THE MAKING OF BRITAIN'S NEW MALAYAN POLICY, 1857 - 1874: THE INTERPLAY OF IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL INTERESTS

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Abstract

The transfer of the Straits Settlements from the India Office to the Colonial Office in 1867 was the outcome of a persistent campaign begun in 1857 by the mercantile communities of the Straits Settlements, particularly that of Singapore. The transfer was delayed largely because of objections from the Treasury that the Straits Settlements were not self-supporting. Imperial consent came only after the Straits Settlements proved that they could be self-supporting and the strategic importance of Singapore was more fully appreciated. The aims of the campaign for transfer were twofold: (1) to bring about a new constitution that would provide for an Executive Council and a Legislative Council with unofficial representation and (2) to elevate the status of the Straits Government by providing the governor with wide powers to conduct foreign relations, particularly with the Malay states. The campaign achieved only a partial success in 1867 for its second aim did not materialize immediately. The British government was reluctant to get involved in Malay affairs. After 1867 demands for British intervention grew rapidly; they were favoured by colonial entreprenuers and officials but rejected by the British government. Lord Kimberley, who conducted colonial affairs within the framework of Gladstone's policy, but with considerable initiative, rejected in 1871 recommendations that political officers be appointed to the Malay states. However, he favoured this policy in 1873 because he believed he could satisfy Gladstone's requirement:

no British protection unless there was such a desire on the part of the native state involved. In 1873 Kimberley fulfilled that condition: Tenku Kudin of Selangor expressed his desire for British protection. And Governor Clarke swiftly put this forward policy into effect in early 1874. The establishment of the Straits Settlements as a Crown colony, followed by intervention in Malaya, came about largely as the result of colonial influences; international rivalry remained a background factor.

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Introduction

In 1867 the British government transferred the Straits Settlements from the India Office to the direct administration of the Colonial Office as a Crown Colony. Seven years afterwards British influence was extended in the Malayan Peninsula with the appointment of British political officers to the native states of Perak, Selangor and Sungei Ujong. These two measures extended Imperial control and responsibility in the area, contrary to the general trend of Liberal colonial policy. The transfer was not only a redistribution of administrative responsibilities between the India Office and the Colonial Office but also involved Britain's general colonial policy, signifying a change in that policy towards the Straits Settlements. A number of substantial changes in the government of the Straits Settlements took place, with the introduction of Executive and Legislative Councils with unofficial representation in the latter body. The position of the Straits Settlements in the Empire was generally reappraised, with the result that their importance was enhanced. The appointment of political officers called Residents to the Malay states put an end to the traditional policy of non-intervention and inaugurated the Residential system under which the Residents became the de facto rulers of the Malay states.

The agitation for the transfer originated in Singapore in 1857 but did not achieve its aims until almost ten years later. The delay was primarily due to insistent objections from the Treasury that the Straits Settlements were not self-supporting financially. During the agitation for the transfer the desire to see British influence extended

over the Malayan Peninsula was frequently expressed by the local community. However, the Imperial government resisted such demands because they were incompatible with its policy of non-intervention in Malay politics. Nonetheless, the transfer did materialize, although rather belatedly, and the appointment of British officers to the Malay states was finally approved by the Imperial government. These two significant developments were linked closely. But they were approved only after the requirements of the Imperial government were satisfied: in the first case, the Straits Settlements proved that they could be self-supporting; in the second case, there was an expressed desire on the part of a Malay ruler for British protection.

E. A. Benians points out in his introductory Chapter to Volume III of The Cambridge History of the British Empire that: "In British colonial policy three influences were always making themselves felt - Britain's own needs and sense of her own interests, the needs and opinions of her Colonies, and the changing face of the world."[1] Here Benians is writing about British colonial policy after the 1870s when international politics became intricately entangled with the affairs of the Empire. Nonetheless, his general remark about the interplay of these three different forces is equally applicable to our subject. The three forces were operative in the making of Britain's new Malayan policy, although not all were of equal weight. International rivalry for colonies was secondary to the more important considerations of Imperial and colonial needs. It is

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[1] The Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. III (1959), 3.

the purpose of this study to investigate, in the light of Benians's remark, the various influences on the formulation of the two significant decisions taken in regard to Malaya. We shall look at the development of the policies from their emergence through their vicissitudes to their eventual adoption by the British government. Concentrating on the actions of the Imperial government, we shall deal with the varying attitudes of the Colonial Office, the India Office and the Treasury towards the demands from the Straits Settlements. In other words, we shall examine, mainly, London's response to the persistent demand for increasing imperial control and assumption of responsibility in Malaya.

The thesis consists of six chapters. The introductory chapter briefly outlines the trend of Britain's colonial policy, bringing out in this general context the various elements that contributed to the outbreak of the campaign for the transfer of the Straits Settlements to the Colonial Office. The second chapter deals with the origin and development of the agitation for the transfer and the initial response of the Imperial departments immediately concerned, the India Office and the Colonial Office. The people involved and their organizations as well as the channels through which the colonial demands reached London are also examined. The subject of Chapter three is the objections from the Treasury to the proposed scheme and the reasons behind them. The Treasury's objections are related to the general colonial policy of the day. Chapter four concentrates on the resulting compromise between the interests of London and Singapore and the final approval of the proposal by the Imperial government. We discuss in Chapter five the

governmental changes that accompanied the transfer, the gradual emergence of a new policy in the Straits Settlements with respect to the Malay states, and its incompatibility with the general Imperial policy of the Gladstone administration. The issue centres largely on the nature and extent of the Straits Governor's powers in foreign affairs. Chapter six discusses the reasons behind Lord Kimberley's decision to adopt a more active policy in the Malay states. While C.N.Parkinson[1] stresses the effects of Britain's domestic politics on the eve of the 1874 general election and C.D.Cowan[2] emphasizes the forces of international rivalry, we suggest that Kimberley decided to change the traditional policy of "hands-off" because he believed he could satisfy Gladstone's general requirements in this regard: no British intervention unless there was such a desire on the part of the native state involved.

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[1] C.N.Parkinson, British Intervention in Malaya,1867-77 (Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1960).

[2] C.D.Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya(London:Oxford University Press, 1961).

Chapter I: The British Empire and the Straits Settlements in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

The main trend of British colonial policy in the 1850s was towards self-government for the colonies of white settlement, a policy that had made great advances during Lord John Russell's ministry (1846-52). In British North America the principle of self-government was conceded in 1846, applied in 1848 and tested in 1849.[1] In 1848 Lord Elgin, the Governor-General, invited the victorious Liberal Party in United Canada to form a government; the same policy of responsible government was also applied to the Atlantic Provinces. Nova Scotia had a party government in 1848, and New Brunswick, although did not have a party government until 1854, had a coalition government in 1848. Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland obtained responsible government in 1851 and 1855 respectively.[2]

The principle of self-government was also applied in the Australian colonies and New Zealand. In 1853, the Duke of Newcastle,[3] the Secretary of State for the Colonies, definitely conceded the principle of self-government to the Australian colonies. The keynote of British policy here can be found in Newcastle's own words. "It appears

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[1] A. L. Burt, The British Empire and Commonwealth (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1956), 267.

[2] Burt, British Empire, 255-267; H. E. Egerton, A Short History of British Colonial Policy, 1606-1909 (London: Methuen, 1950; revised by A. P. Newton), 261-267; K. N. Bell and W. P. Morrell, Select Documents on British Colonial Policy, 1830-1860 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1928), 1-6.

[3] Clinton, Henry Pelham Fiennes Pelham, 5th Duke of Newcastle (1811-64), was educated at Eton and Oxford; in December 1852 became Aberdeen's Secretary of State for the Colonies; in June 1854, the Secretary for War when the War Office became a separate department; Colonial Secretary again in Palmerston's ministry from 1859 until his death in 1864. Dictionary of National Biography (hereafter cited as DNB), IV, 554-555.

to me therefore," he wrote to the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy, "that, while public expectation is as yet but little excited on the subject of responsible government, it is very desirable that we should prepare ourselves to regard its introduction as a change which cannot be long delayed and for which the way should be smoothed as far as possible."[1] In 1855 the Imperial Government finally approved new constitutions giving self-government to the Australian colonies, and New Zealand was granted a responsible government in 1856.[2] By 1856 responsible government had become an accepted principle in the settlement colonies, a year before the outbreak of the agitation in Singapore for the transfer of the Straits Settlements from the Indian Government to the direct administration of the Imperial Government.[3]

The grant of responsible government to the settlement colonies synchronized with the triumph of Free Trade. The Corn Laws were repealed in 1846 and the Navigation Acts done away with in 1849. The connection between these two great developments in the colonial system can be easily established. When the Imperial Government abandoned the monopoly of colonial trade it was no longer necessary to control the administration of the colonies. Earl Grey, the Colonial Secretary who was responsible for the introduction of responsible government, defended his policy in terms of

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[1] The Duke of Newcastle to Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy, 4 August 1853, in Bell and Morrell, Select Documents, 161-163; also Egerton, British Colonial Policy, 276.

[2] Egerton, British Colonial Policy, 271-278; Bell and Morrell, Select Documents, 148-155, 166-171; E. L. Woodward, The Age of Reform (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1962, 2nd. ed.), 377-378.

[3] Bell and Morrell, Select Documents, 6.

Free Trade. He maintained that the Empire should be preserved, but not in the same old way. The Imperial Government should not interfere in the internal affairs of the colonies because the end of the old commerical system had removed the necessity for control of the trade and tariff policies of the colonies.[1]

However, the policy towards British India, under which the Straits Settlements were placed, was altogether different from that applied to the settlement colonies. Although a Legislative Council was provided for India in 1853, it had no elective members and was intended only to assist the Governor-General. The period under discussion coincided with the governor-generalship of Lord Dalhousie (1848-56), who was appointed by the same Russell ministry. It was Dalhousie's administration that witnessed a great expansion of British rule in the continent of India.[2] The Manchester School, although generally deploring the expansionist policy of Dalhousie, advocated governmental intervention in India, such as the promotion of cotton production and railway construction.[3]

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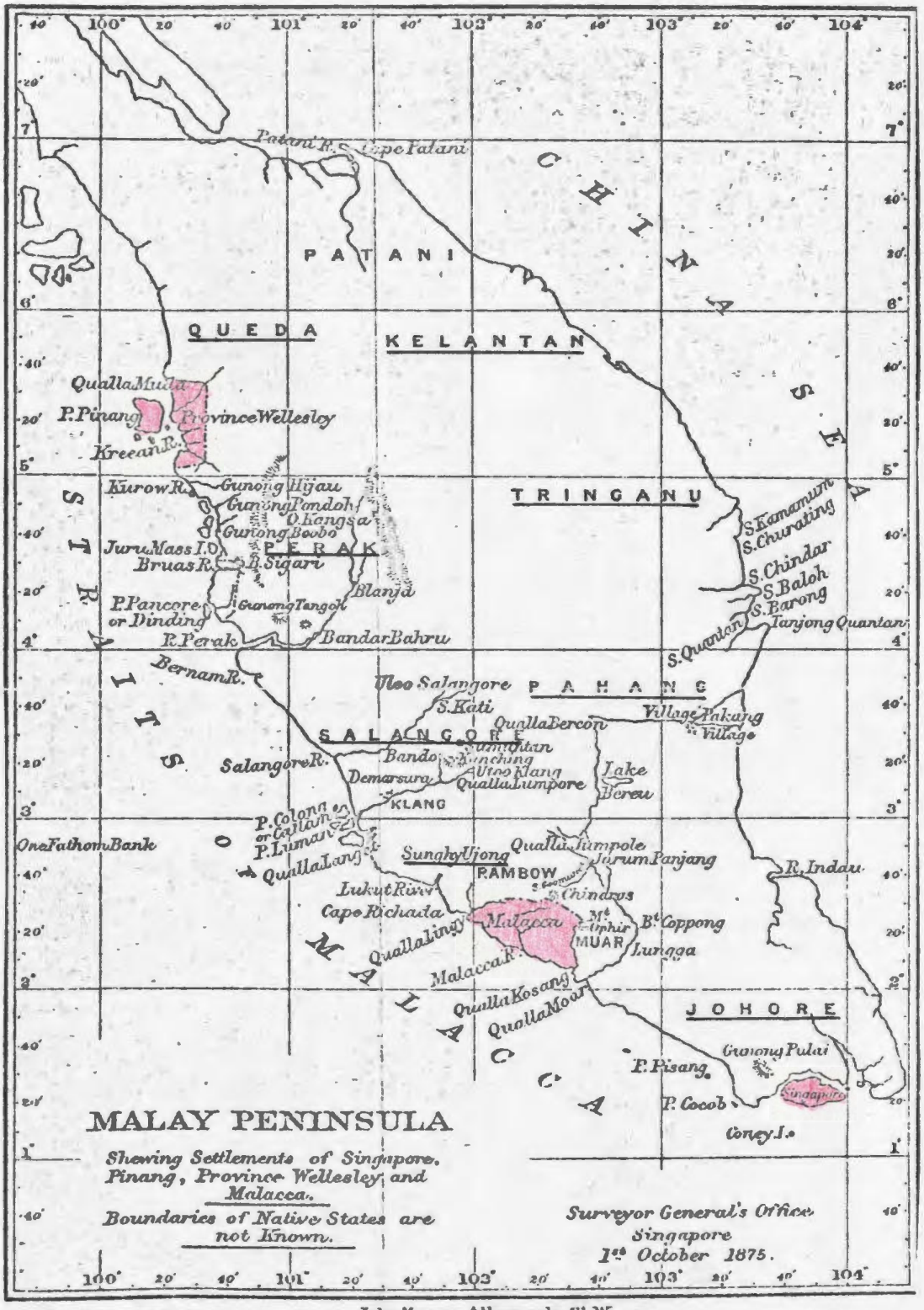
[1] Earl Grey, The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration (London, 1853), vol. I, 11-18; R. L. Schuyler, The Fall of the Old Colonial System: A Study in British Free Trade, 1770-1870 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 146-149. Burt, however, holds that the evolution to self-government was due more to the impact on the colonial administration of the American Revolution and the consequent advance of democratic ideas in North America. See Burt, British Empire, 248-251.

[2] E. L. Woodward, Age of Reform, 408-412.

[3] J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade", Economic History Review, 2nd. ser., vol. VI,1 (1953), 1-15; R. J. Moore, "Imperialism and 'Free Trade' Policy in India, 1853-4", Economic History Review, vol. XVII (1964-5), 135-145; P. Harnetty, "The Imperialism of Free Trade: Lancashire and the Indian Cotton Duties, 1859-1862", Economic History Review, vol. XVIII (1965), 333-49 and "The Imperialism of Free Trade: Lancashire, India, and the Cotton Supply Question, 1861-65", The Journal of British Studies, vol. VI (1966), 70-96. For a contrary viewpoint, see O. MacDonagh, "The Anti-Imperialism of Free Trade", Economic History Review, vol. XIV (1961-62), 489-501.

Malaya in 1875



Reproduced from R.H.Veitch (ed), Life of Sir Andrew Clarke (London, 1905).

The three British settlements in Malaya, Penang, Malacca and Singapore, were originally acquired by agents of the East India Company, and were initially placed under the control of the Indian Government, which was in turn governed from London by the Company's Court of Directors and by the Board of Control until the abolition of the East India Company in 1858 and the creation of a new department, the India Office. The first settlement, Penang (officially called Prince of Wales Island), occupied by Francis Light in 1786, was made a Residency under the control of the Governor of Bengal until 1805 when its status was raised to a Presidency, the Fourth or Eastern Presidency, on an equal footing with the Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, which were subject to the general control of the Governor-General of India. This change in status was brought about because it was anticipated that Penang would become a great trading centre and naval station to compete with the Dutch, an anticipation which did not materialize.

Singapore was occupied in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles on behalf of the East India Company. In 1823 it came under the direct control of the Governor-General of India. John Crawfurd, who played a conspicuous role in the agitation for the transfer of the Straits Settlements from the Indian to the Imperial Government twenty five years later, was appointed Resident of Singapore (in the capacity of governor, 1823-26).[1]

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[1] John Crawfurd(1783-1868), Orientalist, studied medicine at Edinburgh from 1799 to 1803 when he went to India and served with the army in the north-west provinces for five years and then transferred to Penang; took part in the Java expedition of Lord Minto in 1811; in 1821 envoy to the courts of Siam and Cochin-China; the Resident of Singapore from 1823 to 1826 when he was commissioner to Pegu, Burma and Ava; after his return to England, devoted himself to the study of Indo-China. DNB,V,60-61. He was the parliamentary agent and publicity manager in London of the Calcutta merchants at a salary of £1,500, and played a considerable part in the attack on the East India Company's trading privileges. For this see M.Greenberg, British Trade and the Opening of China,1800-1842 (Cambridge:University Press,1951),183-184.

By the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 Britain's possession of Singapore was confirmed and the Dutch colony in the Malayan Peninsula, Malacca, was made over to the British in exchange for Bencoolen in Sumatra. Two years later, Singapore and Malacca were incorporated with Penang into a single Presidency, officially called the Incorporated Settlements of Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca, and came to be known collectively as the Straits Settlements. But under Governor-General Lord Bentinck the Fourth Presidency was abolished in 1829 on grounds of economy and the Straits Settlements were downgraded to the status of a Residency under the control of the Governor of Bengal. No further change was made until 1851 when Lord Dalhousie transferred the Straits Settlements from the Bengal Government and placed them under his direct administration.

Whether under the Governor of Bengal or the Governor-General, the domestic and foreign affairs of the Straits Settlements were subject to the approval of the Indian authorities, which were called in the Straits the Supreme Government. The administration of the Straits Settlements itself was placed in the hands of a governor (stationed at Penang) and his two aides called Resident Councillors, (one at Singapore, the other at Malacca) who acted as lieutenant-governors. After 1832 the site of

government moved from Penang to Singapore where the governor was stationed. Authority was concentrated in the hands of the governor, for there was no executive or legislative council.[1] This political arrangement was soon found to be inadequate and outmoded as circumstances changed.

The Straits Settlements were closely connected with Britain's trade in the East. Penang and Singapore were acquired by the East India Comapny for both strategic and commercial reasons. The long struggle between England and France for supremacy in India, and the Company's expanding China trade, proved the value of such a station as Penang, which could serve as a base for naval operations in the Bay of Bengal and as port-of-call between India and China.[2] When Raffles hoisted the British flag over Singapore in 1819, he hoped to make Singapore a great emporium in the East in order to break the Dutch monopoly of trade in the Malay Archipelago, as the flourishing "country trade" so required. In addition, British shipping en route to China would be safeguarded.[3]

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[1] L. A. Mills, British Malaya, 1824-67 (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966; first published in 1924), 81-97.

[2] D. G. E. Hall, A History of South East Asia (London: McMillan, 1955), 421-429; Greenberg, British Trade and the Opening of China, 8-10.

[3] Mills, British Malaya, 53-55; F. Swettenham, British Malaya: An Account of the Origin and Progress of British Influence in Malaya (London, 1907; rev. ed. 1948), 65.

The growth of trade in Singapore as well as in Penang and Malacca was remarkable. In 1819 Singapore was only a small fishing village of about 150 inhabitants. It soon became the key to eastern trade because it was a free port and commanded a central position in the Malay Archipelago, being situated at the southern entrance to the Straits of Malacca. Native traders flocked into Singapore from the Malayan Peninsula, Siam, Cochin-China, the Philippines, Borneo, the Celebes, Java, Sumatra and Burma. By 1825 the value of Singapore's imports and exports reached £2,610,440, and the trade of the three settlements amounted to £4,043,480. By 1850 the trade of Singapore was valued at £5,637,287, and the total of the three settlements at £7,721,393.[1] The trade of Singapore more than doubled in twenty five years, while the total of the three places together nearly doubled.

In the 1850s there was a tremendous increase of trade in Singapore and the other two settlements. By 1859 the import and export trade of Singapore amounted to £10,371,300, showing a rate of increase close

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1 Table of the Import and Export Trade of the Straits Settlements

Year	Penang	Singapore	Malacca	Total
1825	£ 1,114,614	£ 2,610,440	£ 318,426	£ 4,043,480
1830	708,559	3,948,784	141,205	4,798,548
1840	1,475,759	5,851,924	no data	7,327,683
1850	1,644,931	5,637,287	439,175	7,721,393
1859	3,530,000	10,371,300	920,000	14,821,300
1864	4,496,205	13,252,175	821,698	18,570,080

This table is taken from Mills, British Malaya, 196.

to 100% in a decade, and the total trade of the three settlements reached £14,821,300, showing a similar rate of increase.[1] The figures also reveal the relative importance of each settlement, with Singapore at the top, possessing about 70% of the total trade.

The importance of the Straits Settlements in the British Empire was obvious. But the value of Singapore to British commerce was even greater because of its dominance of the southern entrance to the Straits of Malacca. Singapore carried on a rapidly increasing trade with the Malay Archipelago, and, at the same time, was a centre for transshipment of goods from England to the East. The usefulness of Singapore as an entrepot in Britain's trade with the East has been vividly described by John Cameron, a contemporary writer, who was a master mariner commanding ships trading in Australia before becoming editor of the Singapore Straits Times in 1861.[2] He describes, in 1865, the way Singapore was used for transshipment as follows:

> It is not at all unusual in England to send goods to Singapore which are ultimately intended either for China or Java, because doing so gives the choice of two or three markets. If on arriving there (Singapore) the goods are low in China, but high in Java, they are of course sent on to the latter port, and vice versa; or, if both in China and Java they are unsaleable, there is still the chance of Siam, Saigon, and Borneo. 3

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[1] See the table in p.9 note 1 above.

[2] For John Cameron's career and background, see C.B.Buckley, An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore, 1819-1867(Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1965; first published in 1902),715.

[3] John Cameron, Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India(London: 1865; Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1965 reprint), 177.

As to what extent Singapore absorbed Lancashire cotton manufactures in the 1850s either for sale there or for transhipment to other ports, no accurate statistics seem to be available.[1] However, John Cameron's trade figures for Singapore in a later period are useful for indicating the magnitude of British exports to Singapore. The total imports of Singapore for the year ending April 1863 were valued at £6,461,720, of which £1,500,758 were imports from Britain, about one fourth of the total; and about one half of these British imports were cotton manufactures.[2] Considering the tremendous increase in the trade of Singapore and the Straits Settlements as a whole in the 1850s, the amount of Lancashire manufactures sent to Singapore in the same period must have been considerable.

The advantages of Singapore as an excellent distribution centre were also made use of by India. One half of the opium and more than three fourths of the rice, the two main items of export from India to Singapore, were consumed in China, and a large portion went to Java. Although there was little difficulty in procuring freight from India to China, and the cost of direct shipments was always considerably less, " still, to take

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[1] A.Redford, Manchester Merchants and Foreign Trade(Manchester: University Press, 1934),vol. I, 244-245 Appendix B contains a table showing the exports of Manchester manufactures for the year 1853. As the Straits Settlements were then included under the heading "India" no separate figures are given for the exports to these settlements. The total Manchester exports were £32,712,902, and those to India, Java, the Philippines, China and Hong Kong were as follows:

India.....	£ 5,680,069
Java.....	448,265
Philippines.....	344,155
China.....	1,129,799
Hong Kong.....	278,634

[2] Cameron, Malayan India, 181-182.

the chances of the several markets, obtained through Singapore, is found the most profitable course."[1]

The position of the Straits Settlements, and Singapore in particular, in imperial commerce tended to become more and more linked with Britain and China. Soon after Raffles's occupation of Singapore, James Matheson, the foremost " free merchant" in the East, had perceptively forseen its commercial potential.[2] Michael Greenberg's study of the China trade to 1842 has shown how free merchants, by the device of transhipment of goods through Singapore, were able to encroach upon the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade. It was actually through Singapore that increasing quantities of Manchester manufactures were sent to China when the East India Company still enjoyed the monopoly. By 1833, Lancashire cotton manufactures had become the major branch of the China trade.[3] This in turn strengthened the position of the provincial merchants led by those of Manchester and Liverpool, and encouraged them to fight for the end of the Company's monopoly, which came in 1833.[4]

The interdependence between Singapore and India, on the other hand, was lessening in terms of trade, despite the fact that the Straits Settlements were under the control of India. For the year ending April 1863

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[1] Cameron, Malayan India, 177.

[2] James Matheson to Robert Taylor, 24 May 1819, quoted in Greenberg, British Trade and the Opening of China, 97.

[3] Ibid., 101-102 for how the free merchants used Singapore to carry on trade between England and China.

[4] See Redford, Manchester Merchants, 108-125 for the struggle of the provincial merchants against the monopoly of the East India Company, particularly 115-118 for the early 1830s; also, J.Fairbank, Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast(Cambridge: Harvard University Press,1953),374.

the imports from India (including Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay) amounted to £ 757,678, opium being the chief item, while imports from Britain and China combined amounted to £ 2,403,680.[1] The exports of the same period show the same tendency. Exports to India were £ 990,583, while exports to Britain and China together reached £ 1,901,354.[2] This led to a divergence of interests between the Straits Settlements and India. The East India Company had in 1833 wound up its trading business and in the same year the China trade was thrown open to independent merchants. The benefits derived from the Straits Settlements, which were an essential link in the China trade,were also enjoyed by the free merchants. Probably for this reason, the Indian Government attempted several times to tax the tradeand shipping of the Straits Settlements in order to balance the perennial annual deficit in its budget. But these measures enraged the commercial class in Singapore who were convinced that the commerce of Singapore depended on its free port status. Dissatisfaction towards the Indian Government gradually grew among the merchants.

On the other hand, the affinity of interests between the merchants of the Straits Settlements and England unavoidably brought them together to safeguard or promote their interests by exerting combined efforts on the home authorities concerned. This tendency had already been quite discernible in the 1830s. For example in 1836 the Indian Government proposed to levy a tonnage duty on the trade of the Straits Settlements, in order to meet the cost of suppressing piracy in the eastern seas.[3]

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[1] Cameron , Malayan India, 181.

[2] Ibid., 187.

[3] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 301-302.

The Singapore mercantile community opposed this measure by petitioning Parliament. The petition stated that the foundation of Singapore's commercial prosperity was free trade, and that the proposed duty would not only deflect a considerable portion of native trade to the nearby rival Dutch port of Rhio, but would also destroy the transshipment business.[1] The petition was forwarded to the members for Manchester and Glasgow to be presented to Parliament.[2] The East India and China Association, the commercial rival of the East India Company, also took the matter up on behalf of Singapore.[3] The proposed tonnage duty came to nothing after the Board of Control ordered the Indian Government to abandon it. In this case the Singapore merchants seemed to have overestimated the probable effect of the proposed duty because the rate was not high (2½ %) and the Dutch port could in no way compete with Singapore. But they seemed to have believed that the home authorities would be more attentive and responsive to their demands and wishes. What is significant for our purpose here is the direct and close connection between British and Singapore mercantile interests, a connection which was to become more pronounced in the next thirty years or so and produce far-reaching repercussions for the future of the Straits Settlements.

The central position of Singapore in the Malay Archipelago not only rendered it the hub of commerce in the eastern seas and port-of-call between East and West, but also a significant strategic point in the East.

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 303-304.

[2] Ibid., 302.

[3] Ibid., 305. For the attack of the East India and China Association upon the monopoly of the East India Company, see Redford, Manchester Merchants, 115-118.

Singapore's strategic value was proven in the Opium War(1839-42). It was both the rendezvous and the point of supply for the Chinese expedition. According to John Cameron, Singapore was the gathering point for warships and transports and point of supply throughout the war.[1] In the second Anglo-Chinese War(1856-60) Singapore served the same purpose.[2] This strategic importance did not escape the observation of the mercantile community there. For instance, a writer in the Singapore Free Press, in 1848, proposed that Singapore should be made the principal naval station of the eastern seas.[3] The same demand was also repeated during the agitation for the transfer.[4]

By the 1850s Britain had long established its position as the supreme power in the Malayan Peninsula. The Dutch were excluded from the area by the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824, which settled the conflicting claims of Britain and Holland over Singapore; and by the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1826, Siamese expansion in the north of the peninsula had been checked.

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[1] Cameron, Malayan India, 21-22; see also Buckley, Anecdotal History, 343-344.

[2] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 683.

[3] Letter to the Singapore Free Press, quoted in Ibid., 489-490.

[4] Hansard, 3rd series, vol.CLII(1859), 1603-4; A.Guthrie and Others to the Colonial Office, 20 April 1861, in Correspondence Relating to the Transfer of the Straits Settlements to the Colonial Office, Parliamentary Papers (hereafter cited as P.P.), 1862, XL(259), 651.

A number of other treaties had secured for the Straits Settlements alliances of friendship and free trade with Perak, Selangor, Sungei Ujong and other small Malay states as well.[1] The Malay states were beyond the direct control of the Straits Settlements, but were under strong British influence. For example, in 1855 Governor W. J. Butterworth arranged a treaty between Sultan Ali of Johore and the Temenggong Ibrahim to settle their claims to the control of Johore. By this treaty the real power of government in Johore was transferred from Sultan Ali to the Temenggong who was a British protege (the Temenggong was a high official under the sultan).[2]

The growth of British influence in the Malayan Peninsula was the result of the activities of the Straits Settlements rather than that of Indian Government which had the control of the foreign relations of the Straits. The Supreme Government adopted generally a policy of non-intervention in the Malay states. This was partly because the Indian Government did not want to irritate Siam whose friendship was important during the two Anglo-Burmese wars of 1824-25 and 1852, and partly because

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[1] N. Tarling, British Policy in the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago 1824-1871 (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1969), chapters 1 and 2 ; also his article, "Intervention and Non-intervention in Malaya", The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXI, 4 (1962), 523-7; R. Emerson, Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1964 reprint; first published in 1937), 69-80; for a comprehensive report on the various treaties with the Malay states, from 1786 to 1855, see Colonel O. Cavenagh (Straits Governor, 1859-67) "Report on the Treaties and Engagements with the Malay States of the Malayan Peninsula anterior to 1860", in W. G. Maxwell and W. S. Gibson (eds.), Treaties and Engagements affecting the Malay States and Borneo (London, 1924), 1-7; D. G. E. Hall, History of South East Asia, 444.

[2] Swettenham, British Malaya, 86-101; Mills, British Malaya, 181-188.

the Straits Settlements's interests in the Malayan Peninsula were seen as less important in India. However, the Indian Government in 1862 approved reluctantly Governor O.Cavenagh's decision to bombard Trengganu on the east coast of the Peninsula because the Governor believed that Siam was involved in an intrigue to gain control over Trengganu and Pahang.[1] This incident brought about a debate in Parliament on 10 July 1863 and Cavenagh was charged with being high-handed in his proceedings.[2] Sir Charles Wood, the Secretary of State for India, agreed that Cavenagh's actions were "at least, precipitate," but no further action was taken by the India Office.[3]

Changing circumstances in the Malayan Peninsula were making the non-intervention policy undesirable in the view of the Straits merchants. First of all, the agricultural activities of the Singapore Chinese in Johore had increased the interest of the merchants in the area. Gambier and pepper plantations, started by the Chinese who began to settle in Johore between 1835 and 1840, had by the 1860s developed considerably.[4] The Straits merchants profited from these enterprises because the products were sent to Singapore for export to

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[1] Mills, British Malaya, 168-172; Cavenagh to the Secretary to the Government of India, 26 July 1862, Secretary of the Government of India (Colonel H.Durand) to Cavenagh, 30 August 1862, in Papers connected with the Attack upon Tringganu(Trengganu), P.P. 1863, XLIII(541), 318. See also T.G.Knox, Memoranda on the State of Affairs in the Malayan Peninsula, in P.P. 1863, XLIII(541), 369-370 and 377-378.

