

SURVEY OF THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY OF  
TRENGGANU. 1930-1940

MOHD. ALI MUDA



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A SURVEY OF THE AGRICULTURAL  
ECONOMY OF TRENGGANU -  
1930 - 1940

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ECONOMY OF TRENGGANU, 1930 - 1940

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SEBAGI A GRADUATION EXERCISE SUBMITTED TO  
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PREFACE

In the history of Malaya, Trengganu does not seem to figure as prominently as the other Malay States. Being backward in most respects, the history of the State has been very much neglected and in many history books, it has been mentioned only in passing. Though it is seventeen years since Merdeka despite the emphasis on local historical writing, nothing much has been written on the history of the State. This is mainly due to the lack of literature, especially in specific fields.

Faced with this problem of source materials my aim of writing on a specific socio-economic aspect of the history of the State was instead frustrated. The result instead is a general outline of the socio-economic history of the State between 1930 - 1940.

The choice of this period was because more relevant material is available for this than for any period. This material was obtained only after lengthy research work through a series of incoherent files available at the Arkib Negara Malaysia.

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MOHD. ALI MUDA

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Trenggamu, though under Siamese influence before the accession of Sultan Zainal Abidin III in 1884, a partition of the revenues of the State was inevitable. Being a mere boy who possessed no personal authority in the State, numerous relatives could exact from him what terms they pleased and he would be powerless to resist them. A partition of the State revenues was arranged by which the Sultan was left with only a slender income derived from a small portion of his State, the Trenggamu River from Kuala Telesong to the mouth and the adjacent River Ibai, the rest being divided among his relatives. The district of Kemaman was granted by chop to Ungku Muda, an uncle of the Sultan; Kemantik to Dato' Mata-Mata, one of his principal chiefs; Keretah to Tengku Zabong, the husband of one of the Sultan's nieces; Dungun to Tengku Bukit, the Sultan's great-uncle; Kerohang to Tengku Petra, a Singapore Raja; Marang to the Sultan's brother-in-law, Tengku Besar; Sapia to Tengku Mahmud, a cousin of the Sultan; Beout to Tengku Chik Topok, a great uncle of the Sultan; and the other smaller districts to the

INTRODUCTION

Trengganu, though under Siamese influence before the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of March 10th 1909, remained very much an independent Malay State due to the stubborn resistance of her ruler and her geographical isolation. Acknowledgment of the Siamese suzerainty was limited to a triennial tribute of the Bunga Mas. Though resisting all alien influence, the internal administration of the State was rather weak. The ruling house was subject to usual vicissitudes of disputes and intrigue. Soon after the accession of Sultan Zainal Abidin III in 1881, a partition of the revenues of the State was inevitable. Being a mere boy who possessed no personal authority in the State, numerous relatives could exact from him what terms they pleased and he would be powerless to resist them. A partition of the State revenues was arranged by which the Sultan was left with only a slender income derived from a small portion of his State, the Trengganu River from Kuala Telemong to the mouth and the adjacent River Ibai, the rest being divided among his relatives. The district of Kemaman was granted by chop to Ungku Muda, an uncle of the Sultan; Kemasik to Dato' Mata-Mata, one of his principal chiefs; Kereteh to Tengku Embong, the husband of one of the Sultan's nieces; Dungun to Tengku Bukit, the Sultan's great-aunt; Merchang to Tengku Petra, a Singapore Raja; Marang to the Sultan's brother-in-law, Tengku Besar; Setiu to Tengku Mahmud, a cousin of the Sultan; Besut to Tengku Chik Tepok, a great uncle of the Sultan; and the other smaller districts to the