

The Rev. A. G. Fraser and the Riots of 1915

JAMES T. RUTNAM



Reprinted from
the Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies
New Series, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July-December 1971)

904.75493
RUT



THE REV. A. G. FRASER AND THE RIOTS OF 1915

JAMES T. RUTNAM

On 14 August 1917 the British House of Commons took up the Colonial Office Estimates for debate. On that occasion (owing to constant lobbying by E. W. Perera,¹ who was assisted by D. B. Jayatilaka,²) the matter of the Ceylon Riots³ of 1915 was also brought up for discussion. E. W. Perera had by then been over two years in Britain on a mission seeking redress for the wrongs done to his countrymen. He had laboured hard to collect a large number of earnest and sympathetic persons both in and out of the Houses of Parliament and the Press to support his cause. With great anxiety he waited for the day of the debate for the ventilation of his country's grievances in Parliament.

1. Edward Walter Perera (1875-1953), member of the Ceylon Reforms Deputation to Colonel John Seely, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, on 26 October 1909; President, Ceylon National Association, 1910; President Ceylon National Congress, 1926; led Ceylon National Congress Deputation to the Donoughmore Commission, 1927; Resigned from Congress and formed the All-Ceylon Liberal League along with Francis de Zoysa, H. A. P. Sandrasagra, and N. E. Weerasooriya, 20 March 1931; Member, Legislative Council 1921-1930, State Council 1931-1935; defeated at State Council elections for the Horana Seat 1936, Kelaniya Seat 1942. Like his father, Edward Francis Perera (1848-1920), E. W. Perera was an ardent advocate of Buddhist causes, but both remained Christians to the end. See J. A. Will Perera, *E. W. Perera Patriot and Scholar* (Colombo 1953). W. Thalagodapitiya, *Portraits of Ten Patriots of Sri Lanka* (Kandy 1966) pp. 113 to 126, and Sumitta Kuruppu, *The Forgotten Patriot* (*Times of Ceylon* 7 October 1956 p. 17). For a defence of Perera's stand in the controversy over the Donoughmore Reforms, see his article in Sinhalese on *Sinhalese Rights and Constitutional Reforms*, (*Sihumina* 22 and 29 October and 5, November 1944).
2. Sir Don Baron Jayatilaka (1868-1944), Member Legislative Council, Ceylon 1924-1931 State Council 1932-1942; Representative of Ceylon Government in India from 1942 until his death on 31 May 1944; scholar, patriot and a great Buddhist leader; author of *The Buddhist Temperance Movement of Ceylon*, London, 1916.
3. The Ceylon 'Riots' of 1915 (28 May to 5 June 1915) began as a religious dispute between the Sinhalese Buddhists and the Indian Coast Moor Muslims at Kandy in the Central Province on the night of Wesak Day 28 May 1915, and soon spread to the other provinces of Ceylon except the Northern, Eastern, Uva and North-Central. Martial Law was proclaimed in the five affected Provinces and, as a precautionary measure for short periods, in the North-Central and Uva Provinces. The Government of the day had panicked, and under Martial Law several innocent people were brutally victimised. The maladministration gave an impetus to the movement for self-government for Ceylon. See P. Ramanathan, *Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon*, 1915, London 1916, Armand de Souza, *Hundred Days in Ceylon*, 2nd. Edition (Colombo 1916) and Albert Wickramasinghe, *Reminiscences of the Riots of 1915*, Colombo 1941.

Philip Morrell,⁴ Liberal Member for Burnley, and Joseph King,⁵ Liberal Member for North Somerset, intervened in the debate⁶ with vigorous speeches on behalf of Ceylon. They were followed by Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland⁷ who spoke on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. For our present purpose the relevant remarks made during these proceedings are as follows:⁸

SIR ARTHUR STEEL-MAITLAND: ... There is, as far as I know, perfectly clear evidence that the matter was not accidental fire or any attempt to set alight the heather. That was not the case, and it really spread because it was largely a matter of design. I assure the Hon. Member I am not only speaking with information from official sources, but I have also gathered information from some of the best non-official sources in Ceylon. I remember having long conversations with unofficials, conversations with persons who came back from Ceylon, and certainly that was the opinion of a perfectly unbiased man like Mr. Fraser.⁹

MR. KING: Has the Hon. Member seen the report of Mr. Fraser in which he definitely says that there is no conspiracy and will he quote it?

SIR ARTHUR STEEL-MAITLAND: I am afraid I cannot quote it because I have not got it here.

MR. KING: I have.

This was not the first time that Steel-Maitland had overshot his mark. Perera himself had some caustic comments to make concerning Steel-Maitland's remarks in Parliament¹⁰ some two years earlier on the Ceylon Riots, that while in Singapore there was no possibility of German^{10a} intrigue, in Ceylon

4. Philip Morrell (1870-1943), Liberal Member of the British House of Commons, South Oxfordshire, 1906-10, Burnley, 1910-1918.
5. Joseph King (1860-1943) Liberal Member of the British House of Commons, North Somerset, 1910-1918.
6. The speeches are recorded in the *Parliamentary Debates (Official Report) House of Commons*, London 1917 Vol. XCVII, 6 August to 21 August 1917, columns 1039-1054.
7. Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur Herbert Drummond Ramsay Steel-Maitland (1876-1935), Conservative Member of the British House of Commons, Birmingham (Eastern) 1910-1918, Birmingham (Edrington), 1918-1929; Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, May 1915 to December 1917; Privy Councillor 1924.
8. This is the account given by E. W. Perera in *My Mission to England*, see fn. 11 *infra*. The extract seems to have been taken from the "uncorrected" *Hansard* (British), issued immediately after the proceedings. The "corrected" Official Report (see fn. 6 *supra*) contains a few verbal changes, but these are of no material significance.
9. Rev. Alexander Garden Fraser (1873-1962); M. A. (Trinity College, Oxford) 1895; Principal Trinity College Kandy (1904-1924); Ordained as priest at Kandy 9 September 1915; Principal Prince of Wales College, Achimota (1924-1935); revisited Ceylon 1935 and 1949. After Ceylon attained Independence, her first Prime Minister, D. S. Senanayake, offered Fraser the honour of being a Distinguished Citizen of Ceylon. See W. E. F. Ward, *Fraser of Trinity and Achimota*, Ghana Universities Press, 1965. To the Ceylonese reader, Fraser's career in Ceylon might seem inadequately covered by this book. See also fn. 77 *infra*.
10. "House of Commons Debates, 5th Series Vol. LXXIII, Speech of Steel-Maitland, 21 July 1915", Dr. P. T. M. Fernando *The British Raj and the 1915 Communal Riots in Ceylon*, *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. III: 3 (1919) p. 250 fn. 32; see C. O. 54/782 Chalmers to Bonar Law, Telegram, 23 July 1915; *CNA* 4/434 Bonar Law to Chalmers, Telegram 28 July 1915; *The Ceylon Independent* 21 August 1915, p. 1; also *Hansard* (British House of Commons) 6 July 1915.
- 10a. Germany was at war with Great Britain; World War (1914-1918).

there was a possibility. In his account of his work in England, in a series of articles entitled *My Mission to England*,¹¹ which he published in the *Ceylon Daily News*, from September 1919 to January 1920, Perera contended: "It was just the other way. That impetuous Imperialist [Steel-Maitland] had not properly read the brief prepared for him by the permanent officials at the Colonial Office. *All the heart-burning and subsequent misconception arose out of it*".¹² (emphasis added)

When MacCallum Scott¹³ pointedly questioned Bonar-Law,¹⁴ who was then the Secretary of State for the Colonies, "Can the Right Hon. Gentleman say whether any evidence had been received that German intrigue instigated these Riots", he received the reply, "There is no evidence at all that has reached me to that effect, but I should not be myself inclined to say it was impossible that it had something to do with it".¹⁵ Perera commented, "Mr. Bonar-Law's last answer was characteristic. It was meant to save the Under-Secretary Mr. Steel-Maitland and to shroud the Ceylon happenings in suspicion so that the House might not show any sympathy with our grievances".¹⁶ Perera had added, "Mr. Bonar-Law and Mr. Steel-Maitland, pseudo-Imperialists of the straitest sect ruled the Colonial Office".¹⁷

The casual reference to Fraser in the debate in 1917 had unfortunate repercussions. It sparked off a controversy that threatened to distort, and at one time¹⁸ in its course did distort, the favourable image of Fraser in this country. We propose in this article to consider whether such denigration was deserved.

11. Published in twelve sections: Section I on 6 September 1919, pp. 3 and 4; II 16 September p. 3; III 20 September p. 3; IV 27 September p. 3; V 4 October p. 3; VI 11 October p. 3 and 18 October p. 3; VII 25 October p. 3; VIII 1 November p. 3; IX 22 November p. 3; X 29 November p. 3 and 1 December p. 3; XI 6 December p. 3 and 20 December p. 3; XII 10 January 1920 p. 3 and 17 January p. 3. The first ten of these Sections were republished, with a prefatory note to each Section by James T. Rutnam, in the weekly issues of *Tribune*, Colombo, in August, September, October and November 1967.
12. *Ceylon Daily News*, 13 September 1919 p. 3.
13. Sir Alexander MacCallum Scott (1874-1928), Liberal Member of the British House of Commons 1910-1922; joined Labour Party 1924; author of two books on Winston Churchill (London 1905 and 1916). Scott was the first Member of Parliament who was approached by Perera to take up the Sinhalese cause. Perera was introduced to Scott by his "old and trusted" friend, Henry Evan Auguste Cotton (1868-1939), formerly Liberal member of the British House of Commons, East Finsbury, and editor of the journal *India*.
14. Andrew Bonar-Law (1858-1923), Conservative Member of the British House of Commons from 1900; Leader of Opposition (1911-15), Secretary of State for the Colonies 1915-16, Chancellor of the Exchequer 1916-18, Lord Privy Seal 1919-21, Prime Minister 1921-23.
15. *Hansard* (British House of Commons), 27 July 1915.
16. *Ceylon Daily News*, 13 September 1919 p. 3.
17. *ibid.*
18. In 1924 when Fraser was a candidate for election as Bishop of Colombo, see Appendix D *infra*.

