Development of District Administration in Batang Padang

by

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Batang Padang in 1889 was the largest though not the most prosperous district in Perak. It had tremendous mineral and agricultural potentialities but in order to develop it, a system of government which ensured law and order, established means of communication and promoted commerce was required. Up to this time the main means of access to Batang Padang was its rivers, namely the Batang Padang, the Bidor, the Sungkai, the Slim and the Bernam and even these were rather shallow and were navigable only to the poling of small, flat-bottomed boats. Hence, in order to exploit its mineral and agricultural potentialities there was a crying need for an established administration and good means of communications.

Batang Padang, a district of 1,800 square miles, was divided into seven mukins viz. Batang Padang, Chenderiang, Bidor, Sungkai Ulu, Sungkai Hilir, Slim and Ulu Bernam. Each Mukim was under a Penghulu appointed by the Ruler in Council. The principal villages in the district then were: Tapah, Chenderiang, Bemban, Kuala Lipis, Slim and Tanjong Malim. Tapah, by virtue of its being the largest village with a population of approximately 1,800 and its situation on the largest river, the Batang Padang, was selected to be the administrative head quarters for the district. Other reasons for Tapah’s choice were that it was in the centre of the tin-mining mukins of Batang Padang, Chenderiang and Kuala Lipis (later re-named Bidor). Tanjong Malim, which is situated on the northern bank of the Bernam River, served the agricultural mukins of Slim and Ulu Bernam respectively and in 1894 became the headquarters of a sub-district of the same name.

The total population of Batang Padang District in 1889 was approximately 8,100, more than half of whom were Malays. When the first census was taken in 1891 the district’s population was established as approximately 10,500 of whom about 7,000 were Malays, 2,500 Chinese, 850 Indians and 27 Europeans. Figures for aborigines were not available.

The Malays were engaged principally in agriculture, the Chinese in commerce and mining, the Indians in construction work and the Europeans in administration, mining, planting and construction work.

By 1890, the district showed excellent prospects of becoming a rich mining area for tin and some gold and also an agricultural area for cultivation of coffee and some pepper.

When a district administrative head quarters was set up in Tapah in 1889, the officer in charge was designated the Collector and Magistrate. As his designation implied he was not only the predecessor of the present day District Officer but was also the District Magistrate. After 1892, he came to be known as the District Magistrate.

Before 1890, the District Magistrate in Batang Padang functioned under the supervision of the Superintendent of Lower Perak but after 1890 he was put in general executive charge of the district under the British Resident of Perak. He had both executive and judicial functions and had also supervisory powers over the various departments such as Posts and Telegraphs, the Public Works, the Police, the Medical and Health Department. He was however directly responsible for the Land Office and the District Treasury. A directive from the British Resident in 1892 to officers serving in the district read:

“Officers of all departments in outstation, are duty bound to take whatever
Map of the District of Batang Padang, 1889.
orders may be given by the District Magistrate in charge, and then refer the matter to their own heads of department.”

Among his multifarious duties, the District Magistrate had to hold Court and hear both civil and criminal cases, supervise the work of the Land Office and the District Treasury and oversee the work of the various departments functioning in the district. He had to see that adequate sanitation and health measures were taken to prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases and to keep the district a healthy place for its inhabitants. He had to visit the kampongs and rural areas to encourage parents to send their children to school, and above all to ensure that a usable system of bridle-paths, and later roads, were established to encourage commerce, mining and agricultural development.

Between 1889 and 1900 the district was fortunate in having District Magistrates who were able and conscientious men and their periodic visits to the kampongs helped to make an alien system of administration acceptable not only to the indigenous population but also to the immigrants. The District Magistrates during this period were also fortunate in that their distance from the State Capital gave them an independence which their successors, in the era of good roads and telecommunications, were unable to enjoy. The contribution of these officers at a time when a system of administration was being established in the outlying districts was summarised by Sir Frank Swettenham in the Perak Annual Report for 1890:

“I consider that this Government is very faithfully and zealously served by a body of officers whose hearts are in their work, and who, had they spared themselves or been more tied by regulations and careful of accepting responsibility, the State would not have been in the position of prosperity it now occupies.”