[2] Hansard, vol. CLXXII(1863), 10 July 1863, 586-593.

[3] Sir Charles Wood to the Governor-General of India, 25 July 1863, in P.P. 1863, XLIII, 359.

[4] Swettenham, British Malaya, 86 and 112.

Britain and Europe. In 1863 gambier and pepper were the largest export items to Britain.[1] With the increase of the Chinese population, Johore also furnished a promising opportunity for trade. Secondly, it was long known in the Straits Settlements that the Malayan Peninsula was rich in natural resources (tin, iron and coal). Tin-mining on the west coast (Perak, Selangor and Sungei Ujong) was attracting attention in the Straits Settlements, to which the tin produce was exported.[2] In addition, the soil was fertile and well adapted for plantation of sugar and rice.[3]

Internal disorders in the Malay states from the 1840s onwards prevented smooth expansion of trade in the area. Struggles between rival factions for power and succession were frequent.[4] The internal strife, which became more serious and complicated in the 1860s, also involved the Straits Settlements from where arms and ammunitions were imported.[5] Because of the disturbed conditions, newspapers in Singapore began to urge the Indian Government to adopt a more active policy. For example, in 1844 one newspaper advocated that, in order to develop trade with the Malayan Peninsula, the Malay states should be annexed or controlled by

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[1] Cameron, Malayan India, 187.

[2] Mills, British Malaya, 200-201; C.D.Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 68-69.

[3] Mills, British Malaya, 201.

[4] Ibid., 175-179.

[5] Swettenham, British Malaya, 113.

giving "advice" to their sultans.[1] One article appearing in the Singapore Free Press in 1853 noticed that "the non-interference system, however, has been the favourite one of late years", and regretted that no attempt had ever been made to exercise a "moral influence" on the rulers of the Malay states.[2] The hostility of the mercantile community towards the non-intervention policy was aptly expressed in the Free Press in 1854:

> After Raffles and Crawfurd, we had a succession of officials who were either imbued with the prejudices and feelings of the higher authorities or were of too little weight at head-quarters to induce any great degree of attention to their representations. They knew that the Supreme Government did not wish to have any trouble regarding the politics of a quarter so distant from the seat of Government, and they very dutifully shaped their line of conduct accordingly. Hence, a course of utter neglect towards the native states in our vicinity.[3]

And when the Singapore merchants looked around they became concerned because other European powers were busy expanding their influence in the surrounding regions.

While the British merchants were deploring the non-intervention policy of the Indian Government, their European rivals were energetically pushing forward. The outbreak of the Anglo-Chinese War (1839-42) had drawn attention to eastern affairs, and the activities of James Brooke

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[1] Mills, British Malaya, 175; Buckley, Anecdotal History, 421-422.

[2] Quoted in Buckley, Anecdotal History, 575.

[3] Quoted in Ibid., 584.

in Borneo caused anxiety and fear in the Dutch, who were stirred to adopt a more aggressive policy.[1] In the 1850s the Dutch consolidated their rule in Borneo and Java, and increased their control over Sumatra, situated on the other side of the Straits of Malacca.[2] Having expelled from Sumatra in 1857 a Singapore merchant, Adam Wilson, who assisted the sultan of Siak in an internal quarrel, the Dutch made a treaty with the sultan in the following year, thereby securing control of Siak and its dependencies.[3] The Straits Governor did not come to Wilson's assistance.[4]

In face of the powerful competition offered by Singapore as a free port, the Dutch copied this liberal trade policy. By 1864 there were six Dutch free ports scattered over the Dutch colonies, one of which was at Rhio, about one day's sail to the south of Singapore.[5] These Dutch free ports, however, could not rival Singapore, although they doubtless deflected a good deal of trade away from it. Singapore's dominance was secured by its geographical position and by the fact that Britain was far ahead of Holland in industrial production.

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[1] Hall, History of South East Asia, 456-460; Emerson, Malaysia, 110.

[2] Hall, History of South East Asia, 493-494.

[3] Ibid., 495. Adam Wilson was the chief clerk in Martin Dyce & Co., and later became secretary to the Singapore Exchange and was also a broker and auctioner. Buckley, Anecdotal History, 663-664.

[4] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 664.

[5] Ibid., 303; Cameron, Malayan India, 175.

The French were making great efforts to establish themselves in Indo-China. In the 1840s they had on several occasions intervened in Indo-China on behalf of the missionaries.[1] They also unsuccessfully attempted to establish a station in the Sulu islands, south of the Philippines.[2] During the early years of the reign of Emperor Tu-Duc (r.1848-83) of Annam, persecution of foreign missionaries was resumed.[3] The French, under the Emperor Napoleon III, was looking for a pretext to annex the territory of Annam, and were quick to exploit the issue. In 1857 the French and the Spaniards despatched a joint expeditionary force to Indo-China. The Spaniards joined in the expedition because a Spanish bishop at Tongking was put to death in 1857. Saigon was captured in February 1859 and by 1867 the whole of Indo-China was under French control.[4]

The Spaniards came into direct confrontation with the British over the control of the Sulu islands. In 1851 the Spaniards destroyed the capital of Sulu, thus preventing the ratification of a treaty James Brooke, as British Commissioner and Consul General in Brunei, signed with the sultan in 1849, which gave the British most-favoured-nation treatment in the Sulu islands. To compete with the British in Borneo, the Spaniards established a station on Palawan close to the coast of Borneo.[5] The activities of the Dutch, the French and the Spaniards all explain the rising demand in Singapore for more Imperial naval protection.

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[1] Hall, History of South East Asia, 557-558.

[2] John Cady, Roots of French Colonialism in Eastern Asia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954), 57-60.

[3] Hall, History of South East Asia, 559.

[4] Ibid., 559-560; T.E.Innis, French Policy and Development in Indochina (Chicago: University Press, 1936), 36-38.

[5] Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 23-24, 147-148; Buckley, Anecdotal History, 767.

It is not easy to determine to what extent British trade was affected by this increasing expansion of the Dutch, the French and the Spaniards. British merchants in the Straits Settlements had been carrying on trade with Borneo, Sumatra, the Philippines and Cochin-China, and it would seem clear that a portion of trade had been taken away from Singapore by the measures of the other European powers. We can only surmise that a vast area for the future expansion of British trade had been cut off.

That the Dutch policy had more effect on the trade of the Straits Settlements is obvious. The Dutch were not only more powerful in that area than the other European powers but were also long established. The complaints of the Straits merchants concentrated on the Dutch activities. In 1847 the merchants in Singapore, in their petition to Parliament, charged that the Dutch were throwing hindrances in the way of British trade with the Dutch possessions, thus infringing upon the provisions of the Treaty of 1824 which guaranteed equal treatment of each other.[1] The Dutch exclusive treaties with the native rulers did affect imports from Sumatra to Penang in 1862-63; and the Dutch free ports had, as John Cameron observes, " certainly deflected a good deal of that, which, in their absence, would doubtless have reached " Singapore, although it " had not robbed the Straits of much of its old trade."[2] Trade with Cochin-China was also affected by the French occupation of the area.[3]

However, what really concerned the Singapore mercantile community were the various attempts by the Indian Government to tax the trade or the shipping of the Straits Settlements. Protests against those measures led finally to the agitation for Crown colony status.

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 466-467.

[2] Cameron, Malayan India, 175,195-196.

[3] Ibid., 184.

The early 1850s saw relations between Singapore and India strained by opposition in Singapore to several measures the Indian Government introduced. The Singapore merchants deprecated the idea of a stamp tax, which was proposed in 1851 in order to raise a local revenue and probably also to integrate the Straits Settlements more closely into the fiscal system of India. A public meeting, held on 22 September 1851, opposed the proposal on the grounds that the stamp tax would be "burdensome and vexatious" to the commerce of Singapore where the trade, unlike that in England and India, was carried on by a system of credit. What seems more revealing to us here is the resolution that stressed the importance of Singapore in imperial trade as another reason why the tax should not be introduced. "Singapore was established and is kept up", the resolution declared, "for the chief purpose of affording an outlet to the manufactures and productions of Great Britain and India, and is now yearly acquiring increased value to these countries as a naval and steam station."[1] This was the recurring argument of the Singapore merchants in their opposition to all attempts at taxation. The proposed tax was thus thwarted for several years.

We have already mentioned the Indian Government's unsuccessful attempt in 1836 to introduce a tonnage duty on the trade of the Straits Settlements.[2] The same question flared up again in 1852 and was still

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 549.

[2] See above 13-14.

opposed by the Singapore merchants on the same grounds. But this time the Indian Government only partially gave way: the duty was not charged on native shipping, probably to prevent turning the native traders away to the Dutch free ports.[1] The Singapore merchants, however, were not satisfied with the concession and expressed their dissatisfaction at a public meeting on 18 December 1856, which was " very numerously attended by the European and Chinese merchants." It was charged in strong language that " the imposition of tonnage or port dues on shipping is an unwarranted attack upon the freedom of this port,...(and is) in direct violation of the principles upon which this Settlement was established, and calculated to endanger the very existence of the trade." [2] Antagonistic public sentiment was further reflected in the Singapore Free Press. It contrasted the different attitudes of the home and Indian authorities towards the interests of Singapore. On the one hand the home authorities were sympathetic:

> Statesmen of all parties in England have ever recognised the importance of maintaining in all its integrity the system (of a free port) on which Singapore is conducted, and which has been productive of such beneficial results to the trade of England as well as to that of India.

On the other hand, the Indian Government's attitude was unattentive:

> Our immediate rulers in India, however, have never been able to regard the Settlement of Singapore through any other medium (than) a revenual one; and, whenever, therefore, there has been an excess of expenditure over receipts, whether arising from

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 565-566.

[2] Ibid., 638.

> ordinary sources of disbursement or from measures required for the protection of trade, they have frowned upon the unfortunate place, and the only sole remedy propounded--- the only suggestion they have had to make on the subject--- is the imposition of duties on the trade.[1]

The question of tonnage duty was taken up in London. In February 1857, a memorial signed by individuals and several London firms connected with the Straits was sent to the President of the Board of Control. Among them were retired Straits officials like John Crawfurd, Thomas Church and Samuel Garling; merchants such as Edward Boustead, Alexander and James Guthrie; and business firms like the Borneo Co. Limited, Matheson & Co., the Oriental Bank Corporation, and the Peninsular and Oriental Company.[2]

But it was Act XVII relating to currency, passed by the Indian Legislative Council in 1855, that most infuriated the mercantile community. The Act provided that Indian copper money (anna and pice) was henceforth not only legal tender for fractions of the rupee currency, but also legal tender for fractions of the dollar, and that henceforth only pice, not cents,were to be minted by the East India Company.[3] From the Indian point of view, it was natural to introduce a uniform currency throughout the territories under the Indian Government; and it was probably because of this reasoning that they failed to appreciate the peculiar circumstances of the Straits Settlements and the feelings of the people.

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 639.

[2] Ibid., 646-647.

[3] Mills, British Malaya, 277-278; Buckley, Anecdotal History, 596; see Sir Hercules Robinson's Report (the Robinson Report), 25 January 1864, in Further Correspondence Relating to the Transfer of the Straits Settlements, P.P. 1866, LII (3672), 705-706.

Early in 1852 the intention of the Indian Government to substitute the Indian rupee currency for the dollar one in the Straits Settlements was known in Singapore, and opposition was aired.[1] However, a bill to this effect was introduced in 1854 into the Legislative Council of India. A public meeting, held on 13 October 1854, strongly objected to the bill, because the " inexpedient and impolitic" Indian currency would be "injurious" to the trade of the Straits Settlements. The meeting then resolved to petition Parliament.[2] Meanwhile, the Old Singaporeans in London, led by " the old veteran Governor" John Crawfurd, waited upon the Board of Control to express their opposition to the bill on behalf of Singapore.[3]

The concern of the mercantile community was a genuine one. By custom and common consent, the Spanish dollar with its fractions, cents, had long been the common circulating medium in commefcial transactions throughout the Malay Archipelago, and it was certainly convenient to leave the system unchanged as long as this system of currency did not impede the smooth transaction of trade with the native traders. The bill, if put into effect, would certainly cause confusion, partly because the rupee and its fractions, anna and pice, had never been used in the Straits Settlements, notwithstanding the Indian Acts of 1835 and 1844 by which the rupee and its fractions were made legal tender throughout the territories of the East India Company; and partly because the dollar was a decimal system while the rupee was a " barbarous system" as it was contemptuously described (1 rupee=16 anna; 1 anna=12 pice).

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 566.

[2] Ibid., 597.

[3] Ibid., 598.

Notwithstanding the protests from the Singapore community and the pressure exerted by their supporters in London, the Indian Legislative Council passed the bill on 27 May 1855. As soon as Act XVII was published in Singapore the merchants were outraged. On 11 August 1855 a public meeting was held, attended by nearly every European inhabitant . The meeting strongly opposed the Act, charged the Indian Government with neglecting their wishes, and passed an important resolution:

> That by the passing of the Act XVII of 1855 this meeting is forced into painful conviction that the Legislative Council of India, in treating with utter disregard the remonstrances of the inhabitants, have shown that they are neither to be moved by any prospect of doing good, nor restrained by the certainty of doing evil to the Straits Settlements, and that it is therefore the bounden duty of this community to use every exertion and to resort to every means within its reach to obtain relief from the mischievous measures already enacted, and to escape from the infliction of others of the same nature more comprehensive and still more hurtful. [1]

The feeling of the meeting, judged by the emotional language of the resolution, was completely hostile.

The Singapore petition to Parliament arrived in London early in 1856. The Earl of Albemarle, who was the spokesman for the Straits Settlements in the House of Lords, presented the petition. [2] He strongly attacked the Act without reservation, and urged the Imperial Government

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History,623-624; Mills, British Malaya, 279-280.

[2] Kepple, George Thomas, sixth Earl of Albemarle (1799-1891), was once a private secretary to Prime Minister Lord John Russell in 1846; brother of Admiral Kepple who was despatched to the Straits to suppress piracy and thus popular in Singapore. DNB, XI, 43-44. Albemarle moved in the Lords in 1853 for the correspondence relating to the capture of a Chinese junk at Trengganu. Buckley, Anecdotal History, 575 and 635.

to repeal it. In his reply, Lord Granville, then President of the Council in Palmerston's cabinet, could only raise doubts as to the legality of the dollar money, and give assurance that the Government would see that no harm was done.[1] The Act had to a great extent discredited the Indian Government in the eyes of the Straits merchants, although the use of the dollar currency was subsequently restored by order from the Imperial Government.

The Straits mercantile community was increasingly alienated from the Indian Government by the latter's unpopular measures; and the failure of the Indian Government to take a more attentive attitude to the needs of the community had certainly not checked the process. The continued subordination of the Straits Settlements to the Indian Government was proving more and more unsatisfactory under changed circumstances. It was therefore natural that the Singapore merchants would seize the opportunity brought about by the great convulsion created by the Indian Mutiny to demand that the Straits Settlements be removed from the authority of the Indian Government.

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[1] Hansard, CXLI(1856), 21 April 1856, 1248-1251.

Chapter II: The Beginning of the Agitation for Transfer and Its Initial Success, 1857-1859

The feeling of dislike and dissatisfaction in the Straits mercantile community towards the Indian Government and the East India Company had long existed, but it was the meeting of 11 August 1855 to oppose Act XVII that saw the first indication of a campaign to seek a change in the relationship between Singapore and India.

As we have seen earlier, the meeting resolved that it was the duty of the community "to use every exertion and to resort to every means within its reach to obtain relief from the mischievous measures already enacted, and to escape from the infliction of others of the same nature, more comprehensive and still more hurtful."[1] However, although the tone of the resolution was uncompromising, the actions actually taken were no more than strong protests, and exertion of pressure on the Imperial Government by the Old Singaporeans in London. Yet, the implications of this resolution could not be overlooked. C.B.Buckley, editor of the Singapore Free Press from 1884 to 1887, is perceptive when he suggests, in his An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore(1902), that this meeting was the beginning of the agitation for the transfer.[2] The idea of making the Straits Settlements, or Singapore

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[1] See Chapter I p.27 above.

[2] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 623; Mills, British Malaya, 274.

alone, a Crown colony was apparently emerging amid an atmosphere of protest. A public meeting held in July 1856 adopted a resolution to draw up a petition to Parliament to request that Singapore should be made a Crown colony, but the resolution was dropped subsequently for reasons unknown.[1] The question was mooted again in another public meeting held in January 1857 to discuss the Chinese riots, but came to nothing.[2] However, between the latter part of 1855 and early 1857 the idea of separating the Straits Settlements from the Indian Government slowly took shape in the mind of the Singapore mercantile community. In private conversation and in the press, the desire for the transfer was a frequent subject. However, the decisive moment to demand that Parliament place the Straits Settlements under the Crown came during the great convulsion engendered by the Indian Mutiny.

The year 1857 was a decisive year in the history of British India, and the same can be said of that of the Straits Settlements. The Indian sepoys revolted in early 1857, and the news of the occurence reached Singapore on 31 March 1857.[3] Soon after the outbreak of the revolt the Europeans in Calcutta agitated against the East India Company, demanding that the Imperial Government assume direct control of India.[4] This was

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 636; Mills, British Malaya, 280.

[2] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 636; Mills, British Malaya, 280-281. The Chinese riots were caused by a misunderstanding of the Chinese over a new municipal act which gave the police magistrates power to inflict for certain minor offences fines not exceeding 500 rupees. See Cameron, Malayan India, 268-270.

[3] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 651.

[4] Ibid., 755.

certainly the most opportune moment for the Straits merchants. Whether it was a planned or spontaneous move, the Singapore merchants launched an agitation to support the Calcutta movement, and at the same time put forth their unequivocal demand that the Straits Settlements should be separated from India and placed under the Imperial Government. On 15 September 1857 the European inhabitants in Singapore held a public meeting to consider whether it was advisable to join in the movement against the East India Company. It was unanimously agreed that it would be greatly advantageous to remove the control of India from the East India Company and place it under the Imperial Government. One resolution, proposed by R.C.Woods and seconded by C.Spottiswoode, was passed "to record its hearty concurrence in the prayer of the Calcutta Petition," and to petition Parliament "to place the whole of British India under the sole government of the Imperial Government."[1] The future of the Straits Settlements also became the subject of discussion, and the decisive move was made. The meeting adopted a resolution proposed by J.J.Greenshields and seconded by J.Harvey:

> That the petition to Parliament set forth the grievances under which the Straits Settlements have laboured during the Government of the East India Company, and pray to be placed directly under

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 755; Mills, British Malaya, 281.
Robert Carr Woods, went to Singapore from Bombay in 1845 to practice law and became editor of the Straits Times. Buckley, Anecdotal History, 438 and passim.
Charles Spottiswoode, a merchant, was a partner in John Purvis & Co., later in Spottiswoode & Connolly; took part in the protest against tonnage duty. Ibid., 233 and passim.

> the Crown, with a separate Government and not as present under a delegated authority in India.[1]

As usual, a committee was formed to draw up the petition. It included three lawyers (A. Logan, R. C. Woods and A. M. Aitkin), and two merchants (R. Bain and Joaquim d'Almeida).[2]

The petition which resulted from this public meeting was presented to Parliament in March 1858. It was essentially a categorical indictment of the Government of India. It charged that the Indian Government was completely ignorant of the peculiar circumstances of the Straits Settlements, and "almost invariably treated them from an exclusively Indian point of view", and that it had shown "a systematic disregard" towards the needs and wishes of their inhabitants, however earnestly

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 755.

John James Greenshields, was a partner in Guthrie & Co.; actively involved in opposition to introduction of rupee currency, Indian convicts, income tax, stamp tax and in the agitation for the transfer. Ibid., 499 and passim.

John Harvey (1829-79), was a partner in McEwen & Co.; later managing director of the Borneo Company; played an active part in opposing the rupee currency and the tonnage duty. Ibid., 671 and passim.

[2] Abraham Logan (1816-73), began law practice in Singapore in 1842, and later became one of the leading lawyers there; editor and proprietor of the Singapore Free Press; secretary of the Chamber of Commerce in 1856; a frequent member of the various committees appointed at public meetings to draw up petitions to India and London. Ibid., 379 and passim.

A. M. Aitkin was one of the law agents of the Court in Singapore; appointed Registrar of the Court in 1856-57; called to Bar in 1864. Ibid., 637-38 and passim.

Robert Bain, a partner in the leading firm of A. L. Johnston & Co. in 1848; in Boustead & Co. from 1853 to 1855; and in Maclaine, Fraser & Co. in 1859. Ibid., 208 and passim.

Joaquim d'Almeida, son of the well-known Spanish merchant Joze d'Almeida, was a partner in Joze d'Almeida & Co.; took part in the agitation against the rupee currency and the tonnage duty. Ibid., 186 and passim.

and perseveringly presented.[1] This petition is significant for an understanding of the nature and extent of the discontents among the mercantile community, and therefore deserves a closer look.

The Petition considered that the Straits Settlements were governed under a political system detrimental to their interests. The Settlements were not represented in the Indian Legislative Council "by any person having a competent knowledge of their requirements". When the Council dealt with matters connected with the Straits Settlements, "the members confessed their complete ignorance of Straits affairs", yet no steps had ever been taken to make up this deficiency. The result of this ignorance was that the Council passed acts "most detrimental" to the interests of the Settlements, in spite of their protests. Within the Straits administration itself, there was no executive council to "advise or assist" the governor whose reports and suggestions largely guided the Indian Government in dealing with the affairs of the Settlements. It frequently happened that the governor "from caprice, temper or defective judgement", was opposed to the wishes of the whole community. And when there was a conflict of opinions between the governor and the community, the former's views were almost invariably adopted by the Indian Government.[2]

To substantiate its accusations, the Petition contained grievances on almost every aspect of the Straits administration, ranging from the danger to free trade to the inadequacy of the judicial establishments. The various complaints, after a close examination, fall into two categories, one connected with trade and the other with internal security.

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[1] Petition from the European Inhabitants of Singapore, Presented to the House of Commons in 1858 (hereafter cited as Singapore Petition of 1858), in P.P. 1862, XL, (259), 585-588; also printed in Buckley, Anecdotal History, 755-758.

[2] Singapore Petition of 1858, 585.

The Petition accused the Indian Government of having failed to promote the trade of Singapore. It pointed out that Singapore was established as an outlet for British commerce, and that the preservation of its integrity as a free port had always been recognized by statesmen "as essential to its prosperity and the full development of the objects comtemplated in its formation." Its status as a free port had turned Singapore from "a haunt of savage Malay pirates" into a place having "a trade of the annual value of ten millions pounds sterling, steadily increasing from year to year." However, the East India Company and the Indian Government had "never cordially recognized or appreciated" the advantage which the free port of Singapore had afforded to the commerce of Britain and India as well. The Indian Government, "influenced solely by the desire to protect their revenue," proposed to impose, at one time import and export duties, and at another time tonnage dues, measures which if carried out would have had the effect of "ruining or seriously injuring" the trade of Singapore. The attempted introduction of the Company's rupee into the Straits Settlements to replace the dollar currency was another serious blunder, because the use of the latter had almost exclusively prevailed in the Straits and the former could not be integrated with it. These measures had been protested by the Straits inhabitants, but their protests fell on deaf ears, and the Petition did not fail to point out that "the evil was only averted or redress procured by appealing to the Imperial Government or Parliament".[1]

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[1] The Singapore Petition, 585-6.

Moreover, "no systematic measures" of protection against piracy had been adopted by the East India Company. The result of this neglect was that for long periods the neighbouring seas had been left wholly unprotected or very lightly guarded and had at such times swarmed with pirates, to the "great injury" of the trade of Singapore.[1]

The failure of the Indian Government to encourage a more active policy with regard to the Malay states was another major source of grievance:

> The Supreme Government of India has uniformly discouraged the local Government of Singapore from interfering with matters beyond the limits of the island. The cultivation of friendly relations with Native States and chiefs has been neglected, and the Government (of Singapore) does not possess that influence in the Indian Archipelago which the interests of British commerce require, and which might have been acquired and maintained by a very slight exertion on the part of the Indian Government.[2]

We may note here that Singapore's desire to embark upon a more vigorous policy with regard to the Malay states was to produce significant consequences in subsequent years, as shall be seen later.

The other category of grievances of the Straits Settlements was connected with the question of safety and security. The Petition pointed out that the judicial establishments were inadequate because of the rapid increase in the wealth and population of Singapore. In Singapore there was only one judge; and the amount of judicial business had increased so much that it was impossible for the one judge to dispose of it even though he sat "almost uninterruptedly in Court, from day to day, throughout the whole year." [3]

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[1] The Singapore Petition, 586.

[2] Ibid., 586.

[3] Ibid., 586-587.

The inadequacy in the administration of justice had been aggravated by the presence of a large Chinese population and convicts from India. The Chinese, who constituted the great bulk of the population, belonged "chiefly to the lowest class;" they were "ignorant and turbulent," and with their secret societies, they were found "to interfere seriously with public order and the proper administration of justice." To control such a population, the Petitioners believed, required "a firm and consistent though conciliatory course of action" which was lacking on the part of the Government. It was pointed out that the European inhabitants had previously urged upon the Government the imperative necessity of action to remedy the undesirable state of matters and had suggested means to improve the situation, but "such remonstrances and suggestions have been generally received with indifference." [1]

But the more difficult problem was that of the convicts, a problem that loomed large in later years. The petitioners were "seriously apprehensive" that the Government intended to make Singapore a penal station on a large scale, and to send to it the "worst and most dangerous" of the criminals confined in the Indian jails. The management of the convicts was of the "most defective and loose nature," and there was no adequate provision for the protection of the lives and property of the inhabitants. The petition strongly felt that a settlement established and kept up as an emporium of trade should not be converted into a penal station, and desired to be freed from what it called the contamination of the convict body.[2]

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[1] Singapore Petition, 587.

[2] Ibid., 587.

Thus the Petition clearly showed that the Straits mercantile community was absolutely convinced that they could see no benefit whatsoever in continuing the existing system. But how to escape from this very undesirable state of affairs? The answer to this question was clearcut: the Petition specifically requested that

> the Straits Settlements may be constituted a separate Government, directly under the Crown,[1] and not as at present, under a delegated authority in India.

The agitation so started was to createprofound reactions both in Singapore and London. Support and sympathy for the cause of the Petitioners was not difficult to get in London, where the Conservative government of Lord Derby (February 1858 to June 1859) was soon confronted with the request for Crown colony status. The Petition was presented to the House of Commons in March 1858 by Viscount Bury, the eldest son of the Earl of Albemarle, and touched off a debate on 13 April 1858.[2] Bury, who was greatly interested in colonial affairs, forcefully pleaded the cause of the Straits mercantile community. Having

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[1] Singapore Petition, 588.

[2] Hansard, vol. CXLIX (1858), 13 April 1858, 986-996; also Buckley, Anecdotal History, 758-763; Mills, British Malaya, 281.

William Coutts (1832-94), 7th Earl of Albemarle and Kepple, best known as Viscount Bury, educated at Eton; in 1850-51 was private secretary to Lord John Russell; 1852 went to India as aide-de-camp to Lord Frederick Fitzclarence, commander-in-chief at Bombay; in 1854 went to Canada as superintendent of Indian affairs for Canada; elected to Parliament in 1857 in the Liberal interest, and appointed Palmerston's treasurer of the household from 1859 to 1865; after 1874 he became a Conservative, and served as Under-Secretary at War under Beaconsfield from 1878 to 1880, and under Salisbury from 1885 to 1886. DNB, XXII, 931-2. He was the first president of the Royal Colonial Institute when it was formed in 1868.

reiterated some of the arguments and charges contained in the Petition, he emphasized the point that the question was an Imperial rather than Indian one. He urged the British Government to put the Straits Settlements under the Crown as territories of "great national importance." Commercially, the Straits Settlements were "the highway... of the commerce of the east and the west," as well as "the most natural depots for the trade of the south and the east." On the other hand, the Straits Settlements "had properly no connection with India." They ceased to be of any importance to India since the East India Company lost its monopoly in the China trade, and appeared to be regarded by the Indian Government as "useful for a convict station," "the receptacle of the scum of the Indian population." The Straits Settlements were "compelled to pay the whole expense" of the convict charges. All these circumstances proved, Bury argued, that the interests of the Straits Settlements were very much more Imperial than Indian, and that they would be much better governed if they were brought immediately under the control of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Another important consideration in favour of the transfer involved the question of strategy. Singapore required protection against the aggressive policy of the Dutch, who prevented the native states from trading with Singapore and diverted their trade into Dutch ports. He ended his speech by moving for the correspondence on the subject.[1]

The proposed transfer received no direct objection from H.J.Baillie, Secretary to the Board of Control.[2] Baillie admitted that the Government

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1. Hansard, 986-990.

2 Henry James Baillie(1804-?), was one of the joint secretaries to the Board of Control; Conservative M.P.for Inverness since 1840; voted against the Chinese War; in favour of moderate parliamentary refom. Dod's Parliamentary Companion(1858), p.140.

had not given sufficient attantion to the problems of the Straits Settlements. However, he did not think that their complaints against the Indian Government were altogether justifiable, for the attempts of the Indian Government to impose duties on trade had been frustrated and the dollar currency had been restored after the Settlements appealed to the home government. The only legitimate complaint, Baillie said, was that Singapore had been made a penal station, a complaint "well entitled to consideration." But the convicts were not all useless; they had been employed at public works. And now, Baillie added, with a touch of ridicule, "as often happened with the colonies, when they rose to wealth and power, they desired to get rid of those very means by the help of which they had risen."

Baillie raised the question of the military expenses that would have to be borne by the Imperial Government if the Straits Settlements became a Crown colony, a question that was to become most important in the agitation and a stumbling block to the transfer. Baillie declared that the military defence of the colony involved a question of the utmost importance for the consideration of the Government, because, if Singapore were to become a Crown colony, England would be responsible for its defence spending, estimated at not less than $300,000 annually.[1] He added that it was an amount of expenditure which could not be thrown upon the resources of the colony whose revenue was barely sufficient to defray its ordinary civil expenditure.[2] Whether

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[1] This figure was grossly overestimated; see below p.66 and the table on p.73.

[2] Hansard, 990-992.

Baillie was stating a definite policy of the Board of Control is not clear. The concern over the probable additional burden on the Imperial budget was a real one, as shall be seen in the development of the agitation.

