MINERAL RESOURCES AND THE PRESENT LEGISLATION

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Introduction

When mining legislation was introduced in Malaya it was in the most haphazard form. "Early mining enactments seem to have been produced on sporting principles, with the aid of scissors and paste-paragraphs clipped from Acts dealing with British coal mining, Victorian deep leads, Queensland quartz-mining and New South Wales shallow alluvial mining, eked out by a few original conceptions, jostling each other in hopeless confusion"! Tan Sri Salleh Abas' main paper observes that legislation on mineral resources in Malaya is apt to confuse aryone as it consists of a number of laws, enactments, ordinances, Acts of Parliament, rules and regulations. At present, there are no less than 65 pieces of legislation in Malaya dealing with mineral resources, and more are being introduced as and when the necessity arises.

Motivated by greed and "get-rich-quick" attitude, the British, as other colonialists did, introduced the legislations with two factors in mind, namely, urgency in

C.G. Warnford-Lock, Mining in Malaya for Gold and Tin, London, 1907, pp. 6 - 7.

Paragraph 3.

exploitation and large-scale operations in producing these minerals for purposes of foreign export and for political gains, nationally and inter-nationally. Other considerations were neglected. This is evidenced by incomplete exploitation of mining land leading to wastage of resources, and all mineral resources, especially tin, were exported to the United Kingdom to build up a "World's Tin Center" — and from there it was channelled to the rest of the world.

Until recently, emploration of ores and minerals for industrial utilization on a consistent rational plan had received no attention. The bulk of mining was done with European capital and technical skill. As a result of this, exploration and exploitation of Malaysian minerals became foreign controlled. This is a very unhealthy situation.

To view the present mining legislations in Malaysia by wearing only a "lawyer's spectacles" would not give a pararomic view of the whole situation, as lawyers are noted for splitting hairs. In this commentary, I would use not only the "lawyers' spectacles," but also the "economist's microscope," the "sociologists' lenses," the "administrators' telescope," etc. and I admit that I am neither expert in ophthalmologist nor I am an optician.

The approaches adopted in this paper are the following:-

- (1) Economic
- (2) Sociological
- (3) Political
- (4) Administrative and organizational
- (5) Technological
- (6) Legal
- (7) National
- (8) International

These approaches are by no means complete and exhaustive. Bearing in mind that time has been a major factor in making a detailed study, only bare sketches are provided in the various subheadings, and some comments in one subheading are bound to overlap with another.

I. Economic Approach

"Malaysia is endowed with considerable resources and varieties of mineral resources. Tin is by far the most important mineral found in Malaysia." This is followed by petroleum in Sarawak, iron ore, bauxite, ilmenite, gold, and a host of other minerals. The recent discovery of oil and gas off the East Coast of Peninsula Malaysia will add more ringgits to our coffers. From the available records, production of known minerals from Malaya up till 1970, based on export value was calculated to be \$17,400 millions. The production of petroleum in Sarawak for 1964 - 1972 was estimated at \$2,500 million (See Appendix A).

With that amount of mineral resources found in the Malaysian soil, we can definitely conclude that Malaysia is a wealthy nation. A rough estimate of known mineral resources still to be mined was put at \$20,000 millions or even more.

³ The opening words of Tan Sri Salleh Abas' paper para 1.

Based on Yip Yat Hoong, The Development of Tin Mining Industry on Malaya. Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1969 p. 391 who concluded that Malaya's total known deposits of tin metal to be around 3 million tons.

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No estimate could be made as yet on the value of oil and gas recently discovered in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The figure could easily be doubled or even trippled.

Malaysia's mineral resources, coupled with production of other natural resources, such as rubber, oil palm, timber, pineapple etc. has led Malaysia to a stable nation economically, not only in Asia, but also on the world. Our ringgit is as strong and solid as a rock.

But the question now remains - is the economic wealth of the nation fairly distributed? This question is not easily answered. Adam Smith, the father of economics, advocated in his Wealth of Nations, that the economic wealth of the nation should be fairly distributed. In the case of Malaysia, for historical and political reasons, the nation's wealth has not been fairly distributed among the states and among its citizens. Some states rich in mineral and natural resources benefitted from such wealth endowed, while some others remain backward and undeveloped. From the national point of view, this unhealthy situation cannot be left unchacked. As a nation, each component state and its citizens ought to have a fair share in the nation's wealth. Otherwise sociological complications are bound to arise. Once this happens the situation will be very difficult to control. Therefore, in an attempt to correct this imbalance, the Second Malaysia Plan, 1971 - 1975 stress much emphasis on greater participation by Malays and other indigenous people in economic activities. Such participation applies to ownership and management as well as employment. The Government has set a target that within two decades at least 30% of the commercial and industrial activities in all catagories and scales of peration should have participation by Malays and other indigenous people in terms of ownership and management.