Mr. S.W. Jones, in his book on Public Administration in Malaya (Glasgow 1953) writes as follows:

“...... they had to discharge many of the duties which were later apportioned among many hands, to be at once policeman and magistrate and gaoler, engineer, surveyor, collector and treasurer, here inspector of mines, there harbour-master and customs officer. They were always on the road dealing with the problems of the large tracts of territory under their charge, travelling by track and bridle-path, in dugouts on the rivers, and rafts on the rapids. Confidence in them struck so strong a root that everything was expected of them and a sense of duty saw to it that everything was attempted and a great deal done. Maybe that was just as well, for hard work gave no time to brood over the loneliness, the certainty of ill-health, the entire lack of comfort and amenities which made up their lot.”

Communications

Sir Frank Swettenham wrote in 1894:

“In the administration of a Malay State, revenue and prosperity follow the liberal but prudently directed expenditure of public funds, especially when they are invested in high-class roads, in railways, telegraphs, water-works and everything likely to encourage trade and private enterprise.”

Batang Padang was a large and scattered district and it was realised that only through a well planned and executed policy of liberal expenditure could the district be developed. Government itself was unable to develop the agricultural and mining potentialities but it could catalyse this development by building bridle-paths, roads and railways so that private enterprise could step in. With this realisation, the State Government resorted to a policy whereby surplus revenue from the more developed districts was utilized to open up the relatively undeveloped areas. Thus the first step taken in this direction was to improve communications by building bridle-paths, roads and railways.

By 1890, there were bridle-paths connecting Tapah with Telok Anson, Bemban, Tanjong Malim and Chenderiang. These were however suitable mainly
for travel by foot or on horse-back and these bridle-paths were later developed into cart roads which eventually became metalled and were of twelve-foot width. These cart roads were constructed by contractors supervised by the District Engineer or the Assistant Engineer. There was at this time, also an Inspector of Road Construction in the State who had to inspect and certify that the roads constructed were in accordance with the specifications.

In 1891, work also commenced on a cart-road from Tapah to the Pahang Pass a distance of 35 miles to provide access not only to the reputedly rich mining lands of the Ulu Telom in Pahang but also to open up the country for settlement by agriculturists. Work was also commenced on a cart road from Tapah to Bidor (Kuala Lipis) in the south, a distance of 70 miles, and from Tapah to Blangah on the Kinta-Batang Padang district boundary, a distance of 9 miles. When both these roads were completed the road system in Perak stretched from the Province Wellesley border to Bidor.

Even as early as 1889, a proposal was considered for the construction of a metre-gauge railway from Telok Anson to Tapah a distance of 22 miles. Although this proposal was sanctioned in that year, construction work commenced only in April 1891. But even before work commenced, the original plan to link Telok Anson with Tapah was abandoned and a new plan was drawn up whereby the line from Telok Anson to Ipoh would first be constructed to a point approximately 5 miles from Tapah, and extended later to Ipoh thereby providing Ipoh with a direct link with the sea. The terminal point where the original line from Telok Anson stopped came to be called Tapah Road.
It was intended to build a branch line to Tapah but this idea was abandoned and a cart-road was constructed instead. Work on the Telok Anson - Tapah Road line which necessitated also the construction of two large bridges over the Bidor and Batang Padang Rivers, proceeded smoothly under the supervision of Mr. C.R. Hanson, Resident Engineer Railways, Perak, and the line from Telok Anson to Tapah Road was opened by the Governor, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith on 19 May 1893. From Tapah Road, the line was later extended to Ipoh.

Work was commenced in 1896 to extend the line South from Tapah Road to Tanjong Malim and this was completed in May 1898. After the construction of a bridge in 1900 over the Bernam River the first train from Selangor steamed into Tanjong Malim on 26 September 1900. By 1900, Batang Padang was served by a good system of bridle-paths, cart-roads and railways.