The proposed transfer had a strong supporter in Edward Horsman, M.P. for Stroud (1853-68), who had had some connections in the Straits Settlements, and was not an obscure politician.[1] Like Bury before him, Horsman stressed the point that Singapore was closely connected with the imperial interest. The question under debate was, he believed, "rather one of public policy" than one of complaint against the East India Company. He said the real question for consideration was "what had Singapore to do with India?" He reinforced the argument that Singapore should be separated from India by referring to the relation between Ceylon and India. Ceylon was only 85 miles from India, but it was a colony independent of India; yet Singapore, nearer to China than India and having more trade with England and China than India, was dependent upon India. He thought that Singapore, with its thousands of Chinese population and "well called the Liverpool of the East", ought to seize every opportunity of fostering its trade.[2]

On the other hand, the position of the East India Company was defended by R. D. Mangles, who was a director of the East India

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[1] Edward Horsman (1807-76), educated at Rugby and Cambridge; an advocate of the Scottish Bar; M.P. for Cockermouth (1836-52), for Stroud (1853-58) and for Liskeard (1869-76); a junior Lord of the Treasury in Melbourne's administration in 1840-41; Palmerston's chief secretary for Ireland and a member of the Privy Council in 1855-57. DNB, IX, 1281-2. At one time he had a large plantation in Province Wellesley, Buckley, Anecdotal History, 761; the first president of the Straits Settlements Association when it was formed in 1868.

[2] Hansard, 992-3.

Company.[1] He warned that the military expenditure of the settlement would become a burden on the British Government if the proposed transfer was agreed to. But he hinted that the East India Company would not be unwilling to part with its control over the Straits Settlements if the Governor-General of India, whose opinion must be consulted, saw no objection to the change.[2] And Bury's motion for the correspondence between the departments concerned with the subject was carried.

The character of the whole question of the proposed transfer was quite clear from the debate. The Straits merchants, supported by their friends in London, pushed forward the demand for the transfer on the ground that the Straits Settlements, poorly administered under the Indian Government, were more closely connected with Britain's general Imperial interests, and would be better governed as a Crown colony. On the other hand, the Board of Control and the East India Company, although unable to refute directly the arguments put forth by the exponents of the transfer, as the defences of Baillie and Mangles reveal, stressed the Imperial Government's policy of economy. The next stage in the development of the agitation could be expected to centre around this question.

The Petition of 1858 was no doubt an effective and powerful attack on the East India Company and the Indian Government in so far as it exposed their ignorance of and indifference to the interests and circumstances of the Straits Settlements. Meanwhile, the agitation gained strength from the Old Singaporeans who were busily preparing memoranda to support

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[1] Ross Donnelly Mangles (1801-?), M.P. for Guildford since 1841; formerly in the Bengal civil service; a director of the East India Company and a director of the New Zealand Company. Dod's Parliamentary Companion (1858), p. 244.

[2] Hansard, 994-6.

the proposed transfer. The Old Singaporeans included retired Singapore merchants, such as Edward Boustead and Alexander and James Guthrie, and ex-officials such as John Crawfurd.[1] Loosely organized, they had joined together on various occasions to express their views on matters connected with the Straits Settlements, especially when the trade of the settlements was affected either by piracy, foreign rivalry or measures contemplated by the Indian Government. The latest example was the deputation which waited upon the Board of Control in 1857.[2] Most of them still had commercial connections with the Straits Settlements, whose interests they championed enthusiastically. The most prominent of the group was probably John Crawfurd, a former Resident of Singapore, an Orientalist and a well-known champion of free trade.

John Crawfurd was probably the first Old Singaporean in London to take up the cause of the transfer. In a memorandum to Lord Stanley, the Prime Minister's son, who had held the office of the Secretary of State for the Colonies (February to June 1858) and was now the President of the Board of Control, Crawfurd strongly urged the necessity of the proposed

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[1] Edward Boustead (?-1888), one of the earliest merchants in Singapore; founded Boustead & Co.; returned to England in 1850; edited the Singapore Chronicle for some years and later in 1835 started the Straits Times; a founding member of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce in 1837. Buckley, Anecdotal History, 207-8 and passim.

Alexander Guthrie (?-1865), went to Singapore in 1820; formed Guthrie & Co.; a founding member of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce. Ibid., 65 and passim.

James Guthrie (1814-1900), nephew of Alexander Guthrie; went to Singapore in 1829; a partner in Guthrie & Co. and later its head; active in Singapore politics, such as in the agitation against the Indian rupee. Ibid., 66 and passim.

[2] See above p.25.

transfer.[1] He argued that the Straits Settlements were "colonies" in the strict sense of the word. Socially, they had "little connexion with the British possessions on the (Indian) continent,"for the bulk of the inhabitants were Chinese and Malays. Economically, their"most important commercial relations" were not with India but with England. The Indian trade amounted to one-fourth of the total trade of the Settlements, and the chief part of it consisted of the single item of opium. "The main portion of the trade is with England, the capital English, and the principal merchants British and Chinese."[2]

Crawfurd, because of his long association with the Straits Settlements, was certainly in a position to grasp the reasons behind the campaign. As he pointed out to Lord Stanley, there were two principal ones. First, the Settlements's interests were better understood in England than in India; and secondly, the administration of the Crown colonies to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope was conducted in "a more liberal, popular and constitutional spirit" than that which was characteristic of the East India Company.[3] This realization was reflected in the Petition of 1858 which pointed out that the Imperial Government had intervened favourably in matters connected with the Straits Settlements. It was

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[1] Edward Henry Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby (1826-93), educated at Rugby and Cambridge; appointed Colonial Secretary when the ministry of his father, the 14th Earl, was formed in February 1858; transferred to the Board of Control in June that year when the Earl of Ellenborough retired. DNB, XVIII, 948-51.

[2] John Crawfurd: Notes on the Proposal of Annexing the Settlements in the Straits of Malacca to the Colonial Administration of the Crown (hereafter cited as Crawfurd's Notes) 22 July 1858, in P.P. 1862, XL, 588; Mills, British Malaya, 281.

[3] Crawfurd's Notes, 588.

therefore not unexpected that the Straits community should look forward to be placed under the Imperial Government.

Apparently aware of the misgivings the Imperial Government had over the financial capability of the Straits Settlements and the probable burden on the Imperial Exchequer, Crawfurd proceeded to show that if certain changes were carried out, the transfer would not cost the Imperial Government any additional expenses. To charge the maintenance of the Indian convicts on the local revenue was, in his view, "contrary to justice and principle," and should be stopped; the military garrison, consisting of Madras troops, was large and expensive, and should be reduced to a small European artillery unit and a local infantry corps. The suppression of piracy could be more efficiently carried out by the Imperial navy than by the local marine. If these changes were carried out, Crawfurd argued, there would be no extra cost imposed on the Imperial Exchequer, and that there would be a considerable surplus in the local budget.[1]

However, the agitation for the transfer seemed to have no immediate results. The India Bill was passed on 2 August 1858, whereby the Crown assumed the direct control of British India. A new department, the India Office, was created, and Lord Stanley became the first Secretary of State for India. No change was effected with regard to the Straits Settlements, although Bury in the debate in the House of Commons had requested that the Straits Settlements be excluded from the India Bill in order to give immediate effect to the transfer. This had to await the response of the India Office, and the India Bill was passed before the proposal could be acted upon.

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[1] Crawfurd's Notes, 589-590.

In the meantime, support for the proposed transfer grew, and the debate in the House of Commons in 1858 was "replayed" in the House of Lords in the following year. A petition from "the Bankers, Merchants and Residents at Singapore" which requested that Parliament consent to the proposed transfer, was presented to the Lords on 10 March 1859 by Lord Stanley of Alderley, who was to be appointed Palmerston's Postmaster General in 1860.[1] In presenting the petition, Stanley of Alderley stressed the growing importance of the trade between Singapore and Britain, the effects of the energetic efforts of the Dutch, the French and the Spaniards in expanding their influence, and the potential of Singapore as "a great naval arsenal". And most important of all, he said, a British governor with "competent authority" should be stationed at Singapore to watch the activities of foreign nations and to protect British interests in the area.[2] In his reply, the Earl of Carnarvon, Conservative Under-Secretary for the Colonies, was sympathetic, but non-committal.[3] He thought that the proposed transfer was "a very new fact in the history of the Colonial Office" and "a very great contrast" to the feelings with which the Colonial Office had been usually regarded. However, he agreed that the Straits Settlements were of great importance commercially, and

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[1] Edward John, second Baron Stanley of Alderley (1802-69), was educated at Eton and Oxford; held various offices in Whig administrations, such as under-secretary for Foreign Affairs (1846-52), DNB, XVIII, 951-2.

[2] Hansard, 3rd. ser. Vol. CLII (1859), 10 March 1859, 1602-5.

[3] Ibid., 1605-6. Herbert, Henry Howard Molyneux, 4th Earl of Carnarvon, (1831-90), was Under-Secretary for the Colonies from February 1858 to June 1859 in Derby's administration; became Colonial Secretary in June 1866 in Derby's second ministry, but resigned in March 1867 over Disraeli's scheme for parliamentary reform. DNB, IX, 646-52.

stated that the Government was anxious to fulfill the wishes of the petitioners but was held up by the consideration that the Imperial Government would suffer additional expenditures. He disclosed that the Government had taken the first step of obtaining the opinion of the Governor-General of India.

In fact, the initial response of the India Office to the proposed transfer was favourable. The first necessary step, which Carnarvon mentioned in the House of Lords, was taken by Lord Stanley, the Secretary of State for India, who was convinced that the proposed scheme was desirable. After consultation with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton,[1] he sent a despatch on 1 March 1859 to the Governor-General of India, Lord Canning. Stanley stated that there was no reason to continue the existing arrangement by which the Straits Settlements were controlled by India. This arrangement was convenient and proper when there was "a very intimate connexion" between India and China. But this connexion had gradually diminished since the extinction of the East India Company's trading privileges, while the Straits Settlements had become "more closely connected with China, and in particular with the British settlement at Hong Kong", a connexion he said was likely to become more intimate under the operation of the treaty then being negotiated with China. He believed these changed circumstances made it desirable to separate the Straits Settlements from the Indian administration and provide them with a separate government or connect them with Hong Kong. However, pending any step taken to that effect, Stanley wished to know the opinion of Canning whether "any good and sufficient reasons" existed for continuing the system, or

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[1] Bulwer-Lytton, Edward George Earle, (1803-73), was Derby's Colonial Secretary from June 1858 to June 1859.

whether it would be advantageous to the public interest and to the Straits Settlements themselves to transfer them to the Colonial Office. Canning was also requested to ascertain whether the proposal would be generally acceptable to inhabitants of the Straits Settlements, European as well as Native.[1]

Lord Stanley was certainly quite to the point in emphasizing the intimate connection between the Straits Settlements and the British interests in China. But he was only getting at part of the question involved in the agitation. He had to a large extent ignored the distinct interests of the Straits Settlements, interests that were growing and had to be taken into account in forming a new policy toward them. The significance of Stanley's despatch lay in the fact that it brought about a serious consideration of the proposed transfer by the Imperial Government. Without this important initiative on the part of the India Office, it is doubtful whether the Colonial Office would have volunteered to take control of the Straits Settlements. Stanley's favourable decision was based on reasons which were almost identical with those put forth by the exponents of the transfer. This would suggest that there was strong influence on Stanley by the agitators and their supporters, who included the Old Singaporeans, the leading merchants in Singapore, and the friends of Singapore in Parliament, and all of whom together can be conveniently called "the Transfer Group".

Towards the end of 1859 the Indian Government had made its decision on the subject of the transfer. Canning believed that there was no good

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[1] Lord Stanley to the Governor-General of India in Council, 1 March 1859, in P.P. 1862,XL, 591; see also Mills, British Malaya, 281-282.

and sufficient reason to continue the existing system of government over the Straits Settlements, and was highly in favour of the proposed transfer, an opinion concurred in by the Council of India.[1]

One reason which might be put forth in favour of the status quo was the desirability of consolidating the whole of the British possessions in the East under one chief resident authority. But Canning thought that this object was no longer practical for various reasons. The rapid progress in communication by electric telegraphy between those possessions and England, the broad line of separation between the peoples of India and the Straits Settlements, and the lack of community of interests indicated that there was no real necessity to secure such an arrangement. The opinion that the Straits Settlements should be subject to the nearest centre of British authority prevailed in the past but this was not a consideration to which "much weight" should be attached now because electric telegraphy would soon link the Straits Settlements directly with England.[2]

On the other hand, Canning considered that strong reasons existed in favour of transferring the Straits Settlements from the Indian Government to the Colonial Office. In the first place, he repeated the often made observation that the geographical separation of the two excluded the Straits Settlements from the sphere of Indian interests.For instance, Indian civil and military officers sent to the Straits found themselves completely

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[1] Minutes by the Governor-General of India, 7 November 1859 (hereafter Canning's Minutes), in P.P.1862,XL, 594-597.

[2] Canning's Minutes, 594.

separated from the services to which they belonged, and the Governor-General found it inconvenient to visit the places often. Thus, to maintain the existing arrangement, Canning held, was "to maintain a system of double government very cumbrous and circuitous, and totally without compensating advantages."[1]

Secondly, the Governor-General considered, from the administrative point of view, the civil administration of the Straits Settlements "a positive evil" which ought to be remedied in any case. The evil was aptly described and explained in Canning's own words:

> Indian officers have no opportunities of acquiring experience of the habits or the language of either Malay or Chinese, and accordingly, when officers are sent to the Straits, they have everything to learn. The Government of India is unable to keep a close watch upon their efficiency; the field is so narrow as to afford little or no room to the governor of the Settlements for exercising a power of selection in recommending to a vacant office; and there is consequently so complete an absence of stimulus to exertion, that it may well be doubted whether Indian civil officers sent to the Straits ever became thoroughly well qualified for, or heartily interested in the duties they have to discharge.... In truth, it has come to this that no officer of the Indian civil service will willingly go to the Straits for a permanency, except in the position of governor. To be transferred there at the beginning of his career, on the understanding that he shall remain attached to the Straits throughout the whole or even the greater portion of it, would involve so large a sacrifice of prospects on the part of a young Indian civil servant that he cannot reasonably be expected to make it. 2

Another factor to which Canning attached great weight involved the defence of the Straits Settlements. Canning considered it necessary that Singapore should always be garrisoned, and this duty could be carried out by India in ordinary times without difficulty. But Canning

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[1] Canning's Minutes, 594-5.

[2] Ibid., 595.

rightly pointed out that the Straits Settlements, if threatened with external danger, must be protected mainly by warships which India could not supply."The defence, therefore, of the Straits Settlements, in case of a rupture with any maritime power, must be provided by the naval strength of Great Britain." [1]

On the question whether the proposed transfer would be acceptable generally to the inhabitants of the Straits Settlements, Canning and E.A.Blundell,[2] the Straits Governor, held contradictory views. Blundell, when consulted on the subject by the Indian Government, expressed the opinion that had the measure been proposed two years earlier, "it would probably meet with the enthusiastic approval of the European community of Singapore, but the feeling in favour of it had probably subsided very considerably." With regard to the native people, Blundell thought that it would "probably cause distrust and alarm" among them, because the change "would not be comprehended" and would be "impossible to thoroughly explain to them." He warned the Indian Government that, if the transfer be carried into effect, it must be prepared to give up the transportation of convicts to the Straits, especially to Singapore, because the feeling against it, already strong, would be increased after the transfer. It was a mistake, Blundell thought, to say that the convicts were a burden on the local revenue; on the contrary, without

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[1] Canning's Minutes, 595.

[2] Edmand Augustus Blundell, Governor of the Straits Settlements, 1855-59; joined the Penang civil service in 1821; Resident Councillor at Malacca and Penang before appointed Governor. Buckley, Anecdotal History, 619 and passim.

convict labour, much of the public works could not have been carried out.[1]

But Blundell's opinions were lightly dismissed by Canning. First, it was not apparent to the Governor-General why the native people should be alarmed and suspicious of "a change which would not cause any alteration of things in the Settlements; even if Blundell's opinions "be well founded", Canning argued, nothing beyond a little temporary inconvenience need be apprehended. Secondly, Canning had no doubt that the transfer would be highly acceptable to the European residents," for they had at all times evinced a marked impatience of the control of the Indian Government, and would assuredly wish to be free from it." And, thirdly, Canning believed that there would be no difficulty in arranging for the transportation of convicts, for a new penal settlement had recently been established at the Andamans. He saw no obstacle in arranging for continued transportation to the Straits, on the understanding that the Straits Government would get the profit from the convict labour while the Indian Government would pay the net expense of their maintenance.[2]

Canning concluded,in definite terms, that "no good and sufficient reasons now exist for continuing the Straits Settlements on their present footing;" that "very strong reasons exist for withdrawing them from the control of the Indian Government and transfering them to the Colonial Office;" and that "there are no objections to the transfer which should cause Her Majesty's Government to hesitate in adopting a measure

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[1] E.A.Blundell to the Government of India, 13 June 1859, in P.P.1862, XL, 597-8; see also his letter to the Government of India on 9 February 1859, in P.P.1862,XL, 615.

[2] Canning's Minutes, 595-6.

calculated to be advantageous to the settlements themselves".[1]

Subsequent events were to prove that Canning rightly judged the situation in the Straits Settlements. The European community not only welcomed the proposed transfer, they, in fact, insisted that it should be effected at once, as we shall discuss in the following chapters. What seems surprising was the Governor-General's complete approval of the proposal and his ready admission that the outmoded arrangement was a "positive evil", because it does not appear that the Indian Government had made any attempt to improve it. The sudden recognition of this defective system on the part of the Indian Government would indicate that it wished to relieve itself of the unrewarding burden. Canning's opinions certainly carried great weight with the home authorities and helped to carry the agitation forward.

The advocates of transfer had won an initial victory. They had won the support of an influential group in Parliament, as well as the India Office and the Indian Government, the two authorities most closely connected with the question; both had expressed in very favourable terms their willingness to bring the measure into effect. The negotiations that were to follow might have been expected to be smooth. But they turned out to be complicated and difficult; they became deadlocked because the proposed scheme was not compatible with the Imperial policy of economy.

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[1] Canning's Minutes, 596.

Chapter III: The Setback of the Agitation, 1860-1861: The Treasury's Objections to the Proposed Transfer

When the India Office received the approving reply from the Indian Government on the proposed transfer, Lord Stanley was no longer the Secretary of State for India. Had he stayed in office he would certainly have accepted it, considering his strong support of the proposal when he was in office. The Derby ministry had resigned in June 1859, and Palmerston formed a new government. The change in government, however, did not affect the basic position of the India Office on the subject; Sir Charles Wood, the new Secretary of State for India, entirely concurred in Canning's opinion that the Straits Settlements should be transferred to the control of the Colonial Office.[1] We do not know whether Wood attached any special importance to the several reasons advanced by Canning in favour of the transfer because the former did not elaborate on the position he took. Herman Merivale, the Permanent Under-Secretary in the India Office, stated later in 1861 that it appeared to Wood that the Straits Settlements were more connected with Imperial than with Indian interests, and that it would be expedient to effect the transfer.[2]

Upon the receipt of the reply from the Indian Government, the

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[1] Sir Charles Wood (1800-85), educated at Eton and Oxford, had a long administrative career before his appointment as the Secretary of State for India (1859-66). He was responsible for the reorganisation of the government and finances of India after the abolition of the East India Company. DNB, XXI, 824-5.

[2] Herman Merivale (1806-74), succeeded Sir James Stephen as Permanent Under-Secretary in the Colonial Office in 1848, and held the position until 1859 when he was transferred to the same position in the India Office which he held until his death. DNB, III, 280-1.

India Office began in early February, 1860, serious discussions with the Colonial Office on the necessary arrangements to carry out the proposed transfer of administrative responsibility.[1] The principles laid down by Wood on which the transfer should be based were those contained in Stanley's despatch of 1 March 1859: (1) that all the revenues of the Straits Settlements should accompany the transfer to the Colonial Office; and that (2) India should be relieved of all the existing expenditures, whether civil, military or miscellaneous. The only exception to this rule would be the "net expense" of the maintenance of the Indian convicts, that is, the expenses after deduction of profits derived from their labour. This expenditure was considered by Stanley to be fairly chargeable to the Indian Government. Wood adopted these principles,and, in addition, wished to discuss with the Colonial Secretary, the Duke of Newcastle, the terms on which the Indian troops of the local army should be furnished after the transfer, if such troops were needed.[2] The negotiation between the India Office and the Colonial Office thus centred around the financial condition of the Straits Settlements in general and the relative liability of the two departments with respect to the convict expenditures. Before we start to discuss the development of the negotiations, it is necessary to look at the question of the convicts so as to understand why it came at the top of the agenda and why the negotiations did not proceed as smoothly as expected.

First sent to Singapore in 1821, the Indian convicts soon became

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[1] Sir Charles Wood to the Duke of Newcastle, 7 February 1860, in P.P. 1862, XL, 607.

[2] Ibid., and Lord Stanley to Lord Canning, 1 March 1859, in P.P. 1862 XL, 591.

the main source of labour supply for public works because of the scarcity of labour at the settlement. Their number constantly increased: by 1858 there were 4172 convicts in the Settlements, 2329 of whom were in Singapore. Their custody and maintenance were costly to the Settlements's revenue, as the following table shows:

Convict Expenditures, 1846-59 [1]

1846-56	£ 77,882
1856-57	11,560
1857-58	12,588
1858-59	23,587

The presence of so large a body of convicts had long been a source of irritation to the mercantile community, not only because they thought that the convicts were a constant drain on the local budget but also because they felt the convicts posed a threat to the safety of life and property. For instance, in 1848, on the arrival of convicts from Hong Kong, the Singapore Free Press protested that Singapore had been converted into a penal station.[2] In 1857 the mercantile community was outraged when it was reported that the Indian Government intended to send to Singapore a number of the most dangerous convicts from India. A memorial was sent to the Governor-General of India protesting against any addition of convicts and demanding that transportation to Singapore be stopped.[3] This protest was of no avail. In May 1858, 190 convicts arrived in Singapore from India. The outraged community held a meeting on 19 May 1858 to voice its opposition. The meeting resolved to draw up a petition to the Imperial Government and decided to urge upon the Straits Governor that the convicts should be removed from Singapore. A committee was appointed to carry out the resolutions,

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[1] See inclosure no.1 in E.A.Blundell to the Government of India, 13 June 1859, P.P.1862,XL, 598; also 600, 604, 605, 606.

[2] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 475.

[3] Ibid.,657.

with A.Logan, W.Howard, M.F.Davidson, R.C.Woods, J.J.Greenshields and John Purvis as members.[1] In September that year London merchants connected with the Straits Settlements also sent a memorial to the Board of Control to protest against turning Singapore into a convict station.[2] It was also one of the grievances contained in the Petition of 1858, as we have seen earlier. This averse feeling of the Europeans against the convicts was quite understandable in view of the fact that the total European population of Singapore in 1860 was 2445, an only slightly greater number than that of the convicts.[3] It was small wonder that the question of the convicts became the first issue to be dealt with in the negotiations.

The settlement of the problem of the convicts involved two questions. The first was whether Singapore, or the Straits Settlements, should continue to receive convicts from India. This question was easily settled as all the parties, the Straits merchants, the Old Singaporeans, the India Office and the Colonial Office, agreed that transportation to the Straits should be stopped. The second one was which department, the India Office

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[1] For biographical notes on Logan, Woods and Greenshields, see above pp. 32-33. Howard was a merchant.

Michie Forbes Davidson was a leading merchant in Singapore; partner in A.L.Johnston & Co.; a member of the Grand Jury; took part in the oppostion to the introduction of Indian currency in 1854. See Buckley, Anecdotal History, 234 and passim.

John Purvis was a senior resident merchant in Singapore; started John Purvis & Co. in 1822 and was agent for James Matheson; acted as chairman of various public meetings over a period of years, such as that in 1851 which opposed the stamp duty. See Ibid., 232, 507 and passim.

[2] Ibid., 668.

[3] See A.Guthrie and Others to the Colonial Office, 20 April 1861, in P.P.1862,XL, 637, 638; also Buckley, Anecdotal History, 638.

or the Colonial Office, should pay the convicts' upkeep in the event of a transfer of administration. This was seemingly not a difficult question to solve because the agreed principle stipulated that the Indian Government should pay the "net expense" on this account. But it was in fact a controversial one for the two departments could not agree on what the net expenses should be. The India Office assumed that the profits derived from the convicts' labour was equal to the cost of maintenance; in other words, the convict establishments would pose no great financial burden. The Colonial Office, however, did not share this view. It doubted whether the India Office's assumption was true, and expressed the view that the convicts could only be employed at public works when there was such a necessity, but could not be employed with a view to paying off the cost of their maintenance. Here was a controversial issue that had to be ironed out by the two departments.

While there was no immediate reply from Newcastle to Wood's letter of 7 February 1860, there was no lack of pressure for an immediate transfer. Samuel Gregson, M.P. for Lancaster, raised the question in the House of Commons on 9 March 1860, asking when the proposed transfer could be completed. The Secretary of State for India replied that he was in favour of the proposal, and that he had contacted the Colonial Office, but added that no answer had come to him.[1]

When the Colonial Secretary replied in late June 1860, more than four months had elapsed. The reason for this delay was because the information supplied by the India Office was insufficient and the Colonial

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[1] Hansard, 3rd ser.; vol. CLVII (1860), 9 March 1860, 216-7.

Office had been expecting further details, as Newcastle explained to Wood. In his reply Newcastle immediately drew Wood's attention to the deficit in the Straits budget from the statements provided by the India Office. For the year 1858-59 there was an excess of expenditure over revenue to the amount of £50,797:

Straits Budget, 1858-59

Revenue		Expenditure	
General	£ 132,337	General	£ 82,491
Deficit	50,797	Military	77,056
		Convict	23,587
	£ 183,134		£ 183,134

Newcastle held that it was not desirable that the Straits Settlements be saddled with the reception of the Indian convicts any longer. Unless their maintenance was wholly provided for, he anticipated "much difficulty and probable controversy", from any attempt to allocate the charges. He expressed the view that benefits to the Straits from the convict labour could only be derived when it was necessary to start public works, and when free labour was more costly than that of the convict labour, neither of these two contingencies, he thought, was likely to continue for long.[1]

This rather delayed response of the Colonial Office to the India

[1] Newcastle to Wood, 22 June 1860, in P.P. 1862, XL, 611-12; Wood to Newcastle, 7 July 1860, P.P. 1862, XL, 612.

Office was probably connected with the campaign of the Transfer Group. The date of Newcastle's reply was 22 June 1860. About a week earlier, on 16 June 1860, a deputation composed of persons who had connections in the Straits Settlements and who were in favour of the transfer, had an interview with the Colonial Secretary. The deputation was led by Samuel Gregson and Walter Buchanan, and included the Old Singaporeans John Crawfurd, Alexander and James Guthrie and others.[1] We do not know what exactly transpired in the interview. However, considering the strong support they gave to the proposed transfer, it was probable that they urged upon Newcastle that the move was necessary and that the Colonial Office should not hesitate to take over the government of the Straits Settlements. It had already become an usual method of the interest group to send a deputation to have an interview with the heads of the departments concerned, as we have seen on several occasions earlier. Gregson, M.P. for Lancaster, was chairman of the East India and China Association, which had been a leading opponent of the East India Company.[2] Buchanan was M.P. for Glasgow. Both of them were strong supporters of the agitation from the beginning to the end.

The complicated question of how to calculate the expenditures of the Straits Settlements became the focal point of the negotiations. Should the expenses for the convicts and military defence be fully charged to the Straits revenue? This was the difficult and controversial question throughout the whole negotiation.

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 768.

[2] Redford, Manchester Merchants, 115-118.

The India Office stated that the Straits revenues for the years 1854-59 were more than adequate to cover the ordinary civil expenditures. It was pointed out, in Wood's letter to Newcastle on 7 July 1860, that the Straits Settlements had an aggregate surplus of £ 146,088 for those years, as the following table shows:

The Budgets of the Straits Settlements, 1854-60[1]

	Revenues	Expenditure	Balance
1854-55	£ 87,817	£ 79,169	£ 8,648
1855-56	111,799	76,347	35,347
1856-57	104,430	79,736	24,694
1857-58	130,000	74,052	55,948
1858-59	132,003	105,964	26,034
1859-60 (estimated)	125,960	130,653	4,693 (deficit)
		aggregate surplus	£146,088

The above accounts did not include the military expenditures which were given under the head of general military charges of India in the Indian accounts, but included convict expenditures.

The India Office had in the meantime taken some steps to deal with the convicts. Before the transfer was proposed the Indian Government

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[1] Wood to Newcastle, 7 July 1860, P.P.1862,XL,612-613.
The figures in the table are taken from a statement on revenue and expenditure for 1854-60, an appendix to Wood's letter to Newcastle. The accounts were kept in rupees, and were converted into pound sterling at the rate of 1 rupee= 2 s. Note the discrepency in the figures for 1858-59 on p.60 above. The figures in the table here did not include the military expenses which were £ 77,056 (this sum including the expenses for the construction of barracks); the actual revenues and expenses for the year had been slightly adjusted by the India Office.

had considered the expediency of using any longer commercial settlements like Singapore and Penang as penal stations. It recognised that in the event of the transfer there would be additional reasons of great weight for stopping the transportation of Indian convicts to the Straits Settlements. To solve this question a new penal station had been established in 1858 at Port Blair, in the Andamans. But the Indian Government at the time hesitated to give the assurance that there would be no further transportation to the Straits, because the new station was only a recent experiment and its usefulness had still to be seen.[1] But in 1860 by an Act of the Indian Legislative Council, the transportation of Indian and Hong Kong convicts to the Straits had been prohibited. The question of further transportation was thus settled and the Straits merchants satisfied. But the question of the existing convict establishments remained unsettled.

This question could be reduced to a simple point: what would be a realistic evaluation of the labour of the convicts employed at the public works? We have seen that one of the principles on which the transfer was to be based was that the Indian Government should defray the net expenditures after the profit derived from the convict labour was deducted. Until the transfer was demanded, the Indian Government did not bother to consider the question of convict labour. But now the India Office claimed that the profit derived from convict labour was equal to the cost of their maintenance, therefore India would not be liable for any costs. This assumption was made on

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[1] Wood to Newcastle, 30 July 1860, P.P. 1862, XL, 613-614.

the authority of the Straits Governor, A.E.Blundell. In his administrative report for 1858-59 he stated that the value of convict labour was about equal to the expenses of maintenance, the former being £28,598. This amount was higher than the actual expenses of £ 23,587, and was much higher than the estimated value for the previous two years which were only £527 and £351 respectively.[1] Blundell proposed that the transportation of convicts to Singapore cease because he thought that the progress of Singapore had now made the practice unacceptable. But he dismissed the assumption often made that the convict body was a financial burden, pointing out that public works such as roads, bridges, canals, sea-walls, jetties, piers, churches, batteries and fortifications, had been built by convict labour. He would be glad to see the end of the transportation, but warned that there would be an increased demand on the revenue consequently.[2] By accepting this view, the India Office tended to value convict labour more highly than was acceptable to the Colonial Office.

There was no immediate reply from the Colonial Office to the position taken by the India Office. Probably the Colonial Office was trying to work out a formula which would be acceptable to both departments, and by which the whole question of the proposed transfer could be satisfactorily settled. It took the Colonial Office six months's time to work out a formula which in substance was a compromise. With respect to the convict establishments, the Colonial Office was willing to allow them to

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[1] Governor Blundell's Administrative Report,1858-59, in P.P. 1862, XL, 614.

