

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of Block P of padi-land Sawah Sempadan, Tanjong Karang. It constitutes a part of phase III of the Tanjong Karang Survey Project, undertaken by the Department of Economics, University of Malaya.

Sawah Sempadan, henceforth abbreviated as S.S., is a plot of land, 6,100 acres in area, developed from swampy jungles in the 1920's for the cultivation of padi. It is situated about two miles to the north-east of the town of Tanjong Karang, in the District of Kuala Selangor.

It can be observed from Map I, S.S. is more or less systematically partitioned into twenty-four Blocks, most of which are of equal size. Each Block is designated with a capital letter of Roman alphabet.

Situated towards the centre part of the eastern - most row is Block P under study. Map II shows that it is divided into one hundred and four lots, most of which measures three acres each in area.

Objective

The objective of this study is primarily to enquire into the nature and problems of ownership and operation of land in Block P and other related land elsewhere, and of the economic and socio-economic circumstances arising therefrom.

This study, together with other exactly similar ones conducted simultaneously in other Blocks of S.S., will form a treatise on S.S. padi-land from the aspects of land ownership and operation.

This treatise will in turn fit into a more comprehensive thesis, consisting of enquiries into various aspects of land settlement of the area, conducted over a period of various years.

It is hoped that this final thesis will be able to form a kind of a practical model throwing the much needed light on the process and evolution of land settlement, and its economic, social, cultural and other problems.

It is further hoped that this will eventually usher us to a more effective way of appreciating and tackling the problems relating to land settlement particularly those of the rural areas.

Scope

With the above objective in mind, this study was conducted in Block P, S.S., and when and where necessary outside the Block as well.

The enquiry was conducted into the nature and problems of land ownership and operation. Briefly, the realms of enquiry may be set out thus:

- a) The nature and pattern of ownership and operation of land.
- b) The existence and degree of fragmentation of holdings and farms.
- c) The cases and circumstances of joint-ownership and joint-operation.
- d) Other related topics such as the location of pieces of land, and the productivity and output of the crop in relation to the pattern of ownership and operation.
- e) Other general observations in so far as they relate to any of the above topics.

Methodology

The enquiry was carried out by means of Questionnaire TKFS. 4/64 Land (i), prepared by the Department of Economics, University of Malaya. The Questionnaire is attached in Appendix I.

The writer interviewed the owner(s) or operator(s) or both of each lot of land in the Block, irrespective of whether they stay in the Block itself or outside.

In cases where the relevant interviewees could not be contacted, efforts have been made to obtain the relevant information from such personalities as "Sidang" and "Ketua" and officials of "Kesatuan Peladang" and also the neighbours of the respective interviewees.

The writer also made a few visits to the Land Office, Kuala Selangor, to examine the records concerning the land in the Block.

It is very significant to note at this juncture that the analysis in this study is carried out only in so far as the information

obtained through the Questionnaire goes. The Questionnaire may fall short of some other relevant information. Also, no endeavour has been made to estimate the magnitude of different types of errors which are inherent in a study of this nature.

Context and Terminology

Owing to the existence of some unique features in the padi-land of the S.S., particularly in relation to the ownership of land, there is an urgent need in this study to be precise and accurate with regards to context and terminology.

This study discovers that, with regards to ownership of land and some other matters, there is a sharp divergence between de jure situation, that is the situation as it exists LEGALLY in the documents and treatment of the Land Office; and de facto situation, that is the situation as it exists PRACTICALLY on the ground. In order to bring out the economic and other implications as they exist in the real world, this study distinguishes between the two situations. Either or both may be relevant in one place or another. Hence, the need to be precise as to which context the study refers.

Many important terms appear several times in this study. One of these is 'lot'. A lot is here taken to mean an unbroken or undivided stretch of land that is defined and registered under a single title, regardless of the area. However, a peculiar situation exists in the case of some lots in the Block under study. This peculiarity arises as a result of the stipulation of the Land Office that for every lot of land alienated in the S.S., an acre of kampong land elsewhere would also be alienated; and these two would be registered under a single title.¹ This results in two lots being registered under a single title. There are as yet precisely seven cases of this nature in Block P.

It is obvious, however, that such bendang-cum-kampong combination, though registered under a single title, is actually made up of two separate lots for, physically, the two are divided and broken. Moreover, even the Land Office practically recognises the separate entity of each through its allocation of a separate lot number.²

There are cases when not the whole lot, but only a PART of the lot is relevant. These cases may be found mostly in de facto context. An owner may hold, de facto, not the whole lot which is registered under a single title, but only a part of it. Whenever

¹ See Appendix II, Schedule III, Approval of Application for Land, (Land Rule 5), particularly under 6(1).

² See *ibid*, particularly 6(1), 6(3) and 7(1).

only a PART of a lot as defined above is referred to, the term 'sub-lot' will be employed. A sub-lot is thus a part of a lot, regardless of the proportion of the area involved.

There are other significant terms, such as holding, farm, and fragmentation, but these will be defined under the relevant Chapters.