Malaysia, Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975, p. 158.

II. Sociological Approach

Sociologists believe that unequal distribution of nation's wealth will lead to many sociological problems. This again has the side effects such as unemployment, labour unrest, political instability, racial upheavels and so on. Tan Sri Salleh concluded with a suggestion that ...

the government, therefore, when issuing licences,
permits, or other authorities in connection with
/ mining / industry must not so much be guided by
the need to increase the Consolidated Fund, but must
also have regard to the sociological aspects. If
the re-structuring of the society has any relevancy
at all, it would certainly be proper for the government
to insist that the industry should employ citizens
and that the composition of employees at the various
levels of employment should be such as would reflect
the multi-racial character of this country. The
perpetuation of work identity or industry identity
with certain races or community will not be healthy
for the future development of the country.6

I would go all along to endorse my agreement with the main paper in this matter. History has shown that Malays and Indians have taken little or insignificant part in the development of Malaya's tin and other mining industries. Malay ownership and participation of the mining industries, particularly tin, are negligible. In 1964, only 2.9% of the <u>local</u> share-capital of the tin mining companies was owned by Malays, while the Indian share-ownership was slightly better with 5.4%; the <u>local</u> Chinese ownership was 91.7%. The percentage of Malays and Indian participations in tin mining industry would be tremendously reduced to a negligible proportion if the combined foreign and local ownerships were taken into account. 7

⁶ paragraph 83

⁷ Yip Yat Hoong. op. cit. Table V-12

Similarly, employment in the tin mining industry does not reflect the multiracial character of the country.

Only 21.4% of the persons employed in mining in 1967 were

Malays, while the Chinese 67.2% and the Indians 10.3%.

As a launching pad in correcting this imbalance in ownership, management and employment it should be the policy to issue licenses and permits in new areas especially in the Malay Reservation areas to the Malays or Malay financial institutions. But the Malays will be caught in the twilight zone. The government will be faced with the difficult problem of reconciling the desire of the Malays to own and control a substantial proportion of the mining industry with the need to develop these resources, for the Malays lack the capital, technical know-how and experience. The Government's role will be concerned with explorations to locate areas, both inside and outside Malay Reserves, where tin ore exists and to provide technical and financial support to potential Malay and other indigenous entrepreneurs. This role will be performed in co-operation with State Governments.

Another solution to the problem would be to enter into production sharing agreements or partnership with well-established mining companies to work out potentially large areas of mining lands in the Malay Reservation areas like the petroleum agreements. Alternatively, State Economic Development Corporations, established tin mining companies and land owners could enter into joint-partnership.

The fourth alternative would be for the Malay financial institutions like Mara, or even the State Economic Development Corporations to obtain substantial proportions of shares in the

⁸ Second Malaysia Plan 1971 - 75, p. 173.

⁹ ibid. p. 161.

newly formed public mining companies, control them and allot the shares to the Malay investors.

All these alternatives cannot be carried out unless there is a positive government policy to this effect. It is earnestly hoped that in the proposed petroleum mining industry, the government will adopt a positive policy so as to reflect the needs and aspirations of peoples of the country.

III. Political Approach

Politics play a big role in the shaping of our legislation. Substantial part of our mining legislation was passed during the colonial era, and as such is colonial in spirit and outlook. Pre-Merdeka laws only regulate the mining operations, with minimal control by the government. Issuing of mining leases, certificates and licenses was made only to Europeans and British miners and permits for Dulang washing to Chinese and others. Gradually however, the Chinese were given some shares in the leases, certificates and licenses. In 1954, three years before Merdeka, European interests constituted 77.7% of the total share ownership, and the balance of 22.3% local ownership. The situation was improved after Merdeka in that the local shareholders formed 64% and foreign shareholders 36% in 1964. Of the 64% local shareholders, 71.7% were Chinese, 5.4% Indians and 2.9% Malays.