[2] Blundell to the Government of India, 9 February 1859, in P.P.1862,XL, 615.

remain in Singapore for the next three years. This concession was accompanied by the following "indispensable" conditions:

(1) that the whole expense, direct or indirect, of the establishments should be borne by the Indian Government;

(2) that the employment of convicts should be subject to such laws as the colony might find it necessary to enact for its own protection;

(3) that the colonial government should not be bound to employ the convicts unless it was in the interests of the colony to do so;

(4) that the convicts should not be set free in the colony;

(5) that the colonial government was the "proper judge" whether the convict labour was of value to the public.[1]

The purpose of those conditions was obviously to prevent the convicts from becoming a burden on the Straits budget. If the employment and the rate of payment was to be determined by the Straits Government, then it could see to it that the convicts did not become an unnecessary financial drain. Presumably, the Colonial Office wanted to be able to fix the value of the convicts so that the Indian Government could not write off all or a large part of the expenses by placing a high value on convict labour. The Indian Government, if the conditions were accepted, would be thrown into a disadvantageous position, as the permanent Under-Secretary in the Colonial Office Sir Frederic Rogers admitted.[2] That was obviously the intention of the Colonial Office, because it considered that the Indian Government, which enjoyed the advantages of the convict establishments, should bear the inevitable disadvantages.

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[1] Sir Frederic Rogers to Herman Merivale, 6 February 1861, P.P. 1862, XL, 615-6.

[2] Sir Frederic Rogers (1811-89), Baron Blachford, educated at Eton and Oxford; succeeded Herman Merivale as Permanent Under-Secretary for the Colonies in 1859 and held the position until 1871. DNB, XVIII, 119-120.

On the other hand, the Colonial Office was willing to make some concessions on the question of the Straits finances. It found the statements on the Straits budgets for 1854-59, put before it by the India Office, could support "no trustworthy estimate", and that by "a certain amount of selection and conjecture" they could be made to show a possible surplus of £10,000 annually, or a possible deficit of £70,000. According to Rogers's estimate, the British Treasury would have to cover a deficit of from £30,000 to £50,000 annually, which would largely be used to cover the military expenses estimated at £80,000 for 1858-59. Thus it appeared to the Colonial Office that the transfer would bring "a very considerable expense" on the British Treasury. However, despite all this uncertainty and confusion, Newcastle was prepared to recommend that the expense be risked if the Indian Government would consent to the proposal regarding the settlement of the convict establishments. If Wood should agree to this, then the concurrence of the War Office and the Treasury might be sought.[1] It thus appeared in February 1861 that an agreement could be reached between the Colonial Office and the India Office.

The India Office accepted the propositions of the Colonial Office in principle. It would not give any assurance that the Straits Settlements would not become a burden on the British Exchequer. Wood was unable to answer the question about the details of the budget with any greater degree of precision than was afforded by the statements already sent to the Colonial Office. However, the India Office's reply pointed to the steadily increasing revenues in the past few years, and to the fact that

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[1] Rogers to Merivale, 6 February 1861, in P.P.1862, XL,617.

expenditures, exclusive of military charges, were considerably below revenues and much of the military expense was temporary, like the expenditures on the barracks being constructed.

Wood was prepared to accept, with some modifications, the formula of the Colonial Office on the convict establishments. He demanded that the Straits Settlements, after the transfer, should continue to employ the convicts for some time; that the rate of payment should be based on mutual agreement between the colonial and Indian Governments and be subject to revision from time to time; and that the penal establishments should remain for a longer period, to be removed three years after notice to that effect was received by the Indian Government from the Colonial Office.[1]

The India Office further demanded that the Indian Government should be repaid by the British Government for the cost of barracks which were being constructed at Singapore. In 1858, after the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny, the Indian Government decided to construct barracks for the accommodation of European troops which would be permanently stationed there. The cost of construction was estimated at £ 70,000. The Indian Government held that it was entitled to repayment because the construction had been sanctioned "in the full confidence that the expense would be repaid to the Indian Government."[2] This fresh demand jeopardized the chances of an early agreement with the Colonial Office which definitely declined to accept the demand.

The Colonial Office accepted the counter-proposals of the India

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[1] De Grey and Ripon (Under-Secretary in the India Office) to Rogers, 22 March 1861, in P.P. 1862, XL, 617-9.

[2] Ibid., 617.

Office with some minor changes and the question of the penal establishments was thus closed.[1] Complete agreement might have been reached then had the India Office claimed for the repayment of the cost of the barracks; this claim further complicated the whole issue of the transfer.

The construction of the barracks had been discussed by the India and the Colonial Offices soon after the transfer was proposed, but no decision was made as to which government should pay the expenses. In 1859 the India Office asked the Colonial Office whether the cost would be defrayed by the Imperial Exchequer.[2] The Colonial Office then could not give "any very confident opinion" because the transfer had not yet been finally decided, and it did not know the particulars of the Straits finances; but it added that, in the event of the transfer, if the local revenue was not sufficient to cover the ordinary expenditure, then it was possible that "application would require to be made to Parliament for any military barracks which were found to be indispensable" and that the War Office "would have to prepare plans and submit the vote to the House of Commons."[3] This reply was taken by the India Office to mean that the Colonial Office would agree to repay the cost of the barracks. It was obviously mistaken here for the Colonial Office did not accept the claim on various grounds.

First of all, the Colonial Office argued, in asking Parliament to sanction the transfer which Newcastle had agreed to, the Colonial Secretary would be obliged to propose that "a large and indefinite annual

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[1] Rogers to De Grey and Ripon, 24 April 1861, in P.P.1862, XL, 619.

[2] G.Clerk (Under-Secretary for India) to T.F.Elliot (Assistant Under-Secretary for the Colonies), 28 October 1859, in P.P.1862, XL, 606.

[3] T.F.Elliot to G.Clerk, 18 November 1859, in P.P.1862, XL, 606-607.

payment" should become a charge on the British revenue. He could not further propose that the British Exchequer should reimburse the Indian Government for expenses incurred which the Imperial Government had neither authorised nor controlled. What concerned Newcastle was that the claim involved a principle whose application, if admitted, was difficult to restrict. Secondly, the demand was "peculiarly unexpected" because the Colonial Office had already expressed the view that such an outlay ought only to be made on the authority of the Secretary of State for War and with the sanction of Parliament. Therefore, the Colonial Secretary considered that he "could not recommend to Parliament the reimbursement of expenses incurred not only without its consent but against the views of the department which would have to propose the vote."[1]

The strong language of the Colonial Office was somewhat unexpected, considering its expressed readiness to recommend that the British Government cover deficits in the Straits budget. The India Office was equally unhappy about the refusal. Wood was sorry to find that Newcastle "hesitates to admit the justice of the claim for repayment." The India Office argued that it was entitled to repayment because the construction of the barracks was then considered indispensable,politically and militarily, with respect to the war with China and other considerations connected with the state of affairs in the eastern seas, which were more important to the British Empire than to the Indian territories. The Imperial Government would be the sole party to reap the advantages of these works. Had it not been expected that the Imperial Exchequer would reimburse the

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[1] Rogers to De Grey and Ripon, 24 April 1861, in P.P.1862,XL, 619-620.

cost, the Indian Government would not have sanctioned the construction. However, the India Office would leave the question for further settlement between the two departments and was willing to agree that immediate steps be taken by Newcastle to carry out the transfer in order to prevent "considerable public inconvenience."[1]

When the Colonial Office and the India Office were on the verge of reaching some agreement, in April 1861, over the question of the transfer, the influence of the Transfer Group was brought to bear on the Colonial Office. The Straits merchants and the Old Singaporeans in London flooded the Colonial Office with lengthy memoranda and notes in support of the transfer.[2] The common theme of these memoranda was that the transfer should be effected immediately and the new form of government provided for the colony. The merchants seemed to be well-informed about the progress and obstacles of the negotiations because the information and views contained in the memoranda were specifically directed to them. It is of course not easy to determine to what extent the memoranda influenced the opinions of the departments concerned. But it was beyond

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[1] De Grey and Ripon to Rogers, 9 May 1861, in P.P.1862, XL, 620.

[2] See Singapore Chamber of Commerce: Memorandum on the Revenue and Expenditure of the Straits Settlements, April 1861; John Crawfurd: Suggestions for the Future Administration of the British Colonies in the Straits of Malacca, 1861; Crawfurd: Memorandum on the Finances of the Straits Settlements, April 1861; A.Guthrie and Others to the Colonial Office: The British Possessions in the Straits of Malacca, 20 April 1861, in P.P.1862, XL, 621-651. The last one was signed by 12 other Singapore merchants: Edward Boustead, L.Fraser, James Fraser, James Guthrie, John Harvey, J.M.Little, H.T.Marshall, M.J.Martin, W.W.Ker, William Napier, W.W.Shaw and H.M.Simons.

doubt that their suggestions and arguments carried considerable weight, as we shall see later.

Thus, in May 1861, after more than a year of bargaining, the India Office and the Colonial Office had reached an agreement over the proposed transfer. The Colonial Office agreed to propose the transfer to Parliament, anticipating a considerable expenditure on the part of the Imperial Exchequer; while the India Office gave way over the question of the convict establishments. Both expressed their willingness to bring the scheme into effect in order to satisfy the wishes of the Straits mercantile community. These negotiations in their length illustrated the complexity of negotiations on a question where more than one governmental department had responsibility. The negotiations were further protracted because the War Office and the Treasury also were involved in colonial matters.

It was thought appropriate now to invite the concurrence of the latter departments on the question. The Colonial Office did not seem to have anticipated any unfavourable reaction from either of these departments.

The Colonial Office communicated on 31 May 1861 with the War Office to seek the latter's opinion on the proposed military reorganization which would have to be made in the event of the transfer. This move was necessary because of the reorganization of the War Office itself after the Crimean War. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century a single minister was at the head of the War and Colonial departments. The Crimean War put an end to this arrangement and the War Office became a separate department, but the Secretary of State for War was still obliged to defend in Parliament expenditure incurred for the defence of the colonies.[1]

Before we deal with the response of the War Office on the proposed military arrangements, it is necessary to look back at the various schemes that had already been proposed, and the discussion that had passed between the India Office and the Colonial Office over the subject.

The question of new military arrangements for the Straits Settlements was not only an important issue itself, but also very closely tied up with the finances of the Settlements. Therefore it naturally came under close scrutiny from the parties concerned. It was one of the questions constantly raised in the various memoranda put forth by the Transfer Group, who wished to reorganize the military defences with a view to economy and efficiency. It therefore involved the nature and size of the garrison and its cost.

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[1] Schuyler, Fall of the Old Colonial System, 221-222; and Cambridge History of the British Empire (hereafter CHBE),(1959), Vol.III, 729.

The expenses for the Straits garrison were indeed a great financial burden to the Straits Settlements, as the following table shows:

The Straits Military Expenses, 1846-61 [1]

1846-56	£ 358,412
1856-57	59,047
1857-58	81,025
1858-59	77,055
1859-60	50,537
1860-61	54,966

The garrison was 1728 men strong in 1859, 1868 men in 1860 and 1865 men in 1861. The force was considered too large and expensive by the Straits community. When the Imperial Government had misgivings over the financial strength of the Straits Settlements, the Transfer Group then proposed to reduce the size of the force in order to effect a considerable saving.

We have already mentioned in Chapter II that John Crawfurd had in his memorandum of 1859 suggested that the military defences should be reorganized by reducing the existing troops and raising a local corps: two regiments of native troops, each 1000 men strong, with three or four European commissioned officers, for service in the Straits as well as the British settlements of Labuan (near Borneo) and Hong Kong. These changes if effected, Crawfurd estimated, would bring the cost down to £22,000 from the £ 42,112 spent in 1855-56. In addition to this local force, there would be a detachment of Royal artillery, the cost to be paid by the Imperial Government. Crawfurd also suggested that the Imperial navy should replace the Straits marines for the suppression of piracy.[2]

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[1] Colonel Cavenagh to the Government of India(military department), 26 December 1859, in P.P.1862, XL, 608-610. For the military expenses and forces at the Straits, see statements by G.E.Barrodaile (Secretary to the Straits Government), 13 June 1859, in P.P.1862, XL, 602; also 600, 604, 605 and 606; De Grey and Ripon to Rogers, 22 March 1861, 618.

[2] Crawfurd's Notes, 589-590.

The garrison was then composed mainly of Madras troops. In 1860 the garrison consisted of 102 European artillery men and 1766 Madras sepoys. This garrison was considered to be inefficient, an opinion commonly held in the Straits Settlements. Even Governor Cavenagh himself strongly objected to the employment of the sepoys in the Straits, because the sepoys, unused to the climate and separated from their families, became what the Governor called "proverbially sick."[1]

In the military scheme proposed by Governor Cavenagh, a new corps was considered preferable to the Madras troops of the regular Indian army. This would be composed of six companies, each 100 men strong, to be recruited from "men of all classes and from all parts of India," and if possible, containing a small portion of Malays and Bugis of the Straits. This change in the composition of the garrison would bring about greater efficiency and less expenditure, while the force would be more useful militarily because it would provide effective protection against an external enemy and internal revolt and render assistance to the neighbouring British dependencies.[2]

Cavenagh's new military scheme was well received by the India and Colonial Offices. It would have been surprising if it had been otherwise, because not only the proposal itself was sound, but also because it was made by a soldier who had a great deal of experience with Indian troops. He had been actively engaged in the Punjab War and also in the suppression of the Indian Mutiny. Wood called the proposal "a very good one," and suggested that the new scheme could be more readily carried

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[1] Cavenagh to the Secretary of the Government of India, 26 December 1859, in P.P.1862, XL, 608 and 609.

[2] Ibid., 610.

out before the transfer.[1] From the Indian point of view, the replacement of the Madras troops would "conduce to the contentment and efficiency of the Madras native army." [2] Newcastle agreed with Wood that it was a good proposal, and suggested that Cavenagh be authorized to raise one of the local native corps. The Colonial Secretary thought that a corps composed entirely of the natives of the Malayan Peninsula and the neighbouring islands would be preferable to one composed mainly of Indians. Expressing the view that any new demand on the British army for the defence of the Straits Settlements would be wholly objectionable, Newcastle was glad to see that Cavenagh contemplated the probability of detaching the local troops, if needed, for the defence of the neighbouring British colonies. "Their liability to be moved in case of emergency," Newcastle commended, "will materially increase the value of the corps to the government." [3]

The Transfer Group was also concerned with the future military defence of the Straits, and continued to submit their plans to the Colonial Office. In 1861 John Crawfurd presented a modified plan. He proposed that the existing garrison should be replaced by 200 Royal marines and 500 Malay troops, which would cost £31,442, far below the expense of 1860, £54,966.[4] In the memorandum of 1861, Guthrie and others were also in favour of raising a local corps which could be recruited on the spot and

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[1] See Colonel W.E.Baker(military secretary) to Rogers, 16 June 1860, in P.P.1862, XL, 608.

[2] Wood to the Government of India, 9 August 1860, in P.P.1862,XL,610-611.

[3] See Rogers to Baker, 10 July 1860, in P.P.1862,XL,610.

[4] J.Crawfurd:Suggestion for the Future Administration, in P.P.1862,XL,630.

would be composed of Eurasians, Malays, Bugis and Javanese. They also supported Crawfurd's idea of stationing 200 European troops there; if the European troops were not available, their places could be filled by 200 marinestrained to the use of artillery.[1] It was estimated that this change would reduce the cost to £ 44,250.[2]

The India Office, however, would not commit itself to any of these proposals; and on 22 March 1861 it referred the question of the defence of the Straits Settlements to the Colonial Office.[3] Probably the India Office considered the question belonged properly to the Colonial Office in the event of the transfer, since the garrison in the various proposals did not involve the Indian troops. The Colonial Office in turn transmitted to the War Office in May 1861 the various proposals on the Straits defences, and requested its views on the subject, while abstaining from committing itself to any particular scheme.

The War Office, however, felt it was not in a position to make a definite decision on a general military scheme. Sidney Herbert, the Secretary of State for War, held that it was impossible to form any "positive judgement" on the number and composition of the future garrison and the proportion of European troops to native troops. He considered, however, that a regiment of the line, one battery of Royal artillery, and one or two native corps would be amply sufficient for the defence, and that

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[1] Guthrie and others, P.P. 1862, XL, 648.

[2] Ibid., appendix, 651.

[3] De grey and Ripon to Rogers, 22 March 1861, P.P. 1862, XL, 617.

it was clear that the force must be composed in a considerable degree of native troops. The possibility of employing the marines in the way suggested by Crawfurd was ruled out because the Admiralty had from time to time objected to the use of marines in such a manner. With respect to the claim of the Indian Government for repayment on account of the barracks, Herbert agreed with Newcastle that the Imperial Government could not reasonably accept the demand but for different reasons; the Indian Government would be relieved by the proposed transfer of an expenditure of from £ 30,000 to £ 50,000 annually, and the presence of so large a body of convicts from India would require a larger garrison than would otherwise be needed. Finally, the War Secretary considered it undesirable that a question involving so large a sum as £ 70,000 should be left for future adjustment between the Colonial and the India Offices, and suggested that the attention of the Lords of the Treasury should be at once directed to it by the Colonial Office.[1]

The Treasury was in fact brought into the negotiations at the same time as the War Office and the inability of the War Office to reach a decision on the defence of the Straits helped very much to increase the reluctance of the Treasury to approve of the proposed transfer.

The Treasury rejected the proposed transfer as it then stood. George Hamilton, the Under-Secretary, stated that the Lords of the Treasury found that the information was not sufficient to let them come to a satisfactory decision. He mentioned the fact that the War Office was unable to reach any definite conclusion with regard to the military arrangements.

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[1] Edward Lugard (Under-Secretary for War) to Rogers, 19 June 1861, P.P. 1862, XL, 653-4.

However, the Treasury would reconsider the proposal if it was provided with "more full and exact means of estimating any possible charge on the British Exchequer, as well as reasons for undertaking it."[1] The Chancellor of Exchequer then was W.E.Gladstone. It is not clear how much he was involved in the negotiations because the printed correspondence, at least, does not bear any particular indication of his views or decisions.

In consequence of the Treasury's request, the Colonial Office wrote to the India Office on 16 September 1861, requesting that the latter should state to the Treasury the general reasons for the transfer, inform the War Office about the Straits defence needs so as to enable the War Office to determine the costs involved, and provide a detailed statement of the Straits revenues and expenditures for the past few years. Newcastle insisted that unless the India Office abandoned definitely the claim for repayment of expenses incurred in public works before the transfer, there would be little use pursuing the subject any further.[2]

Before the India Office replied, the Colonial Office further transmitted a memorial addressed to Newcastle by the Singapore merchants.[3] Signed by W.H.Read, J.J.Greenshields, William Paterson and R.C.Woods, the

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1 Hamilton to Rogers, 31 July 1861, in P.P.1862, XL,657.

2 Rogers to De Grey and Ripon, 16 September 1861, in P.P.1862, XL, 655-656.

3 Rogers to De Grey and Ripon, 27 September 1861, in P.P.1862, XL, 657.

memorial resulted from a public meeting held on 22 May 1861 in Singapore.[1] The meeting voiced the view that the Straits revenue was more than adequate to meet local expenses, but that the cost of the expensive fortifications should not be put on them.[2] The memorial, which contained and elaborated the resolutions of the meeting, pointed emphatically to the connection of Singapore with the imperial interests. Singapore was primarily established, it stated, with a view to creating a great commercial emporium, and fulcrum, whence the political influence of the British Government could be extended over the Malay Archipelago. Imperial interests, which prevailed from the very first, had gradually increased, and Singapore had become third in importance among the British possessions in the East. The memorial therefore held that the defence of Singapore was not merely of local but of "high imperial importance," and that it was unfair that the charges should be defrayed by the local revenue alone. The local revenue, however, was not only sufficient to cover local expenses, but having a surplus of £ 50,000, was capable of providing for a local corps, the cost of which was estimated to be £35,000.[3]

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[1] W.H.Read was a very influential merchant in Singapore. A partner in A.L.Johnston & Co., he was sometime chairman of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce and became one of the unofficial members of the Legislative Council in 1867. In 1868 he was elected chairman of the Singapore branch of the Straits Settlements Association . He had strong influence with the native states and Siam. See Buckley, Anecdotal History, 367-368 and passim.

William Paterson was a partner in Paterson,Simons & Co. in Singapore and later chairman of the Bank of India,Australia and China in London for twenty years; very actively involved in Singapore politics. Ibid., 233-234 and passim.

[2] Ibid., 768-769.

[3] W.H.Read and Others to Newcastle, 30 June 1861, in P.P.1862,XL, 657-660.

The memorial was a significant one because it came to the attention of the Colonial Office and the Treasury. It provided the financial information and the general reasons in favour of the transfer that the Colonial Office and the India Office were requested to provide for the Treasury.

The India Office, in the meantime, seemed to have believed that the proposed transfer would not be effected soon, because it ordered the Indian Government to make preparation for the continuing administration of the Straits Settlements. Early in May 1861 Wood instructed the Indian Government to discontinue work on the barracks and later in September after the Treasury's rejection, Wood sent furhter instructions to the Indian Government: all public works should be suspended and no further works of defence be constructed, in order to make the Straits Settlements no longer a financial burden on the Indian Government; and, if necessary, new sources of revenue should be developed.[1]

In October 1861 the India Office answered the Colonial Office's latest communication, but without advancing the negotiations further. This reply, however, throws some light on the origin of the agitation, and supports the view that it originated in Singapore. It stated that the demand for the transfer "originated from the strong expression of the wishes of the inhabitants to that effect." With regard to the financial question, no fresh information was provided; with regard to its claim for the repayment of expenses on the barracks, it insisted on its earlier position that the benefits of those works

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[1] Wood to the Governor-General of India, 14 September 1861, in P.P.1862, XL, 655.

would be reaped solely by the Imperial Government not by the Indian Government.[1] There was little change in the position of the India Office, nor did it provide any fresh information on the whole question. Thus the requirements laid down by the Treasury remained unfulfilled.

The latest correspondence between the India Office and the Colonial Office, which included the memorial, was forwarded on 11 November 1861 to the Treasury for its consideration. The Treasury rejected the proposed transfer for the second time, which action was not unexpected. Although the Lords of the Treasury had "every disposition to give due weight to the views and representations" contained in the memorial of the inhabitants of Singapore in support of the transfer, they were "unable to arrive at the opinion that there are reasons of state sufficient to induce Her Majesty's Government to incur an addition to the public expenditure in order to give effect to such transfer". They refused to commit themselves to an important measure because the information on the subject remained "incomplete" and derived mainly from "local parties", whose accuracy was questionable. But the refusal was not final and the door for consideration not closed completely; the Treasury expressed its readiness to reconsider the case if it was put before them with the "specific" information which it was the task of the India and the Colonial Offices to provide.[2]

The initiative obviously had to come either from the Colonial Office or the India Office, but both were not inclined to take any further step. The Colonial Secretary considered the Treasury's second refusal had put an end to the proposed transfer as far as he was concerned, because he

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[1] Merivale to Rogers, 28 October 1861, P.P. 1862, XL, 660-1.

[2] Peel to Rogers, 11 December 1861, P.P. 1862, XL, 661-2.

had no further information and held that it would rest with Wood to decide whether any further step could be taken by him to obtain the required details.[1] No such step was taken by the India Office, as it admitted later.[2]

The agitation for the transfer thus encounted a severe setback because of the Treasury's insistence on a policy of economy, and the inability of the Colonial Office and the India Office to prove that the Straits Settlements would be self-supporting. The Treasury's position reflected in fact the general colonial policy of the day. To explain why the Treasury was so insistent on the condition that the transfer should not bring any additional expenditure on the British Exchequer, we have to look at the reappraisal of colonial military defence and expenditure that coincided with the agitation for the transfer.

From the preceding discussion it is obvious that the Straits revenue, although sufficient to meet the general civil expenditure, was not adequate to cover the military expenses. If the proposed transfer was carried out, the British Government would have to pay the deficit. The Treasury had every reason to reject such a proposal as it then stood, because the traditional colonial military policy, whereby the Imperial Government had the greater share of the burden, had come under serious attack and was being changed.

It has been mentioned earlier that after the Crimean War the War Office was made a separate department, but the Secretary of State for War was still obliged to defend colonial military expenditure in Parliament.

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[1] Rogers to Merivale, 19 December 1861, in P.P.1862, XL, 661.

[2] T.Baring (Under-Secretary) to Rogers, 28 July 1863, in Further Correspondence Respecting the Transfer of the Control of the Straits Settlements from the India Office to the Colonial Office(in continuation of No.259), P.P.1866, LII,695.

It thus became necessary to define the respective liability of the War Office and the various colonial governments for military expenses. For this purpose an interdepartmental committee was formed in 1859 at the initiative of the War Office, comprising representatives from the War Office, the Colonial Office and the Treasury. The War Office then held the view that:

> England should assist in the defence of her colonies against aggression on the part of foreign civilized nations, and (in a less proportion) of formidable native tribes, but in no case, except where such Colonies are mere garrisons kept for Imperial purposes, should she assume the whole of such defence...(and) that military expenditure for purpose of internal police, should be defrayed from local funds, there being no ground for drawing any distinction between a colony and an independent nation in this respect. 1

One of the principal grounds on which the existing policy of colonial defence was attacked by the report of the committee was that it imposed an enormous burden on the British people, not only in taxes but also by withdrawing a large part of their military forces from home. The report proposed to divide the colonies into two classes:

(1) military posts, garrisoned by the Imperial Government for the imperial purposes rather for local defence;

(2) all other dependencies where troops were stationed primarily for the protection of the inhabitants.

For the second class of colonies, it recommended that the defence system should be based on two simple principles:(1) colonial management, and (2) joint contribution at a uniform rate. It proposed that the Imperial Government should call upon each colony to decide on the nature of its own defence and should offer to bear a share of the entire cost (one half was the proposed share.)[2] The military questions involved in the proposed transfer obviously fell within the scope of this enquiry, and the Treasury's

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[1] Quoted in Schuyler, Fall of the Old Colonial System, 222.

[2] Ibid., 223-224.

reluctance to approval the transfer is understandable.

In the meantime, demand for reform continued to grow in Parliament. On 5 March 1861 Arthur Mill's motion for the appointment of a select committee to enquire into colonial defence and to recommend changes was carried in the House of Commons.[1] The enquiry was completed in July 1861, and the Report divided the British dependencies into two classes:

(1) those which may properly be called "colonies": to this class belonged the North American and South African Colonies, the West Indies,Ceylon, Mauritius, New Zealand, and the Australian Colonies (excluding Western Australia).

(2) "military garrisons, naval stations, convict depots, and dependencies maintained chiefly for objects of Imperial policy": to this class belonged Malta, Gilbraltar, and the Ionian Islands, Hong Kong, Labuan, Bermuda, the Bahamas, St. Helena, and the Falkands, Western Australia, Sierra Leone, Gambia, and the Gold Coast.

With respect to the settlement colonies, the Report recommended that, with some reservations, "the responsibility and cost of the military defence of such dependencies ought mainly to devolve upon themselves." With respect to the dependencies in the second class, "the responsibility and main cost of their defence properly devolve on the Imperial Government."[2]

The Straits Settlements were not included in the latter classification because they were then part of the Indian territories, and the enquiry of the select committe did not extend to India (an indication that India was a distinct colonial entity.) To which class the Straits Settlements would belong, if separated from India, had never been clearly defined

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1 Hansard, 3rd. ser.,vol. CLXI(1861), 5 March 1861, 1400-1421; also Schuyler, Fall of the Old Colonial System, 225-226.

2 Report from the Select Committee on Colonial Military Expenditure, 11 July 1861, in P.P.1861,XIII,74; for the whole report see 69-90; also Schuyler, Fall of the Old Colonial System, 226.

so far. They seemed to lie somewhere in between because they were colonies and military stations at the same time. The timing of the Report was significant here. It was completed in July 1861, at a time when the proposed transfer was being considered by the Treasury. To bring the transfer into effect required parliamentary approval. If such a measure would place an added burden on the British Exchequer, as it then appeared, it was certainly not expedient to request such approval. Hence the Treasury refused the proposal. Changing parliamentary sentiment on colonial defence apparently made the Treasury more reluctant. The House of Commons adopted in 1862 the principle that self-governing colonies should be responsible for self-defence, i.e., self-governing colonies should have the main responsibility for internal order and assist in external protection. The recommendations of the Report of 1861 were adopted by the governments of the 1860s and their implementation was to reach its climax in the Gladstone ministry of 1868-74.[1]

The Straits mercantile community held that since Singapore was serving Imperial interests, it should be protected by Imperial forces, but they had offered a compromise: local revenue would pay for raising of a local corps for internal security. Of course, the Straits Settlements were never expected to be given self-governing status even in the event of the transfer taking place. But the Imperial policy of self-defence might be binding here too. This was certainly a setback for the agitation for the transfer. But the movement did not die out, and soon was to resume. The outcome of this conflict would be either the at least partial exemption of the Straits Settlements from the new Imperial policy, or the assumption by the Settlements of full responsibility for their own defence.

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[1] Schuyler, Fall of the Old Colonial System, 226-227.

Chapter IV: The Triumph of the Agitation: The Straits Settlements Became A Crown Colony, 1863-1867

The deadlock caused by the Treasury's refusal to approve the proposed transfer appeared to be more serious than it actually was. The conditions of the Treasury were not all that difficult to meet if either the Colonial Office or the India Office would go to the trouble of collecting the accurate and specific information required by the Treasury and prove that the Straits Settlements were self-supporting. Neither the Colonial Office nor the India Office took any step in this direction. On the other hand, there was no indication that the Treasury could be swayed to change its position. As far as the British Government was concerned, the issue of the proposed transfer was virtually closed. After four years of vigorous agitation , the proposed transfer seemed doomed to failure. But the Singapore merchants, greatly disappointed, no doubt, by the Treasury's refusal, had not been completely discouraged. They were soon to raise the question for the second time, bringing strong pressure to bear on the Colonial Office to resume negotiations with the departments concerned.

The immediate cause that precipitated the renewed agitation for the transfer was the Indian Government's decision to bring into effect the provisions of the Stamp Act in the Straits Settlements. It has been mentioned earlier that the Secretary of State for India, Sir Charles Wood, instructed the Governor-General of India that the latter should balance the Straits budget, if necessary, by developing new sources of revenue. Consequently, the Indian Government sent to Singapore "imperative orders in very curt terms" to enforce the Stamp Act.[1] It was announced in May 1862

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 694-695; see also above p.23.

that, under instructions from the Supreme Government of India, the Stamp Act would become effective on or about 1 November 1862. The Indian Government had attempted unsuccessfully to introduce stamp duties earlier, but was prevented by the vigorous objections of the Straits inhabitants. Now the mercantile community was as annoyed as before. The Singapore Chamber of Commerce sent a memorial immediately to the Governor-General of India opposing the measure. The objections were that the measure would affect the trade of Singapore, that taxation in the Straits Settlements was already higher than in India, and that the local income was sufficient for all civil expenditures. But the protest came to nothing. The Indian Government, determined to bring the duties into force, refused to accept those arguments. This refusal brought about more protests from the merchants. A public meeting held on 10 July 1862 expressed regret that the Chamber's memorial was ignored by the Indian authorities. A committee of W.H.Read, W.Paterson, J.J.Greenshields, A.Logan, J.Davidson, W.Mactaggart and J. d'Almeida was appointed to draw up a petition of protest to the British and Indian Governments.[1] The Old Singaporeans in London also took the matter up. A deputation led by John Crawfurd had an interview with Wood, urging him to reconsider the matter, but with no result. The Indian Government declined to postpone the enforcement of the provisions

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[1] James Davidson was manager of the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London and China until about 1864. Buckley, Anecdotal History, 711.