The controversy in Ceylon followed Perera's publication of *My Mission to England*. Towards the latter part of these articles Perera took Fraser to task for circulating a pamphlet marked "private" among members of the House of Commons "ostensibly giving an account of the development of Trinity College but suggesting a novel and original theory of the Riots".¹⁹

In the account of his mission Perera had stated that he saw the report of the Colonial Office debate at Manchester where he was busy soliciting the support of that great journalist C. P. Scott,²⁰ Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, a very powerful journal at the time. On reading the report of the proceedings in Parliament, Perera called upon his colleague, Jayatilaka, who knew Fraser, to write to him "to correctly ascertain what Mr. Fraser had told Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland". Copies of the correspondence that passed between Jayatilaka and Fraser (except for one letter) are now available among the *E. W. Perera Papers*²¹ at the Library, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.

According to Perera "Mr. Fraser's correspondence" (which Perera said was not with him as he wrote) "was suave but diplomatic".^{21a} Fraser is reported to have replied that "he did not quite remember what he stated to Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, but while going very far with Mr. Jayatilaka, and denying privy conspiracy he", (so far as Perera could remember) "favoured the theory of sedition".²² Let the letters^{22a} now speak for themselves:

19. *Ceylon Daily News* 6 December 1919 p. 3.

20. Charles Prestwich Scott, (1846-1932), Editor *Manchester Guardian* 1872-1929; Liberal Member of the British House of Commons for Leeds Division of Lancashire 1895-1906; E. W. Perera was introduced to the *Manchester Guardian* by H. E. A. Cotton, see fn. 13 *supra*. Perera rushed a copy of *Sessional Paper VI* of 1917 on the Kegalle Shootings as soon as he received it from Ceylon to the *Manchester Guardian*, which scored a scoop by publishing on 2 November 1917 long passages from it of Governor Anderson's despatch, causing public outcry in liberal circles in England.

21. The *E. W. Perera Papers* consist of correspondence, manuscripts and typescripts and typescript drafts, copies of letters and articles and some press-cuttings and leaflets that belonged to E. W. Perera and (a few) to his father, E. F. Perera. Unlike several of his contemporaries E. W. Perera had carefully preserved them. A part of this collection is in the Library, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, and is here referred to as *PPU*. Some, *PPH*, are with Professor D. E. Hettiaratchi, Editor of the *Sinhalese Encyclopaedia*, Colombo; some, *PPA*, with Dr. T. B. H. Abeyasinghe of the University of Ceylon, Colombo. Thanks to the late Shelton C. Fernando of Colombo, E. W. Perera's letters to Leonard Woolf, *PPCNA*, have come into the possession of the Ceylon National Archives. Some other *E. W. Perera Papers*, *PPEPI*, to which the writer has direct access, are available at the Evelyn Rutnam Institute, 35 Guildford Crescent, Colombo 7. The writer is grateful to H. A. I. Goonetilleke, Librarian University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, Professor Hettiaratchi, Dr. Abeyasinghe, the late Shelton C. Fernando, Amarawansa Devaraja, Government Archivist, and G. P. S. H. de Silva, Assistant Government Archivist, for their kindness in making the papers in their custody readily available to him. Copies of the correspondence between Fraser and D. B. Jayatilaka are in *PPU* and attention was specially drawn to these by H. A. I. Goonetilleke, Professor K. M. de Silva and W. J. F. La Brooy of the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, to all of whom and to Professor T. Nadaraja of the University of Ceylon, Colombo and Dr. M. W. Roberts of the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, the writer is indebted for unfailing courtesy and encouragement.

21a. *Ceylon Daily News* 6 December 1919 p. 3.

22. *ibid.*

22a. Copies in *PPU*.

This is what Jayatilaka wrote to Fraser:

3 Middle Temple Lane
Temple—London E.C.
21.8.1917

Dear Mr. Fraser,

I have no doubt that like myself you read Sir A. D. Steel-Maitland's speech on matters in Ceylon with much interest. I was very much surprised to find that the Under-Secretary of State renewed the old charge of conspiracy, and I was still more surprised when I found he gave you as his chief authority for this. As I know, you would not wittingly do the Sinhalese people an injustice. I cannot help feeling that the Colonial Office has misunderstood you.

The word "conspiracy" suggests something political and treasonable, and I cannot suppose that, knowing Ceylon as you do, you believe the riots of 1915 to have been in the least degree of this nature, or to have been in any way whatever a matter of design. It would gratify me very much to learn that you dissociate yourself from views so groundless and if you feel at liberty to communicate to me what you have said to the Colonial Office, I shall be very grateful. You know, of course, that I am one of the delegates sent by the Sinhalese Committee to represent matters to the Imperial Government.

With kind regards,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

[Sgd.] D. B. Jayatilaka.

P.S. I am sending a copy of the Official Report of the debate, in case you have not had the chance of reading it before.

To this Fraser replied as follows:

As from 18 Succoth Avenue,
Edinburgh W. 25.8.17

Dear Mr. Jayatilaka,

I received your letter this morning, and with it the first intimation I had had of the discussion in the H. of C. I do not know exactly now what I said to Sir A. Steel-Maitland. But it must have been this in effect. That the mass of the rioters were out against Mohammedans pure and simple on economic and religious grounds, and without any design against British Rule, some indeed believing an attack on Mohammedans would be popular as the Empire was fighting Turkey. But on the other hand, there was in my opinion no doubt that the riots were organised in advance, that there was a small clique of men hostile to Government and representing the opinion of a man like Dharmapala,²³ whose articles were read and who was flattered and well received, that this clique exploited the hatred of the Mohammedans by directing attention to them, and probably in organising and starting the first chief riot outbreaks. But they were not typical of the people as a whole or of the nation. That has been my opinion pretty well right through.

Yours sincerely,

[Sgd.] A. G. Fraser.

23. Don David Hewavitarne (1864-1933) took the name of Dharmapala—Protector of the Dharma—in 1888 and was known thereafter as the Anagarika Dharmapala. In 1932 he became a *Samanera*, and in 1933 was ordained as Sri Devamitta Thero. He was a member of the Buddhist Theosophical movement established in Ceylon by Colonel H. S. Olcott and Madame H. P. Blavatsky from 1880. He broke away from Colonel Olcott, October 1904, and Buddhist Theosophy, March 1906; founded the journal *Sinhala Bauddhaya* and the Maha Bodhi Press in Ceylon, May 1906; he was suspected by the Ceylon Government of being an instigator of the Riots and was for a time prohibited by the Indian Government from leaving Calcutta, where he had established the headquarters of the (Buddha Gaya) Maha Bodhi Society which he founded in 1891. During the reign of terror in 1915 almost everybody in Ceylon denied having had any association with Dharmapala. Even Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan whom Dharmapala admired and supported (see extract from Dharmapala's letter dated 21 October 1915 from Calcutta to Ramanathan, *Ceylon Daily Mirror*, 26 November 1971 p. 4) had to dismiss his influence as insignificant. See *Hansard : Debates in the Legislative Council in Ceylon*, Session 1913-16, Colombo 1916, 11 August 1915 p. 403; He died at the Mulagandhakuti Vihara in India with the last words, "May I be reborn in a Brahmin family in India to work for the upliftment of Buddhism...." *Buddha Jayanti Memorials*, issued by the Information Department, Government Press Ceylon 1956, p. 56.

P.S. That there was a planned start and some organisation I as living in Kandy can have no doubt.—A. G. F.

It will be noted that Jayatilaka had laid emphasis on the word “conspiracy” which suggested, as he said “something political and treasonable”. Fraser replied that the “mass of rioters had no design against British Rule”. This ruled out treason. But was there a conspiracy? Fraser had evaded using the word. However, he admitted that there was “a small clique of men” who “exploited the hatred of the Mohammedans by directing attention to them and probably in organising and starting the first chief riot outbreaks”. One would conclude that this was a conspiracy by a small clique of men. But Fraser asserted in the same communication that it was “not typical of the people as a whole or of the nation”. He thus absolved the people as a whole and the nation of conspiracy.

One could now understand what was at the back of Perera’s mind when he wrote to Leonard Woolf^{23a} on 29 August 1917 as follows:

Mr. Fraser writes to Mr. Jayatilaka admitting that he suggested to the Under-Secretary the theory of a conspiracy. We are writing to him again and shall later communicate with the Colonial Office.²⁴

Neither the original of the letter dated 31 August 1917 from Jayatilaka to Fraser nor a copy is available at present. But as we have a copy of Fraser’s reply of 5 September, the loss is not material to our present enquiry. Perera’s description to Woolf of the contents of Fraser’s letter to the effect that Fraser *admitted* conspiracy would appear to be both right and wrong. He was right when he spoke of conspiracy, but wrong when he left an inference that it was a conspiracy of the people. This matter was quickly clarified by Fraser’s letter of 5 September which read as follows:

18 Succoth Avenue,
Edinburgh W.
5th September 1917

My dear Jayatilaka,

Thanks for your letter of 31st which I have just received readdressed to me at the above address. You were quite right. I have always denied that there was any conspiracy on the part of the Cingalese people against the Government. But I find it difficult to believe that there was no organisation in advance. For one thing I knew that the riots were going to take place before they took place and warned the authorities to be on their guard in order that there might be no trouble.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd.) A. G. Fraser.

23a. Leonard Sidney Woolf (1880-1969), Ceylon Civil Service 1904-11; joined Fabian Society 1916; founded (with wife Virginia) Hogarth Press 1917; Woolf was introduced to Perera by Sidney James Webb (later first Baron Passfield) (1859-1947) of the Fabian Society. In his lecture at Colombo on 14 June 1919 Perera said “....it will be more than ingratitude to omit any reference to the valuable services that Mr. Leonard Woolf rendered to the cause and his great kindness to me personally....His active interest in the welfare of Ceylon never abated nor his faith in the justice of our cause shaken by official misrepresentation....” see *Ceylon Daily News* 30 August 1919 p. 3.

