

CHAPTER IV

Handling of Rubber and Other Main Commodities

Rubber, coconut, copra and fruit create a heavy demand for transport in the mtkin of Bessarab. In this chapter it is intended to discuss the transportation of the above-mentioned products and problems related to it.

A. Rubber Handling.

1. Rubber farmers and rubber dealers' arrangement.

In Bessarab, there are 10 smoke-houses where rubber farmers send rubber sheets to be smoked. They belong to the richer farmers who smoke rubber for themselves as well as others for a certain payment. After being smoked, the rubber sheets are kept in the stores of the smoke-houses prior to being transported to Kuznetz. Thus the smoke-houses serve as storage facilities for the rubber farmers as a whole. This is an important factor in transportation.

In the mtkin, nearly all the rubber - both sheets and scrap - belonging to rubber farmers or bought by the two licensed rubber dealers is hauled by the cooperative van. With the exception of few rubber farmers who send rubber to Kuznetz by bus or lorry, the majority make arrangement with the van to transport rubber to Kuznetz regularly.

The charge for the haulage of rubber from Beserah to Kuantan is 60 cents per picul. Every transport operator adheres to this rate. Even the buses and taxis, which charge lower rates for fresh fish haulage, charge the same rate. This uniformity of rate is due to the fact that in the transportation of rubber the prime consideration of the transport user is the charge levied, rather than the quality of service, i.e. timeliness, promptness and the consideration of perishability. Rubber is not a perishable commodity like fresh fish, and also it is easy to handle during the process of transport.

Farmers patronize the cooperative van despite the uniform charges by all operators. For example, there is a small lorry operator living in Sungai Karang, which is adjacent to Batu Hitam. But the farmers in Batu Hitam send rubber to Kuantan by the cooperative van. There are several reasons for the widespread use of the cooperative van in rubber transportation.

First, the cooperative van has gained the goodwill and trust of the producers. This is shown by the fact that, when the van stopped operating temporarily for 2 weeks in June 1958 because of a certain reason,¹ the rubber farmers sought the services of other operators. But when it came into operation again they reverted to the cooperative van in the transportation of their rubber.

¹ See Chapter V, page 34.

Second, there is a mutual understanding among small transport operators in Beserah and adjacent areas not to compete each other out of existence. There is a strong human element preventing purely economic factors from operating completely. For example, the chairman of the Cooperative is an important person in the mizim and well respected. Out of respect, the desire to break the "monopoly" by other small operators, who usually established themselves later than the cooperative van business, is somewhat checked.

Lastly, the payment by means of credit accounts attracts customers who usually like to pay in lump sum at the end of the month or after the sale of their rubber.

Table 5 shows the amount of rubber transported by the cooperative van from Beserah to Kuantan, the rubber market in the region, in the period from July 1957 to June 1958. The figures show both sheet and scrap rubber. Rubber sheets form about 80 per cent of the total rubber production and scraps form the rest 20 per cent.

TABLE 5

THE AMOUNT OF RUBBER CARRIED BY THE
COOPERATIVE VAN FROM BESEBAH TO KUANTAN
JULY 1957 TO JUNE 1958

Year and Month	Volume (in piculs)
1957: July	57
August	269
September	215
October	294
November	271
December	215
1958: January	166
February	320
March	399
April	338
May	129
June	429
Total	3,102

In the same period the records of the smoke-houses show that the rubber produced amounted to 2,948 piculs of sheet rubber and about 700 piculs of scrap rubber which totalled to 3,648 piculs. Thus it can be seen that the cooperative van carried about 85 per cent of the whole volume of rubber produced in Beserah. Therefore the figures indicate the importance of the cooperative van in the haulage of rubber. The small amount of rubber not carried by the cooperative van was transported by other vans, buses, lorries, etc.

2. Rubber Haulage in Estates.

There are two rubber estates, one wholly situated and another partly situated in the mukim of Besaroh to the northwest corner. The first estate with an area of approximately 290 acres possesses one $3\frac{1}{2}$ -ton lorry which is used to transport all its rubber from the estate to Kuantan from where it is shipped to Singapore by coastal steamers. This lorry is also used to carry rubber from another estate belonging to the same owners in another district. During the period from July 1957 to June 1958, the lorry transported about 700 piculs of rubber from the above-mentioned estate to Kuantan.

