

LEGAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH EXCLUDING THE UNITED KINGDOM, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, CANADA, INDIA AND PAKISTAN, 2nd Ed. Compiled by Leslie F. Maxwell. [London: Sweet & Maxwell. 1964. vii + 459 pp. £4. 4s. 0d.]

The seven volume *Legal bibliography of the British Commonwealth of Nations* by Sweet & Maxwell, of which the present volume is one was started as early as 1925. The publishers have now brought out a second edition of volume 7 (originally published in 1949) with a change in title from *British colonies, protectorates and mandated territories* to the rather negative *British Commonwealth excluding the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India and Pakistan*.

First reactions are to commend the publishers not only on continuing this tremendous project but also in attempting to bring this bibliographically complex venture up to date at a time when the Commonwealth is so rapidly changing in political context. On examination however, the work does not live up to expectation.

This second edition has almost four times the volume of the first. This increase in volume is not as one might surmise or hope, due to up-dating but to the inclusion of new countries and to the transfer of certain sections from other volumes. The listing however of Shanghai and the ex mandated territories of Iraq, Palestine, etc. in a Commonwealth collection or of Hong Kong under China, all in 1964, leads one to wonder if perhaps the old title might not have served better. The arrangement conforms with that of the original work and the bibliography is divided into six main divisions. Within the sub-sections the arrangement is difficult to ascertain, unless it can be described as vaguely alphabetical. Legislation where it is separately recorded is arranged chronologically.

As for the contents of the sections, this review can only be restricted to the Malaysian Section, the writer not being familiar with the legal materials pertaining to the other countries. The Malaysian section begins with a brief historical introduction. Descriptions such as "the almost uninhabited island of Penang" and "the deserted island of Singapore" are misleading, for both these islands though not flourishing did have small scattered trading and fishing villages before the advent of the British. The formation of Malaysia in 1963 is traced in the introduction, yet two of the major component parts of Malaysia — Sabah (North Borneo) and Sarawak are not listed under Malaysia but in another section under the heading "British Borneo" and together with Labuan and Brunei. The Cocos-Keeling Islands and Christmas Island which were transferred to Australia in 1955 are retained under Malaysia.

The bibliography is by no means comprehensive. Although published in 1964, the latest items mentioned are dated 1961 and pre-Malaysian. One of the 1961 entries and the only one referring to Federal legislation for the year is entered as, "Federation of Malaya. Acts of Parliament [5 pages 1-13] 1961". This appears to be one of the sections of the Federal government gazette supplements and a closed entry such as this is not helpful to anyone. There were in fact fifty acts passed by the Federal legislature in 1961. Even keeping within the time limit of 1961, the work is by no means adequate and some of the standard works of the time are missing as, e.g. J. Baalman's *Registration of title in Singapore*, 1960, Choor Singh's *Gaming in Malaya*, 1960 and L. A. Sheridan's *Federation of Malaya Constitution*, 1960. Important source materials such as the Straits Settlements Charters of Justice 1807-1855 and the *Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei Supreme Court reports* published in 1955 and onwards are also left out as are most of the current Federal acts, State enactments, etc.

The *University of Malaya law review* changed its name to *Malaya law review* in 1961 but is listed here under its former title only. Some of the Non-Federated Malay States' enactments are described as being in Arabic. This is misleading for though the script used is Arabic, it is known as "Jawi", the language employed being Malay and not Arabic.

Information as to the currency of publications is often inaccurate and the asterisk which we are told "denotes current series" is used haphazardly. It is used for the *Malayan law reports* (which ceased publication in 1954) and is used for Singapore ordinances enacted by Governor in Council (Singapore ceased having a Governor in Council in 1959). The asterisk is omitted (though mention is made of "1948-49 supplements in progress") for the *Malayan law journal* which is the only series of law reports current in Malaysia and Singapore since 1932. The annual supplements to the Straits Settlements Revised edition of the laws are described as "current" and the annual Supplements to the laws of the State of Singapore, current today, are omitted altogether.

A section of Malaysian legal bibliographies would have been helpful to those interested in the acquisition of Malaysian legal materials as would imprints as to publishers, places and dates of publication and author and title entries in the index. If recourse could only be made to certain British libraries as is implied in the preface, the restriction perhaps to the holdings of those libraries should be emphasised preferably in the title itself. Bibliographies are not as simple to compile as they might seem and it is hoped that future compilations will conform more with modern accepted standards and that they will be entrusted to someone familiar with the law of the country or at least to a trained librarian. As it is, it is difficult to envisage whom the Malaysian section is meant to serve. It is difficult to recommend it to the scholar or researcher in Malaysian law or to libraries wishing to build up Malaysian holdings.

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