24. *PPCNA*, Perera—Woolf letters; a photostat copy of this file of letters was gifted by the late Shelton C. Fernando to the Evelyn Rutnam Institute where it is available

Here we find Fraser categorically denying "any conspiracy on the part of the Cingalese [sic] people against the Government". This was exactly what Perera and Jayatilaka had wanted to enable them to contradict, and indeed to give the lie direct to, Steel-Maitland. They rushed to incorporate what Fraser had admitted, into their famous letter²⁵ beginning "In justice to the Sinhalese people . . .", dated 18 September 1917 to the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. "We are in a position to state", they triumphantly declared, "that Mr. Fraser does not in any way support the theory of conspiracy on the part of the Sinhalese people". This was clear and unequivocal and with this declaration the differences or misunderstanding that existed between Perera and Fraser should have for ever disappeared. Unfortunately this was not the case.

At this stage, it would be well to draw attention to two letters²⁶ dated 14 December 1916 and 24 October 1917 written to Perera by his knowledgeable and patriotic confidant, James William de Silva²⁷ upon whom he had placed the highest trust and who was regularly sending Perera news from home. "Mr. Fraser of Trinity College", de Silva wrote in December 1916, "is in England. He is a friend of the Attorney-General²⁸ and others and will no doubt advocate the cause of the officials and support official views as much as he can. He will make it his main business in England".

It is now clear, why Perera had declared in *My Mission to London*, as we shall observe later,^{28a} that he had been informed that Fraser had come up to London as an apologist for the Government officials in Ceylon. But the same James William de Silva who had warned Perera against Fraser wrote him another letter²⁹ on 24 October 1917 saying, "I received a letter from you and one from D. B. after a long time enclosing Fraser's reply. *His reply is not bad as in it*

25. *PPCNA* Perera—Woolf letters; *CNA* 4/462 September/October 1917; *PPU* and *PPERI*; see also *Ceylon Daily News* 6 December 1919 p. 3.

26. The originals are in *PPERI*; photostat copies are in the Ceylon National Archives entitled *Papers on Riots 1915—correspondence of E. W. Perera*.

27. James William de Silva (1862-1947), Barrister-at-Law (Gray's Inn), Member of Ceylon Reforms Deputation to Colonel John Seely on 26 October 1909, see *fn.* 1; an unobtrusive and knowledgeable political worker, de Silva was a member of the Organising Committee of the Ceylon National Congress; see S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike (Editor) *The Handbook of the Ceylon National Congress* Colombo 1928, p. 192; regular correspondent to the *Ceylon Daily News*, writing over the initials "J.S.", see *Ceylon Daily News* 31 May 1947; a large collection of de Silva's letters to E. W. Perera are in *PPERI*, and photostats of these are in the Ceylon National Archives.

28. Sir Anton Bertram (1869-1937), Attorney General of Ceylon 1911-18; Chief Justice 1918-25, Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge 1929; he was "a conscientious character who could become jittery under pressure", wrote Sir Hanry Monck-Mason Moore of his colleague in Ceylon, in H. A. J. Hulugalle, *British Governors of Ceylon*, Colombo 1913 p. 212. See *CNA* 65/232 Sir Anton Bertram's memo on certain arrests and searches made during the period of Martial Law. "Bertram was one of the few European officials who were sympathetic to Anderson . . ." P. T. M. Fernando *op. cit.*, p. 255.

28a. See *fn.* 47 *infra*.

29. See *fn.* 26 *supra*.

he says there was no conspiracy against Government, but only an organisation to attack the Moors, which too though contrary to fact was believed by him" (emphasis added). This was a gracious act on the part of a severe critic. The tirade about 'conspiracy' should have ended with this. But it did not.

Fraser is on record as having testified with regard to the Riots at a meeting of the Police Inquiry Commission³⁰ at the Kandy Kachecheri, that was appointed on 26 October 1915 by Government with the Chief Justice Sir Alexander Wood-Renton³¹ as Chairman to study the conduct of the Police in connection with the Riots and recommend measures for re-organising the Police Force. On 6 November 1915, a few months after the Riots, Fraser gave evidence before this Commission in the course of which he stated that he did not think there was "any definite pre-organisation" of the Riots. It will be seen that Fraser had maintained this position throughout. The Report³² of the Commission was published as a Sessional Paper in 1916 and it should have been available to Perera for his work in England. Fraser's evidence³³ in this matter is given in the Report as follows:

THE CHAIRMAN: From what you say, did you form any opinion on the question whether the riots in Kandy had been pre-arranged to any extent?

WITNESS: It depends on what you mean by pre-arrangement. If you mean whether there was any definite pre-organisation, I don't think so. That the riots were expected to break out I firmly believe. For instance, on the Saturday night they had runners on the road and got news quickly.

THE HON. MR. PAGDEN: That points rather to pre-arrangement.

WITNESS: Pre-arrangement for Saturday night without doubt, but that does not mean that there was any pre-organisation for a riot, otherwise the people would have known of it on the Friday night.

THE HON. SIR CHRISTOFFEL OBEYSEKERE:^{33a} It was generally talked about in the town that there would be a riot?

WITNESS: There were a fairly large number of rumours to that effect.

30. See *Sessional Paper XVI* of 1916 (Colombo 1916).

31. Sir Alexander Wood-Renton (1861-1933), Puisne Judge, Supreme Court, Ceylon 1905-1914, Chief Justice 1914 until his retirement in 1918; Chairman (Kegalle) Shooting Inquiry Commission along with Sir Gualterus Stewart Schneider (1864-1938), 1916; Chairman Salaries Commission Ceylon 1921; knighted in 1915, conferred K.C.M.G. 1925, G.C.M.G. 1930; for his differences with Governor Anderson see correspondence in *CNA* 65/232.

32. *Sessional Paper XVI* of 1916.

33. *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

33a. Sir Solomon Christoffel Obeyesekere (1848-1926), Proctor, Supreme Court, Ceylon. Nominated member representing the Low-Country Sinhalese in the Legislative Council 1900-1916; knighted 1911. In the Legislative Council soon after the Riots he attacked the "half a dozen misguided designing villains who have been trying to pose as leaders of the Buddhists", and who belonged to the "lower [?] section of the Sinhalese community", as being responsible for the Riots. He referred to them as "a few who are nobodies but who hope to make somebodies of themselves" See *Hansard, Debates in the Legislative Council in Ceylon, Session 1913-16* Colombo 1916, 11 August 1915, p. 406. For remarks on "nobodies" and "somebodies" see E. F. C. Ludowyk *The Story of Ceylon*, 2nd Edition, London 1967 pp. 221, 222.

In *My Mission to England* Perera stated,

"The Anti-Slavery Society³⁴ was organising a deputation^{34a} to be sent to the Secretary of State. Mr. A. G. Fraser too had conveyed his views to them on the subject but I am precluded from discussing his communication without reference to the Anti-Slavery Society. I was anxious to coordinate our forces as much as possible and arranged that other friends of Ceylon who did not belong to the Anti-Slavery Society should co-operate with them".³⁵

Perera invests Fraser's "views" with a certain amount of mystery and even suspicion. We have not been able to find out what these "views" were at the Rhodes House Library³⁶ in Oxford where the Fraser Papers³⁷ as well as the Archives of the Anti-Slavery Society are now kept. But Fraser's views could not have been very much at variance with those of the members of the Society.^{37a}

Fraser seems to have been held with some regard by the Society, for in a letter³⁸ to Perera dated 23 March 1917, John H. Harris,³⁹ one of the Organising Secretaries had written "We are now preparing our Appeal to the Government for an enquiry. We much hope to get Fraser to come and speak at our Annual Meeting on Ceylon, but I have a note from him this morning saying that he has to leave at once for France".

34. *The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society* which Perera recalled, "made the serf a man and broke his chain", is still in existence at the same address viz., Denison House, 296 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW 1, under a slightly modified name, the *Anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights*. This Society which was supported by retired Christian Missionaries in England has a long and distinguished record of philanthropic service. Perera declared, "To the persistent efforts of this Society working without fee or reward may be traced much mitigation of the effects of Martial Law administration....." *Ceylon Daily News* 30 August 1919 p. 3. In 1909 the *Aborigines Protection Society* founded in 1838 merged with the *Anti-Slavery Society* founded in 1839 to become the *Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society*. In 1947 the name was changed to the *Anti-Slavery Society* and in the late 1950's the present name was adopted. The records of this Society are preserved in the Rhodes House Library, Oxford, see fn. 36.

34a. The deputation was led by the Society's President Sir Thomas Fowell Victor Buxton (1865-1919) and was received at the Colonial Office on 16 January 1918.

35. *The Ceylon Daily News* 20 December 1919, p. 3.

36. This is a department of the Bodleian concerned with Commonwealth and United States history and was established as a dependent library in 1928. The writer is obliged to Annamuttu Muttukumaru of Somerville College and F. E. Leese of the Library for the kind assistance given him when he visited Oxford in 1970 to examine the Fraser and Anti-Slavery Society Papers available at the Library.

37. A large collection of letters, manuscripts and printed documents belonging to Fraser are in this library. An interesting autobiographical account (incomplete) is also here. But we were not able to trace the elusive "Report of Trinity College, Kandy 1915" in this collection.

37a. For example, see Fraser's letter dated 17 March 1917 to Harris, one of the Organising Secretaries of the Society, *Fraser Papers*, Rhodes House, Oxford.

38. In *PPERI*.

39. Sir John Hobbs Harris (1874-1940) formerly a Christian Missionary in Africa, Secretary to the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society; Liberal Member of the British House of Commons for North Hackney 1923-1924; author of several books including *Slavery or Sacred Trust* London 1926, and *A Century of Emancipation*, London 1933.