William Mactaggart was a partner in the trading firm of Syme & Co., and latter in Mactaggart,Tidman & Co. in London; a member of the Singapore Grand Jury. Ibid., 233 and passim.

For the rest of the committee, see notes in preceding chapters.

pending appeals to the home authorities, and officers were appointed for the operation. It was not actually carried out, however, until 1 January 1863 because arrangements could not be completed in time.[1]

It was this determination of the Indian Government to go ahead with the enforcement of the stamp duties that led to renewed efforts to press for the transfer first proposed five years ago. A week after the previous meeting another one was held on 17 July 1862 to discuss the question again. In the view of the mercantile community the Indian Government had been so identified with taxation that they felt it was absolutely necessary to remove the Straits Settlements from its administration. A resolution passed at the meeting declared that the transfer was "an imperative necessity" because British interests, both commercial and political, would benefit. Another resolution stated that the attempt to impose "an objectionable tax" gave the inhabitants "a just ground" to renew their appeal to have the Straits Settlements transferred from the India Office to the Colonial Office. It was resolved that a petition should be sent to Parliament to demand an immediate transfer, and a committee of W.H.Read, A.Logan, J.d'Almeida, W.Paterson, W.Mactaggart and J.J.Greenshields was appointed to carry out the resolutions.[2] A petition was presented to Parliament by Samuel Gregson but there was no debate and no immediate response.

In London, a deputation of the friends of Singapore had an interview with Wood again but it yielded no satisfactory result.[3] Again, on 8 May 1863

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 695.

[2] Ibid., 770-771.

[3] Ibid., 771.

a strong deputation had an interview with the Colonial Secretary, Newcastle. It was led by the supporters in Parliament, Samuel Gregson and Walter Buchanan, and included John Crawfurd, the Guthries, E.Boustead, L.Fraser, G.G.Nicol and F.Richardson.[1] Newcastle was urged to bring the proposed transfer into effect, and it was pointed out to him that the financial position of the Straits Settlements was improving. The Colonial Secretary was sympathetic to their presentation.[2]

It was probably at this interview with Newcastle that the memorial of 23 March 1863 was presented to him. The main points of the memorial were familiar: that the transfer must be carried out at once, and that the financial situation was improving. What was fresh in it, and convincing perhaps, was that the memorialists could state definitely,for the first time, that the Straits income for 1861-62 was not only capable of meeting expenditures, including military spending, but also showed a surplus of £ 10,000. The figures were trustworthy because they were taken from the official report of the Governor-General of India.[3] The surplus was largely due to the income from the stamp duties, which, although so persistently objected to, turned out, ironically, to be a blessing in disguise for the agitation.

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[1] Lewis Fraser was a partner in the trading firm of Maclaine, Fraser & Co.; a founding member of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce; took part in opposition to the tonnage dues and the Indian currency. Buckley, Anecdotal History, 314.

George Garden Nicol was a partner in the trading firm of Hamilton, Gray & Co.; lived in London for many years when he was the Chairman of the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India and China; one of the vice-presidents of the Straits Settlements Association. Ibid., 566-567.

Francis Richardson was a partner in the firm of McEwen & Co.(later the Borneo Company).Ibid., 380.

[2] Ibid., 771; Mills, British Malaya, 284.

[3] Memorial from Merchants of the British Settlements to the Duke of Newcastle, 23 March 1863, in P.P.1866, LII, 691-692.

The memorial of 23 March was significant because it contained specific and authentic information and because it was supported by influential interest groups. The list of the signatures was impressive. In addition to the familiar names of Crawfurd and Guthrie, it included representatives of several banking and shipping interests, like the Borneo Company, the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London, and China, the Oriental Bank Corporation, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Co., and the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China.[1] This was so far the largest deputation that had come forward to support the agitation.

The memorial had offered satisfactory proof that the transfer would not become a financial burden on the Imperial Government. The Colonial Office certainly thought it was now able to resume negotiations with the India Office. Immediately after the Transfer Group had the interview with Newcastle, the Colonial Office took the initiative to reopen its talks with the India Office. Newcastle told Wood that he was "quite willing to reopen the question," if Wood would agree to assure the Treasury that the total income of the Straits Settlements was in such "a promising condition" as to justify the assumption that the transfer would not entail any expense upon the Imperial Exchequer. On the question of repayment for the barracks, the Colonial Office still denied the claim of the India Office. However, Newcastle was ready to give it

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[1] The rest of the signatures were: John Fraser, Lewis Fraser, W. W. Ker, W. Paterson, John Purvis, Edward Boustead, John Harvey, F. Richardson, G. G. Nicol, W. W. Shaw, J. Guthrie, Ashton & Co., and Smith, Wood & Co.

his "fullest consideration" when he received information from the India Office on the various points, and he would communicate with the Treasury to satisfy the wishes of the memorialists.[1]

The India Office was also ready for negotiations although it had so far taken no further steps to meet the requirements of the Treasury since the latter rejected the proposed transfer in December 1861. Replying to Newcastle's request for negotiations, Wood expressed his readiness to bring into effect the long contemplated transfer. He confirmed the authencity of the financial statement contained in the memorial of 23 March. But his position with regard to the various issues under discussion remained unchanged. There was, however, a new development in the claim of the India Office for repayment on account of the barracks. The construction of the barracks had been halted by order of the India Office, and the Indian Government was willing to pay the expenses already incurred. For the completion of the barracks, an estimated sum of £15,000 was needed. But whether to complete the construction or not was a question that had to be determined by the Colonial Office in the event of the transfer. This new development certainly removed the dispute as to which department should be responsible for paying the expenses on this account. The question of convicts ceased to be controversial for no fresh convicts had been sent to the Straits, and the previously agreed upon mode of disposing of the existing convict establishments did not cause any further difficulty.[2]

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[1] See T. F. Elliot to Herman Merivale, 22 May 1863, P.P. 1866, LII, 692-4.

[2] See T. G. Baring (under-secretary for India) to T. F. Elliot, 28 July 1863, P.P. 1866, LII, 694-6.

The transfer seemed to have a better chance of meeting the approval of the Treasury in May 1863 because the question of which department had to pay the cost of the barracks was no longer an issue and the new information about the Straits financial situation pointed to a balanced budget. But the Colonial Office did not seem to entertain this optimistic view. Instead of seeking the Treasury's approval at the time, it decided to send a special fact-finding mission to the Straits Settlements to inquire into the whole question on the spot. This move was caused by the Colonial Office's desire not to put any additional charges on the Imperial Government, as Chichester Fortescue, the under-secretary for the Colonies, indicated in the House of Commons.[1]

The idea to appoint the commission obviously came from Newcastle, who had previously proposed to make such an enquiry. This device was opportune. As Newcastle himself saw it, the commission was "the most satisfactory, as well as the most expedient way" of reaching a conclusion on the various points concerning the military costs and finances of the Straits Settlements. He proposed that the commission should consist of an engineer officer from the War Office, an official resident in Singapore to be selected by the India Office, and one from the Colonial Office.

The commission was appointed in September 1863. The official appointed by Newcastle was Sir Hercules Robinson, who was the principal

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[1] Hansard, 3rd. ser., vol. CLXXI (1863), 11 June 1863, 705.

member of the commission; the War Office's appointee was a Colonel Freeth of the Royal Engineers; and Governor Cavenagh was selected by the India Office.

The appointment of Sir Hercules Robinson was a convenient choice. Robinson, Governor of Hong Kong (1859-65), was then on leave in England and was about to return to Hong Kong. It was also a very appropriate appointment, not only because Newcastle had "every confidence" in his ability, but also because of his experience in the East. During his governorship of Hong Kong Great Britain was at war with China; he negotiated for the cession of Kowloon and made the arrangements for its annexation. For the next thirty years, Robinson was in the colonial service as governor of Ceylon (1865-72), New South Wales (1872-79), New Zealand (1879-80), and Cape Colony (1881-89).[1]

The terms of reference of the Robinson commission were specifically laid down by Newcastle in his letter of appointment on 9 September 1863. The commission was requested to inquire into and report:

(1) "the state of the fortifications and barracks, and the amount of expenditure requisite to complete these works, so far as it may be needful or expedient to carry them to completion;"

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[1] DNB, XXII, 1172-5.

and (2) "the number of men to be maintained for the protection of the Straits Settlements, and the nature of those troops".[1] In addition, Robinson was required to furnish the Colonial Office with "a general report upon the affairs of the Straits Settlements with reference to the proposed transfer". The Treasury also suggested that the primary object of the enquiry ought to be "to ascertain whether the Settlements, in the event of their transfer from the Indian to the Imperial Government, will be in a condition to defray their own expenses without any charge upon the Imperial revenues".[2] It was obvious that the defences and finances of the Straits Settlements were the most important considerations.

Robinson arrived at Singapore on 4 December 1863, while Colonel Freeth did not arrive there until 20 January 1864. In the meantime, Robinson began, with the assistance of Governor Cavenagh, collecting information for a general report on the affairs of the settlements. Robinson's arrival at Singapore naturally prompted activity on the part of the Transfer Group there. A public meeting was held to discuss ways and means to communicate with the commissioners. It appointed a committee to collect information regarding the finances, resources, and commerce of the settlements; and it resolved that, if expedient, the committee would communicate directly with the commissioners. We do not

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[1] Newcastle to Robinson, 9 September 1863, in P.P. 1866, LII, 697; see also Buckley, Anecdotal History, 771-2.

[2] Rogers to Robinson, 5 October 1863, in P.P. 1866, LII, 697.

know whether the interview took place or not, but a long report, dated 9 January 1864, was published in Singapore, putting forth the complaints we have seen earlier and showing the promising financial condition of the settlements.[1]

The general report of the commission was completed in January 1864, less than two months after the commission started its enquiry. The report was enclosed in Robinson's despatch to Newcastle of 25 January 1864. The Robinson Report, as it can be properly called, was very much in favour of the proposed transfer. The commission confirmed the repeated assumption of the Transfer Group that the increasing income of the Straits Settlements was adequate for the local expenditures with a surplus for military expenses. The Report stated that for the financial year ending 30 April 1863, the total revenues (including the Indian, Imperial and municipal incomes) were £250,437, while the total expenditure (including the Indian, Imperial and municipal costs) were £280,144, leaving a deficit of £29,707, as the following table shows:

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 772-773. Among those who attended the meeting were: Joaquim d'Almeida, R. C. Woods, J. G. Davidson, J. S. Atchison (lawyer), J. Berwick, J. C. Scryngeour (accountant and manager of the Oriental Bank), J. Cameron (proprietor and editor of the Straits Times), Thomas Dunman (Commissioner of Police), J. J. Winton (assistant, the Mercantile Bank), and John Purvis (of John Purvis and Son).

Straits Settlements: Income and Expenditure for the fiscal year ending 30 April 1863[1]

Income		Expenditure	
Total Straits Settlements	£ 165,450	Total Straits Settlements	£ 119,647
Total Indian & Imperial	44,169	Total Indian & Imperial	116,550
Municipal	40,817	Municipal	43,946
	250,437		280,144
deficit	29,707		
	£ 280,144		£ 280,144

But the commissioners held that the total expenditure contained several items "not fairly chargeable to the Straits Settlements, such as convicts and payment on account of Public Debt". If these items were excluded, the deficit would be reduced to only £7,293, as the following table shows:

Straits Settlements: Adjusted Budget

Income		Expenditure	
Total	£ 165,450	Total (civil)	£ 119,647
deficit	7,293	Military	53,096
	£ 172,743		£ 172,743

[1] The Straits revenues included those derived from land, excise duties, income tax, stamps, administration of justice, marine, public works and miscellaneous; the Indian revenues: postal services, convict labour and others; the Imperial revenue was that from the naval coal depot. The Straits expenditures were those for the revenue departments, pensions, salaries and establishments, marine and others; the Indian expenditures were for postal services, convicts, Public Debt and military; and the Imperial expenditure was for the naval coal depot.

This deficit would have disappeared if the stamp duties, which came into effect on 1 January 1863, had been collected for a full year, instead of four months, increasing the revenue from the £7,965 collected to £26,000. The additional sum would have not only cancelled the deficit but would have produced a surplus of £10,000. Hence, the Report concluded positively that the revenue of the Straits Settlements for 1863 was "more than sufficient to meet all their civil and military expenses by upwards of £10,000".

The Report was also very optimistic about the prospects for the Straits revenues for 1863-64. According to the estimated budget of the Report, the total income would be £241,250, against a total expenditure of £239,210, including a military charge of £63,000. Therefore, Robinson had "no hesitation" in expressing his "conviction that the three settlements, if incorporated into one colony, will be in a position for the future to defray their own expenses, civil as well as military, without any charge upon the Imperial revenues".[1]

The commission's recommendations on the military defence of the Straits Settlements were transmitted by the Colonial Office to the War Office in May 1864. The enquiry found that the existing fortifications were sufficient for the defence of the Straits. It recommended that the future military garrison of the Straits Settlements should consist of three batteries of Royal artillery and one regiment of infantry,

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[1] The Robinson Report, 25 January 1864, in P.P. 1866, LII, 697-709. See enclosures no. 1 & 2 for the financial conditions and prospects, 710, 711.

to be recruited chiefly among the Indian natives. The expenses of this force should be defrayed by an annual contribution of £63,000 from the Straits treasury.[1]

The Robinson Report undoubtedly gave the views of the Transfer Group an official authencity and consequently dispelled the Treasury's misgivings about the accuracy of the information in the petitions. The Report was well received by Edward Cardwell who had succeeded Newcastle after his retirement in April 1864.[2] He described it as a "careful analysis of the resources" of the settlements. The optimistic and favourable views of the Report certainly strengthened the negotiating position of the Colonial Office. In submitting the Robinson Report to the Treasury, on 26 May 1864, the Colonial Office could positively state that there was no reasonable prospect of the proposed colony becoming a burden on the Imperial Exchequer, and proposed that the Treasury consent to the immediate introduction of a bill to give effect to the transfer.[3] The Colonial Office might well have expected to receive an favourable reply from the Treasury.

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[1] Rogers to Captain D. Galton (under-secretary for War), 26 May 1864, P.P. 1866, LII, 714-5.

[2] Edward Cardwell (1813-86), was Chief Secretary for Ireland in Palmerston's cabinet in 1859; transferred to the position of the Chansellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1861. As Colonial Secretary (1864-66) he implemented the policy of withdrawing imperial troops from the colonies, DNB, Vol. III, 952-4.

[3] Rogers to F. Peel (under-secretary to the Treasury), 26 May 1864, P.P. 1866, LII, 714.

However, the Treasury's strict adherence to a policy of economy almost amounted to an obsession. Even the Robinson Report failed to meet its requirements. Although the Treasury agreed that the Report "appears to have been framed with care", yet it considered the estimated surplus "very inconsiderable". It required "some assurance" that in case of need there were means by which the income could be increased, and future finances maintained in a position not less favourable than that anticipated by the Report.[1] The Treasury also raised the further issue of what was to be called "Public Debt", and required its satisfactory settlement before it would sanction the introduction of the bill.

This fresh obstacle arose from the section of the Robinson Report which dealt with the position of the Public Debt in the Straits finances. The debt consisted of money which belonged to the suitors in the Court of Judicature (referred to as the Suitor's Fund) and the Police Fund. Under instructions from the Indian Government, this money had from time to time been invested in Indian securities at 4% interest. But the revenues from both funds, which had reached an accumulated amount of about £134,576 (Rs. 1,345,768) had been paid to the Straits treasury to cover expenditures on Indian items. The Report considered that since the costs had been incurred by the Indian Government, it should make good the amount of money so expended and that the Straits Settlements could not be fairly asked to refund amounts due the suitors.[2]

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[1] F. Peel to Rogers, 19 July 1864, P.P. 1866, LII, 715-6.

[2] The Robinson Report, in P.P. 1866, LII, 707. The total amount included the invested Rs. 989,607 and the uninvested Rs. 356,167.

The Treasury, however, did not spell out what settlement would be satisfactory to it. Presumably, a satisfactory settlement would be that the debt would not be repaid by the British Exchequer. In consequence of this new demand, the Colonial Office requested the India Office to replace the money.[1] The India Office could not give a positive reply pending the arrival of information on the subject from the Indian Government, but Wood, anxious to see the transfer proceed without delay, was willing to "engage to hold the Imperial Government harmless in respect of any claim upon the Public Debt".[2] The Transfer Group insisted too that the debt belonged to the Indian Government, and the Straits Settlements should not be asked to refund it.[3] The Colonial Office was not satisfied with the reply of the India Office for it held that the Straits Settlements had a claim to a portion of the profit from the Suitor and Police Funds which would accrue after the transfer. Its suggestion for settling the claim was that whatever sums had been already written off as unclaimed and had therefore fallen into the revenue, should belong to the Indian Government, but that any sums that might so fall in future should be considered as the separate revenue of Singapore.[4] The India Office, repeatedly expressing its desire that

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[1] Rogers to Lord Dufferin, 26 May, 1864, P.P. 1866, LII, 714.

[2] Lord Wodehouse to Rogers, 22 July 1864, P.P. 1866, LII, 717; Lord Dufferin to Rogers, 19 January 1865, P.P. 1866, LII, 720.

[3] Memorial from Merchants and Others to Rogers, 19 September 1864, P.P. 1866, LII, 718-9.

[4] Rogers to Lord Dufferin, 28 February 1865, P.P. 1866, LII, 723.

the transfer should not be delayed, accepted the Colonial Office's proposition. The Treasury finally agreed on 30 March 1865 that the settlement was satisfactory.[1] The issue of the Public Debt was thus closed.

But there still remained the arrangements that had to be made for the future defence of the Straits Settlements. Although this question had in fact been under discussion as early as 1859, it was still far from being settled when the negotiations resumed. The Imperial Government was conducting an overall review of colonial military defence and expenditure, as we have discussed earlier. The Report of the Select Committee of 1861, the culmination of the process of review, held that the erection of many fortifications in distant colonial possessions involved a useless expenditure and failed to provide efficient protection for the places.[2] This explained the insistence of the Colonial Office that it could not accept the claim of the Indian Government for repayment for the barracks. When the question of repayment ceased to be an issue, as pointed out earlier, the financial capability of the settlements in turn became the focus of attention, because the Treasury would not agree that the surplus was sufficient to meet military expenditure. From the point of view of the Treasury, colonies should be required to absorb as much as possible the cost of their

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[1] Lord Dufferin to Rogers, 11 March 1865, P.P. 1866, LII, 724; Rogers to G. A. Hamilton, 24 March 1865, P.P. 1866, LII, 725; F. Peel to Rogers, 30 March 1865, P.P. 1866, LII, 725-6.

[2] Report from the Select Committee on Colonial Military Expenditure, 11 July 1861, P.P. 1861, XIII, 75; see also above pp. 84-5.

defence. In this case, it required the Straits Settlements to defray the cost entirely, which was an unfair requirement from the point of view of the Straits Settlements because they felt themselves to be important to the Imperial interests in the East. The question was thus essentially a conflict of opinions between London and Singapore.

The facilities already available in the Straits Settlements for the garrison did not pose any problem, for the War Office agreed with the Robinson Commission that they were sufficient. The War Office also accepted the recommendations of the Report on the proposed composition of the military force, but stated that no Imperial troops were available at the time and that India could provide the proposed troops. The Straits garrison could be composed of a detachment from one of the European regiments stationed at Hong Kong and a portion of the Ceylon Rifles. For that purpose the Ceylon Rifles, then fourteen companies, should be increased and formed into three small battalions, two of which to be stationed in Ceylon, and one in the Straits. The arrangement would have, it was stated, the result of obviating "the evil of a purely local corps", and recruiting for the Ceylon Rifles from among the natives of the Straits Settlements would be facilitated.[1] Cardwell agreed to this alternative arrangement proposed by Lord Grey, the Secretary of State for War. But since he had failed to obtain the approval of the Treasury on the finances of the Straits, Cardwell considered the whole question as being "in abeyance".[2]

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[1] Galton to Rogers, 21 July 1864, in P.P.1866,LII,716-717.

[2] Rogers to Galton, 4 August 1864, in P.P.1866,LII,718.

The Transfer Group, in the meantime, having heard of the Treasury's refusal, kept sending memorials to the Colonial Office to press for an early approval of the long awaited transfer. In a letter of 19 September 1864 they put forth a very convincing argument against the expensive and large garrison that was proposed, which would cost £63,000. This garrison they considered "inordinate and uncalled for". The 2400 strong garrison at Ceylon whose population was eight-fold that of the Straits Settlements, was only 600 men more than that of the Straits.[1]

The controversy here apparently arose from a different appreciation of the political situation in the Malay Archipelago and the resulting defence needs. The Straits mercantile community did not foresee any threat from the native people, and believed that any danger to British power there could only come from European countries. The proper garrison needed was a small local corps to keep law and order while protection against an external enemy should be the task of the Imperial navy. This view was clearly expressed in a memorial addressed to Rogers:

> ... Throughout the whole Indian (Malay) Archipelago, and in its neighbourhood, there is not the remotest risk of invasion or attack from a native power.... Conspiracy against the Government in a heterogeneous population consisting of many nationalities, differing in race, language, and manners, and consequently incapable of

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[1] Merchants and Others to Rogers, 19 September 1864, P.P. 1866, LII, 718-9. The letter was signed by Crawfurd, the Guthries, Boustead, W. W. Shaw, W. Mactaggart, W. Paterson, John Harvey, H. W. Beaves, J. J. Greenshields and M. Little.

> combination, may be said to be next to impossible. If the inhabitants of the Straits Settlements cannot in the strict sense of the word be called loyal, the intelligent portion of them are unquestionably attached to the ruling power by a thorough conviction of the advantage which they derive from its protection.

The memorial continued:

> The only danger incident to the Settlements would be from an European enemy in time of war. An enemy's cruiser might bombard and destroy any one of the towns of the three Settlements, and most easily Singapore and Penang, the most valuable. From such a disaster our fleet must always be our chief protection for no amount of land force would be a security against such a catastrophe.[1]

Therefore the proper garrison was not one that "should aim at protection against foreign aggression", but one that "will give confidence to its peaceable inhabitants, preserve internal order, and give security against lawlessness to property in goods, houses, and warehouses". The garrison should comprise, they proposed, 200 Royal marines, trained to the use of artillery, in place of regular artillery, the marines to be assisted by the European Volunteers in Singapore or a native police force, instead of by the Indian native troops. If this arrangement was not acceptable, than the alternative would be to reduce the existing sepoys from two regiments to one.[2]

This view about the defence of the Straits Settlements seemed to be commonly held in Singapore. John Cameron, editor of the Singapore Straits Times, was also in favour of a strong naval defence. According

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[1] Merchants and Others to Rogers, 1 February 1865, P.P. 1866, LII, 722. It was signed by: John Crawfurd, A. Guthrie, E. Boustead, W. W. Shaw, J. Guthrie, M. Little, J. Smith, W. H. Read, John Harvey, F. Richardson, G. Lipscombe, F. G. Pereira, and H. W. Beaves.

[2] Ibid..

to him, the best military and naval authorities in the Straits all agreed that the protection of Singapore and its shipping in case of a European war could be best secured by the presence of one or two heavily armed ships of the Navy. Cameron's opinion was contained in his book Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India, published in 1865. The purpose of the publication of the book was to support the agitation for the transfer. The importance of the Straits Settlements in the Empire was stressed, the defects in the existing government exposed and reasons for the transfer expounded. How effective its publication was in helping the cause of the Transfer Group, it is not easy to determine. It certainly strenghtened the voices in favour of the transfer.[1] The merchants naturally favoured naval protection because then they would not have to pay for such forces.

The Colonial Office agreed in principle with the Singapore merchants that the proposed garrison was too large. It, however, did not accept their proposal in its totality. In his letter to the War Office on 28 February 1865, transmitting the merchants' memorial, Rogers stated that Cardwell objected to the replacement of artillery by marines because the Colonial Secretary considered the former a necessary part of the forces to be stationed in the Straits; besides, there was the repeated objection of the Admiralty to the employment of the marines in the way proposed by the memorial. Reminding the War Office of the

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[1] John Cameron, Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India,(published in 1865; Kuala Lumpur 1965 reprint), p. 247.

Treasury's basic condition that the Straits Settlements should pay their own way, military as well as civil, the Colonial Office suggested some reduction in the amount of the forces recommended by the Robinson commission and by the War Office. It was pointed out that since a large force was maintained at Hong Kong, not exclusively for the protection of that colony, but to a great extent for the protection of trade in China and Japan, then the cost of the detachment of European troops proposed to be stationed in the Straits might be considered as belonging to the British Government. As to the defence of the Straits, the force might be fixed at three batteries of Royal artillery and one battalion of the Ceylon Rifles. Such a reduction would lower the proposed colonial contribution from £63,000 to £45,000 or £ 50,000, an amount which was considered to be within the means of the Straits Settlements.[1]

This alternative arrangement proposed by Cardwell, who was later in 1868-74 to undertake drastic reforms in the British army, was obviously calculated to get round the obstacle arising from the Treasury's condition. But it was also a more realistic appreciation of the value of Singapore as a military station. From now on a new military scheme was to emerge gradually in which the Straits Settlements were assigned a greater role.

The question of colonial contributions to the cost of defence was another matter that had to be arranged. The principle in this regard had been definitely laid down by the Select Committee on Colonial

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[1] Rogers to J.Crofton (Under-Secretary for War), 28 February 1865, in P.P. 1866,LII, 723-724.

defence and expenditure of 1861, but the mode of how the contribution should be made was still a difficult matter to settle because it was not easy to fix an uniform rate. However, the War Office had finally worked out a formula regarding the Straits Settlements. The defences to be maintained in the Straits would be determined by the "wants and means" of the inhabitants, since it was the sine quo non condition of the consent of the Imperial Government to the transfer that there should be no additional burden on the Imperial Exchequer. The War Secretary explained that if the Straits Settlements were taken over by the Imperial Government, "it will not be with a view to hold them as imperial military stations, but in order to meet the often expressed wishes of the local communities".[1] The implication here is obvious. If they were to be considered imperial stations per se, then the Imperial Government would have to defray the military charges (at least a larger portion of it), as the Report of the Select Committee recommended. The War Office was obviously trying to avoid expenditure commitments by refusing to view Singapore as an imperial station.

The War Office's new formula was produced by a committee appointed specifically for the purpose of finding out the nature and size of the garrison that was needed in the Straits. The Committee found that it was impossible to lay down any inflexible rule as to the composition of distant garrisons supplied by imperial troops, the distribution of which throughout the world was determined by general considerations. The War Office thus decided that the simplest mode

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[1] J. Crofton to Rogers, 11 May 1865, P.P. 1866, LII, 726.

by which the question of the colonial contribution could be settled was for the Colonial Office to state the sum which the Settlements could fairly be required to pay for their military defence, and then for the War Office to determine what forces could be supplied for that sum.[1] This was obviously a flexible way by which the question could be settled; it was also a safeguard, as far as the transfer was concerned, by which additional charges on the Imperial Exchequer could be prevented.

The Colonial Office accepted this new formula and stated that the Straits Settlements could contribute an annual sum of £ 50,000. Such sum was to be taken as covering all military expenditures with the exception of the maintenance and repair of barracks and fortifications, with the understanding that the colony would not be charged with more than the actual cost of the military expenditure if the sum was less than £ 50,000 per annum. The Colonial Secretary at the same time requested the War Office for an assurance that the garrison would not entail any charge on the Imperial Government, so as to obtain the consent of the Treasury to the transfer.[2]

In the meantime, British military strategy in the East had come under review, the result of which was to give the Straits Settlements a greater role. The question of the future garrison to be maintained in the East had become of "pressing importance" due to the withdrawal of the Indian troops from the China command and

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[1] Edward Lugard (under-secretary for War) to Rogers, 30 January 1866, P.P. 1866, LII, 732.

[2] Rogers to Lugard, 9 February 1866, P.P. 1866, LII, 733.

the withdrawal of one battery of infantry from Hong Kong because of the high mortality of the troops there. The redistribution of troops in the East also involved the Straits Settlements. Edward Lugard, Under-Secretary of State for War, pointed out to the Foreign Office in March, 1866 that, in the event of the transfer, a number of Imperial troops would have to be maintained in Singapore as a reserve unit for the China command. He went on to state:

> These troops would not, under ordinary circumstances, be available for service in China, but in an emergency, reinforcements would no doubt be sent from thence in less time than from any other military station, and to this extent the proposed transfer may influence the decision as to the China garrison.[1]

The subsequent consultations between the War Office and the Foreign Office resulted in a new military scheme in which the Straits Settlements had a greater role than ever before in eastern defence. The redistribution of the forces in the East was as follows:

(1) Japan----- one battery of infantry;

(2) China----- (Hong Kong) one wing of a battalion of British infantry, a small battalion (6 companies) of native troops, and the existing force of Royal artillery;

(3) Straits--- a wing of British troops to be detached from Hong Kong, six companies of the Ceylon Rifles, and two battalions of the Royal artillery.

The estimated cost of the garrison to be stationed in the Straits Settlements was £66,000, £16,000 more than the earlier proposed contribution. But the wing of the battalion to be stationed in the

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[1] Lugard to E. Hammond (Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), 17 March 1866, P.P. 1866, LII, 733-4.

Straits would be "to a certain extent, available, if required, for service in China and Japan", and when the proposed reduction of the European force in Hong Kong was decided upon, the Settlements were the most convenient station for the remaining wing. For these reasons the War Secretary, Lord Hartington, whose predecessor Lord de Grey had been transferred to the India Office in February 1866, suggested that the cost (£20,000) of the Imperial troops to be stationed in the Straits should be defrayed from the Imperial treasury, and considered that the colonial contribution of £50,000 would probably cover the total cost of the garrison to be stationed there exclusively for the military protection of the Straits.[1]

The belated recognition of the advantages of Singapore as a military station, was an apparent indication that the Straits Settlements were indeed linked with general Imperial interests. The new military arrangement was somewhat similar to that eloquently advocated by John Cameron when he urged that Singapore be made a military station for British troops in the East for Imperial purposes. Cameron was of course no military strategist; nevertheless, his views could be taken as reflecting those of the local military authorities. Here is how he saw the usefulness of Singapore for the Imperial purpose:

> ... there could be no better point (than Singapore) at which to keep a reserve of European infantry for general Imperial purposes. By recent medical returns of the army and navy, the China station has proved by a long way the most unhealthy

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[1] Lugard to Rogers, 28 March 1866, P.P. 1866, LII, 734; for the estimate of the additional cost of this change, see 735; also Hammond to Lugard, 21 March 1866, P.P. 1866, LII, 734.

> for European troops; and it is almost certain that for a considerable time to come, Great Britain must continue to back her influence there by the occasional display of military strength. Singapore is but six or seven steaming days from Hong Kong, and ten from Shanghai, even in an unfavourable monsoon; its climate has been established beyond all doubt to be kinder and more genial to the European constitution than any other in the East. It has no pestilence, no epidemics or endemics that extend themselves to Europeans. Invalids, broken and exhausted, from China and Bengal alike seek its shores, and after a sojourn of six or seven weeks leave it in health and vigour.

