgd) Wm. F. Drummond Jervis

(Published as a Parliamentary Paper in May 1877)

21. Privilege of Official Papers. In essentials Speedy's situation has much in common with the plaintiff's in the leading case of *Adam v. Ward* decided forty years later. In this case the defendant was a civil servant at the War Office who, in the course of duty, had arranged the official publication of a report censuring the plaintiff, a former Army officer. The Court held that the undoubted privilege (i.e., immunity from liability for libel) which exists in respect of confidential reports on officers in the public services, extends even to the general publication of such reports.

22. Swettenham on Speedy. It is the writer, not Swettenham, who applies this passage to Speedy. Swettenham does not say explicitly which of his former colleagues he had in mind when writing the passage. The views of Swettenham on Speedy when he was 24 years old are discussed at pp. 41-42 of this paper. In "British Malaya" (1st Ed. 1906) Swettenham's references to Speedy, as to most other personalities, express no personal judgement on the man. At p.195, however, he comments favourably if patronisingly on Speedy's administration of Larut. In his memoirs (1942:39) Swettenham says "I never understood why Speedy resigned his Office after only two years work"

23. Alamayu. This information is taken from the obituary notice and the report of the funeral published in the *London Times* on 15 and 22 November 1879. Swettenham (1952:38) relates that Alamayu died at a public school. By implication Swettenham dates Alamayu's death as occurring before 1874. He says that Speedy grew a beard as a mark of his grief at Alamayu's death and that this beard had been shaved off before Speedy became Assistant Resident of Larut. The date of Alamayu's death in 1879 is beyond question. The portraits of Speedy in 1868 and 1897 both show him with a beard. So, too, the group photograph published in *JMBRAS*, 1951, Pt 4, which includes Speedy and is believed to have been taken in April 1875. Speedy probably had a beard all through his adult life.

24. The Spanish Sword. The writer construes the inscription to mean "To Captain Speedy from Count Miramar."

"Miramar" is an unknown word. But "Miramar" is quite common as a place name. Mrs. Speedy may have made a mistake in giving the instructions for her will. The sword was not then in her possession to refer to for the spelling of the inscription; she states in the will that the sword was deposited at a jeweller's. In the same will Mrs. Speedy mis-spells Alamayu as "Almaya." Spelling was not perhaps her strong point. There is also another possibility of a spelling mistake. Mrs. Speedy's original will may have had "Miramar." The writer has only seen a typed copy of the will. The writer holds a copy of the Speedy marriage certificate, certified "a true copy" supplied by Somerset House. In it Mrs. Speedy's first name is given as "Conelia". Mistakes in copying can occur and pass unchecked at Somerset House.

The most famous Miramar is a Franciscan college at Mallorca in the Balearic Islands. There are several small places so named in Spain and at least one each in Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico and Austria. Perhaps the most intriguing is a town in Argentina named after General Alvarado Miramar. But the writer cannot discover who General Miramar was. The heroic period in Argentine history was in the first half of the nineteenth century before Speedy's time.

It is also possible that Tristram Speedy merely inherited the sword from an earlier Captain Speedy. His father, James Speedy, had no connection with Spain or South America, so far as is known. But there was an Army officer called Speedy in the period of the Napoleonic War who was serving overseas in 1811, the period of the war in Spain. This Speedy, who married in 1805, may have been the father of James Speedy. He would thus be Tristram Speedy's grandfather. But the writer cannot establish any connection between this Speedy and James Speedy, nor prove that the sword was a Peninsular War relic.

Speedy and Prince Alamayu

As we have noted (p. 16, above) Prince Alamayu of Abyssinia travelled to England with Speedy after King Theodore's death in April 1868. By a minute 12340/68 of that year the Treasury agreed to allow Speedy £300 a year for taking care of the Prince, plus a further sum not to exceed £400 a year for expenses. He was paid under these terms in 1868, but from 1 January, 1869, until he parted from the Prince he received payment at a set rate of £700 a year. Over the whole period of his guardianship he was paid a total of £2,451-0-5, including expenses.

In 1869 Speedy applied for permission to take Alamayu with him to India. This was granted under two minutes, 10670/69 and 6601/69, and by a subsequent minute (12654/69) he was allowed a sum of £200, additional to his regular payments, towards the cost of the boy's outfit and fares. Payments to Speedy in India ceased after 28 February, 1871, and it seems likely, therefore, that he came over to Malaya in that month or the next: it also seems likely that he omitted to obtain permission from London to bring Alamayu away from Oudh. There is no record of any such permission having been granted, or of any arrangements having been made for the payment of his allowances here. In August, 1871, Col. Anson, then acting as Officer Administering the Government in the absence of Sir Harry Orde, who was in England on leave, wrote to London for instructions on the matter (194 of 10.8.1871). The reply was a statement to the effect that Alamayu had been allowed to accompany Speedy to India for two years from July 1869, after which the situation was to be reviewed, that his travelling round with Speedy in this manner was prejudicial to his education and prospects, and that he must be sent back to England immediately in the charge of a reliable person (enclosure in S. of S. to S.S., 192 of 7.9.1871). By this time Speedy was serving in Penang. Anson replied as follows (254 of 2.11.1871).

My Lord,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's Despatch No. 192 of 7 September directing that Prince Alamayu should be sent to England, and to enclose a correspondence on this subject from Captain Speedy and the Acting Lt Governor of Penang.

I have myself seen Captain Speedy and Alamayu frequently together and have had the latter spending the day at Government House on several occasions, and in justice to Captain Speedy I must say that he shows the greatest affection for his charge which is fully returned by him. Were Captain Speedy his father he could not have done more for him in every way and I consider that under the circumstances Captain Speedy is deserving of every consideration.

Captain Speedy being a married man without any family has allowed Alamayu to take the place of son and I understand that Mrs Speedy, who is at present in England, takes an equal interest in him.

I have &ca.

(Sd) A. E. H. Anson,
Administrator

The next move was a telegram from the Secretary of State of 17 November, 1871, to the effect that Speedy was to take the boy home as soon as possible. Anson carried out the "peremptory" (his adjective) instructions with alacrity, but in his reply pointed out that he was short of police officers, and that as Speedy had served in the Straits Settlements for less than a year he was not yet entitled to leave.

Speedy sailed for England with Alamayu on 23 November, and they must have reached London about the end of the year. Payments to Speedy for taking care of the Prince ceased on 4 March, 1872, and three days later he was given an advance of £150, presumably for expenses in connection with his return to Malaya. In spite of Anson's letter of 20 November, he does not seem to have been hurried back to his job. Belatedly, on 17 April, Anson's letter was noted, but only with reference to his query about Speedy's status while he was away: he was to receive full pay, but no Colonial allowance, for the period of his absence from duty (S. of S. to S.S., 87 of 17.4.1872).

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Note: the 1920 paper by Wilkinson is a revised and expanded version of of the 1908 paper (in so far as Larut history is concerned). The Larut section of the 1920 paper is reprinted, with only minor changes, as a Chapter of Wilkinson and Winstedt's "History of Perak" (*JMBRAS*, 12, (1), 1934).