On 8 October 1916 Fraser left Ceylon for England to take part in the War⁴⁰ against Germany. He served at the Western Front as a regimental chaplain during 1917 and 1918. He was gassed and invalided⁴¹ out of the Army in June 1918, shortly before the end of the War. He returned to Ceylon in February 1919 having regained his health. But soon thereafter on 9 April he left the island, this time to preside over a Missionary Commission on Indian Village Education.

Perera too returned to Ceylon in 1919. He had been away in the United Kingdom for over four years, during a part of which time D. B. Jayatilaka served with him as his colleague. Perera had been an indefatigable worker on behalf of his country. He was virtually the first Ceylonese permanent envoy at the capital of the British Empire! Anything of national importance pertaining to Ceylon, not necessarily matters relating to the Riots, passed through his or Jayatilaka's hands. Together with Jayatilaka he pleaded for political reforms for this country, and was the mouthpiece in London of Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam⁴² and his band of patriots.

Perera was responsible for bringing the Appeal in the *Gampola Perahera Case*⁴³ before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1916. The Appellant for whom Perera had appeared finally withdrew the Appeal, but not without suffering a judicial pronouncement favourable to the Respondent being incorporated in the judgement of the Privy Council. From the very beginning Perera had been actively associated with this case, which he described in Pope's words as the "direful spring of woes unnumbered".⁴⁴ It must have been a great disappointment to him to find that at the end he was unable to prevent inclusion in the Privy Council Judgement of a passage that was tantamount to a repudiation of the permanent validity of the Kandyan Convention of 1815, the bedrock of his entire case.

40. World War (1914-1918); Fraser who had urged some of his senior students to volunteer for War Service felt that he too should join them "Aleks [Fraser] had been feeling restless...staying safe in Ceylon while his pupils were volunteering for active service", Ward *op. cit.*, p. 118.

41. For some time his voice was badly affected. Earlier he was knocked down by a lorry, and had suffered from two broken ribs and a touch of pleurisy.

42. Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam (1853-1924), for some time Official Member of the Executive and Legislative Councils, Ceylon; leader of the "Ceylonese Reformers"; author of *Our Political Needs*, Colombo 1917; first President Ceylon Reform League 1917; Founder Ceylon National Congress, 1919. Perera spoke of him as one whose "name, his personality, his connection with the cause of Reform have helped us considerably to secure recruits and further the cause in England", *Ceylon Daily News* 16 June 1919 p. 5. On Arunachalam's death the *Ceylon Daily News* described him as "the most powerful personality in Ceylon of the last decade", 10 January 1924 p. 6. For a sketch of his life and work see [James T. Rutnam] *Ponnambalam Arunachalam* published by the Arunachalam Centenary Committee, Colombo 1953.

43. See Appendix A *infra*.

44. Pope's translation Homer's *Illiad* I. i.

Perera was an advocate *par excellence* of national causes; indeed that was his undoubted role, not only on the public platform but also in the legal forum and the Council Chamber. He was a master of the pointed phrase which he would wield with *finesse* like a rapier; and of withering sarcasm that often came upon the heads of his opponents like a blow from a sledge hammer. His "asides" whether spoken in intimate whispers or with a rasping derisive scorn were fearful and formidable.

On his return in 1919, Perera gave a heartening account of his stewardship to his countrymen. Nothing substantial or material had emerged from his mission. Its more lasting effect on the political scene was not discernible at the time. No Royal Commission of Enquiry into the Riots was appointed. Nevertheless the fight was valiantly fought, and the tale, as befitting the teller, was valiantly told. It was in this historic account of Perera's stewardship that the dead embers of the Fraser controversy were re-kindled to burn with an ominous glow.

As a preliminary and a personal approach to the people, Perera delivered a lecture on 14 June 1919, at the Tower Hall in Colombo, with Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam in the chair on "Political Work in England".⁴⁵ No reference whatsoever was made to Fraser at this time. Perera however acknowledged the help rendered by Arunachalam who had written letters to his influential friends in official circles in England on the situation in Ceylon. It was some time later that Perera went into great detail about his labours in England when he wrote the articles entitled *My Mission to England*.

The subject was exhaustively treated in these articles with numerous references to the correspondence and conversations exchanged and to various accounts of speeches and comments published in the British Press. The labours of Perera and Jayatilaka were well chronicled; so were the efforts made by British friends and supporters from all quarters. It is a most valuable record, deserving of publication as a book. In the last three Sections of these articles, Sections X, XI and XII, Perera referred to the part supposed to have been played by Fraser in England.

In Section X⁴⁶ Perera republished the extract from *Hansard* that referred to the exchanges between Steel-Maitland and King in connection with Fraser's communication with Steel-Maitland.

In Section XI⁴⁷ Perera wrote:

45. A letter from Arunachalam to Perera inviting Perera to deliver this lecture is in *PPH*; Owing to Censorship prevailing at the time, only a brief account of this lecture was published in the *Ceylon Daily News* on 16 June 1919, although Arunachalam's favourable comments were published in full; with the lifting of the Censorship the *Ceylon Daily News* published the full text of Perera's lecture on 30 August 1919.
46. *Ceylon Daily News* 1 December 1919 p. 3. See *fn. 8 supra*.
47. *Ceylon Daily News* 6 December 1919 p. 3.

.... Mr. A. G. Fraser the Ceylon Missionary, had according to the Colonial Under-Secretary, testified to the disloyal nature and the organised character of the riots, like his episcopal chief, who had condoned the shootings and applauded the officials. I had received the information from Ceylon, which at the time I did not believe, that the Rev. A. G. Fraser had come up to London on the suggestion of the local Government officials as a witness of their views and an apologist for them at Downing Street. I did not personally know^{47a} Mr. Fraser but had heard a great deal about him: the son of Sir Andrew Fraser^{47b}, Governor of Bengal, he was a great Imperialist and a great Missionary.

Charging Fraser with wrongfully testifying to Steel-Maitland, Perera continued:

It will not be irrelevant to say in this connection that the Rev. A. G. Fraser had circulated a pamphlet marked 'private' to Members of the House of Commons ostensibly giving an account of the development of Trinity College, but suggesting a novel and original theory of the Riots in which is emphasised the part that the reverend gentleman took in securing justice, punishing perjury and above all stopping the rising or rebellion from spreading by using his extraordinary influence with the great Highland Chiefs with whom he was friendly. As I may have unwittingly done injustice to this Imperialist Missionary by a short and inaccurate summary of the scope and character of his pamphlet which I only had for a few moments in my hands, I hope Mr. Fraser will remove all misapprehension by communicating his pamphlet to the Press now that the Censorship is removed.

In Section XII,⁴⁸ Perera described a meeting held in 1918 in the rooms of the Indian Association⁴⁹ at Edinburgh, where he delivered a lecture on the "Premier Crown Colony" and stated:

47a. E. W. Perera had exchanged letters with Fraser earlier. The writer had seen a letter from Fraser to Perera in *PPERI*, where Fraser had discouraged Perera from republishing the account of the controversy in August 1873 between the Buddhists and Christians at Panadura. This debate was originally reported by a "special reporter" in the *Ceylon Times* and later issued as a pamphlet with a prefatory note by "J.C.". It was again published in America and in the words of E. W. Perera "formed the starting point of the renaissance of Buddhism and a national awakening in Ceylon", *PPERI*; it was a copy of this pamphlet that came into the hands of Colonel Olcott and led to his eventual visit to Ceylon to herald the Buddhist revival in this country; E. W. Perera's father, E. F. Perera, was the "reporter" of this debate. The credit had usually gone to John Capper (J.C.), who of course was the Editor of the *Ceylon Times*. E. F. Perera was made a Fellow of the Theosophical Society of America by Olcott in June 1880. He was the first President of the Lanka Lodge for Occult Research (Lanka Theosophical Society?) with young H. J. C. Pereira (1861-1924) as Secretary and was a close friend of Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, copies of whose correspondence with Perera (Snr.) and a manuscript copy of Perera's Report of the Panadura Controversy are in *PPERI*.

47b. Sir Andrew Henderson Leith Fraser (1848-1919). Born in Bombay, son of Rev. Andrew Garden Fraser a Presbyterian Missionary, who served sixty years in India; Indian Civil Service 1869 to 1903, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal 1903 to 1908. He faced the violent agitation that followed Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal and survived repeated attempts on his life; he personally did not favour partition but was obliged to support the Viceroy. See *Dictionary of the National Biography* 1912-1921, London 1928, pp. 197 and 198.

48. *Ceylon Daily News* 10 January 1920 p. 3.

49. A Notice of this meeting on 12 January 1918 signed by R. M. Johri, Secretary Edinburgh Indian Association is in *PPH*; The title of the lecture was described as, "The Premier Crown Colony: its Past, Present and Future".

... in addition to the Indian and Ceylon students, several residents of Edinburgh were present including Mrs. W. T. Stead, Mrs. A. G. Fraser, Mrs. Oldham and the Professor of the University. Mr. Panitckar⁵⁰ presided and I had a very friendly hearing, the only occasions of interruption being when my enthusiastic audience felt that my terms of denunciation and the language employed were not commensurate with the horrors perpetrated in Ceylon.

Continuing Perera wrote:

Amid sympathetic comment and friendly query Mrs. Fraser raised a challenging note. While exceedingly friendly and courteous to me personally, she maintained in language of studied calmness and moderation but with great firmness the official view of the Colonial authorities that the riots were very serious, hence Martial Law was the only remedy and that once Martial Law was proclaimed—our government moves slowly—it cannot be readily withdrawn. While reciprocating the courtesy and assuming the seriousness of the Riots I pointed out that there was no justification, legal or moral for surrendering the island to the soldiery instead of using the military. Distinguish the Prussian method, which was employed in Ceylon, from the British method, which made the Civil administration employ the soldier as an instrument instead of making the jackboot supreme over the civil power. Moreover under British Law, Martial Law, which was negation of Law, ought to cease as soon as order was proclaimed.