Cameron then asked:

> Why, then, not station in the Straits one moiety at least of the troops intended to be available for China and Japan?... it is apparent that any body of troops stationed at Singapore would be available not for China only, but for India, and that within a period so short as to meet any emergency which is almost possible to arise, nine days would serve to convey both men and baggage to Calcutta, Madras, or any point on the east coast, or in Burmah. Indeed... irrespective of the China force and in regard to India only, Singapore might with great advantage be used as a healthy recruiting or reserve station for European infantry.[1]

The similarity of thinking on the strategic importance of Singapore was probably a coincidence; in any case, Singapore's strategic significance had been more realistically evaluated.

The Colonial Office considered the War Office's new military scheme satisfactory and submitted it on 21 April 1866 to the Treasury for approval, requesting that the Treasury consent to introduce the bill.[2] The new scheme was accepted by the Treasury; but it still insisted that the proposed contribution of £50,000 was an underestimate, for the

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[1] John Cameron, Our Tropical Possessions, 249-50.

[2] Rogers to Hamilton, 21 April 1866, P.P. 1866, LII, 735-6.

amount did not include the expenditures for stores, pensions, transport, conveyance of stores, and the cost of raising six companies of the Ceylon Rifles. An increase in the sum to 59,300 was demanded, coupled with the repeated statement that the Lords "must adhere to the determination not to impose on the Imperial Exchequer any charge on account of the Settlements, the transfer of which is not desired by this country, but the inhabitants of the Settlements themselves." [1] The Colonial Office, anxious to carry out the transfer, accepted the demand without hesitation.[2] After its basic condition that the Straits Settlements should be self-supporting had been satisfied, the Secretary to the Treasury consented on 2 June 1866 to the introduction of the bill to provide for a new government for the Straits Settlements.[3] The persistent Singapore merchants, after almost ten years of agitation, finally succeeded in overcoming the insistent objections of the Treasury.

The Treasury approved at the same time a new constitution based on the recommendations of the Robinson Report, a constitution that was designed to provide a better government for the Straits Settlements. The inadequacy of the existing administration had long been a complaint of the Straits Settlements. The mercantile community had demanded the transfer in order to bring about a new government in which they

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[1] H.C.E.Childers (Secretary to the Treasury) to Rogers, 12 May 1866, in P.P.1866,LII, 736-7.

[2] W.E.Forster (Under-Secretary for the Colonies) to Hamilton, 25 May 1866, in P.P.1866, LII,738.

[3] Childers to Forster, 2 June 1866, in P.P.1866, LII, 739-740.

could be represented and whose status would be enhanced by giving the Governor greater power. The Indian Government, which had in the past ignored the complaint, finally admitted, in 1859, that the Straits administration, as it then stood, was a "positive evil". To remedy this defect, Lord Canning, then Governor-General of India, suggested that the Straits Settlements could be connected with the British establishments on the coast of China, presumably, Hong Kong. Canning thought that there were strong reasons for this proposal. First, the Imperial Government would find a good field of selection among the consular officers in China for service in the Straits Settlements, and improve the prospects and elevate the position of the Chinese consular service. Secondly, there were intimate social and economic connections between the Straits Settlements and China, there being a large Chinese population in the Straits.[1] But Canning's proposal appeared to have overestimated the connection between the Straits Settlements and China while it neglected the distinct needs and wishes of the local community. This proposal made no reference to the form of government, which was the question at issue. During the subsequent prolonged negotiations between the Colonial Office and the India Office, Canning's proposal never became a subject for discussion, nor did the general question of the type of government to be provided for the Straits Settlements after the transfer. The only reference to this question on the part of the Colonial Office was contained in Rogers's letter of 31 May 1861 to the India Office, which stated that Newcastle would propose to the Settlements a

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[1] Canning's Minutes, in P.P.1862,XL,595.

form of constitution similar to one that was in existence then in the Crown colonies.[1] The India Office thought that the question properly rested with the Colonial Office, and abstained from making any proposal.[2] There was no further official reference to the question until after the Robinson Report was completed in 1864.

Great concern and interest, however, was expressed by the Straits community and their supporters in London over the future government which would be established after the transfer. John Crawfurd, the most eloquent spokesman of the Transfer Group, had in 1858 pointed out that the Straits Governor's authority was restricted, for the governor had "no diplomatic or legislative authority", and was "entirely dependent" on the Governor-General of India. He requested that the Governor should be appointed, after the transfer, by the Crown and provided with a Legislative Council, which to be "popular and effective", should, as in Ceylon, have "an admixture of British and native resident inhabitants".[3] In a later memorandum Crawfurd further demanded that an Executive Council should be provided for the Governor, which was to include the following principal functionaries:

1. Colonial secretary;
2. Treasurer; (these two positions to be held by the same person)

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[1] Rogers to Merivale, 31 May 1861, P.P. 1862, XL, 652.

[2] Baring to Rogers, 28 July 1863, P.P. 1866, LII, 695-6.

[3] Crawfurd's Note, P.P. 1862, XL, 590.

3. Accountant-General;

4. Auditor-General (to be held by the same person);

5. Attorney-General.

The composition of the Legislative Council was also elaborated in the same memorandum. The official members should be the Governor and his principal functionaries, plus a judge and the commander of the troops. The unofficial members, whose number would be two or three, should be merchants only, for he thought there was no distinct planting interest requiring a separate representation. At least one unofficial member should be recommended by the Singapore Chamber of Commerce. The unofficial members would be appointed for a period of two years, the qualifications being that the candidates should be British subjects possessing "adequate acquaintance with the English language". Crawfurd also suggested that Singapore (with Malacca attached to it) and Penang should be given separate administrations.[1]

A similar demand also came from the other old Singaporeans, led by A. Guthrie, who requested that the official and unofficial members of the Legislative Council should be equal in number, and that the unofficial members should be elected. The right of election, they proposed, should be vested in the ratepayers who paid an annual 25 rupee municipal tax. Like Crawfurd, they proposed that Penang and Singapore should possess separate Legislative Councils, an arrangement which they

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[1] Crawfurd's Suggestion, P.P. 1862, XL, 632.

believed would "conduce to convenience, without increasing the expenses".[1]

The various proposals of the Transfer Group, if carried out, would no doubt have resulted in a better form of government, for the local community would have been represented in the government. But the question of the future government of the Straits Settlements had been slighted by the various departments concerned because of a more immediate problem: overcoming the objections of the Treasury to the proposed transfer.

The principal recommendations made by the Transfer Group were embodied in the Robinson Report, although there were some variations and one major difference. The new constitution recommended by the commission included an Executive Council and a Legislative Council. The Executive Council, besides the Governor, was to include the following officials:

1. Colonial Secretary;
2. Attorney-General;
3. Officer in command of the troops (when the post was not held by the governor);
4. the government agents of Penang and Malacca (lieutenant-governors).

The Legislative Council, as in Ceylon and Hong Kong, should be composed of official and unofficial members. The official members,

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[1] Guthrie and Others to the Colonial Office, 20 April 1861, P.P. 1862, XL, 643, 647.

besides the Governor, should include:

1. Chief Justice of Singapore;
2. Colonial Secretary;
3. Attorney-General;
4. Treasurer;
5. Auditor-General;
6. Chief Engineer.

The unofficial members would be four in number, to be nominated by the Crown, not elected by the ratepayers as proposed, but should fairly represent the opinions of the communities.

The Report proposed that the three settlements of Singapore, Penang and Malacca should be incorporated into one colony, under one Governor, and with one Legislative Council. This was a realistic arrangement, because, as the Report pointed out, the conditions and interests of the three settlements were identical. Moreover, from the financial point of view, Malacca and Penang were not self-supporting.[1]

It is obvious that the recommendations of the Report were in substance those favoured by the Transfer Group, with the exception of the question as to whether the three settlements should be brought under one single government and whether the unofficial members should be elected or not. Thus the Robinson commission helped to give the proposals of the "local parties" an official status.

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[1] The Robinson Report, in P.P.1866,LII,698-699.

A bill to provide for the new government of the Straits Settlements was introduced into the House of Commons on 6 June 1866 and passed on 10 August 1866 without debate. By this act the Straits Settlements ceased to be part of the Indian territories and were placed under the British Government as part of the colonial possessions of the Crown. The new government was officially inaugurated on 1 April 1867.[1] The fight for the transfer had been won at last.

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[1] Hansard, 3rd. ser., vol. CLXXXIII (1866), 1920; also Buckley, Anecdotal History, 780.

Chapter V: The Temporary Success of the Imperial Policy of Non-intervention in the Malay States, 1867-1872

The transfer of 1867 thus placed the Straits Settlements under the direct administration and vigilant protection of the Imperial Government which, unlike the Indian Government, had evinced a more attentive and responsive attitude to their needs and wishes. What the supporters of the transfer actually wanted to bring about was a reformed government, to be introduced as soon as the administrative change was effected. The new government that was expected to be formed involved two major changes. Internally, the new government would be enlarged and streamlined by providing it with an Executive Council as well as a Legislative Council, and the local community should have representation in the latter body. Externally, it was frequently requested that the status of the Straits Government should be enhanced by giving the governor greater powers to carry out an active policy towards the native states, particularly the Malay states, and to improve British trade and increase British influence in the area. In other words, more of the initiative in handling the Colony's external relations should rest on the local authority rather than with the distant authorities in London.

The Straits community was delighted to know that the Imperial Government had agreed to the transfer, even though rather belatedly. And internal constitutional changes were duly effected when the Straits Settlements became a Crown colony. The newly formed Executive Council included the new governor, Sir Harry St. George Ord, the two lieutenant-governors, Archibald E. H. Anson (at Penang) and William Cairns (at Malacca), the Chief Justice (Sir Peter Benson Maxwell), the Colonial Secretary (Ronald Macpherson), the Attorney-General (Thomas Bradell),

the Treasurer (W. W. Willans), the Auditor (John Irving) and the Colonial Engineer (J. A. F. McNair).[1]

The proposed Legislative Council was also brought into being. On 3 April 1867, two days after Governor Ord was sworn in, the unofficial members were nominated by the Governor. They were: W. H. M. Read, partner in A. L. Johnston & Co., and Chairman of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce; F. T. Brown, "head of one of the oldest and wealthiest firms at Penang" and perhaps "the largest landholder in the Straits"; Thomas Scott, senior resident partner in Guthrie & co.; Dr. R.Little,as a "representative of the agricultural interest"; and C. H. H. Wilsone, captain of the Singapore Volunteers.[2] The selection of the unofficial members appeared to be representative of the various mercantile interests in the Colony. Later, the following were appointed: W. R. Scott (1869), W. Adamson (1869), Hoo Ah Kay (1870), J. J. Greenshields (1871) and Thomas Shelford (1872).[3]

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[1] C. N. Parkinson, British Intervention in Malaya, 1867-77 (Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1960), 18; W. Makepeace, G. E. Brooke and R. Bradell, One Hundred Years of Singapore (London: John Murray, 1921), 149. R. Macpherson died in 1869 and was succeeded by James Wheeler Woodford Birch, who was then government agent of the Eastern Province of Ceylon.

[2] Parkinson, British Intervention, 19-20. The Colonial Office wanted 10 names from which to choose five; the other five names submitted by Ord were:
J. Weis (partner in W. Spottiswoode & co.), L. Nairne (a Penang planter), G. Lipscombe (senior resident partner in Boustead & Co.), J. F. Crockett (Singapore representative of Jardine, Matheson & Co.) and Charles Dunlop (senior resident partner in Maclaine, Fraser & Co.).

[3] Makepeace, et. al., One Hundred Years of Singapore, 149-151.

The composition of the Executive and Legislative Councils was in accordance with the recommendations of the Robinson Report. The presence of representatives of the local community as unofficial members undoubtedly gave greater weight to their opinions. Although they were in a minority, their opinions were not to be taken lightly. As the new Colonial Secretary Lord Carnarvon stressed emphatically in his instructions to Ord in 1867, "the fullest possible latitude" must be allowed to the unofficial members "in discussing and voting upon all questions brought before the Council, and when they are absolutely unanimous, great deference should be paid to their opinions, especially in regard to all new ideas of expenditure and taxation".[1] That deference would be paid them on questions of expenditure and taxation was quite natural. As we have pointed out, one of the reasons that inspired the movement for the transfer was the various attempts of the Indian Government to tax the trade and shipping of the Colony without consulting local opinion.

However, the Straits community suffered at least one disappointment: its demand that the new governor possess greater power in conducting external affairs was not conceded.

One of the grievances complained of in the petition of 1858 was that no effort had ever been made by the Straits Government to cultivate friendly relations with the Malay states, which could be attained by a

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[1] Carnarvon to Ord, 2 February 1867, quoted in Parkinson, British Intervention, 17.

slight exertion of influence on the part of the governor.[1] Although this subject did not enter the debates on the proposed transfer in the House of Commons in 1858, it turned out, however, to be an important point in the debates in the House of Lords in the following year. Lord Stanley of Alderley, who presented a petition from the Singapore merchants to the House of Lords in support of the transfer, echoed the demand of the petition:

> a governor of Singapore and of the Straits Settlements might be appointed, with extended powers similar to those of the Governor of Hong Kong, and the Superintendent of British trade in China ... (who) should be enabled to negotiate treaties with the native Powers for the extension of our trade and to see that our engagements with the Dutch and other powers in those seas were duly observed.[2]

He added that this was "imperatively necessary for the safe protection of British trade in the (Malay) Archipelago". This demand, if accepted, would have amounted to turning the Straits Governor into the diplomatic representative and trade commissioner of the British Government in the area, a measure the Imperial Government was not very enthusiastic about. Carnarvon, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, avoided the question in his reply.[3] However, the position of the Government was amply indicated in the former Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey's revealing observations on the issue. He agreed that Singapore was of "extreme importance" and it was necessary to watch over its interests, but he

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[1] See above p.36.

[2] Hansard, 3rd ser., vol. CLII (1859), 1602.

[3] Ibid., 1605-06.

counselled caution in extending the governor's power. Speaking from his own experience as Colonial Secretary, he held the view that:

> Great caution would be observed in extending the power of the Governor of that Settlement (Singapore) to enter into treaties with native powers. The whole of his experience led him to the conclusion that nothing was more dangerous than to enter into diplomatic relations with those barbarous powers, and he thought the Governor of Singapore ought not to be entrusted with powers of that kind, except under very stringent restrictions.[1]

Grey was of course not speaking in the capacity of Colonial Secretary, therefore his opinions could not be taken as representing the official stand of the British Government. But, because of his past association with the Colonial Office and the weight his opinions might carry with the Government, his observations could at least be taken as reflecting the thinking of the Colonial Office.

Here again was an indication that the needs and opinions of the colonists did not coincide with those of the Imperial Government. While the Straits merchants wished to strengthen the hand of the Governor by giving him more leverage in dealing with the native states, the Imperial Government frowned upon such a move lest it be involved in disputes with the native states, disputes that might well arise from concluding treaties with them, for the native states broke treaties as lightly as they entered into them. This conflict between imperial and colonial needs was to become more clearly underscored in subsequent years when the question of extending the Governor's power was continually raised.

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[1] Hansard, 3rd. ser. vol. CLII (1859), 1608.

In 1861 the Transfer Group, mistakenly expecting that the transfer was within reach, demanded that the power of the new governor be substantially extended. Like the earlier demand in the House of Lords, the demand was now put forward in specific terms and in relation to the political and commercial situation in the Malay Archipelago. Crawfurd suggested that the Governor of Singapore and the lieutenant-governor of Malacca would, after the transfer, "naturally be the agents of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs with native princes". These would include the chiefs of the Malayan Peninsula, some of those of eastern Sumatra, and perhaps the king of Cochin-China, but excluding those states subject to the authority of the Dutch and those where the British Government had consuls.[1] The Singapore Chamber of Commerce suggested even greater powers for the governor. In addition to his ordinary duties, the Governor

> should exercise the function of Her Majesty's commissioner and Superintendent of British trade in the Indian (Malay) Archipelago and adjacent countries, with power to enter engagements with native powers, and having jurisdiction over the British consuls in Netherlands, India, Borneo, Siam, Cochin-China, & c.[2]

Furthermore, Read and other Singapore merchants wanted the Straits Governor to be appointed Britain's commissioner and superintendent of trade in the Malay Archipelago, accredited with "full powers" not

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[1] Crawfurd's Suggestions, in P.P. 1862, XL, 632-33.

[2] Singapore Chamber of Commerce: Memorandum on the Revenue and Expenditure of the Straits Settlements, April 1861, in P.P. 1862, XL, 624.

only to treat with the native chiefs, but also to negotiate with the other European powers so that "British interests may be maintained in their integrity, and that civilization and Christianity may be largely promoted." [1]

The Straits Governor, as the representative of the Governor-General of India, had already possessed the authority to deal with the native states. The importance and expediency of this practice was fully realized and appreciated in the Straits, as the memorial of Guthrie and others to Newcastle shows:

> It has always devolved upon the Governor of the Straits Settlements to give effect to the policy of the Supreme Government, with regard to the neighbouring native states, whenever occasion arose either for remonstrance or more active interference, and the Local Government (in Singapore) has more than once, on its own view, claimed the right to an authoritative voice in the settlement of disputes between the minor states of the Peninsula. Its arbitrament and decisions on such occasions has (have) always been effectual, and there can be no doubt that the English name and government are treated throughout the Peninsula with the utmost deference and respect... .[2]

It was thus natural that the mercantile community, fully aware of the importance of this practice, wished to see it maintained and extended. They were concerned that the Foreign Office might, after the transfer, take over full responsibility for the Colony's external affairs. They urged therefore that it was

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[1] W.H.Read and Others to Newcastle, 30 June 1861, in P.P.1862, XL,658.

[2] A.Guthrie and Others to Newcastle, 20 April 1861, in P.P.1862, XL, 644.

> ... of the greatest importance to the commerce of the Straits Settlements, and to the welfare of the native states, in no way to abridge the political authority which has heretofore been exercised by the Local Government in the Straits, or to do anything to diminish its credit and influence with the native chiefs of the Peninsula, as well as with the Rajah of Acheen (in Sumatra) and Cambodia, ...[1]

However, these repeated demands of the colonists failed at the time to draw an immediate response from either the India Office or the Colonial Office. The Robinson Report, which first brought the question to the fore, recognised the Indian practice by which the governor was allowed greater freedom in conducting external relations with the Malay states:

> The Governor of the Straits Settlements ... is at present, in his capacity as the representative of the Governor-General of India, required to conduct all political relations with the chiefs of the neighbouring states in the Malayan Peninsula, and the island of Sumatra, at which there may be no British resident agent. With many of these states there are British treaties and engagements, and with all there is commercial intercourse. It is the Governor's duty to guard against any infringement of those engagements, and to secure facilities for commerce as well as protection for British subjects.[2]

The Report fully supported the demand of Guthrie and others that the governor's power not be reduced, citing their memorial to this effect.[3]

In spite of repeated requests and the full support of the Robinson Report, the question of the governor's powers was still not brought into the negotiations between the departments. The more immediate

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[1] A. Guthrie and Others to Newcastle, 20 April 1861, in P.P. 1862, XL, 644.

[2] The Robinson Report, in P.P. 1866, LII, 699-700.

[3] The passage was quoted in the Report, p. 700.

question which had to be solved first, such as the financial arrangements, had overshadowed the negotiations from the beginning. Even the Transfer Group itself concentrated its efforts in demonstrating to the Treasury that the Straits Settlements were virtually self-supporting financially. All the memoranda presented to the home authorities after 1861 were silent about the question of the governor's powers.

When the Straits Settlements finally became a Crown colony in 1867, the nature and extent of the governor's powers were still an open question, for the Colonial Office had not come to any definite decision yet. Therefore, the movement for the transfer could be seen only as a partial success. Nevertheless, the Imperial Government's approval of the proposed transfer might have been taken by the Transfer Group to mean that their demand that the governor's powers should be increased was also approved. This false impression was soon dispelled when the new governor attempted to deal with the Malay states entirely on his own initiative. We may note here that the Old Singaporeans in London had formed themselves into the Straits Settlements Association in January 1868. The President was John Crawfurd, who died later that year and was succeeded by Edward Horsman. Branches were also organised in the

Straits Settlements; the chairman of the Singapore branch was W. H. Read.[1]

To Governor Ord the Legislative Council was very much a sore subject because he did not get along well with the unofficial members.[2] He was disliked by the mercantile community from the day he was sworn

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[1] The Straits Settlements Association, whose purpose was the promotion of the interests of the Straits Settlements, was formed on 31 January 1868 in London. Its vice-presidents were: Colonel W. Gray, S. Waterhouse, Sir James Elphinstone (who once had a plantation in Penang), J. H. Burke, Jacob Bright, G. G. Nicol, R. N. Fowler, T. A. Mitchell and E. Haveland. All were M. P.s except Nicol.
The executive committee was as follows:
Chairman: William Napier.
Deputy Chairman: James Guthrie.
Hon. Secretary: P. F. Tidman.
Committee: Edward Boustead, John Harvey, James Fraser, H. M. Simons, Jonathan Padday, W. Mactaggart, E. J. Leveson, J. J. Greenshields, W. W. Shaw, W. Paterson.
See Makepeace, One Hundred Years of Singapore, 297-298.
Singapore branch executive (formed on 20 March 1868)
Chairman: W. H. Read; deputy chairman: W. Adamson.
Committee: R. Padday, J. Cameron, O. Mooyer, J. D. Vaughan, J. Young, J. S. Atchison, G. H. Reme.
Secretary: J. S. Atchison.
Penang branch (formed on 28 April 1868):
Chairman: L. Naine.
Secretary: Stuart Heriot.
Committee: J. Allan, A. Gentle, H. J. D. Padday, S. Heriot.
See Makepeace, One Hundred Years of Singapore, 298.

[2] Sir Harry St. George Ord (1819-1885), graduate of the Royal military Academy at Woolwich; became Major-General of the Royal Engineers; served in the West Indies (1840-46); lieutenant-governor of Dominica (1857-60); governor of the Bermudas (1860-66). He served as the Straits Governor from 1867 to 1873, then as Governor of South Australia, 1877-79.
DNB, XIV, 1130-31.

in because of his presumptuous attitude towards them.[1] His decision to spend money on a new government house made him even more unpopular.[2] Whatever his disagreements with the powerful local merchants, Ord did not fail to pursue a vigorous policy towards the Malay states. A few months after his assumption of office he turned his attention to the Peninsula.

Ord realised that in 1867 the Malayan Peninsula was already essentially a British sphere of influence. In the 1820s the Dutch were excluded from the Peninsula and Siamese influence halted. The Straits Government had secured commercial and alliance treaties with Perak and Selangor and freedom of trade with Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu, although the last three states remained tributary to Siam. Johore, an independent state in theory, was virtually controlled by the Straits Government. There was no treaty relationship with Pahang. But it was once a dependency of the now defunct Johore sultanate, therefore the Straits Government could influence its ruler, styled Bendahara, through the Temenggong of Johore. Trade treaties were also concluded with the smaller states in Negri Sembilan (a confederacy of nine states on the west coast).[3]

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[1] Buckley, Anecdotal History, 781, describes somewhat amusingly the unfavourable impression Ord created among the local community during the ceremony of inauguration, and the favourable impression of the popular Admiral Henry Kepple, a staunch supporter of Singapore.

[2] Parkinson, British Intervention, 20-32; Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 31-33; Buckley, Anecdotal History, 785. Ord was at odds with the chief justice over the question whether the governor had the right to be styled "His Excellency".

[3] See above pp. 15-17.

This was in the barest outline the position in the Malayan Peninsula in 1867. That the Colonial Office refused to give the Straits Governor full powers in dealing with the Malay states was obvious when it rejected Ord's treaty with Kedah signed in 1867. The energetic and experienced Governor, acting on his own judgement and the advice of the local officials, but without instructions from London, negotiated the treaty in order to settle some outstanding disputes. The disputes involved the boundary between Province Wellesley (part of Penang territory situated on the Peninsula) and Kedah, the duties on provisions imported into Province Wellesley from Kedah, and the establishment of gambling houses in the Kedah border region.[1]

Ord's proceedings here involved the important question of whether he had the power to negotiate and conclude treaties with the Malay states on behalf of the British Government, especially in this case where Kedah was tributary to Siam. Apparently aware that he might have exceeded his authority, Ord wrote to the Colonial Office to enquire with what diplomatic power the Straits Governor was entrusted. The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, who had succeeded Carnarvon in March 1867, rejected Ord's treaty with Kedah on the grounds that the governor was not entrusted with any such power and that the treaty was "irregular".[2]

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[1] Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 56-58.

[2] Grenville, Richard, 3rd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos (1823-1889), was Lord President of the Council from July 1866 to March 1867 when he succeeded Carnarvon as the Colonial Secretary until December 1868 when the Conservative Derby ministry resigned. DNB, VIII, 574-5.

The Colonial Secretary then clearly laid down the nature and extent of the Governor's powers. Although Buckingham was "not fully aware to what extent the governor of the Straits Settlements while under the government of India was authorized, or had been allowed, to contract, cancel, or modify treaties with neighbouring states without the express sanction of that Government", he pointed out that in Ord's case, "neither your commission as Governor of the Straits Settlements nor any subsequent instructions from Her Majesty, convey to you any such authority". He reminded Ord that "the function of contracting or modifying such treaties on behalf of Her Majesty, whether provisionally or otherwise, is one which prima facie belongs to the diplomatic representatives of Her Majesty". Therefore Buckingham considered that the proposed treaty with Kedah was "in excess of the powers hitherto vested in you". These observations were not intended to convey any censure on the Governor for the course he had taken, but were intended to ensure regularity in the matter in future.[1]

The same despatch added that the Straits Governor's relations with the Dutch colonies in the neighbourhood would "differ little" from those between the Governors of other British colonies, such as British Guiana, Gambia, or the Gold Coast and those of other European colonies; in other words, the Foreign Office was the proper channel for the Straits Settlements's relations with the Dutch colonies. With

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[1] Buckingham and Chandos to Ord, 22 April 1868, Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Certain Native States in the Malay Peninsula, P.P. 1874, XLV (in continuation of Command Paper 465 of 1872), (hereafter cited as P.P. 1874, XLV), 144-145.

regard to the native states, Ord possessed a "larger authority". However, Ord was reminded that the relations with the native states "may at any time become of serious importance", and that the Imperial Government was "bound to exercise a vigilant and effective control". Although circumstances might frequently arise in which Ord might have "to act absolutely" in his own judgement, it was "generally undesirable" that he should enter into formal negotiations with native states, still less that he should conclude any agreement with them "except in pursuance of an object, or a policy considered and approved by Her Majesty's Government". Any such agreement should be "strictly provisional", and "liable to be disallowed" by the British Government until embodied in a formal treaty by the Government.[1] The purpose of refusing the Straits governor greater authority was to avoid involvements in Malay politics, which the British Government feared would likely arise. But the merchants disagreed with the policy of the Colonial Office; Read wrote to Buckingham, in May 1868, that it was desirable to have treaties with the native states and that he did not apprehend any political complications in that.[2]

Although the nature of the "larger authority" was not specifically defined and the reasons for it not given in Buckingham's important despatch, it obviously derived from the practice developed during the

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[1] Buckingham and Chandos to Ord, 22 April 1868, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 145.

[2] Read to Buckingham, 4 May 1868, quoted in Parkinson, British Intervention, 39.

administration of the Government of India, a practice which allowed the Governor to conduct external relations in a flexible manner and with considerable initiative. Nevertheless, the demand that the Straits Governor be appointed commissioner and superintendent of trade in the area, possessing wide power to negotiate treaties with the native and European powers, was rejected. The Imperial Government wanted to have the final say in matters that were of "serious importance". Thus the Colonial Office was in fact pursuing a mixed policy: on the one hand, it continued the Indian practice under which the Governor enjoyed some latitude; on the other hand, it wished to uphold imperial control over the Colony's external relations. This policy tended to cause conflicts between London and Singapore for it was not easy to draw a clear line of division between the two aspects of the policy. It was not clear what questions or what measures adopted by the Straits Government were to be considered of "serious importance". Probably, if the dealings of the Straits Government with the Malay states involved imperial commitments, then they would be considered important issues.

It may be noted, however, that Ord's treaty was not thrown out altogether. The Colonial Office rejected the treaty as it stood more because of the procedure by which it was made rather than because of its contents. It was considered "irregular" because the Colonial Office held that it should have been signed by British diplomatic representatives, and by Siamese officials, since Kedah was tributary to Siam. The

substance of the agreement was later incorporated in a treaty with Siam, properly signed on 6 May 1869 at Bangkok.[1]

The Imperial Government was also opposed to further acquisition of territory in the Malayan Peninsula. A treaty signed in 1826 between Perak and the Straits Government, by which the former ceded the island called "Pulo Dinding Pangkor" to the latter, had never been carried out. Now Governor Ord wished to carry out the cession. Negotiations began towards the end of 1867 between Colonel Anson, Lieutenant-governor of Penang, and the Perak chiefs. It came to nothing after Ord's personal visit to Perak had scared the Sultan who refused to meet the Governor. Ord did not report immediately his proceedings to the Colonial Office probably because he believed he had acted within his authority. But his actions caused criticism in London, and he was alleged to have embarked upon a policy of territorial expansion. The criticism came from Henry Stanley (later Lord Stanley of Alderley) who was a former official in the Foreign Office and had previously visited Singapore and several Malay states.[2] The Derby ministry had resigned in December 1868 and Gladstone had formed a new government. Stanley wrote to Lord Granville, now Gladstone's Colonial Secretary (1868-70), on 26 April 1869,

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[1] See Maxwell, Treaties and Engagements, 82-85 for the treaty and the Note explaining the reason for the Colonial Office's rejection.

[2] Stanley, Henry Edward John (1827-1903), 3rd. Baron Stanley of Alderley, served in the Foreign Office as Palmerston's precis writer; later held a junior consular position in the Near East; was a prominent member of the Asiatic and Hakluyt Societies. DNB, Vol. III (20th Century), 383-4. He visited Singapore and was said to be a Muslim, Buckley, Anecdotal History, 723.

to voice his objections to Ord's attempts to claim territory from Perak.[1] He informed Granville that the Straits Government was claiming not only the island of Pulo Dinding ceded in 1826 to the Straits Government by Perak, but also a hill inland named Pangkor Darat, on the ground that "at high tide this hill was surrounded by water which flows into a channel or rivulet". He alleged, in addition, that the Straits Government was also trying to acquire from Perak "an alluvial plain beyond Pangkor Darat, and perhaps some hills beyond which contain tin". Stanley took strong exception to Ord's scheme for two reasons. First, he thought that the acquisition would be costly to the Colony since it might lead to "petty wars, brigandage, and bloodshed". Secondly, the acquisition would have the effect of throwing "the Malay still more into the hands of the Siamese", and raising among the Malays "suspicion of the intentions and good faith of the British Government". Even if Pulo Dinding was an acquisition worth making, he argued, the right to do so could not be made out, for he regarded the treaty of 1826 as a "dead letter" - it had been rejected by the Indian Government, and the cession was never acted upon.[2]

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[1] Leveson-Gower, Granville George, 2nd. Earl Granville, (1815-1891), served in the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade before admitted in 1851 to Russell's cabinet; president of the council (1852-54); 1859-66; Colonial Secretary, 1868-70; transferred to the Foreign Office to succeed Lord Clarendon and held the position until 1874. DNB, XI, 1029-31.