Public Works

The Public Works Department in addition to supervising the construction of roads, was also responsible for the construction of bridges and public buildings. A roofed wooden bridge was constructed over the Batang Padang River at Tapah in 1892 and during the period from 1889 to 1900 the Department was responsible for the supervision of the construction of government offices at Tapah and Tanjong Malim, Court houses at Tapah, Tanjong Malim and Slim, and post-offices, police stations, rest houses and quarters for government employees in the larger settlements within the district.

Posts and Telegraphs

The Post and Telegraphs Department was responsible not only for the handling of mails and telegrams but also for the maintenance of many miles of telephone lines within the district. Even by 1889, Tapah was in telegraphic communication with Batu Gajah, the district headquarters for Kinta, on the one side, and Telok Anson on the other. By 1890, the line was extended to Tanjong Malim and linked with the Selangor - Sungai Ujong - Malacca trunk line.

The transport of mail was done by mail-runners, pony carts and, after 1893, by railway.

Law and Order

For development to take place the prevalence of law and order is a necessity. In Perak in the late nineteenth century, financial stringency did not permit the maintenance of a police force that was sufficiently large to deal with anything but petty crime in the townships. Sir Hugh Low, then British Resident of Perak, planned to surmount this by making the penghulus in the mukims and the Chinese headmen (kepalas) in the mining areas responsible for the maintenance of order among the people under their charge.

Batang Padang is an extensive district and the small police force stationed in Tapah in early 1889, consisting of one European Inspector, 4 Non-Commissioned Officers and 16 privates, was always over worked in its efforts to maintain law and order.

Tin was extensively mined in the southern half of the district and the predominantly Chinese mining population was concentrated mainly in or around the mining villages of Chenderiang, Bidor and Temoh. The miners were generally unruly and they brought with them not only their energy and enterprise but also their secret societies and habits like gambling and opium-smoking. Since it was not possible to prevent them from indulging in these practices the other alternative was to regulate and control them. The miners who worked under very trying conditions “consoled their weariness with opium and lightened the tedium of their exile with simple-minded wagers.” Since their predilection for secret societies could not be eliminated, this attraction was channelled into friendly societies whose membership lists were constantly checked by the Chinese Protectorate up to 1893 and the police thereafter.

The Malays on the other hand, both native and immigrant, had long lived under conditions where might and nobility of birth were of greater consequence.
than the law, and therefore they experienced difficulty in adapting themselves to the new and unfamiliar system of administration.

In 1889 there were two police stations in the district. One at Tapah and the other at Tanjong Malim. In 1890 two more police stations, one at Chenderiang and the other in the fast developing mining village of Bidor, were established and a reinforcement of 17 privates was sent to the district to help man these stations. In 1895 the police station at Chenderiang was moved to Temoh a village on the Kinta Valley Railway. In 1898 a police station was set up in Sungkai a village on the projected trunk road to Tanjong Malim. In 1900 a new police station was established at Tapah Road the important railway junction and station for Tapah, and another was re-established at Chenderiang which had been without one since 1895.

Before 1896 the Perak Sikhs under Major R.S.F. Walker provided a major part of the police force in the State but after this date a mixed force consisting of both Punjabis and Malays was introduced. This combination was a happy one since the former were ideal for duty in the towns and villages where immigrants predominated and the latter for duties in the kampongs and coastal areas peopled by the Malays. With the formation of the Federation in 1895 the control of the police force was transferred to the Federal Commissioner of Police in Kuala Lumpur.

Since the police presence was felt mainly in the towns and villages, highway robberies and murder were a frequent occurrence. In the kampongs and in the mining areas where the penghulus and kepalas were vested with the responsibility for maintaining law and order, they had not been provided with the means of enforcement.

The Perak Sikhs.