Perera wrote further:

I had no hesitation in affirming these principles, as I told the audience, for I had the authority of the highest legal opinion in England on the subject. Moreover the text of the testimony in the Kegalle Shootings Enquiry with the commentary in Sir John Anderson's⁵¹ despatch dispelled any doubt as to the frightfulness that was

50. Kavalam Madhava Panikkar (1895-1963), Indian statesman and scholar.

51. Sir John Anderson (1858-1918), Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies 1911-1916, Governor of Ceylon 1916 until his death from cancer on 24th March 1918; in the Colonial Office he generally opposed E. W. Perera's moves and was largely responsible for preventing Ponnambalam Ramanathan from obtaining an interview with the Secretary of State, Anderson following the usual Colonial Office practice of relying on the advice of the "man on the spot", who in this case was successively Robert Chalmers, a former Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, and Reginald Stubbs, formerly of the Colonial Office. In *My Mission to England* Perera wrote, "Facts justify the conclusion that were it not for his [Anderson's] unreasoning and persistent opposition, the pressure of Parliamentary opinion would have induced Mr. Bonar Law to grant a Commission of Enquiry long ago", *Ceylon Daily News* 13 September 1919 p. 3; On the announcement of Anderson's appointment as Governor of Ceylon, Perera expressing great disappointment wrote, "Sir John Anderson succeeds Sir Robert Chalmers, the one man for whose exclusion from the Governorship all Ceylonese would have voted to a man". He also wrote, "Sir John Anderson is Governor. So Amurath succeeds Amurath"; See copies of Perera's letters dated 1 December 1915 to H. E. A. Cotton and H. J. C. Pereira, *PPH*. To Armand de Souza, the Editor of the *Ceylon Morning Leader*, Perera wrote on the 21 January 1917, "It is known here that Sir John Anderson is the greatest reactionary that ever went to the East, not excepting Lord Curzon". See copy *PPA*. However Anderson, who had assured Bonar Law, See *Ceylon Daily News* 4 October 1919 p. 3, that he would enquire every case of injustice with an "open mind" became the most popular of all British Governors. His despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Walter Long, on the Kegalle Shootings, see *Sessional Paper VI of 1917*, was a sensational document, which marked a complete reversal of official opinion on the measures adopted to suppress the Riots. For his forthrightness in condemning the excesses of the local British planters and officials, he was hated by the "prestige" obsessed Europeans in the country. The horse-driven gun-carriage that carried his coffin for interment at the General Cemetery Colombo was rushed in a undignified gallop to the consternation and distress of all of us who saw it. For a description of this incident see D. S. Senanayake's letter dated 10 April 1918 to D. B. Jayatilaka published in *Tribune*, Colombo, 15 March 1970 with a prefatory note by James T. Rutnam an eye-witness to the incident. Many years afterwards, W. T. Stace who served in the Public Service at the time explained that "the cortege was trotted instead of being walked", because neither horses (from the Ceylon Mounted Rifles) nor men had been trained in such an exercise; See E. F. C. Ludowyk, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

being enacted in Ceylon. Prof. Whittaker (University of Edinburgh) in very generous terms moved a vote of thanks to me. Mrs. W. T. Stead came up and expressed her horror at the atrocities and her sympathy with the people of Ceylon. Mr.⁵² [sic] Fraser too spoke to me after the lecture.

It would seem from the above that Perera had drawn Mrs. Fraser into the fray with some degree of vehemence for venturing what appeared to Perera a contrary view to that held by him.

Fraser was in Ceylon for nine days in October 1919. He was however away from this country when the references to him appeared in the *Ceylon Daily News*. No protest seems to have been lodged on Fraser's behalf when these appeared during his absence. But there is no doubt that the charges made by Perera were the talk of the town, and Fraser's friends, notably past pupils of Trinity College, most of whom could not have for a moment imagined Fraser ever behaving in the manner alleged, were embarrassed and indeed outraged. They bided their time until Fraser returned, although meanwhile Fraser wherever he was, was probably apprised of these incidents. According to Fraser,⁵³ he came to read the articles containing the charges against him, in India some two months after they had first appeared.

Fraser was in Ceylon with members of his Commission for a few weeks in June 1920, before he left for England to complete his report on Village Education. After finishing his assignment he returned to Trinity College in February 1921.

Fraser who was so much at home in this country from 1904 and had in a way integrated himself into the life of the community here, and who in April 1919, during an all too brief stay in the island after the War, had publicly advocated in the Press manhood suffrage⁵⁴ for Ceylon even before the Ceylon National Congress saw the light of day, discovered to his chagrin, that he had now in February 1921 come under a dark cloud of suspicion and hate.

52. Obviously an error for "Mrs."

53. See Report of Fraser's lecture at Kandy, *Ceylon Daily News* 24 October 1921, p. 1.

54. Fraser wrote, "Personally I would like to see manhood suffrage", see A. G. Fraser *Constitutional Reform in Ceylon* (*Times of Ceylon* 24 April 1919); Fraser described the proposals of the "Ceylonese Reformers" as "moderate", to which criticism Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, who also favoured a wide franchise, had to plead that they had to "educate" and "conciliate" "our own Tories". (*Times of Ceylon* 28 April 1919). The Ceylon National Congress held its "first session" on 11 December 1919. In the Report of Trinity College Kandy for 1918 Fraser had written "So I want a wide franchise open to the illiterate, manhood suffrage if possible. It would after the first two or three elections make the corruption of the electors almost impossible....." (quoted by Ward *op. cit.*, p. 132). See also Colonel Seely's remarks on manhood suffrage to E. W. Perera and the other members of the Ceylon Reforms Deputation on 26 October 1909 that "it was impossible to draw up a scheme of representation approaching self-government unless on a basis of something like manhood suffrage for which the country was not ripe", Perera's notes of the interview, *PPERI*; See Secretary of State Crewe's despatch dated 24 December 1909 to Governor McCallum where Seely's remarks are repeated with the substitution of *adult suffrage* for *manhood suffrage*; S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike *op. cit.*, p. 65.

He was supposed to have worked against the Buddhists, against the Sinhalese, against this country, while he was away in England. His conversation (and perhaps his correspondence) with Steel-Maitland, over the Ceylon Riots and a publication in the same connection of an alleged secret Report, formed the basis for the charges against him.

This must have been a most galling experience for Fraser. Of all persons, Fraser had hitherto prided himself that he had done some really valuable service to the people during the Riots and their aftermath, for (as he had himself imagined and as will appear later) did he not scotch a threatened conflagration at its source?⁵⁵ Did he not pour oil on troubled waters when the tension was at its worst? Did he not, in the dead of night, face almost single-handed and unarmed, a furious mob of hooligans and restrain them with his antics and quaint humour from besmirching the fair name of this country? Did he not bring the lion and the lamb—the Sinhalese and Muslim leaders—together at Kandy, cool their tempers and lead them to the Governor⁵⁶ in order to restore peace and goodwill? And was this to be the reward? Perhaps Fraser had exaggerated his role at this tragic hour. We shall see.

Meanwhile we have to acknowledge that during these dreadful days when the Government ran amok, and when Sinhalese Buddhists were in dire peril from the military bully, and at the mercy of every liar and perjurer, the Christian Missionaries,⁵⁷ almost all of them, both foreign and local, had been of

55. See Appendix D *infra*.

56. Fraser was one of the earliest to see the Governor (Sir Robert Chalmers) in connection with the Riots when the Governor who was in Nuwara Eliya arrived at Kandy on 1 June 1915. The diary of the Private Secretary (W. T. Southorn) to the Governor has the following entries: "c 6 p.m. Fraser of Trinity College comes to see H.E., tells P.S. he thinks Paranagama and Ratwatte Korala (both have been assaulted) and all Ratwattes—also Aluwihares—are sound. He sees H.E. re a proposed deputation of leading Buddhists and Moors to H.E. tomorrow...." "2 June, 9 a.m. H.E. interviews 4 Moors and 4 Sinhalese in Kandy.....At c 2 p.m. H.E. sees Fraser". See Confidential File, *Diary of Riots of P.S. to Governor*, May 31 to June 6 [1915], CNA 65/228; see also Appendix C *infra*. While Chalmers and Fraser were busy trying to compose matters in Kandy, the Colonial Secretary Stubbs, it would seem from his letter dated 2 June 1915 to A. E. Collins his former colleague at the Colonial Office, was fretting and complaining at Colombo. Stubbs wrote, "H.E. is still hesitant and conferring with the people in Kandy, who can do nothing here, even if they want to, which I doubt", C.O. 54/782 (29056); see Charles S. Blackton *The Action Phase of the 1915 Riots*, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXIX: 2 (February 1970) p. 242 *fn.* 36. Southorn has also recorded in his diary (2 June) after telephone communications with Colombo that the Colonial Secretary is of the view "that something like revolution will break out tonight if situation not handed over to military under Martial Law". J. G. Fraser Government Agent of the Western Province, R. W. Byrde Mayor of Colombo and E. B. Denham are also recorded by Southorn as holding the view that "Martial Law is now the only course".

57. See Appendix B; also see Rev. W. H. Rigby's correspondence with P.S. to Governor Chalmers, *Sinhalese Memorial to Bonar-Law* 25 November 1915, Appendix XVII. The notable exception among the Christian missionaries was Rev. Henry Long (1873-1918) who according to Perera "is doing his best to prevent an Enquiry and nurses a deep seated rancour against the Sinhalese", Perera's letter dated 24 February 1916 to Francis de Zoysa (1879-1938) copy in PPA. See also *London Quarterly Review* July 1916 pp. 120-125.

great help, in Ceylon as well as in England, to the unfortunate victims of the holocaust. One of these great Christian gentlemen was the Rev. J. Simon de Silva,⁵⁸ who is distinguished both for his scholarship and patriotism. His diary, kept during those times of trouble, is now available.⁵⁹ It affords interesting reading and is a graphic record of the contemporary scene as the grim spectacle unfolded itself from day to day. Fraser's name appears in two places in a portion of this diary.⁶⁰

On the 19th July, 1915, de Silva had noted in his diary:

'Had the valuable advantage of the presence of Mr. Fraser of Kandy who is using his great influence with Government on behalf of the people'.