[2] Henry Stanley to Granville, 26 April 1869, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 136-7. For the cession of 1826, see Maxwell and Gibson, Treaties and Engagements, 23; also Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 54-55.

Granville responded swiftly to these charges by requesting Ord to report to him on the subject. The Governor denied the allegations and stated that he had merely been trying to ascertain the actual geographical position of the places referred to in the cession.[1] Granville, in his reply, was "glad to learn that you had no intention of acquiring new or occupying disputed territory without specific instructions to that effect from the Secretary of State", and stated unequivocally that he "should not be disposed to approve of any proceedings which would extend the responsibilities" of the British Government in the native states adjacent to the Colony.[2] The matter was dropped.[3]

Granville's policy here was probably influenced by the permanent Under-Secretary Sir Frederic Rogers, who held the position from 1859 to 1871.[4] Rogers was very influential in the Colonial Office; as an Australian politician, George Higinbotham, said in 1869, Rogers had

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[1] Granville to Ord, 5 May 1869, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 136; Ord to Granville, 14 July 1869, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 137-8.

[2] Granville to Ord, 10 September 1869, P.P. 1874, XLV, 139.

[3] Ord to Kimberley, 23 February 1870, P.P. 1874, XLV, 139.

[4] See above p. 65 footnote 2 for a biographical note on Rogers; for his belief that the colonies would separate ultimately from the mother country, see G. Bennett (ed), The Concept of Empire, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 2nd, ed. 1962), 213-4. After his retirement from the Colonial Office he was critical of the new Malayan policy adopted after 1874, see Hansard, 3rd. ser., CCXXX (1876), 845-6.

governed the whole of the colonies for the previous ten years.[1] Rogers was apparently well aware of the wishes or the demands of the Straits community with respect to expanding British influence into the Malayan Peninsula for he was one of the principal officials responsible for the negotiations that led to the transfer in 1867. He was well aware of the forces at work in the colonies, remarking in 1868:

> Settlers and merchants are always ready to call for operations of which they are to reap the benefits in the shape of security of commerce etc., and government to bear the cost in the way of military proceedings, embassies etc. And Governors are only too apt to fall in with a policy which gives interest and importance to their proceedings.[2]

There was a close accord between Gladstone, Granville and Rogers. Rogers was a school-fellow of Gladstone at Eton and Oxford, and it was the latter who offered the former his first appointment in the Colonial Office in 1846. Granville was "an able parliamentary leader and possessed of political acumen", but he was "a very easy-going departmental minister" who "made very few corrections of the despatches drafted by Rogers". The relations between Granville and Rogers were so close that when the latter retired in 1871 from the Colonial Office, Granville offered him the position of under-secretary for the Foreign Office.[3]

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[1] DNB, XVIII, 120.

[2] Quoted in H. L. Hall, The Colonial Office, A History (London, 1937), 240.

[3] For this close relationship between the three, see E. Drus, "The Colonial Office and the Annexation of Fiji", The Royal Historical Society, (Transactions), 4th ser. XXXII (1950), 92.

The policy pursued by the Colonial Office after 1867 with respect to the Malay states resulted from Britain's general colonial and foreign policy. Since the death of Palmerston in 1865, Britain's policy towards Europe was one of non-intervention and isolation. Even during the short ministry of Lord John Russell (1865-66) who succeeded Palmerston as Prime Minister, there were signs of a reaction against Palmerston's system of intervention, a reaction which became more pronounced during the Derby ministry (1866-68).[1] This was partly due to a "natural reaction against the excessive habits of intervention practised by Palmerston the bully and Russell the busybody", and partly due to the fact that the country was very much preoccupied with the question of parliamentary reform.[2]

By the time Gladstone formed his first ministry in December 1868, non-intervention had become more firmly established as a principle of Britain's foreign policy. It was during his ministry that the policy of withdrawing imperial troops from the colonies reached its climax. Although this policy was applied primarily to the self-governing settlement colonies, it was accompanied by resistance by the Imperial Government to further increases in colonial territory elsewhere. Nevertheless, the forces at work on the frontiers of the Empire, in the remote

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[1] H. Temperley and L. M. Penson, Foundations of British Foreign Policy (Cambridge University Press, 1938), 305-06; R. W. Seton-Watson, Britain in Europe, 1789-1914, (Cambridge University Press, 1937), chapter XII: "Non-intervention and Isolation".

[2] Seton-Watson, Britain in Europe, 477.

tropical regions of the Malayan Peninsula, as elsewhere, continued to work against the policy of the Imperial Government.[1]

When Lord Kimberley succeeded Granville in July 1870, the Straits Government was still restrained from interfering in the internal affairs of the Malay states.[2] But demands for an active policy continued to reach London, and soon after, in 1871, Kimberley was urged for the first time by the Straits Government to adopt a more active policy towards the Malay states. The new Colonial Secretary, however, refused to consent to the proposals presented to him, upholding the principles laid down by his predecessor.

Governor Ord was absent on leave from March 1871 to the following March, and the lieutenant-governor of Penang, Colonel Anson, was appointed Acting Governor with the title "Administrator".[3] He appointed a committee

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[1] Paul Knaplund, Gladstone's Foreign Policy (London: Frank Cass, 1970 reprint), chapter III: "The First Ministry", 1868-1874; Temperley and Penson, British Foreign Policy, 317; Schuyler, 263-267.

[2] Wodehouse, John, 1st Earl of Kimberley (1826-1902) was educated at Eton and Oxford. He became Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the ministry of Lord Aberdeen and in Palmerston's first ministry (1852-56). In 1856 he was British minister at St. Petersburg, later became Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1859 to 1861 in Palmerston's second administration; Under-Secretary of State for India for a few months in 1864, then became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1864-1866. When Gladstone formed his first ministry in December 1868, Kimberley became Lord Privy Seal. In July 1870 when Lord Granville became Foreign Secretary, Kimberley succeeded him at the Colonial Office until 1874. He was again Gladstone's Colonial Secretary 1880-1882; Indian Secretary, 1882-1885, 1886, 1892-1894, and Foreign Secretary 1894-1895. DNB (Twentieth Century), 695-699.

[3] A. E. H. Anson, lieutenant-governor of Penang since 1867, was popular in the Colony for he was more receptive to the demand for British intervention in the Malayan Peninsula. See Parkinson, British Intervention, 18, 46-47.

to inquire into and report on the relations of the Colony with the native states, because of the "very unsatisfactory state" of the relations with all these states, and the injury to trade which was "the natural result", as he later explained to the Colonial Secretary. The committee, which was composed of A. N. Birch (acting lieutenant-governor of Penang), Major J. A. F. McNair (the colonial engineer), and George Robinson (commander and senior naval officer, Straits division of the China station), recommended that "it would be desirable that a commission of officers of rank should visit Achin, Perak, and the other states", and that "there should be frequent communication between this (the Straits) Government and those native states". Colonel Anson agreed with the committee on this suggestion, but he did not consider it feasible to appoint "resident officers" for these states, because he did not think that the Straits Legislative Council would be prepared to pay their salaries, nor would the native governments. He also felt it was not propitious to do so due to "the barbarous state of these countries". Instead, Anson presented a modified proposal. He considered that it would be "advisable to have a qualified officer as a Political Agent, whose duty it would be to visit these states, frequently, either in a man-of-war or in the Colonial Government's steamer, and who might also be employed to carry on all correspondence with them". He also agreed with the committee that, if possible, it would be advisable to make a new treaty with Perak in order to retain the Dinding Island (Pulo Dinding Pangkor), hoping that some day it would be made "the centre of civilization for Perak, as well as the depot for

all the produce of the interior of that country, and at the same time it would enable us to suppress piracy, and protect the trade at the mouth of the Dinding and Perak rivers." [1]

The report of Anson's committee was significant because it was the first official report from the Straits Government since 1867 to present specific measures to the Colonial Office to deal with the Malay states, and also because the Colonial Office had earlier specifically instructed Colonel Anson not to initiate or suggest such changes. But on the spot, Anson's proposals were not novel at all. Since at least 1844 it had become a recurring topic in the Singapore newspapers to suggest an active policy with respect to the Malay states. Many accounts had been published describing the abundant natural resources in the Malayan Peninsula which still remained undeveloped and their potential benefits to the trade of the Colony and British industry as well as to the native people themselves. These accounts expressed disappointment with the indifferent attitude of the Indian Government in this respect, and complained of the unstable, disorderly and insecure conditions in the Malayan Peninsula, proposing to control them either by direct annexation or indirect rule.[2] But these proposals did not lead to action. And now Anson's recommendations also came to nothing because the Imperial Government resisted this forward policy.

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[1] Anson to Kimberley, 3 June 1871, in P.P. 1874,XLV, 139-140.

[2] Quoted in Buckley, Anecdotal History, 421-422, 503, 575, 584-585, 722-723. The Singapore Free Press, started in 1835, was the most influential of the Straits papers. It was praised as being "among the ablest and most influential journals in the East." Ibid., 437-438.

To the disappointment of Anson, Kimberley rejected his proposals. The Colonial Secretary told him that he did not "perceive that there was any urgent necessity for an immediate examination into the points submitted to the Committee", although he was quite aware that the relations with those Malay states were of "commercial and political importance". Reminding Anson of Granville's despatch of 10 September 1869, Kimberley reiterated that "any proceedings which would extend the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government in the neighbourhood of the Straits Settlements would not be approved". In fact, as Anson was further reminded, Kimberley had informed him in a previous despatch that he was not to "initiate any proposal as to changes in our relations with native states without instructions from home". Kimberley added that "large and delicate questions of policy should not be entered upon in the Governor's absence", except in case of emergency.[1]

Anson responded by further explaining the reasons that induced him to take such steps. He said that in Perak, where the sultan had recently died, the country was reported to be in "a state of anarchy"; and the British territories were likely to be affected because of persons from Perak entering Province Wellesley, and creating disturbances there. In addition, there were "the outstanding complaints of the traders of Penang against some of the Rajahs in Achin (in Sumatra) and in Perak. They were constantly urging the Straits Government to assist them in settling their complaints."[2] Kimberley received the explanations without

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[1] Kimberley to Anson, 26 August 1871, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 140-141.

[2] Anson to Kimberley, 19 October 1871, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 141.

making any further comments.[1] While the imperial policy was upheld, conditions in the Colony, or rather in the Malayan Peninsula, were making for a change.

The political imbroglios in the Malay states that prompted Colonel Anson to initiate specific measures to cope with them, were apparently the result of a continuous disintegration of the Malay sultanates, a process that may be traced back to the 1840s. The Straits officials had reported frequently on this situation and its impact on the stability and trade of the area.[2] On the west coast of the Peninsula the disturbances had existed for almost a decade when the Anson committee was appointed in 1871. Perak and Selangor, two major states, were the scenes of rampant conflicts. In Selangor, rival rajas were fighting among themselves for political control and the right to collect duties on tin because the reigning sultan Abdul Samad was losing control over them. The principal rivals in the struggle were Tenku Kudin and Raja Mahdi. Tenku Kudin, who was brother of the Sultan of Kedah, married a daughter of Sultan Samad and was appointed Viceroy of Selangor by the Sultan in 1868. Raja Madhi was the ruler of the district of Klang, then one of the centres of tin mining. From 1866 on frequent conflicts broke out between

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[1] Kimberley to Anson, 4 December 1871, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 142; see also Parkinson, British Intervention, 46-47; Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 82-85.

[2] For Malay politics in the 1840s, see Mills, British Malaya, 175-176; particularly p. 176 for Blundell's (then resident councillor at Malacca) report of 1847 on the political disorders.

the factions led by Kudin and Madhi over the right to collect duties on tin. With the continuation of the quarrel the neighbouring states of Pahang and Sungei Ujong were also drawn into the imbroglios. In 1872 the ruler of Pahang, the Bendahara Wan Ahmad, was sending Pahang men to assist his friend Tenku Kudin, while some of the chiefs in Sungei Ujong were supporting Madhi. The Straits Settlements had commercial connections with Selangor: the produce of its tin mines, mostly operated by the Chinese and Malays jointly, was exported to Malacca and Singapore. Therefore the political chaos in Selangor was likely to involve the British in the Straits.[1]

But the situation appeared to be more serious in Perak, where the disputes among the Malay rajas over the succession to Sultan Ali, who died in May 1871, were further complicated by the turbulent Chinese tin miners. The disputed succession arose when Ismail was elected Sultan over Abdullah. According to Malay law, Abdullah, who held the position of Raja Muda (Viceroy), should have succeeded the late Sultan Ali; also according to the Malay law, when the sultan died the new sultan should have been installed at his funeral. But Abdullah was absent at the late Sultan's funeral; consequently, Ismail, who was supported by

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[1] For contemporary accounts of Malay politics, see Governor Ord's political reports, 6 November 1872, 10 July 1873, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 1-4 and 28-30; C. J. Irving (auditor-general): Memorandum Relative to the Disturbances on the Territory of Selangor, July 1871; C. J. Irving to Anson, July 1871; J. W. Birch (colonial secretary) to Anson, 26 July 1871, in Papers Relating to Recent Proceedings at Selangore, P.P. 1872, LXX (C-475) (hereafter cited as P.P. 1872, LXX), 11-13, 24-28; and 20-23 respectively. See Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 66-77.

the powerful and wealthy Orang Kaya Mantri of Larot, was elected Sultan of Perak. After 1860, thousands of Chinese flocked into Perak, particularly to Larot district, from Penang and Province Wellesley, to work in the tin mines. Rival groups of Chinese miners, bringing with them from China their secret societies, fought for mining rights. The most powerful of them were the Ghee Hin and the Hai San with their headquarters in Penang and connections in Singapore. Between 1860 and 1872, four serious outbreaks were reported, involving hundreds and even thousands of men on both sides. The Mantri, who was the ruler of the Larot district and also a high Malay official, sided with one or the other depending on which one was victorious. The most serious and latest outbreak had occurred in February and March 1872. Penang, being the headquarters of both sides, was affected in these factional quarrels, sending arms and ammunition as well as fighting men into Larot and Perak. The conbined result of this fectional fighting and rivalry was that trade with these states was halted.[1]

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[1] See C.J.Irving, Memorandum Relative to the Affairs of Perak, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 126-137; G.W.R.Campbell(Acting Lieutenant-Governor of Penang), Memorandum, 24 October 1872, in P.P.1874,XLV, 16. The best study, so far, of the Malay political system on the eve of British intervention in 1874 is G.M.Gullick, The Indigenous Political System of Western Malaya(London: London University, 1958; 1965 reprint)(in the series of the London School of Economics: monographs on social anthropology), 11-15 for the roots and nature of the conflicts in Selangor and Perak. For the Chinese secret societies, see V.Purcell, The Chinese in Malaya (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 106-108; W.Blythe, The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya(London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 172-184. For a concise account, see Parkinson, British Intervention, p.372, Appendix; see chapters five and six for the details of Chinese involvement in Malay politics in Selangor and Perak; see also Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 77-79.

British involvement was inevitable, especially after the capture of a Chinese junk by pirates. In 1871 Tenku Kudin had driven the Madhi party from Klang and himself become its ruler. In July 1871 the followers of the defeated Madhi were found to be implicated in piracy. A Chinese junk leaving Penang, with 40 passengers and several thousands dollars worth of cargo, was captured on its way to Larot, its crew and passengers killed and cargo taken. Colonel Anson immediately despatched the colonial steamer Pluto to search for the captured junk. The search party was resisted by Madhi followers in Selangor district where the junk was found. The assistance of HMS Rinaldo and the imperial troops at Penang was called for subsequently. The fort at Selangor and the war boats of the Madhi faction were destroyed.[1]

Anson apparently believed that occasional suppression of piracy was not sufficient to prevent its recrudescence, and wished to have stability restored in Selangor. He further persuaded the weak Sultan Samad to give full power to Tenku Kudin to govern the whole territory of Selangor. J. W. W. Birch, the colonial secretary, and John Irving, the auditor, were sent by Anson to conduct the negotiations, on board the Pluto, which was reinforced by HMS Teazer under commander R. W. Blomfield. The mission was successful: Tenku Kudin's position in Selangor was reaffirmed and the Sultan proclaimed Raja Madhi and his two lieutenants

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[1] For the reports on the episode of the junk, see Penang Argus, 1 July 1871, and Penang Gazette, 1 July 1871, in P.P. 1872, LXX, 14-15 and 15-16; also Anson to Kimberley, 14 July 1871, P.P. 1872, LXX, 1-2.

"pirates and outlaws", calling upon his people to assist Kudin and the Straits Government in their capture.[1]

To Kimberley, Anson's proceedings against piracy and his diplomacy in the Malay court of Selangor were satisfactory. It has to be noted that the Straits Government's involvements in the Malay states here stopped short of treaty obligations, and perhaps this was the reason why the Colonial Secretary did not object to them.[2] The Navy had played a considerable role in this episode, but later that year the Admiralty, with Kimberley's concurrence, ordered the Navy not to perform such political duties.[3]

That Kimberley would not go further than occasional intervention was clear, as his response to a fresh demand for British protection in Selangor indicated. There was some vestige of political stability after Tenku Kudin had established his administration in 1871, and the Malacca merchants and traders, Chinese as well as European, increased their investments in Selangor. It was reported that "large sums of money" had been invested in the trade of Selangor, more particularly in tin mines. On the Klang river alone, about 12,000 Chinese miners were

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[1] For the mission of the Teazer, see R. W. Blomfield to Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Kellett, 20 September 1871, in P.P. 1872, LXX, 44-46; Blomfield to Robinson, 6 August 1871, in P.P. 1872, LXX, 40-44; and also the reports of Irving and Birch to Anson; also Parkinson, British Intervention, 55-56 and 62.

[2] Kimberley to Anson, 6 September 1871, P.P. 1872, LXX, 17-18.

[3] Admiralty to the Colonial Office, 16 December 1871; H. Kellett to the Admiralty, 30 October 1871, and Colonial Office to Admiralty, 28 December 1871, in P.P. 1872, LXX, 44, 46 .

employed at the mines; and the yield, which was about 3,000 piculs (1 picul = $133\frac{1}{3}$ lbs) per month, was exported to Malacca, Penang and Singapore. It was reported that during the short administration of Kudin the yield of tin had doubled.[1] But the stability in Selangor was more apparent than real. Opposition to Tenku Kudin still existed, and without a helping hand he could not maintain his position for long, a situation which the commander of the Teazer had pointed out earlier.[2] The Madhi faction, although defeated and driven out of Klang in 1871 was not destroyed, and attempted a comeback. In 1872 fighting broke out again in Selangor, with the Madhi group using Sungei Ujong as some sort of a operational base, and Tenku Kudin seeking help from Pahang.[3]

This caused great concern in the Straits Settlements, and British intervention was again demanded. A petition from the Malacca traders and merchants was forwarded by the Singapore Chamber of Commerce to the Straits Government. The petition, signed by 34 Chinese merchants, complained of the insecurity and loss they had suffered as a result of the renewed fighting in Selangor, and urged the Singapore Chamber of Commerce to "press on the (Straits) Government the necessity of giving Tunku Dia Oodin (Tenku Kudin) an unqualified and hearty support".[4]

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[1] See Petition of the Malacca Traders to the Singapore Chamber of Commerce, 27 July 1872, P.P. 1874, XLV, 5-6.

[2] Blomfield to Kellett, 20 September 1871, in P.P. 1872, LXX, 46.

[3] Parkinson, British Intervention, 62-65, 66-71.

[4] Petition of the Malacca Traders to the Singapore Chamber of Commerce, P.P. 1874, XLV, 5-6.

The Chamber of Commerce urged the Straits Government "to give its early and earnest attention" to the demand.[1]

But the petition received a very disappointing and discouraging reply from Governor Ord who had resumed office in March 1872. Apparently bound by Kimberley's orders to refuse the demand for British intervention, Ord reiterated to the Singapore Chamber of Commerce the principles of "non-intervention". "If traders", Ord warned, "prompted by the prospect of large gain, choose to run the risk of placing their persons and property in the jeopardy which they are aware attends them in these countries under present circumstances, it is impossible for government to be answerable for their protection or that of their property".[2]

Kimberley was satisfied with Ord's handling of the matter, and approved the answer given to the Singapore Chamber of Commerce.[3] On the other hand, the mercantile community of the Colony expressed great regret. Read, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, wrote to the Straits Government to express his strong disagreement with Ord's reply and urged that it was absolutely necessary to adopt "some straight-forward and well-defined policy in dealing with the rulers of various states of the Malay Peninsula".[4]

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[1] J. G. Davidson (secretary of the Chamber of Commerce) to Birch (colonial secretary), 30 July 1872, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 4-5. Parkinson, British Intervention, 65.

[2] See Birch to Davidson, 21 August 1872, P.P. 1874, XLV, 6.

[3] Ord to Kimberley, 6 November 1872, Kimberley to Ord, 28 December 1872, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 1-4 and 7.

[4] Read to Birch, 17 (September ?) 1872, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 6-7; Parkinson, British Intervention, 66.

Since the transfer in 1867, then, the British Government had been repeatedly urged to extend its political influence in the Malayan Peninsula, but the Government had so far been able to restrain the Straits Government from taking initiatives that would probably involve Imperial commitments in the factional conflicts of the Peninsula. It was not the intention of the Imperial Government to increase its responsibility or to give the Straits Governor wide powers to intervene in the Malay states. But clearly also, as can be seen from the foregoing discussion, an alternative policy was being formulated and strongly advocated in the Straits. This appeared most clearly in the recommendations of the Anson committee that a political officer should be appointed to the Malay states, a proposal rejected at the time by Kimberley.

Chapter VI: The Decisive Years, 1873-1874: The Adoption of A New Policy

The Colonial Office under Kimberley had so far managed to restrain the Straits Government from getting involved in the Malay states. But the enterprising individuals at the frontier of the Colony incessantly worked to change this policy. The pressure for British intervention continued to grow, pressure that came primarily from entreprenuers whose activities produced repercussions even in London, as the story of James Guthrie Davidson illustrates.[1]

Davidson was a nephew of James Guthrie who was one of the pioneer merchants in Singapore and who had played a considerable part in the agitation for the transfer.[2] Several years after his arrival in Singapore in 1861, Davidson became the legal adviser, and financial supporter, of Tenku Kudin of Selangor. It was not infrequent then for the Malay rajas to find a friend among the leading merchants in the Colony, and A. L. Johnston, W. H. Read, Tan Kim Ching and Hoo Ah Kay (better known as Mr. Whampoa) were the more prominent examples of them.[3] These wealthy

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[1] J. G. Davidson (1838-91) was appointed British Resident to Selangor in 1875, but resigned in 1877 and returned to his law practice in Singapore. See Buckley, Anecdotal History, 731 and 773; Makepeace, et. al., One Hundred Years of Singapore, vol. 1, 28.

[2] See above p.43 , note 1.

[3] Alexander Laurie Johnston, came to Singapore in 1819 and formed A. L. Johnston & Co., one of the earliest firms; first chairman of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce when it was formed in 1837; commanded great respect among the Malays and Chinese. Buckley, Anecdotal History, 62-63 and passim.

Tan Kim Ching (1829-1892), a leading Singapore Chinese merchant with wide commercial interests, including Siam; consul and special commissioner for Siam; adviser of Sultan Abdullah of Perak in the 1870s. See Ibid., 530 and passim; Song Ong Siong, One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore (1923), 92-93.

Hoo Ah Kay (1816-80), provisioner and shipchandler to HM Navy; consul in Singapore for Russia, China and Japan; one of the first unofficial members of the Legislative Council; created C.M.G. in 1878. Buckley, Anecdotal Hisotry, 658-659; Song, Chinese in Singapore, 51-56.

and powerful merchants in turn became very influential with the Malay chiefs. For instance, in 1867, it was through the good offices of Tan Kim Ching that the Sultan of Kedah was invited to Singapore to negotiate a treaty with Governor Ord.[1]

Davidson and Tenku Kudin decided to launch a joint enterprise in tin-mining. In March 1873 a tin concession was granted by Tenku Kudin to Davidson, probably as security for money advanced to the Tenku. By the terms of the concession, Davidson agreed to organize a company to work the tin mines in Selangor for ten years with a capital of £100,000. In return Tenku Kudin would receive 5% of the gross produce.[2] Subsequently, the Selangor Tin Mining Company was formed. For the smooth operation of the tin mines security and stability were necessary. These conditions did not exist in Selangor because of the resumption of fighting in 1872. The Straits Government was not inclined, or rather was bound to refuse, to extend British protection to Selangor. Davidson was obviously aware of this because he had, as the secretary of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce, forwarded in 1872 the unsuccessful Malacca petition to the Straits Government.[3] Probably because of this, Davidson turned to London.

The London solicitors Lambert, Burgin and Petch approached the Colonial Office in June 1873, on behalf of Davidson, about the subject

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[1] Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 56-57.

[2] The concession, dated 8 March 1873, was printed in P.P. 1874, XLV, 52-55; see also Parkinson, British Intervention, 71-72 and Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 142, 166-168.

[3] See above pp. 150-151.

of British protection in Selangor. The Colonial Office was informed that their client was endeavouring to form a company in London to work the mines, but met in financial circles with the objection that the territory was not within the immediate protection of the British Government, and that there was no assurance of safety for life and property. The Colonial Office was then asked: (1) whether there was any possibility of British protection in Selangor; or (2) whether the British Government would interfere and prevent the company from keeping armed men in Selangor.[1]

The Colonial Office brushed aside the requests. Robert Herbert, who had succeeded Rogers as permanent under-secretary in 1871, stated unequivocally, in his reply, that the British Government did not "interfere in the government of Salangore (Selangor)", and could not "in any way sanction the employment of an armed force by an English company within the Salangore territory". In addition, Herbert gave the usual warning of "do-at-your-own-risk", the same one that the Singapore Chamber of Commerce received from Ord in the previous year.[2]

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[1] Lambert, Burgin and Petch to the Colonial Office, 25 June 1873, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 20-21; Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 166-167.

[2] Robert Herbert to Lambert, Burgin and Petch, 5 July 1873, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 27.

Sir Robert Herbert (1831-1905), educated at Eton and Oxford; once private secretary to Gladstone for a short time; 1860-65 member of the Queensland Legislative Council and its first premier; 1868, assistant secretary at the Board of Trade; in February 1870 entered the Colonial Office as assistant under-secretary; succeeded Rogers in 1871 and held the position until 1892; in retirement, agent-general for Tasmania (1893-96); for a short time adviser of the Sultan of Johore. DNB, (20th Century), II, 253-254.

The tone in Herbert's reply was very much the same as that in Governor Ord's categorical rejection of the Malacca petition in 1872.[1] The Colonial Office's refusal was unmistakeable. But Kimberley, paradoxically, seems to have been convinced of the necessity of British intervention in Selangor, as he revealed three years later. Speaking in the House of Lords on his Malayan policy, Kimberley declared that "no one who studied the actual circumstances of the case could fail to convince himself that a policy of non-intervention was impossible". "When European settlements", he added, "of such importance as those of Penang and Singapore were planted side by side with Malay states, it was impossible for them to avoid exercising great influence either for good or evil on the surrounding population, and with that influence came responsibility". Kimberley referred specifically to the "occurrence of the Chinese riots at Perak", and "the danger to the Native States arising from Europeans obtaining large concessions and employing them to acquire political influence". He considered that these circumstances "rendered our intervention absolutely necessary", and also "rendered it necessary to take the state of the Peninsula into consideration with a view to some change of policy".[2]

"Europeans obtaining large concessions and employing them to acquire political influence" was a statement that referred apparently to Davidson's activities. Kimberley was convinced that the policy of

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[1] See above p. 151.

[2] Hansard, 3rd. ser., CCXXX (1876), 3 July 1876, 843.

non-intervention was impossible, yet the Colonial Office's refusal to intervene in Selangor was unequivocal, as Herbert's reply to Davidson's solicitors indicated. The explanation of this apparent contradiction was that while Kimberley held the view that political influence begot responsibility, and believed that it was necessary to consider a change in policy, he was not sure that Gladstone held the same view. In fact, Kimberley was constrained to a great extent by the requirements of Gladstone in this regard: no Imperial expansion unless there was a desire to be annexed on the part of the native people concerned. This is a point that we shall elaborate on later.

But before long an important message reached the Colonial Office, a message that appeared to be the key which unravelled the whole problem of British protection in Selangor and other Malay states. One of the London promoters of the Selangor Tin Mining Company was Seymour Clarke, brother-in-law of W.H.Read. Clarke, who was at one time manager of the Great Western Railway and later that of the Great Northern Railway, was said to have a good reputation in the City.[1] He wrote to the Colonial Office on 18 July 1873 about the projected mining enterprise in Selangor and the political situation there. He informed the Colonial Office that he had lately received a letter from "one of the old residents in Singapore (W.H.Read?)", who was "intimately acquainted with the native

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[1] See Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 167, and Parkinson, British Intervention, 72. It was said that Queen Victoria never liked to make a railway journey unless Clarke also went on the train. Buckley, Anecdotal History, 297.

chieftains". It had expressed the opinion that:

> the independent sovereigns of the smaller states in the Malay Peninsula would put themselves under the Protectorate of some European Power, and Germany was mentioned as most likely to be approached, failing England.[1]

In addition, Clarke included an extract of a letter, dated 3 June 1873, which the promoters had received from Tenku Kudin, Viceroy of Selangor. It read:

> I would like to ascertain if the English, or any other Government, would interfere in any disturbance that might arise in the territory of Selangor from wicked persons, so that merchants, and etc., desirous of opening up trade here, may have a security for their capital and property invested, and see that there was some safety for life and property.[2]

What impression the mention of other European powers, particularly Germany, stepping into a traditional British sphere of influence, had on the Colonial Office, it is difficult to say. What was clear was that the Colonial Office was not alarmed, as Herbert's reply to Clarke indicated. It calmly acknowledged the receipt of the letter, but did not express any opinion on the question of foreign intervention in Selangor. As to the question of British protection, Herbert stated that the British Government had "hitherto made it their practice to abstain, as far as possible, from interference in the internal affairs" of the Malay states, although the Government had "always maintained intimate relations with the native states which are bound by treaty obligations to this

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[1] Seymour Clarke to Herbert, 18 July 1873, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 27-28.

[2] Clarke to Herbert, op. cit., 28.

country," and were "most anxious that peace should be maintained throughout the Peninsula, and that trade and commerce should be promoted." [1]

This exchange of letters between Seymour Clarke and Robert Herbert offers us, perhaps, the key to the question as to why Kimberley changed his policy in later 1873. That there was no indication of a possible change in policy in Herbert's reply is beyond doubt. But the tone of the letter was very different, indeed, from that of Herbert's answer to Davidson's solicitors one month earlier. The previous warning of "do-at-your-own-risk" had disappeared.

It has been rightly pointed out by C.D.Cowan that Clarke's letter was the factor that "prompted Kimberley's change of front in 1873." [2] But it seems that Cowan, by dwelling upon that portion of Clarke's communication that alluded to a possible German intervention, has overstated the case.[3] It is clear that the communication indicated unmistakably that some Malay chiefs, Tenku Kudin in particular, would invite other European powers to assist them in their internal troubles, if Britain refused to accept the request. But at the same time, the communication also indicated one important fact: the ruler of Selangor wished to receive British protection, a statement that has not received sufficient attention. It was probably at this time that Kimberley thought he could change his policy for he could now satisfy Gladstone's requirements. It must be

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[1] Herbert to Clarke, 5 August 1873, in P.P.1874, XLV, 28.