Moreover, tin mining industry has been for the past one hundred years a European venture. The number of European companies predominates over the local companies. It follows, therefore, that if the industry is foreign controlled, the organization that look after the interest of European companies

¹⁰ See Yip Yat Hoong, op. cit. Table V 3, V 11 and V 12.

is also foreign controlled. Sad to say that the States of Malaya Chamber of Mines is the only commercial organization in Malaysia which is controlled by Europeans. Appendix B discloses that 78% of the Council members were Europeans, and the rest local tin miners.

The Clamber of Mines appears to be a powerful political pressure group. Their voices are heard in Parliamant. Many things demanded by the Chamber of Mines have been met with by the government. For many years, the Chamber of Mines have pressured the government to introduce new legislation dealing with tin stealing. Isn't Penal Code enough to deal with this kind of offence?

Tin and iron are strategic minerals, most-sought after by developed nations of the world. Since Malaysia produces 47% of the world requirement for tin, it has been acknowledged that Malaysia occupies a commanding, if not a controlling, position in this metal. However, for the past ten years or so, the United States have been stock-piling this metal along with ten other essential deficit minerals. The stock-piling is aimed not so much for emergency purposes, but more as a powerful economic weapon. There have been protests by tin producing countries every time the United States gov ernment announces the release of tin from its stock-pile.

Being a great tin producing nation, proud of our sovereignty and independence, we should not allow other nations, capitalists or otherwise. to exploit the situation thereby jeopardizing our interests and underming not only our economy but also our sovereignty.

We now need a mining policy to be used as a political strategy to combat any attempt to undermine our economy and

sovereignty. What we need is a mining legislation that reflects our sovereignty.

IV. Administrative Approach

At present we have many departments dealing with administration of mineral resources - the Mining Department, the Geological Survey Department, the Office of State Director of Lands and Mines and the various land offices at the district level.

By having different departments at different levels, some of the functions are bound to overlap. At the same time, there needs to be coordination and cooperation at different levels, and at the same level at different departments. Lack of coordination between various organizations, will certainly hamper the smooth running of the administrative machinery and this leads to inefficiency, duplication of work and wasting of efforts.

To facilitate the smooth running of the whole organization relating to mineral resources, it is submitted that a single organization be formed to handle all mineral resources and matters relating thereto. The various departments existing at present need to be integrated and restructured. In the reorganization of the department, the national interest, and not departmental or professional interests, should prevail. The Organization Chart on page explains the proposal for the reorganization of the various departments dealing with mineral resources.

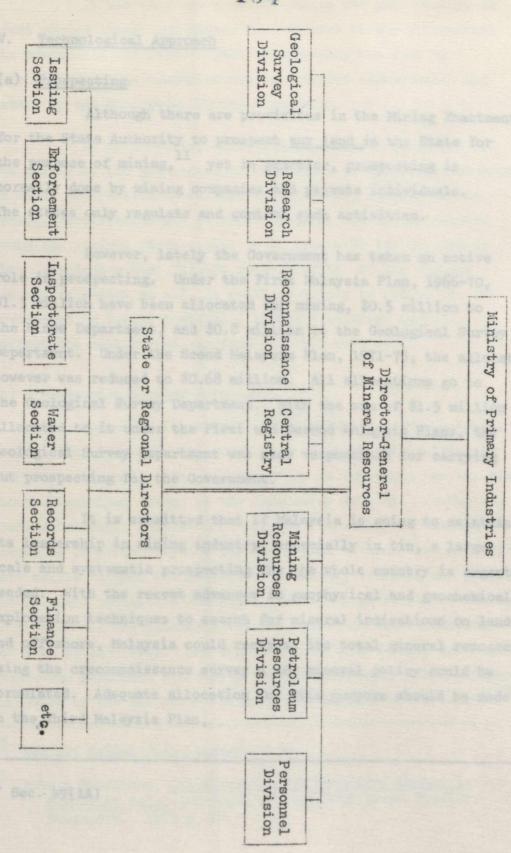
Through reorganization of the various departments and the establishment of a new Department of Mineral Resources, the

duties and powers now vested in the State Director of Lands and Mines and the Collectors of Land Revenue in respect of mining, could be transferred to the State Director of Mineral Resources, thereby relieving some of the duties of Land Officers.

Furthermore, judicial powers vested in the Senior of Inspector of Mines could be taken away and transferred to the Magistrate's Court thereby abolishing the Court of Senior Inspector of Mines and substituting it with Magistrates Court with Special Powers.