On the 12th May, 1916, de Silva wrote:

Went with F. R. Senanayake⁶¹ to see Mr. Fraser in order to seek his help in approaching the Governor in connection with riot prisoners still in incarceration.

The extracts from the Rev. Simon de Silva's diary would give some glimpses, as seen from a particular angle, of the activities behind the scenes at the time. At the height of the crises during July 1915 it was acknowledged that Fraser was using his "great influence with Government on behalf of the people"; and so well it would appear he had laboured "on behalf of the people" that even after an interval of a year the Rev. Simon de Silva goes out to see him with F. R. Senanayake for further "help".

When Perera made his adverse comment on Fraser in the *Ceylon Daily News* of 6 December 1919, the Editor of that paper added a note in its editorial column as follows:

58. Rev. John Simon de Silva (1868-1940), Wesleyan Methodist minister from 1892; Sinhalese Litterateur, author of a weekly column *Katana Lipi* in the Sinhalese newspaper *Dinamina* 1915-1938; edited *Rivikirana* and *Gnanodaya*, two Christian journals; active worker in the Temperance movement; Christian nationalist; in 1913 he organised with Dr. Paul E. Pieris and others an annual National Day observance on the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year's Day. See his diaries in the possession of Sriani and Ratna de Silva of Colombo, with whose kind permission we are able to publish a portion of the diary as Appendix B *infra*. This useful contemporary record was brought to light by Dr. M. W. Roberts of the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.

59. Copy in Library, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.

60. See Appendix B.

61. Frederick Richard Senanayake (1882-1926) B.A., L.L.B., (Downing College, Cambridge), Barrister-at-Law (Lincoln's Inn); Interned with his brothers D. S. Senanayake, future Prime Minister and D. C. Senanayake at Welikada Jail Colombo during the Riots. F. R. Senanayake contributed generously to the "Royal Commission Fund" of which he was the Hon. Treasurer. The expenses of Perera and Jayatilaka during their stay in England were to a large degree defrayed from this Fund. F. R. Senanayake became the most influential Sinhalese leader from the time of the Riots until his untimely death. Together with Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam he convened a "Sinhalese Conference" at the Tower Hall, Colombo on 20 September 1919, at which Arunachalam, speaking in Sinhalese, on behalf of the convenors inaugurated "a movement in the Sinhalese districts of the Island" for "political, social and economic improvement". See *Ceylon Daily News* 22 September, 1919, p. 1. F. R. Senanayake became the first President of this organisation which was eventually named The Lanka Maha Jana Sabha. Although Senanayake did not himself aspire to be a Member of the Legislative Council, he was a powerful "Member-maker" in the Sinhalese districts during the Legislative Council Elections of 1921.

Suspicion and doubt are ever the most prolific causes of discord and it must be the endeavour of all right-minded persons to remove doubt and to allay suspicion. It is for this reason that we appeal to the Rev. A. G. Fraser with some confidence. In Mr. E. W. Perera's absorbingly interesting article which appears today, Mr. Perera states *with considerable reluctance* an impression conveyed to his mind by a passing perusal of a pamphlet by Mr. Fraser, 'ostensibly giving an account of the development of Trinity College, but suggesting a novel and original theory of the Riots in which is emphasized the part that the reverend gentleman took in securing justice, punishing perjury and above all stopping the rising or rebellion from spreading by using his extraordinary influence with the great Highland Chiefs with whom he was friendly.' Mr. Perera as a faithful historian of the activities of the Ceylon deputation in England feels bound to make the statement, but with characteristic fairness Mr. Perera adds, 'As I may have unwittingly done injustice to this Imperialist Missionary by a short and inaccurate summary of the scope and character of his pamphlet, which I only had for a few minutes in my hands, I hope Mr. Fraser will remove all misapprehension by communicating his pamphlet to the Press'. This is a suggestion which we heartily second. Mr. Fraser during his career in Ceylon has acquired a reputation which few of his brethren can ever hope to match. And we feel sure that Mr. Fraser owes it to himself no less than he owes it to the people of this country to take them into confidence in this matter. The members of the Anglican Communion who have reason to mourn the defection of those in high places, and among whom we understand, are not a few who look to Mr. Fraser to supply in his time what is lacking at present in that exalted quarter, will also be anxious to have their minds set at rest on this vexatious point. Accurate information and perfect understanding make for peace and harmony, and we have no doubt that Mr. Fraser will not deny accurate information of the nature of his pamphlet by causing it to be published so that the people of this country may arrive at a perfect understanding of a personality who has always been very prominent in our midst (emphasis added).

No response came from Fraser to this earnest appeal, the probable reason being that he was away from the island and was unaware of the charge. On 5 March 1920, the *Ceylon Daily News* published a letter from an anonymous correspondent who signed himself "A Sinhalese Christian". He declared "The papers report that Mr. Fraser is in the island now. I trust he has completely recovered from the attack of dysentery and is once more fit for work. I think the time has come for Mr. Fraser to give to the world at large the views and ideas expressed by him in the pamphlet" (emphasis added). The Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News* supported this letter by taking the unusual step of republishing under the caption "A Second Invitation to the Rev. A. G. Fraser" its own editorial appeal that had appeared some three months earlier, on 6 December 1919.

There was no response from Fraser to this too. Although "A Sinhalese Christian" had assumed that Fraser was in Ceylon, it is just possible, if that were so, that Fraser was preoccupied at the time with the work of the Indian Village Education Commission. Besides, it is on record, and "A Sinhalese Christian" too had confirmed it in his letter, that Fraser was suffering from an attack of dysentery in February that year. By April he was known to be recuperating at Kodaikanal in India and drafting the Commissioners' Report at that place.

In any case Fraser was not the type of man who, when he considered himself as being in the right, would stand up and answer a challenge to suit the caprice of an opponent. In certain situations he could be a very obstinate person. He had some of the defects of the imperious school teacher, and occasio-

nally accustomed as he was to the society of children, he behaved, as we shall see, like an overgrown schoolboy himself. This cussedness on his part might have urged him not to yield to any pressure from a detractor, even when aware he could absolve himself from blame. Another probable and more likely reason could have been Fraser's reluctance to publish his own "mighty" doings as recorded in the pamphlet, these being too personal for a public audience.

The indifference has cost Fraser dearly. For he has allowed a completely unjustified campaign against him to gather momentum, and we believe as a result he eventually forfeited a good chance of being the Anglican Bishop of Colombo; not that achieving this prize was as far as we know his ambition, although it would have been a most gratifying reward to crown his services to this country.

It would be observed that even the Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News*, in his editorial note, had drawn a distinction between Fraser and others in "high places" and in an "exalted quarter". At this time the country was agitated over the news that leaked out from the publication in September 1919⁶² of the European memorial to the Secretary of State, that the then Bishop of Colombo, E. A. Copleston⁶³ had lent his signature to it and thus compromised himself as one supporting the excesses committed during the Riots by a set of trigger-happy adventurers⁶⁴ named Sly, Sudlow, Baines and Bailey whose conduct was earlier denounced by the former Governor, Sir John Anderson. The *Ceylon Daily News*, which was friendly to Fraser, was apparently groom-

62. The *Ceylon Daily News* scored a scoop by publishing the full text of the memorial and some connected correspondence in its issue of 16 September 1919. This memorial of "the European residents in Ceylon" was signed by V. A. Julius, Chairman of the organising committee, and partner in the firm of Solicitors, Julius & Creasy, the other chief partner of which, it is interesting to note, was Harry Creasy (1852-1922) a strong supporter of the Sinhalese cause. Among the 1531 signatures to this memorial were (according to Dr. P. V. J. Jayasekera of the Vidyodaya University of Ceylon, Gangodawila) some other Christian clergymen besides the Bishop of Colombo, who was singled out for strong attack by Ceylonese nationalist Christians such as C. E. Corea, see *Ceylon Daily News* 24 September 1919. The memorial (which the writer has not seen) was an enclosure in Governor Anderson's despatch to Long, Confidential, 21 December 1917, C.O. 54/805, referred to by P. T. M. Fernando, *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. III: 3(1969), p. 254 fn.54; the memorial and connected correspondence is reprinted in Armand de Souza, *op. cit.*, Appendix A pp. 1-30.

63. Rt. Rev. Ernest Arthur Copleston, Bishop of Colombo 1903-1924; served in Ceylon from 1880; was Incumbent of Holy Emmanuel Church, Moratuwa and St. Paul's Church Kandy; retired 1924; died 24 August 1933. See fn. 62 *supra*.

64. See *Sessional paper VI* of 1917. See also P. T. M. Fernando's extensive studies on the Riots in the *Journal of Asian Studies* (U.S.A.) Vol. XXIX No. 2, February 1970, pp. 255-266, and *Modern Asian Studies* (U.K.) Vol. III: 3 (1969) pp. 245-255. A more detailed and lengthy version of the latter is found in *Ceylon Studies Seminar 1969/70 Series, A Symposium of 1915 Communal Riots*, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, June 1970, where also appear Dr. M. W. Roberts, *Directions and Patterns in the 1915 Communal Riots*, Dr. Kumari Jayawardena, *Economic and Political Factors in the 1915 Riots*, Dr. Charles S. Blackton, *The Action Phase of the 1915 Riots* and Dr. Robert N. Kearney's Introduction to the Symposium on the Riots, published originally in *Journal of Asian Studies* cited above pp. 219-266.

ing him to take the place of the discredited Copleston. But, for some reason or other, Fraser did not respond to this appeal or try to vindicate himself. He simply ignored the appeal. Perhaps he told himself that he would treat unworthy accusations with the contempt they deserved. In the present case Fraser's contemptuous silence was misunderstood, for it was construed by some as an admission of guilt.

