

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Objective and Purpose of pursuing the Research:

(a) To see the present position of the fishing industry, the third largest agricultural industry, in terms of employment, after rubber and padi in Malaya.

(b) To see how far the fishing industry has been developed and how much further it can be developed. After all, the sea is a great supplier of food, especially animal protein.

(c) To understand the many complex problems connected with the marketing of fish and the credit needs of the fishermen and to see how we can overcome these problems and how we can improve the fish marketing system and the fishermen's credit facilities.

(d) To seek ways and means of raising the level of income of the fishermen.

(e) To determine the importance of the role of the fishermen's cooperative movement in solving the problems faced by the fishermen and in raising the level of income of the fishermen. To analyse the causes of the failure of the movement in Malaya and to establish the conditions needed for its success.

(f) To evaluate the role of the Government in helping the fishermen obtain a better standard of living.

Scope and Limitations of the Study:

The study is very wide because it covers the whole of the Malay peninsula. The credit and marketing systems themselves are very wide topics for discussion. Differences in practice between regions like the East and the West Coast widen the topic for discussion further. There has so far been very little researches into all the facets of the industry.

Most of the existing writings on the fishing industry are written from experience by those who have been in touch with the industry for some time like D. G. Stead⁺¹ and T. W. Burton⁺². But the credit and marketing side of the industry has not been touched in great detail by these writings. Therefore, there is much research work to be done in these two fields.

There is little written information concerning the fishing industry. Books are few in number and are often out-of-date. For example, D. G. Stead's book, "General Report on Fishermen in British Malaya" was printed in the 1920's and Raymond Firth's book, "Malay Fishermen: Their Peasant Economy" was printed in 1945. Few printed pamphlets on the industry have ever been published. Very little is known of the exact position of the fishermen and the industry. To those who want to study the fishing industry in great detail, the study is limited by the lack of books and pamphlets. There has never been a book or pamphlet published on the fishermen's cooperative movement to date. Neither has a full page been devoted to it in any of the existing books touching on the fishing industry.

Nevertheless, much information concerning the industry especially the fishermen's cooperative movement can be secured from the files at the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in both the Fisheries and Cooperative Divisions. Unfortunately, such information have been mysteriously classified as "confidential" and access to them is difficult and on many occasions refused⁺³. In addition, much information can be obtained from the experience of those officers at the Ministry who have been in touch with the industry for some time.

Proposed Method of Research:

As it is a very wide field of study and with limited time available, it is very difficult to undertake a full-scale fieldwork unless there is adequate manpower to do investigation

+1D. G. Stead: General Report on Fishermen in British Malaya.

+2T. W. Burton: The Fishing Industry of Singapore.

+3I experience all these difficulties during my many visits to the Ministry in connection with this graduation exercise.

throughout Malaya for a certain length of time. The research shall be confined mainly to information obtainable from the Fisheries Division and the Cooperative Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Statistics Department, Kuala Lumpur and books relevant to the topic available in the library at the University of Malaya, at the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and at Penang.

I shall try to verify those information obtainable from the above sources by my interview with those Government Officers connected with the fishing industry. Their experience will undoubtedly be of invaluable help to my graduation exercise. In addition, I intend to do some fieldwork in Penang to support those information which I have obtained from my readings and from my conversation with those Government Officers. In my fieldwork, I intend to go to some of the fishing villages in Penang Island and question the fishermen on those aspects of the industry connected with this graduation exercise.