It is submitted that it is easier to train a qualified magistrate in mining law than to train qualified Mining Inspectors in law. The Special Magistrate or even President Sessions Court with special knowledge in mining legislation could be sent on circuit covering more than one state, if necessary.

The ICDAU of the Prime Minister's Department, or the Division of Public Administration, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, could be given the task of making feasibility studies to find out whether such reorganisation is desirable.



Note: This Chart may be modified when serious studies are made

V. Technological Approach

(a) Prospecting

Although there are provisions in the Mining Enactment for the State Authority to prospect any land in the State for the purpose of mining, ll yet in practice, prospecting is normally done by mining companies and private individuals. The states only regulate and control such activities.

However, lately the Government has taken an active role in prospecting. Under the First Malaysia Plan, 1966-70, \$1.3 million have been allocated for mining, \$0.5 million to the Mines Department, and \$0.8 million to the Geological Survey Department. Under the Scond Malaysia Plan, 1971-75, the allocation however was reduced to \$0.68 million. All allocations go to the Geological Survey Department. With the sum of \$1.5 million allocated to it under the First and Second Malaysia Plans, the Geological Survey Department was made responsible for carrying out prospecting for the Government.

It is submitted that if Malaysia is going to maintain its leadership in mining industry, especially in tin, a large-scale and systematic prospecting for the whole country is urgently needed. With the recent advances in geophysical and geochemical exploration techniques to search for mineral indications on land and off-shore, Malaysia could reassess its total mineral resources. Using the creconnaissance survey a new mineral policy could be formulated. Adequate allocation for this purpose should be made in the Third Malaysia Plan.

¹¹ Sec. 49(1A)

It has been the practice during the past century to grant mining leases and mining certificates to the prospectors who prospected the land. Again, prospecting was done by established mining companies and experienced individuals, and lately by the Geological Survey Department.

It is submitted that from now onward, it should be the policy of the government to monopolize prospecting, not only in Malay Reservation areas, but in all areas, so that mining leases, certificates and licences could be fairly distributed among the various races. This is in line with Tan Sri Salleh Abas' conclusion that "if the restructuring of the society has any relevancy at all, it would certainly be proper for the government to insist that the / mining / industry should reflect the multiracial character of this country." 12

(b) Production Sharing Agreements

Indonesia is no better than Malaysia in the technical field. Yet, Indonesia has surmounted the technical difficulty with eas and smile. The oil discovery in Indonesia has brought about a technical change in the Indonesian economy. Production Sharing Contracts entered into between Pertamina and foreign companies paved the way for the Indonesian technocrats to acquire more skills through the process of learning, training and participation. The standard production sharing contract obligates the contractor to provide all the financing for the operation and to sustain the risk of all costs. The contractor is also obliged to train Indonesian personnel and employ Indonesian labour. The equipment purchased by the contractor becomes the property of Pertamina. 13

¹² Tan Sri Salleh Abas, paragraph 83.

Robert Fabrikant, Oil Discovery and Technical Change in Southeast Asia, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. 1973 p, 20.

As far as petroleum mining is concerned, Malaysia is at par with other developing nations in surmounting the technical hurdle. Production sharing contracts have been entered with well established international petroleum mining companies, namely Conoco, Esso, Mobil and Shell. It should now be the policy of the government to establish petro-chemical complexes in Malaysian towns nearest to the oil fields, namely Kuching, Kuantan and Kota Bharu not only to process and refine petroleum, but also to produce certain intermidiaries and derivatives. Legislation should be made to provide that these refinaries and petro-chemical complexes public companies, shared and enjoyed by citizens of Malaysia.

For other minerals, such as tin and copper, a reexamination of the existing leases or mining certificates or licences is necessary. Serious studies should be made as to whether it is legally feasible to terminate the present leases and substitute them with production sharing agreements, and eventually to convert the existing private companies into public companies.

VI. Legal Approach

At present there are 65 pieces of legislation in Malaysia dealing with mineral resources. The latest deal with petroleum, i.e. Petroleum Mining Act (Act No. 95). The time has now come for the government to consider codifying all these Acts of Parliament, enactments, ordinances, rules and regulations into a single, complete and exhaustive code. Although minerals are the property of the state and only the state concerned has the competence to exercise legislative and executive powers in respect of lands and mines, the Constitution, by

¹⁴ Sec. 40(b) and 41(a) of the National Land Code.

virtue of Arts. 76 provides that -

Parliament may make laws with respect to any matter enumerated in the State List, but only as follows, that is to say:

- (a)
 - (b) for the purpose of promoting uniformity of the laws of two or more states;

The National Land Code, 1965 which amended and consolidated 43 provinces land laws came about as the result of the Parliam nt exercising its powers under Art. 76. Any further delay in bringing about a uniform Mining Code will hamper the smooth administration of mineral resources.