The other estate, two-thirds of whose area of 1,300 acres is in the mukim, has two $3\frac{1}{2}$ -ton lorries which are used for the carrying of its rubber to Kuantan. During the period July 1957 to June 1958, about 3,400 piculs of rubber were transported by the two lorries from the estate to Kuantan.

Estate lorries are, of course, used for other purposes also besides the haulage of rubber, such as transporting workers to various parts of the estates or to Kuantan and materials from other places to the estates.

The lorries of the above-mentioned estates do not run on the Kuantan-Besaroh road, but use the road which was originally constructed for estate transportation situated to the west (called the Kuantan-Jabar road).

In conclusion it can be said that the estates have their own transport facilities in the haulage of rubber, and they even have special routes on which their lorries operate.

B. Coconut and Copra Haulage.

It is interesting to note that in the case of Beserah, an area where coconut trees are extensively grown, coconuts are seldom the export product. With the presence of three copra-millers in the mukim, coconuts from other areas are brought in to supplement those grown in Beserah.

Despite the heavy cost of transport in importing into the mukim coconuts from other areas because they are heavy materials, and the transport cost of re-exporting copra from Beserah, the copra industry is situated in the mukim and the three millers are the principal copra-manufacturers in Kuantan District.

The high cost of coconut transport is indicated by the fact that in the making of one picul of copra from coconuts imported from villages around Kuantan, the cost of such transport constitutes about 10 per cent of the total cost of production. Then again there is the transport cost of exporting copra to Kuantan.

The charges for the haulage of coconut fixed by the cooperatives vary according to distance. They range from \$7.00 to \$10.00 per 1,000 coconuts. The longest distance is about 10 miles from the copra-making establishments.

The rate for the haulage of copra from Beserah to Kuantan is 50 cents per picul. Like the rate for rubber, this rate is much lower than the rate for carrying fresh fish.

As in the case of rubber, the haulage of both coconut and copra is monopolised by the cooperative van. The three copra-makers normally have the two commodities transported by the van. However, in rare cases the Chinese copra-maker - the other two are Malays - send his copra by lorry, not to Kuantan but direct to Kuala Lumpur.

During the period from July 1957 to June 1958, the cooperative van carried 115,410 nuts from various localities into Beserah. Gross transport charges amounted to \$923.00. For the same period the van carried 1,929 piculs of copra from Beserah to Kuantan and gross receipts of \$965.00 were realized. In short it can be seen that the transportation of these two commodities provides a major source of revenue for the cooperative van business.

C. Fruit Haulage.

Fruit such as durian, mango and others are seasonal, and as such the importance of transport attach^{ed} to them is only applicable during fruit seasons. It should be noted that fruit are an export commodity from Beserah.

The haulage of fruit as a rule is undertaken by various people. Normally, fruit dealers, especially those from Kuantan, use their own means of transport to carry their fruit purchases. They use private cars, vans and sometimes lorries. However, the cooperative van haul fruit from Beserah to Kuantan for some customers. For example, during July 1957 to June 1958 period the van transported 15,800 durians to Kuantan. This accrued to the Cooperative \$775.00 in transport charges. The haulage rate of durian is quite high: \$2.50 per 100 durians from Beserah to Kuantan.

Other fruits such as bechang, mango and small fruit are not important, and most of them are consumed locally; thus they do not involve transport problems.

D. General Remarks.

The transport facilities for the haulage of the main commodities mentioned in this chapter are very adequate for the area. In this connection the cooperative van provides a major portion of the service needed by the producers.

The rates of transport charges are lower than before the introduction of the cooperative van and other transport operators. For instance, before the establishment of the Cooperative transport business, bullock-carts were the principal means of rubber haulage from Beserah to Kuantan. Their rate was 80 cents per picul of,

rubber but, when the Cooperative van and other transport operators reduced the rate to 60 cents per picul, the bullock-carts were ousted from the field of rubber haulage. In fact, the bullock-carts have been ousted from all fields of transport in the maku. They are now obsolete as a means of transport even in a village like Bokokuh.

DOKUMEN ASAL TIDAK TERANG