Photo: National Archives.
The police were required to perform many and varied duties. Many of their duties were routine and these prevented them from using their energies for the more urgent tasks. Among others, their routine jobs were to register births and deaths and they conducted the district's first census in 1891. When the Chinese Protectorate was withdrawn in 1893, they were responsible also for the registration and control of brothels, gambling and opium farms, checking of membership lists of friendly societies, registration of dogs, firearms and vehicles and the management of the fire brigade as well. Being few in number, and encumbered with numerous routine duties they were unable to function effectively as the agents of enforcement of law and order. They were quite often unable to prevent smuggling or infringement of the Opium and Gambling Farm regulations. Law breakers within the district, and particularly in Tanjong Malim, could evade arrest merely by crossing the Bernam River into Selangor where the Perak police could not, at least until the Federation was established, arrest a wanted criminal without a warrant issued by a Selangor magistrate.

The policeman's job was a difficult and thankless one and his good work in apprehending a particularly dangerous criminal was often nullified by some inexperienced magistrate who either acquitted him for lack of conclusive evidence or let him off with a sentence entirely disproportionate to the crime committed. The fault here was not always the Magistrates' since the police with their inadequate training in criminal investigation had not always been able to produce cast-iron cases.

But inspite of being under-staffed, bogged down with routine duties and having had inadequate training, particularly in crime investigation, they were able to contribute their share to the development of the district.

Sir Frank Swettenham wrote in his book British Malaya (London, 1906) that

"To the people of the country (the Protected Malay States) the greatest innovation was the institution of Courts of Justice (presided over by European magistrates, often assisted by Malay magistrates), where all classes and nationalities, Europeans, Malay Rajas, and raiats, Chinese capitalists and coolies, were treated alike."

The Judicial system in Perak between 1889 and 1900 was such that the Residency Court and the Penghulu's Court were the highest and the lowest judicial bodies respectively. In Batang Padang, the District Magistrate's Court at Tapah was the chief judicial body. In each mukim, the Penghulu's Court was the nearest to the people and the most patronised. The penghulu derives his judicial powers from the 'kuasa' granted him by the Sultan in Council and was vested with the power to hear and determine all cases brought to him by Malays and other Asians, involving "all suits where debt, damage, demand or matter in dispute" did not exceed the sum of twenty-five dollars. The penghulu could not impose a fine exceeding five dollars.

In each mukim there was also the Kathi's Court which dealt with matters concerning the Muslim religion and custom and other matters regulated by Hukum Shara. The Kathi too derived his authority from the 'kuasa' received from the Sultan in Council. The Kathi could impose fines up to ten dollars.

Above the Penghulu's Court were the Courts of the Justices of Peace, who were appointed by the Resident with the consent of the Sultan and vested with the powers of a 3rd Class Magistrate. A Justice of the Peace was empowered to try any offence under the Penal Code of the Straits Settlements which could be punished by a term of imprisonment not exceeding a year, and any other offence which could be tried by him under the existing laws of Perak. He could also hear "all suits where the debt, damage, demand or matter in dispute" did not exceed fifty dollars. A Justice of the Peace could impose a term of imprisonment not exceeding one month or a fine not exceeding twenty-five dollars.
Above the Court of the Justice of the Peace was the Assistant Magistrate’s Court. Each Assistant Magistrate was vested with the powers of a 2nd Class Magistrate. A 2nd Class Magistrate’s Court, which could be called into session by two or more Justice of the Peace, was empowered to handle all cases involving offences under the Straits Settlements Penal Code and the existing laws of Perak which were punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 years. The 2nd Class Magistrate, who had also the powers of a Coroner, could hear “all suits where the debt, damage, demand or matter in dispute” which did not exceed one thousand dollars and try all breaches of the Customs and Revenue laws within the district. He could impose a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months or a fine of not more than five-hundred dollars and also corporal punishment where he thought fit.

The highest court in the district was the Court of the District Magistrate who had the powers of a 1st Class Magistrate whereby he could try all offences under the Straits Settlements Penal Code which carried a penalty not exceeding seven years’ imprisonment and all other offences under the existing laws of Perak. He was a Coroner and was empowered to hear “all suits where debt, damage, demand or matter in dispute” which was not more than six thousand dollars and to deal with all cases of probate and succession in which the value of the estate of the deceased did not exceed six thousand dollars. All breaches of the Revenue and Customs laws could also be tried by this Court. A 1st Class Magistrate’s Court could be called into session by two or more 2nd Class Magistrates. This Court could also hear appeals against any decision in the lower Courts but on such occasions there should be one or more native Justices of the Peace to serve as assessor. This Court could impose a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years or a fine that did not exceed two thousand dollars. A 1st Class Magistrate could also impose corporal punishment.