One might argue that a National Mining Code at this juncture would be a futile academic exercise, as the mineral resources, especially tin deposits are facing exhaustion. 15

This is not true, for various estimates on tin reserves have been proved inaccurate and unreliable. 16

"At present there are still several important potential sources of tin in Malaya. What is needed is large-scale and systematic prospecting of these sources to discover the locations of the deposits. In the past, prospecting has been left too much in the hands of private companies and individuals. The Malaysian Government has recently undertaken some prospecting, but this is not enough because it has been confined mainly to Malay reservations. While every assistance should be given private enterprise in carrying out prospecting, the Government should undertake prospecting more seriously.

See First Montage Plan 1966-1970 : 128: The plan estimated a decline of 4.6 per namum in the rest value of Malayan tin output over the period 1966-70.

In 1939, Fermor estimated one million tons of tin deposits in Malaya but up till 1972 1.7 million tons have been produced. 1953 Paley estimated 1.5 million tons of tin ore deposits, but since then till 1972, 1.2 million tons have been produced See also Yip Yat Hoong, The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya, K.L. University of Malaya Press, 1969.

This is now a matter of urgency. But the future looks bright, and when the whole country has been thoroughly and systematically prospected, Malaya's total known deposits could well double the figure of 1.5 million tons of tin metal, as estimated in the Paley Report."

Furthermore, the discovery of copper in Sabah and the increasing production of bauxite, couple with the discovery of oil and gas off the East Coast of Peninsula Malaysia by a consortium of three international oil companies justify a new Mining and Petroleum Code.

VII. National Approach - The National Mineral Policy

A nation's progress and power potential are largely measured in terms of its ability to explore, process and utilize it to the best possible advantage. Malaysia' mineral policy for national reconstruction has been neglected in the past.

Systematic exploration and exploitation of minerals for local industrial utilization on a consistent rational plan for national purposes had also been neglected. Iron ore was exploited until exhausted for purposes of export to Japan entirely in the crude condition without any processing or curing done locally. Similarly, tin was mined and exported only in smelted form.

We are not lacking in our capacity and ability to frame a national mineral policy. The National Planning Unit (NPU) and the Implementation, Coordination and Development Administration Unit (ICDAU) of the Prime Minister's Department, the National Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research (NISIR), the Mining Department, the Geological Survey Department (the proposed department of National Mineral Resources) could be

¹⁷ Yip Yat Hoong, op. cit., p. 391.

mobilized to draw up a comprehensive report on mineral resources and to recommend a national mineral policy based on modern techniques and progressive approach for the benefit of the Malaysian society as a whole.

The potential mineral resources available was estimated at \$20,000 million at current price, and double or even tripple this figure for petroleum. In making the mineral policy, we should be guided by our resources from the viewpoint of surpluses, sufficiencies and deficiencies. Today every great world power assesses its mineral potential from the veiwpoint of military stratergy and internal-defence; stock-piles of deficit stratergic minerals are built up against possible eventuality of agression. 18

It is submitted that a planned programme of mineral development is necessary. This could be incorporated in the Third Malaysia Plan. Our priorities are as follows:-

- (1) Intensive and systematic geophysical and geochemical explorations to search for mineral indications on land and off-shore.
- (2) Domestic treatment and processing of raw materials instead of their export in the raw condition.
- (3) Maximum industrial utilization of our mineral resources, and the surpluses exported.

Meher Wadia, Minerals of India, New Delhi, National Book Trust, 1966, p. 188.

VIII. International Approach

It has always been the irony that the governing body or the market of a commodity is not located in the producing country, but has been the monopoly at Western powers. Rubber and Tin markets are not located in Malaysia. Tea market is not located in Colombo, oil palm market (if there is any) is not in Kuala Lumpur. The International Tin Council, The International Tin Research and Development Council and the tin markets are all located in London.

