

THE FEDERATED STATES OF THE
MALAY PENINSULA.

Relations with Straits Settlements.

The more intimate connection of the Straits Settlements with the Native States of the Malay Peninsula dates from the year 1874, though for many years previous relations of a semi-commercial, semi-political character had existed, as in the case of the commercial treaty between the Penang Government and Pérak in 1818.

For some years previous to 1874 the anarchy prevailing in some States in the Malay Peninsula, and especially in Pérak, was a source of disquiet to the Straits Settlements community, and a hindrance to the prosperity of British traders.

In the beginning of that year matters were brought to a crisis in Pérak, and, with the approval of the Secretary of State, steps were taken by Sir Andrew Clarke to remedy the state of things by the Pangkor Treaty (20th January, 1874). Later on in the year British Residents were stationed in the States of Pérak, Sélángor, and Sungei Ujong, to advise their rulers respecting the collection of revenue and general administration.

The events leading to the establishment of the Protected State, known as the Negri Sembilan (Nine States), began in 1883, when closer relations were entered into with the State of Rembau; a federation was formed in 1889 by Sir C. C. Smith, and the officer, styled Superintendent from the time of his appointment in 1886, was created British Resident.

In 1895 this office was combined with that of the Resident of Sungei Ujong, who since 1885 had exercised control also over the administration of the adjacent inland State of Jelebu, and, in August of that year, an agreement was signed by the chiefs, by which the present Federal State (which retains the old title) was constituted.

In 1887 Sir F. Weld made an agreement with the Raja of Pahang, in accordance with which the control of his foreign relations, &c., was surrendered to the British Government. This was followed by a further agreement in 1888, between the Raja (now styled Sultan) and Governor Sir C. C. Smith, under which Pahang was taken under British protection, on the same terms as the Protected Native States on the west coast of the Peninsula; a British Resident being appointed, at the request of the Sultan, in September of that year.

The Residents of these four States are assisted by a staff of European officers, whose duty it is to carry out the executive functions. The supreme authority in each State is vested in the State Council, consisting of the highest native chiefs presided over by the Sultan or Ruler of the State, who is assisted by the Resident, and, in Pérak and Sélángor, the Secretary to the Resident. In the three older States there are also Chinese and non-official European representatives.

The British Residents are appointed by the Secretary of State and are subordinate to the Chief Secretary and to the High Commissioner for the Malay States, who is also the Governor of the Straits Settlements. The administration of each State is carried on, as far as may be, on the model of a Crown Colony.

In 1895 a treaty was signed by the rulers of the four States, by which they agreed to constitute their countries a Federation (to be known

as the Federated Malay States), to be administered under the advice of the British Government. While all existing treaties and arrangements were to stand, the States agreed to the appointment of an officer, to be styled Resident-General of the Malay States,* to control the Residents appointed to each State, and to be the means of communication between the State Governments and the High Commissioner. Subject to the authority created by the appointment of the Resident-General, the system of administration under the advice of British Residents remains unchanged.

The States undertook to give each other material assistance in men and money, the wealthier States assisting those in want of help, and all moneys so advanced being considered as loans; and also undertook to raise and equip a force of Indian troops for service throughout the States, and to supply a portion of these troops on requisition for the defence of the Colony of the Straits Settlements, should Great Britain be at war with any foreign Power.

It was also provided by the Treaty of 1895 that the rulers of the Federated States should meet periodically in one of the States, under the presidency of the High Commissioner, to discuss affairs of mutual interest. The first of these meetings was held at Kuala Kangsar, Pérak, in July, 1897, and was attended by the High Commissioner, the rulers of all the four States, with their most important chiefs, the Resident-General, and all the British Residents. The meeting was in every respect a success, and many important matters were discussed and arrangements made to deal with them in the councils of the various States.

The second meeting was held at Kuala Lumpur in July, 1903, and was also a pronounced success in every way; the Sultan of Pérak expressed success himself and the other Malay rulers entire satisfaction with the administration of affairs.

No further meetings of this nature have been held since 1903, as the necessity for them has been removed by an important development of the principle of Federation, which was introduced in 1909. In that year a Federal Council was created by an agreement between the High Commissioner and the four native rulers. The object in view, as stated in the preamble to the agreement, was to provide means "for the joint arrangement of all matters of common interest to the Federation or affecting more than one State and for the proper enactment of all laws intended to have force throughout the Federation or in more than one State." The Council consists of the High Commissioner, as President, the Chief Secretary, the Sultans of Pérak, Sélángor and Pahang, the Yam Tuan of Negri Sembilan, the four British residents and four unofficial members, nominated by the High Commissioner with the approval of the King. Provision is made in the agreement for the addition, if desired, of the heads of one or more public departments and of a corresponding number of unofficials. The Council meets at least once a year and considers the drafts of laws, which are to apply to more than one State, and the annual estimates of the revenue and expenditure of the four States. The first meeting of the Council was opened on the 11th of December, 1909, at Kuala Kangsar.

* The title of this post has now been altered to Chief Secretary.