All appeals against the decisions of the District Magistrate’s Court in Tapah were heard in the Senior Magistrate Court in Taiping which consisted of the British Resident, The Secretary to the Government and the Senior Magistrate.

In all cases where capital punishment could be imposed, the Court had to include one or more assessors selected from the Asian members of the State Council. In 1895, the Jury system was introduced in Perak but was withdrawn in 1897 and the old assessors system brought back. In 1897 the State Government decided that the accused in a murder case be given $25 to engage a defence counsel.

The Senior Magistrate’s Court could hear all cases and impose any sentence authorised by law provided that every death sentence was subject to confirmation by the Sultan in Council.

The Residency Court, which consisted of the Sultan, the Resident and the Secretary to the Government, was the apex of the judicial system in Perak.
duties, obligations and powers of this Court were the same as those of the Senior Magistrate's Court.

By 1889 a temporary court-house had been built at Tapah and in 1894 a temporary building was also erected in Tanjong Malim for the Assistant Magistrate to hold Court. In 1897 new court-houses were built at Tapah, Slim and Tanjong Malim.

Many of the District Magistrates and Assistant Magistrates who served in the district between 1889 and 1900 were men who had no legal training and their judicial work therefore lacked quality. From 1898 onwards, the Collector of Land Revenue was not permitted to hear cases and therefore the load on the District Magistrate and his Assistants increased rather rapidly. But in spite of their many difficulties, their inadequate legal training and experience they were able to do much good work in meting out cheap and speedy justice.

Sir Frank Swettenham in his reference to the District Magistrate in Perak wrote in the Perak Government Gazette that

“Our Magistrates are not as thoroughly trained as I should wish, but I believe that substantial justice is done at small cost to the suitors, and they probably prefer cheap and speedy justice to the delays and expense of more elaborately constituted Courts.”

Land and Revenue Administration in Batang Padang

In Perak of the late nineteenth century, all land not held under title was theoretically vested in the Sultan, and State Land could be converted into private ownership by the administrative authorities acting on behalf of the Sultan.

Land Administration in Perak then was based on the Torrens system used in Australia, whereby clear and simple titles were issued. This title enabled the largely agricultural population to own its land, to sell it, borrow money on it and to transfer it after death with the minimum of legal formality and expense. No instrument of transfer unless registered in the prescribed manner was regarded as valid or accepted as evidence of ownership in Court.

Before western administration was introduced into Batang Padang, some land in the district was already owned by the inhabitants and the initial step taken was to compile a register of land held under Customary Tenure. This registration entitled the owner to a certificate which gave him a permanent but conditional right of use and occupancy of the land. The Torrens system which necessitated a precise theodolite survey, led in time to the replacement of the system of customary tenure by one of registration of title. The success of this system was however reduced by the delay in getting the land surveyed.

A person making a fresh application for land for cultivation would have to apply for it in the prescribed manner to the Penghulu of the mukim where the land was situated. On receiving the application the Penghulu would visit the land applied for, enter in his ‘Banchi Book’ the name of the applicant, the position, the length and breadth of the boundaries of the land in question. The Penghulu would then require the applicant to get the boundaries clearly marked out and when this is completed the applicant could occupy and cultivate the land.