Negotiations to transfer the rubber market from London to Kuala Lumpur mark the beginning of a new era to locate the market, the research and development centers in appropriate locations. It is hoped that in a not-too-distant-future, arrangements could be made to put Kuala Lumpur on the world map as the center for tin, oil palm, pineapple and pepper. The markets, research centers and councils not only give the producing nation that national pride, but also the potentiality to control the commodity and manipute the prices.

Conclusion

The present mining legislations in Malaysia have been found to be obsolete, confusing, inadequate and more often than not, unavailable. Compiling and revising the existing aged legislation into a single bound document will not help solve the many problems raised in this commentary. It will no doubt help the practising lawyers, law students and others to locate where the law is, but other problems will continue to remain.

The Attorney General's Chambers took about three years to prepare for the birth of the National Land Code, 1965. It is my submission that a new National Mining and Petroleum Code is urgently required. The new Code should not only incorporate, amend and consolidate the existing laws, but also should include a preamble embodying the aspirations of the peoples of Malaysia and the objectives of the national mineral policy. Article 33 of the Indonesian Constitution declares that -

- Sec. 1
- Sec. 2 Branches of production which are important to the State and which affect the life of most people, shall be controlled by the State.
- Sec. 3 Land and water and the natural riches therein shall be controlled by the state and shall be exploited for the greatest welfare of the people.

and United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1803 (XVII) adopted on 14th December 1962. declares that -

The exploration, development and disposition of / natural / resources as well as the import of the foreign capital required for these purposes, should be in conformity with the rules and conditions which the peoples and nations freely consider to be necessary or desirable with regard to the authorisation, restriction or prohibition of such activities;

In cases where authorisation is granted, the capital imported and the earnings on that capital shall be governed by the terms thereof, by the national legislation in force, and by international law. The profits derived must be shared in the proportions freely agreed upon, in each case, between the investors and the recipient State, due care being taken to ensure that there is no impairment, for any reason, of that State's sovereignty over its natural wealth and resources.

All these declarations, resolutions, and the views, writings and opinions express in this Second Malaysian Law Conference, could be used as guidelines for the framing of our National Mining and Petroleum Code.

Appendix A

Value of Minerals produced in Malaya

(based on export)

(in Million riggits)

		31 ST 80 18	ES LEYS US	some devices of the second	-	Odd	Desired and desired the section of
Mineral	Tin	Iron	Bauxite	Ilmenite	Columbite	Other minerals	Total
8 - 1941	2,362	nsas	neao	n.a.	n.a.	43	2,405
	Tokr						N-4
2 - 1944		***			-	-	3
1945	3		n 0-	n.a.	n.a.	1	31
1946	30	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	96
1947	94	n.a.	Itacop		-	73	
1948	19 221	1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	224
1949	264	7	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	273
1949	354	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	7	370
1951	496	10	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	6	512
1952	465	21 13	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	9	495
1953	382	21	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	THE RESERVE OF THE PARTY OF THE	412
1954	404	22 13	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	466
1955	433	33	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	530
1955	471	51 13	n.a.	n,a.	n.a.		
1957	371	66	6	n.a.	n.a.	1	444
1957	239	63	4	3	n.a.	2	311
1959	299	100	7	2	n.a.	3	411
1960	507	140	8	3	n.a.	2	662
1961	553	164	5	3	n.a.		730
1962	620	166	6	3	1	1	797
1963	642	176	The second secon	4		1	832
1964	728	163	9	4	n.a.	1	1;052
1965	872	161	14	4	n.a.	1	947
1966	792	136	14	4	n.a.	1	895
1967	755	122	14	3	n.a.	4	962
1968	830	111	13	4	n.a.	5	1,082
1969	940	116	17	4	n.a.	5	1,141
1970	1,013	107	12	3			
Total	45, 440	1,966	159	44	3	75	17,412
1970	-	1,966	159	3 44		man and the state of the state	

Sources: Official Year Books & Yip Yat Hoong, op.cit.

Note: n.a. - not aveilable

The figure includes import of tin from Thailand for smelting and subsequently reexported.

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Appendix B

States of Malaya Chamber of Mines Council Members

	Nu			
Year	European	Chinese	Malay	Total
1960	13	5	-	18
1961	14	4	-	18
1962	14	4	-	18
1963	13	4	1	18
1964	13	4	1	18
1965	13	4	1	18
1966	14	4	-	18
1967	14	4	-	18
1968	15	3	-	18
1968	15	3	-	18
1969	13	5	-	18

Sources: States of Malaya Chamber of Mines Yearbook