[2] Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 167-168 and 264.

[3] Cowan's theory is supported and further developed by W.D.McIntyre in The Imperial Frontier in the Tropics, 1865-75 (London: MacMillan, 1967), pp.199-210 and 378-379.

pointed out immediately that Tenku Kudin's letter did not fully meet the requirements of Gladstone if we take the Prime Minister's words literally. The "wish of the people to be annexed," "well understood", "freely and generously expressed", and "authenticated by the best means" together would seem to imply a step tantamount to a plebiscite.[1] But such a move was inconceivable in the tropical countries in 1873. The fact remains that Tenku Kudin had expressed his desire for British intervention, which was the thing that mattered.

In the meantime, fresh demands for British protection continued to reach London. The Colonial Office received on 21 August 1873 a petition signed by 248 "Chinese merchants and traders, British subjects and inhabitants of Singapore, Penang and Malacca,"[2] including, according to Governor Ord, "every leading Chinese merchant and trader in the Settlement." The petition praised British rule in the Colony where the merchants enjoyed the benefits of trade; it complained of the anarchy in those Malay states beyond British sovereignty and not tributary to Siam, anarchy that was the result of resumed fighting. It expressed the wish that the British Government would extend her protection to their trade with those Malay states. This petition resulted from an interview several Chinese merchants in Singapore had with Ord on the eve of his return to England and was fully supported by the Governor.[3] It is

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[1] See below p.171.

[2] Chinese Petition to Ord, 28 March 1873, transmitted on 10 July 1873, received on 21 August 1873, in P.P.1874,XLV, 30-32.

[3] Ord to Kimberley, 10 July 1873, in P.P.1874, XLV, 28-29.

difficult to tell exactly how it was organised, though Parkinson says "the conception and wording of the petition was both European and astute", and suggests that perhaps Davidson was partly involved.[1]

The Chinese petition, because it was mentioned in Kimberley's instructions of 20 September 1873 to Sir Andrew Clarke, the newly-appointed successor to Ord, and because of its timing (received at the Colonial Office one month before Kimberley's instructions), has been described by historians as the most important factor that persuaded Kimberley to move.[2] But more than two weeks before the arrival of the petition at London, as we have seen, the Colonial Office had already changed its tone about British protection in Selangor. It may

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[1] Parkinson, British Intervention, 110; Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 169.

[2] D. G. E. Hall, History of South East Asia, 474; R. O. Winstedt, Malaya and Its History (London: 1951), 64-65; in his 1962 edition of A History of Malaya (Singapore: Marican, 1962), Winstedt modified his view and adopted Cowan's, 222; Parkinson, British Intervention, 109; F. Swettenmam, British Malaya, suggests that Kimberley changed his policy because of humanitarian motives as well as because of British strategic interests and trade, 174.

Sir Andrew Clarke (1824-1902), entered the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich; 1853, Surveyor-general of Victoria; member of the Victorian Legislative Council and Cabinet; 1864, director of public works at the Admiralty; 1873-5 governor of the Straits Settlements; 1875-80, member for public works in the council of the Viceroy of India; 1882-94, 1897, agent-general for Victoria and Tasmania. DNB, (20th Century), 362-5. He was one of the founding members of the Colonial Society in 1868; see Proceedings of Royal Colonial Institute, vol. 1 & 2 (1869-70), 17; R. H. Veitch (ed.), Life of Sir Andrew Clarke (London: John Murray, 1905); also Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 177-8, Parkinson, British Intervention, 107-8.

be more appropriate to say that the petition gave additional support to the case for British intervention.[1]

Thus, British intervention was not only desired by British merchants, English as well as Chinese, but was also requested by the Malay ruler himself. Whether by concerted moves or by coincidence, the demands from the Straits Settlements for British intervention were organised and presented in a way suitable for Kimberley to take action.

When the Colonial Office began seriously considering a change in its Malayan policy is not certain. It is obvious, however, that by early September 1873, the Colonial Office had completed its review of Britain's relations with the Malay states, for a memorandum on Britain's existing treaties with them was drawn up by then. The memorandum discovered that Britain had already concluded treaties, either commercial or of friendship, with all the Malay states on the Peninsula, with the exception of Pahang and the two northern states of Kelantan and Trengganu.[2] The draft instructions to be given to the new Straits Governor, probably prepared at the same time as the memorandum, was passed to Gladstone on 10 September 1873. We do not know what the Prime Minister actually thought of the despatch because he did not make any comment on it.[3] Presumably, Gladstone did not think that the step to be taken by his Colonial Secretary was objectionable.

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[1] Kimberley to Ord, 23 September 1873, P.P. 1874, XLV, 42.

[2] Memorandum respecting the relations of the British Government with the independent states of the Malayan Peninsula, 8 September 1873, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 39-41; Maxwell and Gibson, Treaties and Engagements; Mills, British Malaya, 174 gives a concluding passage on the Malayan policy of the East India Company until 1867.

[3] Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 174.

Kimberley's new Malayan policy was embodied in his instructions of 20 September 1873 to Sir Andrew Clarke. Kimberley pointed out that it was "an important part of the duties of the Governor of the Straits Settlements to conduct the relations between the British Government and the states of the Malay Peninsula which are not tributary to Siam." The Colonial Secretary considered that the political anarchy which prevailed and appeared to be increasing in parts of the Peninsula, and the consequent injury to trade and British interests generally, rendered it "necessary to consider whether any steps can be taken to improve their conditions." Kimberley referred to Tenku Kudin, who was "sensible of the evils which exist in that country(Selangor)," and was "desirous of obtaining assistance from Her Majesty's Government, or from some other European Power." Therefore Kimberley thought that it was "incumbent upon them (the British Government) to employ such influence as they possess with the native Princes to rescue, if possible, these fertile and productive countries from the ruin which must befall them if the present disorders continue unchecked." But the Government had, Kimberley added, "no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of the Malay states." He requested Clarke to "carefully ascertain, as far as you are able, the actual condition of affairs in each state," and to report whether in his opinion there were "any steps which can probably be taken by the Colonial Government to promote the restoration of peace and order, and to secure protection to trade and commerce with the native territories." He wished Clarke "especially to consider whether it would be advisable to appoint a British Officer to reside in any of the states, with the full consent of

the native Government", and added that the expenses so incurred would have to be defrayed by the Straits Government.[1]

The appointment of a British officer to the Malay states had been recommended to the Colonial Office by the Anson committee in 1871, but the proposal was then rejected by Kimberley who thought the move was uncalled for.[2] But two years later the situation in Malaya had changed and now the Colonial Secretary believed that some action must be taken.

The new Straits Governor, Andrew Clarke, was a far more energetic man than his immediate predecessor. Soon after he arrived in Singapore, in November 1873, he concentrated his attention on Malay affairs. Instead of merely making enquiries and reporting to the Colonial Office, as instructed, Governor Clarke took swift actions. In January 1874 he secured an agreement between the rival Chinese miners in Larot by which the leaders of both parties agreed to accept British arbitration to settle the disputed claims over mining areas. A few days later, on 20 January, Governor Clarke proceeded to conclude an agreement with the chiefs on the island of Perak, which came to be known as the Pangkor Treaty.[3] By this treaty, Sultan Ismail was pensioned off and Abdullah

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[1] Kimberley to Andrew Clarke, 20 September 1873, P.P. 1874, XLV, 38-39; Parkinson, British Intervention, 111-112; Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 174-175.

[2] See above pp. 141-144.

[3] For Clarke's proceedings in Perak, see Veitch, Life of Sir Andrew Clarke, 147-156; Clarke to Kimberley, 26 January 1874, 24 February 1874; T. Braddell (attorney-general): Report on the Proceedings at Perak and Larot on the Occasion of the Visit of Sir Andrew Clarke in January 1874, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 70-73, 108-114, and 160-176 respectively.

installed in his place. The most important stipulation, as far as Britain's policy was concerned, was Article VI by which the new Sultan agreed to accept the appointment of a British resident:

> That the Sultan receive and provide a suitable residence for a British officer to be called Resident, who shall be accredited to his court, and whose advice must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay Religion and Custom.

By Article VII it was provided that an assistant resident, with similar powers and subordinate only to the Resident, should be attached to Larot.[1] The same proceedings took place also in Selangor and Sungei Ujong in February and April respectively. Tenku Kudin's position was strengthened when Governor Clarke appointed him, together with McNair and Davidson, to try the Malays who were implicated in a piracy that took place in late 1873.[2] It is obvious that Clarke had exceeded his instructions in these proceedings.

In explaining the new departure in Malayan policy in 1873, Parkinson emphasizes the point that when Kimberley appointed Andrew Clarke as Straits Governor in May 1873, Gladstone's government was

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[1] For the engagements, see Maxwell & Gibson, Treaties and Engagements, 28-30, 35, 37; P.P. 1874, XLV, 81-82, 83-84; Parkinson, British Intervention, 323-325 appendix A.

[2] For Clarke's proceedings in Selangor, see Clarke to Kimberley, 24 February 1874; T. Braddell, Report on the Proceedings of Government Relating to the Native States, 18 February 1874, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 181-2, 184-195. For Clarke's actions in Sungei Ujong, see Clarke to Carnarvon, 8 May 1874, P.P. 1874, XLV, 232-234. Also, Veitch, Life of Sir A. Clarke, 156-164 for Selangor and 165-171 for Sungei Ujong. For Clarke's actions generally, see Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 176-211 and Parkinson, British Intervention, 119-142.

tottering. The Government had lost a vote on 12 March 1873 on the Irish University Bill. The fall of the Government was expected, and it was as a member of a defeated ministry that Kimberley made the appointment. What Parkinson implies here is that the Liberal ministry had little to do with the new policy in Malaya. He assigns a larger share of responsibility to the new Governor, who was very close to both the Liberals and the Conservatives. Clarke was a close friend of H. C. E. Childers and Montagu Corry; the former was then Gladstone's First Lord of the Admiralty, and the latter Disraeli's long-time private secretary.[1] Because of these connections, Parkinson says that Clarke, who was fully alive to the political atmosphere, might have had inside information about the political prospects when he left for Singapore before the 1874 general election. We may also add here that both Childers and Clarke were among the earliest members of the Colonial Society (later Royal Colonial Institute) when it was formed in 1868, which was the first appreciable sign of a revived interest in colonial affairs. Thus, Parkinson seems to suggest that Clarke acted in

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[1] Hugh Culling Eardley Childers (1827-1896), went to Melbourne in 1850 and remained there until 1857, held various positions: member of the executive and legislative councils and member of the first Victorian cabinet; elected M.P. for Pontefract in 1860 and represented it until 1885; financial secretary to the Treasury from August 1865 to June 1866; first lord of the Admiralty (1868-71) and later Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1872-3) in Gladstone's first ministry. DNB, XXII, 423-26.

Montagu Corry (1838-1903), 1st baron Rowton, prominent member of the Conservative Party; Disraeli's private secretary from 1866 until his death in 1881; Disraeli's inseparable companion in public life, DNB, (20th Century), 422-423.

1874 without sanction from the Colonial Office because he knew that the Conservatives, expected to form the next government soon and to adopt a forward policy, would sustain him.[1] But Parkinson has ignored Kimberley's role in the making of the new Malayan policy.

Kimberley was praised by John Morley for his "capacity, industry, probity, independence, entire single-mindness."[2] In the words of E.Drus, editor of Kimberley's political journal, Kimberley was "a most able and conscientious departmental minister."[3] Kimberley had succeeded Granville as Colonial Secretary in 1870, at a time when public opinion in Britain was showing great interest in colonial affairs. To what extent Kimberley played a part in the early phase of Imperial resurgence is not certain. Of one thing we are sure: when he became Colonial Secretary, the imperialists(as exponents of Imperial unity and opponents to separatism) felt relieved.[4] He also received praise from colonial governors for his sympathetic support.[5] Although he shared the prevailing

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[1] Parkinson, British Intervention, 106-111; see Veitch, Life of Sir A.Clarke, 128-131 for Clarke's correspondence on the political prospects of the 1874 general election.

[2] CHBE, vol.III,31.

[3] E.Drus, "The Annexation of Fiji", R.H.S.(Transactions), XXXII(1950),97.

[4] Schuyler, Fall of the Old Colonial System, 276; C.A.Bodelsen, Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism (Copenhagen, 1924), 113. For the revival of interest in colonial affairs, see Schuyler, Fall of the Old Colonial System, 272-278; Bodelsen, Imperialism, chapter II; Burt, British Empire, 443-454; CHBE,vol.III,26-28; J.E.Tyler, The Struggle for Imperial Unity,1868-95(London:Longmans,1938), 1-6. For the meaning of "imperialism" used here see Bodelsen, preface p.7.

[5] CHBE,vol.III,31.

pessimism about maintaining the Empire intact, he was opposed to the separatist policy of Gladstone, Granville, Cardwell and Lowe. He wrote on 2 March 1872 that he could conceive "no greater folly than to drive Canada and the Australian colonies into separation".[1] Kimberley urged the prime minister to support the annexation of Fiji, although the former was opposed to extensive increases in territory. "At present," he wrote to Gladstone on 26 July 1871 "we neither allow the English settlers to establish a government for themselves nor provide a government for them. This seems to me to be quite unreasonable."[2]

The Ashantee expedition in 1873, which was a response to the invasion of Gold Coast by the Ashantees, reveals Kimberley as an energetic Colonial Secretary. Together with the War Secretary, Edward Cardwell, Kimberley supported the expeditionary plans of Sir Garnet Wolseley, who was appointed the Administrator of Gold Coast and Commander of the expeditionary forces. Two months before it went to the Cabinet, the decision to send troops to the Gold Coast was taken by Kimberley, Cardwell and Wolseley.[3] When cross-examined by some of his colleagues on the subject of the expedition, as Wolseley records, Kimberley was so annoyed that he banged his fist on the table, saying

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[1] A Journal of Events During the Gladstone Ministry 1868-1874, by John, first Earl of Kimberley, edited by E. Drus, in Royal Historical Society, Camden Miscellany, XXI (1958) (hereafter Kimberley's Journal), 29.

[2] Quoted in Drus,"Annexation of Fiji", 98.

[3] W. D. McIntyre,"British Policy in West Africa", The Historical Journal, vol. I (1962), 26-39.

"either this expedition comes off or I cease to be Colonial Secretary."[1] When Gladstone knew of the plan, he counselled caution, but his intervention came too late. As Kimberley notes in his journal, Gladstone was "aghast at the expenditure" of the expedition.[2]

Kimberley was thus energetic and forward moving, conducting colonial affairs within the general policy of the reluctant Gladstone, but displaying considerable initiative on his own. Gladstone was opposed to annexation of territory. When Germany, after the Franco-German War, intended to annex Alsace-Lorraine, Gladstone wanted to protest to Germany, but failed to do so because of lack of support from his colleagues. He wrote to John Bright on 16 November 1870 that "England, I think, can never contemplate with satisfaction the transference of unwilling population from one country of Europe to another."[3] Kimberley did not think that Gladstone's policy was practical. The Colonial Secretary noted on 30 September 1870 that "Gladstone wants to address a remonstrance to Germany against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine contrary to the wishes of the population on the ground that it has become the settled practice in Europe not to transfer territory from one state to another without the consent of the inhabitants," and added that "I am very glad the project has been abandoned."[4]

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[1] Quoted in McIntyre, "British Policy in West Africa", 33.

[2] Kimberley's Journal, 42, entry of 22 September 1873.

[3] Quoted in Knaplund, Gladstone's Foreign Policy, 59; see also 55-56; 59-61; and Temperley & Penson, British Foreign Policy, 324-327; Seton-Watson, Britain in Europe, 499.

[4] Kimberley's Journal, 18-19.

Gladstone opposed any increase of Britain's territorial responsibilities abroad. As Paul Knaplund's excellent analysis of Gladstone's colonial policy reveals, Gladstone was aware of the magnitude of the task of Empire, and felt that Britain's primary duty was to develop the lands already acquired. Yet Gladstone also understood that at the frontier of the Empire there were strong forces at work promoting expansion. When it was urged that Britain annex the Fiji islands, Gladstone refused to consent. In the debate on the subject in the House of Commons, on 25 June 1872, Gladstone declared that although the Government had not taken a vow that "nothing should induce it to add to the territory or territorial responsibility of Britain", the general policy in this should be that the British Government "would not annex any territory, great or small, without the well understood and expressed wish of the people to be annexed, freely and generously expressed, and authenticated by the best means the case could afford".[1] This principle he reiterated in another debate on the same subject on 13 June 1873.[2]

A further example of Gladstone's reluctance to approve the annexation of new territory can be found in the annexation of the South African Diamond Fields in 1871. The Diamond Fields were claimed by both the Griqua chief, Waterboer, and the Boer republic, the Orange Free State. Thousands of miners, who were British subjects, had flocked into

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[1] P. Knaplund, Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy (London: Frank Cass, 1966 new impression), 133-139.

[2] Hansard, 3rd. ser. CCXLVI (1873), 13 June 1873, 943-949.

that district to work in the gold mines. The British Government was urged to annex the place. The Colonial Office decided not to annex the territory, unless Cape Colony would take full responsibility for it and the inhabitants consented to the step.[1] Gladstone was then told that Waterboer wanted to cede his country to Britain; that the claims of the Orange Free State were"very weak"; and that Cape Colony was ready to annex and assume full responsibility for the Diamond Fields. It was only then that Gladstone reluctantly approved of the proposal. As he wrote to Kimberley on 11 May 1871:"If, as appears, the parties be willing and the resolution of the Legislature of the Cape unequivocal, I do not object to the proposed annexation of the Diamond Fields, while I regret the necessity which brings it about."[2]

Sir Henry Barkly, Governor of Cape Colony, was then authorized to annex the Diamond Fields, subject to the conditions imposed by the Colonial Office. Before the Cape Parliament passed an annexation bill, Governor Barkly hastily proclaimed the Diamond Fields British territory, thereby violating Kimberley's instructions. Nevertheless, Barkly convinced Kimberley of the necessity of immediate action, and Kimberley sanctioned the annexation without consulting Gladstone. For this Kimberley apologised later on 10 December 1871 to Gladstone; he told his chief that Barkly was a prudent man who could be trusted and asked for

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[1] CHBE, vol.III, 39.

[2] Quoted in Knaplund, Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy, 135.

Gladstone's confidence in dealing with the South African situation. Gladstone and the Cabinet had no alternative but to sustain Kimberley.[1]

In the case of the annexation of Fiji, we meet the same reluctant Prime Minister and vigorous Colonial Secretary. Gladstone wrote to Kimberley that he did not want "to be a party to any arrangement for adding Fiji and all that lies beyond it to the cares of this overdone and overburdened Government and Empire".[2] To this Kimberley replied: "I take a more sanguine view I confess of the power and energy of this country than you do." Gladstone's reply was disarming: "It is quite right your should be more sanguine than I, for I am old and begin to feel it."[3] By February 1873 Kimberley had been converted to the need of annexing Fiji, while the Prime Minister still remained unconvinced.[4] On 13 June 1873 Gladstone said in Parliament that "the chill of age" was coming upon him, and that he "confessed he did not feel that excitement for the acquisition of new territory."[5]

Gladstone seems to have kept an eye on his Colonial Secretary. Knaplund tells us that many drafts of Kimberley's despatches bear the annotation "seen by Mr. Gladstone", and suggests that probably Kimberley

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[1] Knaplund, Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy, 136.

[2] Quoted in Ibid., 136; also Drus, "Annexation of Fiji," 102.

[3] Quoted in Drus, "Annexation of Fiji," 102.

[4] CHBE, vol. III, 34; see Drus, 97-104 for Kimberley and Gladstone's attitudes to the proposed annexation of Fiji, which eventually came about on 10 September 1874.

[5] Hansard, 3rd. ser. CCXVI (1873), 13 June 1873, 945.

enjoyed less freedom from control than Granville did.[1] Another study of the history of the Colonial Office comes to the same conclusion: "Thus Kimberley deferred much to Gladstone and Gladstone to the Cabinet."[2]

Thus while Kimberley may have been convinced of the need for a change in policy towards the Malay states, he also had reasons for delay. Not the least important of these reasons was that he could not meet the requirements of Gladstone.

We have seen that Parkinson attributes the new policy towards the Malay states to Britain's domestic politics. Cowan, unlike Parkinson, seeks his answer to the question in international rivalry. Kimberley's decision to reverse the policy of non-intervention in Malaya, Cowan suggests, was prompted by the fear that some other European power, particularly Germany, might be invited to intervene in Malaya. The decision, he says, was taken by Kimberley on his own initiative.[3]

There is no doubt that Kimberley took the initiative, as we have seen earlier. But Cowan seems to have overstated the possible threat posed by other European powers to Britain in the Malay Peninsula. The British had long established their supremacy in the area, a supremacy never challenged by any other European power since the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824.

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[1] Knaplund, Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy, 100.

[2] CHBE, vol. III, 737.

[3] Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 166-169; 173-175.

The Dutch were perhaps the most powerful in the Malay Archipelago, and their energetic expansion in Sumatra in the 1860s had, no doubt, roused great concern among the Singapore merchants.[1] But by the time the Sumatra Convention of 1871 was signed, whereby Britain removed any objections to Dutch expansion in Sumatra in return for equal tariff treatment there, disputes between Holland and Britain arising from colonial rivalry had largely been removed.[2] Furthermore the Dutch had declared war in April 1873 on Acheh, in Sumatra, beginning what came to be the longest war in Dutch colonial history, ending in 1908.[3] As R. Emerson clearly points out, "there seems no reason to suspect that the slightly later date of the British advance (in Malaya) can be attributed to any fear of an expansion of Dutch ambitions to include the Peninsula as well as Sumatra".[4] One wonders, in fact, whether the Dutch could afford to entertain any pretensions on the other side of the Straits of Malacca.

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[1] D. G. E. Hall, History of South East Asia, 494-495; Buckley, Anecdotal History, 663-664; Cameron, Malayan India, 175-176, 195-196; Tarling, British Policy, 159-163.

[2] For the Sumatra convention, see Maxwell & Gibson, Treaties and Engagements, 17-19, and Convention for Sumatra, P.P. 1872, LXX (C-475), 1-2; D. G. E. Hall, History of South East Asia, 474-475, 495.

[3] D. G. E. Hall, History of South East Asia, 495-498.

[4] Emerson, Malaysia, 112; D. G. E. Hall, agrees with Emerson, 475. W. D. McIntyre, "Disraeli's Election Blunder: The Straits of Malacca Issues in the 1874 Election," Renaissance and Modern Studies, vol. V (1961), 71-105, refutes the suggestions that the Sumatra convention and the transfer of Dutch settlements in West Africa to the British was a bargain between the two countries.

The French, another established colonial power in this part of the world, were on the move in the early 1870s, but being recently defeated in war with Germany, were not powerful enough to pose a threat to the British in the Malay Peninsula.[1] The Spaniards, being busy in the Philippines, do not seem to have entered the scene at all.

In 1870 Germany did not rank as a colonial rival in the calculations of the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office. When the Foreign Office received a rumour that Prussia had secured an island off the east coast of Malaya, it merely passed the information to the Colonial Office. Rogers minuted that he did not "object to European neighbours in the Indian Oceans, and if Prussia likes to have an island there, I should let her by all means".[2] In the summer of 1870, Robert Herbert, then assistant under-secretary, even suggested inviting the North German Confederation to annex Fiji, and this idea had general acceptance in the Colonial Office.[3] During the Franco-Prussian war Kimberley was ready to see a victorious Germany rather than France. He noted on 7 September 1870: "The North Germans are socially a very disagreeable race, but their supremacy would be less dangerous to Europe than that of France."[4] In the Malayan Peninsula, the Germans had no footing at

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[1] D. G. E. Hall, History of South East Asia, 568-577.

[2] Quoted in Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 170, note 85; Tarling, British Policy, 85.

[3] E. Drus, "Annexation of Fiji", 93-4.

[4] Kimberleys Journal, 18.

all, and there was no sign of any serious attempt to establish themselves. After the Franco-German war Britain's attitude towards Germany in Europe changed markedly, as Cowan emphasizes.[1] Disraeli's Crystal Palace speech on 24 June 1872, which was an indication that imperialism had won the day and that separatism had lost, was followed by a debate in Parliament on the protection of Fiji, but this does not seem to have been directed against Germany.[2] There was competition between Britain and Germany, as well as the United States, in Samoa; but the Germans did not obtain a treaty from Samoa until 1879.[3] In fact, German overseas expansion was to come in the next decade.[4] In 1870 there were also rumours of Italian and American intervention in Sumatra, but all came to nothing.[5] Therefore, it is safe to say that foreign intervention was not the major factor motivating Kimberley in 1873.

That Kimberley was convinced of the necessity of changing British policy in Malaya is further illustrated by what he said in public after he had left the Colonial Office. Supporting his successor at the Colonial Office, Carnarvon, who defended the proceedings of Governor

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[1] Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 171-2.

[2] For Disraeli's speech, see Bennett, Concept of Empire, 257-9; for an analysis of the speech, see Bodelsen, Imperialism, 120-24.

[3] CHBE, Vol. III, 324-5.

[4] W. O. Henderson, Studies in German Colonial History (London: Frank Cass, 1962), 3-5.

[5] D. G. E. Hall, History of South East Asia, 474-5; Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya, 170; McIntyre, "Disraeli's Blunder", 99-100.

Clarke, Kimberley declared in the House of Lords in May 1874 that Clarke "had exercised a wise discretion in the proceedings he had taken".[1] Later, when the death of the first Resident at Perak, J. W. Birch, killed in a Malay reaction to British intervention, was raised in the House of Lords, Kimberley said that he had "no desire to disclaim any responsibility that probably belonged to him; and was ready to admit that although he had not actually sanctioned the act of Sir Andrew Clarke in appointing a Resident in the Peninsula, still he was first inclined to think that step promised well".[2] Kimberley's speech later in the same year clearly indicated his strong conviction of the need to change the policy because of the peculiar situation that then existed in the Malayan Peninsula, as has been discussed above.[3]

In conclusion, it is reasonable to say that Kimberley initiated a new Malayan policy in September 1873 because he thought he could fulfill Gladstone's requirements. Although he was urged in 1871 and 1872 by local officials and influential merchants to extend British protection to the Malay states, and was himself convinced of the necessity for a change in policy because of the chaotic situation in the Malayan Peninsula, he could not take immediate action because he had not found a way to satisfy the requirements of Gladstone in regard to further territorial expansion. But, when Kimberley received Tenku Kudin's

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[1] Hansard, 3rd. ser. CCXIX (1874), 19 May 1874, 477.

[2] Ibid., CCXXVII (1876), 28 February 1876, 1017.

[3] See above pp. 157-158.

message asking for British protection, the Colonial Secretary was ready to consent now that he had some evidence that could be presented to meet the Prime Minister's conditions.

That Kimberley's instructions of 20 September 1873 signified a change in Malayan policy becomes more obvious if we recall the earlier policy of the Colonial Office after the transfer. First, the Colonial Office insisted on controlling closely the colony's external relations, particularly relations with the Malay states. The Governor could not initiate any agreement or treaty with them unless in pursuance of a policy of the Imperial Government, as found in his instructions. Secondly, Kimberley had on earlier occasions refused to consider British protectorates in the Malayan Peninsula, and rejected the idea of appointing British officers to the Malay states. But in his instructions of 20 September 1873, Kimberley not only saw the necessity to take action, but also spelt out specific measures that could be taken.

The Liberal Government had, in the meantime, been defeated in the general election of January-February 1874. When the reports of Governor Clarke's proceedings in Perak reached London, Kimberley had left the Colonial Office. Thus it was Carnarvon, Disraeli's Colonial Secretary, who had to face the fait accompli.

Carnarvon approved the course taken by Clarke in Perak, Selangor and Sungei Ujong. The Pangkor Treaty was confirmed and the appointment of British Residents to the three states approved towards

the end of 1874.[1] Thus, a new Malayan policy came into being, largely because of pressures at the frontier of Empire; a policy which inaugurated in British Malaya a system of indirect rule known as the residential system.

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[1] Carnarvon to Clarke, 6 March 1874, 29 May 1874, in P.P. 1874, XLV, 88, 231-232.

Conclusion

The transfer of the Straits Settlements from the Indian Government to the Colonial Office was the result of a persistent demand which originated in the Straits mercantile community. The demand stemmed from the outmoded and inadequate political arrangement by which the Straits Settlements were governed. The increasing importance of Singapore in the Empire commercially and strategically required a far more attentive government than the Indian Government could offer. The strong desire on the part of the inhabitants to have a say in their government added support to the campaign for transferring the Straits Settlements to the Colonial Office. The expansion of the Dutch, the French and the Spaniards emphasized the need for Imperial protection. It was natural that the mercantile community should have wished to be placed under the administraton of the British Government,by which system they would have a better form of government, more vigilant Imperial protection, and some representation in the local government which would have a freer hand in conducting external affairs.

But the transfer involved increased Imperial responsibility, especially in military defence. From the viewpoint of the Imperial Government the demand was contrary to the trend of colonial policy of the day, which was towards relaxation of Imperial control. As Lord Carnarvon rightly stated in 1859 in the House of Lords, the proposed transfer was something novel in the history of the Colonial Office. The Imperial Government was sympathetic to the idea initially, but the policy of economy was paramount. It became more reluctant when doubts arose as

to whether the Straits Settlements were self-supporting. The new colonial military policy, which required that the colonies make greater contributions to their own defence, added strength to the position of the Treasury. It was only after the Straits Settlements' ability to finance their own defence was proved and the strategic importance of Singapore more fully appreciated that the Imperial Government eventually consented to the transfer.

The transfer not only signified an increase in Imperial control but also produced important constitutional changes. The outmoded system of "one-man" government ended with the provision of an Executive Council and a Legislative Council. With the inclusion of unofficial members in the latter body, the new government had some element of popular representation. Another aspect of the campaign for the transfer was the growing desire in the Straits Settlements for British intervention in the Malayan Peninsula, a desire which grew greater after 1867.

A strikingly similar situation to that of the transfer existed with regard to the events of 1873-74. The chaotic political situation in the Malayan Peninsula and its impact on British trade, or more properly the Straits trade, made British intervention highly desirable in the eyes of the local merchants. However, this was not compatible with Imperial policy which resisted further territorial increases or Imperial responsibilities. A forward policy gradually took shape in the Straits Settlements but was rejected by the British Government under Gladstone. Kimberley, although refusing initially to appoint British officers to

the Malay states, recognized that British protection was unavoidable. But he was more or less restrained by the requirement of Gladstone that British rule only be extended in response to native demand. When Kimberley secured Tenku Kudin's request for British protection, the Colonial Secretary then felt free to act and instructed the new Straits governor Sir Andrew Clarke to investigate the need for a change in policy, a change which came soon after.

The interplay between Imperial and colonial needs and interests determined the course of the development of the new Malayan policy as well as the ultimate outcome. Especially important were the colonial mercantile interests located on the frontier of Empire, but capable of exerting powerful influence on the government in London. The establishment of the Straits Settlements as a Crown Colony, coupled with the extension of British protection over the Malay states, laid the foundation for "British Malaya".

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