At the end of each month, the Penghulu’s ‘Banchi’ Book was brought to the Land Office at Tapah or Tanjong Malim and the applications were entered into the ‘Application Book’ and rent collected. The Penghulu had to see that no land was cleared until it had been demarcated and any application for more than five acres was referred to the District Magistrate before it was entered in the ‘Banchi’ Book. The District Magistrate had the power to alienate up to twenty-five acres of land on behalf of the Sultan. All applications for land in excess of twenty-five acres had to be referred to the British Resident. After the land had been properly surveyed by the Government Surveyor, the full details of the land were entered in the Mukim Register (the title was called E.M.R. — Entry in the Mukim
Map of Batang Padang District in 1900.
Register). When an application was entered into the Mukim Register all previous titles to the land became null and void irrespective of whether they had been surrendered or not. The holder of the E.M.R. was then the de facto owner of the land and was entitled to dispose of it as he wished, subject to an annual payment to the Government of a small quit rent and his abiding by any special conditions which the title might carry.

Applications for mining land had also to follow a prescribed procedure which varied according to the type of mining intended. Those who wished to do ‘lampam’ mining had to obtain special passes while those who wanted to prospect for tin with a view to opening a mine had to obtain prospecting licences.

All applications for ‘lampam’ passes had to be made to the Penghulu who, on finding that the land applied for was available, gave the applicant a letter to the District Magistrate describing the position of the land. On payment of five dollars, the District Magistrate would then issue a pass which was valid for one year. The Penghulu had to see that the lampam worker worked within his land and that he had his pass on him while at work. ‘Lampam’ passes were non-transferable and could be cancelled at any time by the District Magistrate by refunding the amount paid for the pass. This system of mining was extensively used by the Chinese and Malays.

When applying for prospecting licences for specific lots of land in the district the application had to be made either in person or in writing to the District Magistrate. Such applications were entered in the ‘Application’ Book with all particulars, including the date and hour of application. When the land applied for exceeded twenty-five acres the British Resident's sanction had to be obtained. When this was done, the District Magistrate would instruct the applicant to demarcate the land applied for, clearing and marking the boundaries in a rectangular block. The Inspector of Mines was then consulted on the advisability of granting the land and on his agreeing the applicant would be asked to deposit twenty-five dollars for the prospecting licence and a further sum to defray the cost of survey. The land would then be surveyed and a prospecting licence would be granted to him. If the land on which prospecting was done showed promise a mining lease was taken out. When agreements for mining leases were made, it was clearly stipulated that every stream and water-course within or near the land leased would remain under the absolute control of the Government.

All Town lands in the district were divided into lots which were governed by the Building and Municipal Regulations of Perak of 1889. The lots were normally sold by auction and a condition of the sale was that building operations on them should commence within two months of their purchase. Otherwise the land reverted to Government.

The District Magistrate was directed from time to time by the British Resident to mark out Forest Reserves in the district, and to regulate the issue of timber — passes for the cutting down of trees.

The Land Officer at Tapah had many duties to perform, among which the most important one was the collection of land revenue. He had to send to the District Magistrate at the end of each month a return showing the total land revenue, both current and arrears, due in each mukim and the total collection made. As long as the demarcation of holdings in the district was incomplete he had to see that the survey work and the preparation of a new rent-roll were carried out. If any infringement of the conditions of leases took place, he had to inform the District Magistrate, and also enforce the latter's directions regarding the reservation of forest lands and the protection of timber and other jungle produce. Finally, he had to prepare an accurate assessment of town lands and houses liable for rates after getting the properties valued and the houses numbered.

The Land Officer's work was made more difficult by the absence before 1896 of both topographical and land utilization maps of the district.
Revenue

The most important source of revenue in the district was the customs duty on the tin exported. This duty was $12.50 per bhara (3 piculs) in all the kampongs except Ulu Bernam where the duty was $9.00 per bhara. This reduction was made in order to discourage smuggling into Selangor where the duty was $11.00 per bhara. To ensure that no smuggling took place, it was ordered that no tin was to be removed from any mine without a pass from the Pengulu of the kampong. These passes had to be produced at the customs houses both at Telok Anson and at Tanjong Malim. The importance of this revenue can be gauged from the fact that out of a total revenue of $284,593.49 collected in Batang Padang in 1900, the duty on tin alone accounted for $180,529.