When Fraser returned to his substantive post, at Trinity College in February 1921, there is no doubt that he became aware of the whispering campaign that had turned rumour and suspicion into belief among several people in this country. Fraser had already convinced his own "old boys" that he was not to be blamed, when he met them in June 1920⁶⁵ at a reception they had accorded him shortly before his departure for England. Fraser's friends however could not endure the alarming vendetta waged against him any longer and in October 1921 prevailed upon him to reply to his critics.

Fraser delivered a Public Lecture⁶⁶ on 20 October 1921 under the auspices of the Literary Branch of the Kandy Y.M.B.A. on "Political Movements in Different Lands" at the Association Hall presided over by Albert Godamunne,⁶⁷ a prominent citizen of Kandy and an "old boy" of Trinity College. It was on this occasion, in the concluding portion of his lecture, that Fraser as anticipated replied to his critics.

The *Ceylon Daily News* of 24 October 1921 carried the following account in its first page under the headline *Fraser and the Riots, a Statement Repudiated*:

In the course of a lecture on the "Political Movements in Other Lands" at the Sinhalese Young Men's Association Hall on Thursday last, Mr. A. Godamunne presiding, the Rev. A. G. Fraser referred to the imputation of Mr. E. W. Perera that he had written a pamphlet denouncing the conduct of the Sinhalese during the riots of 1915. Mr. Fraser said, 'I have been very long away from Ceylon, where I stayed only two weeks after I returned from China and then went to India. When I was in India I got some newspapers which were about two months old by the time I got them, saying that I had written a pamphlet, which I had sent to the House of Commons and which contained an attack on the Sinhalese. Mr. E. W. Perera accused me of it and I am told that because I did not answer I was condemned. That isn't fair by me. I did not answer for three reasons. Firstly because I have never yet answered a personal attack in the Press. I have answered an attack on the College, but it is not a personal attack. Secondly when I was in India I was very busy and I did not see the copy of the paper from here till it was two months old. Thirdly I do not admit the right of any person to challenge me to answer the attack in the Press especially when he has had the impertinence to say that he was not certain of his facts. Now, the only pamphlet I ever wrote—Mr. Godamunne has seen it—was not sent to the House of Commons but to the supporters of the School and it did not contain any attack on the Sinhalese. I only referred to the Riots in regard to what the Boys of Trinity had done during that period.'

65. See fn. 72 *infra*.

66. A Notice of this meeting is in *PPERI*. E. W. Perera's brother, Arthur Augustus Perera of Kandy (1880-1966) sent him a letter dated 20 October 1921 giving an account of Fraser's lecture reported by V. M. Saravanamuttu, Proctor of Kandy, *PPERI*.

67. Albert Godamunne (1893-1967) Proctor S.C. active member of the Kandyan National Assembly, a political organisation which agitated for a Federal System of Government for Ceylon divided into three States composed separately of the Tamil provinces, Kandyan Sinhalese Provinces, and the Low Country Sinhalese Provinces.

Perera was stung to the quick by Fraser's charge of "impertinence." Perera had been generally polite in his comments, but here and there he did inflict some deep wounds. Fraser would not have minded being called a "great Imperialist", but he knew what Perera meant by the term was entirely different, indeed contradictory, to Fraser's own concept. Besides, Perera had put Fraser in the same pack as "his episcopal chief who had condoned the shootings and applauded the officials", an insinuation from which the *Ceylon Daily News* had independently taken great pains to disassociate itself.

The debate began in earnest. Perera was at his best when he was crossed. The *Ceylon Daily News* held the scales evenly—or almost so, for, it would seem, a little weight was thrown in on the side of Perera who was a close friend of its proprietor, D. R. Wijewardene.⁶⁸

Perera's prompt reply to Fraser appeared in the *Ceylon Daily News* on the following day, 25 October 1921 on its first page. He quoted in full the text of his charge against Fraser as found in the *Ceylon Daily News* of 6 December 1919, which we have reproduced earlier^{68a} in this article. He had something to say about Fraser's peculiar excuses for not replying earlier. That was by way of argument. At the end he came to what he called the "crux of the matter" by inviting Fraser for "the third time of asking" to "forward the pamphlet to the Press when as I originally stated it will remove all misapprehensions".

Smarting at the whiplash administered for his "impertinence", Perera could not resist having a dig himself at "clergymen in a temper and attorneys with a bad case who had the privilege of abusing the other side". So far so good. But we are afraid Perera did not put all the cards on the table in his confrontation with Fraser. Despite his apparent concern for the case to be stated fully, fairly and dispassionately, Perera appears to have omitted to place before his readers some vital part of the proceedings in Parliament which had appeared in his series of articles in 1919 and which in the present instance would have, to say the least, mitigated the alleged transgression of Fraser if it did not exculpate him completely.

The omissions were the exchanges between King and Steel-Maitland immediately after the name Fraser was cryptically brandished in self-defence by Steel-Maitland. It is worth repeating these exchanges:

MR. KING: Has the Hon. Member seen the report of Mr. Fraser in which he definitely says that there is no conspiracy and will he quote it?

SIR ARTHUR STEEL-MAITLAND: I am afraid I cannot quote it because I have not got it here.

MR. KING: I have.

68. Don Richard Wijewardene (1886-1950), "the greatest newspaper man in the history of Ceylon journalism" See H. A. J. Hulugalle, *The Life and Times of D. R. Wijewardene*, Colombo 1960.

68a. p. 162.

Perera it will be seen, had showed himself as a clever advocate who would consider a little suppression of the truth and a little suggestion of the false as points gained in debate. The burden of the discussion that day at the House of Commons, between Steel-Maitland on one side and Morrell and King on the other, was whether there was a conspiracy. It will be profitable to read a full account of this debate in *Hansard* rather than depend upon extracts sometimes torn out of context. Steel-Maitland was hedging and shifting. In his despair he summoned Fraser to his rescue as one who would bear him out. But to no avail. For King had Fraser's Report with him and there Fraser, according to King, had "definitely" stated that there was "no conspiracy".

Some of us are not aware of the assistance given to our representatives in England by the Christian Missionary Societies there. The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society of London was the most active amongst them. Perera and Jayatilaka had testified to it. It is a curious fact that in this grave national crisis we had to be foster-mothered by an institution that rejoiced in the name of *Aborigines* Protection Society. This circumstance was the butt-end of the jokes of some who could not see any good coming from Nazareth.

The following copy of a letter⁶⁹ addressed by Travers Buxton,⁷⁰ the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, to E. W. Perera is of interest:

THE ANTI-SLAVERY AND ABORIGINES PROTECTION SOCIETY

Denison House
296, Vauxhall Bridge Road,
London, S.W. 1.
30th August, 1917.

Dear Mr. Perera,

I received an answer from Mr. King today to my questions about Mr. Fraser's Report, to which he referred in the House of Commons debate. He sends me the report of Trinity College, Kandy, for 1915, which has a section on the riots. This is interesting reading, and you will like to see it. Mr. King wants the Report back, but he is quite willing that you should read it. Will you call here tomorrow, if convenient, or a later date, and have a look at it? This would be better than sending it to you, as it is specially marked "for private circulation only". Mr. King says he has had two talks with Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland since the debate on the subject, and he would like to speak to me some time on his impression of the position.

I got hold of the *Manchester Guardian* of Tuesday yesterday, and was very glad to see the Leader in which the Editor backed up your letter.

Yours very truly,
Travers Buxton.

E. W. Perera, Esq.,
126, Tollington Park,
N. 4.

69. Original in *PPERI*.

70. Travers Buxton M. A. Oxon, born 1864; Barrister-at-Law, Lincoln's Inn 1893.

In response to Travers Buxton's letter Perera had evidently gone to him and seen the "Report" referred to. According to Perera he had the pamphlet in his hand only 'for a few moments'. This was in August (or September) 1917. But his charges against Fraser were made some two years later. The incident that called for these charges had not seemed important enough, and were not referred to by Perera during the intervening period, even when he delivered his lecture in June 1919. But now in his fuller narrative delivered in pungent prose he fires his broadsides, drawing freely from his imagination where the memory of what he had seen for only a few moments had eluded him.

Having made grave charges on an admittedly doubtful recollection of the contents of this pamphlet, Perera when confronted chose the seemingly fair and straightforward course by appealing to Fraser to publish the pamphlet, which he knew was issued '*for private circulation only*'. Would Fraser walk into the trap, for trap it undoubtedly was? For argument's sake let us suppose that somebody had written a very personal and confidential communication to an intimate friend. Must this letter be published, and the purpose of privacy defeated, to disprove an allegation that it contained a libel? That, in short, was the problem posed.

The Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News*, like most detached people wishing to see such disputes the sooner mended or ended would say (as indeed he said) "publish and be damned", for this was what the editorial note of the same date suggested (but in more polite language):

Mr. E. W. Perera who apparently does not share the Rev. A. G. Fraser's aversion to answering charges made in the public press makes his rejoinder in our columns today to Mr. Fraser's explanations offered before the Kandy Sinhalese Young Men's Association. We are sure that Mr. Fraser will not conceive Mr. Perera's letter as a personal attack. The prominence given to this controversy is inevitable in view of the position Mr. Fraser occupies in Ceylon. That position involves certain responsibilities. For this reason we hope that Mr. Fraser who has gone so far towards meeting apprehensions entertained by the public with regard to the riots will set them completely at rest. This he can do as Mr. Perera suggests by forwarding the impeached pamphlet to the Press and by letting the public judge between him and Mr. Perera.

This was quite a "reasonable" request. Let us see how Fraser reacted. But first let us analyse the position a little more fully. From the reading of the *Hansard* of the British House of Commons, it was quite clear that Steel-Maitland had not been able categorically to state that there was a conspiracy. The furthest he would go was to declare that the Riots "*really spread because it was largely a matter of design*", Out of this mole-hill Perera had made a mountain. He wrote "*According to the Colonial Under-Secretary, [Fraser] testified to the disloyal nature and the organised character of the riots like his episcopal chief who had condoned the shootings and applauded the officials*" (emphasis added).