The other important items of revenue were the General Farm which included the sole rights to operate gambling, liquor and pawn-breaking shops and to import opium into the district. The operation of opium shops was not included in the General Farm, but this could be done by anyone obtaining a licence for that purpose. In 1894, there were 25 opium shops in Tapah alone. The next important item of revenue was that derived from land. There were also other sources such as sale of licences and passes, dues collected by the Sanitary Board and the Courts.

All financial matters within the district were dealt with by the Financial Assistant in charge of the District Treasury under the direct supervision of the District Magistrate.

Health

Batang Padang was subject to many endemic and epidemic diseases among which the most common ones were intermittent fever (malaria), beri-beri, small-pox, diarrhoea and dysentery. The immigrant population, particularly, lacked resistance to the endemic diseases and the death rate among them was high. Economic development, which depended on the influx of people from outside the district, was best when the environment was reasonably healthy. Hence, the need of an efficient health service in Batang Padang was seen and a hospital established in Tapah as early as 1888. The hospital, which had a staff of three — two dressers and a vaccinator — did useful work under the supervision of the District Surgeon, Lower Perak. In 1893, an apothecary was sent to Tapah and he came to be known as the Medical Officer. In 1896, a travelling dispensary was organised to pay weekly visits to the neighbouring villages of Temoh, Bidor and Chenderiang and this proved popular.

Besides attending to his normal hospital duties, the Medical Officer had to perform a number of other functions. When there was an outbreak of infectious diseases either among men or animals, he had to take the necessary precautions, enforce quarantine measures and prescribe the necessary treatment. He had not only to visit weekly the principal mining centres in the district and distribute medicines but also to visit the various villages periodically to carry out vaccination work. Before the establishment of a Sanitary Board in 1894, he was also in general charge of the health and sanitary work in the district.

The Medical Officer had to overcome many difficulties arising from his lack of adequate training, inadequate facilities at the hospital and insufficient drugs and little co-operation received from the inhabitants in so far as health and preventive measures were concerned.

The Sanitary Board consisted of both official and unofficial members with the District Magistrate as Chairman. Besides concerning itself with the general health of Tapah, the Board had many specific duties connected with revenue collection, drainage, water-supply, conservancy and the fire-brigade. Its influence was chiefly felt in the field of drainage both within and outside the town. Swamps were drained, forests and belukar outside the town were cleared and brick drains were built in the town.

Education

Since Malay was the 'lingua franca' of the Malay States, and was "the language
of the State Councils and the Courts, of hospitals and police-stations and all Government departments in their dealings with the public", it was naturally selected as the medium of instruction in the early schools.

Education in Batang Padang began with the establishment of a school at Tapah in 1890. Schools were also established in 1891 at Bidor and Chenderiang and in 1892 three more schools were opened at Sungkai, Tanjong Malim and Slim. The last school set up in the district before 1900 was that at Temoh in 1896. By 1896, Batang Padang had six boys’ schools with a total enrolment of 174 boys.

The aim of the early schools was to enable the Malay boys to read and write their own language, to do a little arithmetic, to know the geography of the area in which they lived, to write Romanised Malay and to take an active interest in physical exercise and manly sports. Their education was also intended to inculcate in them habits of punctuality, neatness, obedience and general good behaviour. Consideration was also given to their Muslim religion and the Koran was taught in the schools. The education in all schools was free.

When schools were first started, the inhabitants showed a marked reluctance to send their children there and the District Magistrate and the various Penghulus faced the task of persuading parents to send their children to school. The situation was so acute that Government had to enforce by law the compulsory attendance of children at school.

**Conclusion**

By 1900, the district administration had more or less assumed its ultimate form and the increased efficiency and greater capacity for work resulted in an acceleration of economic development.

Between 1889 and 1900, the annual revenue of the district increased ten-fold and the population doubled.

Economic development, which commenced in the northern part of the district, spread gradually southwards, and by 1900 in addition to tin-mining, consideration was given to the cultivation of rubber for which the district was found to be ideally suited.

Thus by 1900, a sound foundation for the economic development and prosperity of the district had been laid.