Fraser in his reply which appeared in the *Ceylon Daily News* of 27 October 1921, was obliged to call this insinuation a "terminological inexactitude".

Fraser pleaded in defence:

I did not say that the rioters were disloyal or anti-Government, for I did not believe that they were (except for a very few), though they were I believe organised. I protested to the Government against the charge of High Treason, and I believe the protest had effect. Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland was quite clear that I was not a supporter of the view that the riots were of German or anti-English origin.

Perera had also declared, "I had received information from Ceylon, which at that time I did not believe, that the Rev. A. G. Fraser had come up to London on the suggestion of the local Government officials as a witness of their view and an apologist for them at Downing Street". This evidently refers to the letter dated 1 December 1916 that Perera had received from James William de Silva. We have dealt with this earlier. Fraser did have a few of what we might term "enemies" in Ceylon. He had rubbed some on the wrong side by his independent and somewhat wilful ways. It is enough that Perera had admitted that at that time he did not believe the information he had received. Fraser had "friends" too in Ceylon. We know for certain from the Rev. Simon de Silva's diaries that even after a lapse of a year after the riots, F. R. Senanayake had gone to Fraser for "help", only a short while before Fraser left Ceylon for England. This is how Fraser replied to Perera:

Then, I did not go to England as a witness on the riots, but on questions connected with the War, and the conversation on the riots was only incidental. They did not bulk largely in England during the War, nor in our talk.

The original bone of contention—the remarks of Steel-Maitland in the debate on the Colonial Office Estimates in August 1917—gradually slipped from the teeth of the contenders. In its place entered the myth of a secret pamphlet that was alleged to have slandered a nation. Answering the demand of Perera for its publication forthwith, Fraser in a letter that appeared on 27 October 1921 revealed that he did not circulate a pamphlet to Members of the House of Commons. "In no case", said Fraser, "could I have felt it right to issue pamphlets to the Members of the House of Commons to attack a people. That would be unpardonable and the statement that I did so is a lie". Fraser did not mince his words here. This was in reply to Perera's accusation on 6 December 1919 that "*Rev. A. G. Fraser had circulated a pamphlet marked 'private' to Members of the House of Commons ostensibly giving an account of Trinity College*".

Fraser described the pamphlet as follows:

It is a Report of 106 pages of which only twelve in all refer to the Riots, almost all twelve of which have already appeared in Ceylon in the pages of the College Magazine.^{70a} The pamphlet is concerned with all the actions of the College Year, with the class work, athletics, the Social Service, with letters from the boys at the Front, the Prize Giving Reports and Speeches, the Old Boys' Dinner etc., etc. There is no reference to "Highland Chiefs" great or small except to the brave act of one. This Annual Report in pamphlet form was sent round, as it is every year by the Committee, to the Subscribers to the College Fund, of whom four only are, I believe, Members of the House of Commons, and he quoted me as saying the Riots were not anti-British,

^{70a}. See fn. 83 *infra*.

Fraser confirmed:

I sent home material for a College Report containing a mass of papers, not more than a quarter of it in my own handwriting, and that material was submitted to others in the staff, and all the material was sifted and put together and published in pamphlet form in England by the Secretary of the College Committee. To publish the whole of that again is impossible. It was as I said an Annual Report published as usual for private circulation only, and sent only to friends of the College, and it contained the letters and reports of many written only to a limited circle. But I can quote in full all I say, or that contained, in the pamphlet *as to the origin of the Riots and leave you Sir, to say whether I have put the position of the Riots fairly or not.* (emphasis added)

Fraser followed this up with an extract from the Report directly answering the specific charge of Perera that the Report was "*ostensibly giving an account of the development of Trinity College, but suggesting a novel and original theory of the Riots*". What was said in the pamphlet in this connection is given below, Fraser releasing it under the eye of the Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News* who was given a copy of the pamphlet:

"*The Riots*": And now having more or less polished off our bit for the War in England, I must come to the Riots. I do not believe these would have taken place if there had been any effort made to enlist the interest and sympathy of the people in the War. But they were unrestful as men are everywhere during this War. Nothing was done to turn their restlessness into wise channels. And so it was fixed on their own racial quarrels... The causes for the Riots rising were two: I. Religion. II. Economics. The Mohammedans called Moors in Ceylon but with no racial connections with the Moors in Africa are to Ceylon, what the Jews are to Russia. These useful, but hated alien traders, protested against a Buddhist religious procession passing their Mosque at a country town, Gampola, twelve miles from Kandy. Now a procession means more to modern Buddhism than any other religion. They have no sacraments and no corporate worship, nor have they much mysticism. The procession provides them with their one opportunity of a corporate religious act, and of rousing a mystic enthusiasm by pointing back to an idealised national past. When, then, the Moors objected to the Gampola procession, and were upheld in their right to object by both police and law courts, a very serious blow was dealt to Buddhist sensibilities and this by the "Jews" of Ceylon. The Moors boasted they would interfere with the great Kandy Perahera—the greatest annual procession in Ceylon, held each August, and they did try to prevent the erection of a dansala or booth where food is distributed free to all comers on Buddha's birthday, May 28th in Kandy. Their objections to the dansala were overruled by the Municipal Council, but the ill-feelings raised by them were not allayed. A dansala is a great opportunity of winning merit, and interests ardent Buddhists in *all* the country over. It gives fuller life to those who subscribe for the food, and fuller life now to the pilgrims who eat it. Everyone is interested in a dansala.

The economic hatred against the Moors is due partly to the jealousy of bad traders for good ones. They do shady things sometimes, very often in the villages and their morals are not high, yet they win, by patient attention to details and a study of their customary needs.

[Poor Fraser got into trouble over some of these remarks. It was now the turn of the "Moorish Community in Ceylon" to feel insulted. S. I. Sheikh Abdul Cader lost no time in protesting in the *Ceylon Daily News* of 1 November 1921. He demanded from Fraser a public withdrawal of those "scathing remarks against the peaceable Muslim sons of Mother Lanka". Fraser kept quiet.]

In his letter published in the *Ceylon Daily News* of 27 October Fraser made it clear that the above extract was all that was written on the causes of the Riots, "except for a cartoon for which I am not responsible, and which was never considered mine, nor referred to in any way".

Fraser continued:

Now let me add this. During the Riots we at Trinity did our best to save the lives and property of Moormen. After the Riots we did our best to save those of the Sinhalese. In both cases we largely succeeded. And in Trinity we were certainly successful in getting the leaders of both communities to co-operate with us and with each other in goodwill, and were able to win their friendship and trust. We made mistakes, of course, and apparently enemies, but as a whole our Old Boys and Masters have little reason to be anything but proud of the services they rendered to both communities.

The Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News* subscribed a footnote to Fraser's letter as follows, "Mr. Fraser has left with us the booklet from which he has made his quotations. We shall be glad to show it to Mr. Perera if he wishes to see it—Ed. C.D.N."

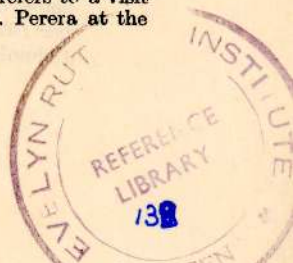
As a matter of fact we now have evidence that the pamphlet has been seen by several persons. We are not quite sure whether Steel-Maitland was given a copy after Fraser's conversation with him, although Steel-Maitland had vaguely given a hint of his awareness of the pamphlet in his reply to King. King, who was one of the four Members of the House of Commons who were also subscribers to the College Fund, had of course received a copy. Travers Buxton was one of the first to call for a copy after the incident in Parliament. Albert Godamunne, who presided at the Y.M.B.A. Meeting, was also shown a copy. E. R. de Silva,⁷¹ a former Principal of Richmond College had also seen the Report. When Fraser addressed the Trinity College Old Boys in June 1920, when the air was thick with Fraser's alleged disservice to the country, Rev. G. S. Amarasekera,⁷² Vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Kandy, had received a copy. Amarasekera had then written to Perera as follows:

Stanley House
Kandy.
June 28, 1920.

My dear Mr. Perera,

Just a couple of days before 'Fraser of Trinity' left for England i.e. on the 16th inst, I think, it was that Trinity College Old Boys Assn., was at Home, in the College Hall to meet Mr. Fraser. The President welcomed him in a few words. Then Fraser in his reply made some reference to the recent attacks on him in the Press regarding him and the riots and said that he published his usual annual report, for the benefit of his supporters in England some of whom happened to be M.P.'s. In it he said that the riots in 1915 were due to two causes:—

71. Egodage Richard de Silva (1901-1971), "He was a great Teacher, a great Man, a great Christian," Rev. W. J. T. Small *The Ceylon Methodist Church Record*, January/February 1971, p. 18; teacher at Trinity College Kandy, during the Fraser period, and at Richmond College Galle where he finally became Principal; he retired in 1957. He wrote an article entitled "Fraser of Trinity" in the *Ceylon Observer* 9 March 1962; "Unfortunately", he wrote "Mr. Fraser was unwilling to do so [i.e. publish in full his report of the Riots] merely because of a reference to himself made therein. Those of us who read the pamphlet were sure that the lines referred to did not carry the interpretation suggested to Mr. Perera in England". His article also refers to a visit made by him, A. M. K. Cumaraswamy and James David to E. W. Perera at the residence of his brother, Arthur Perera, in this connection.
72. Rev. Gregory Suriarachchi Amarasekera (1858-1929). See fn. 82 *infra*.



Religion and Economics. These you know already. Gampola Perahera and Hambaya's,^{72a} and added that he was blamed by some for blaming the Mohammedans. This evening I got hold of a copy of the "Report" he referred to. It is entitled "The Story of another year's work, 1915. Trinity College, Kandy Ceylon". This is an illustrated pamphlet, which booms the College. I wonder whether this is the identical document you saw when in England.

I thought I would give you this information for what it is worth.

With kindest regards to you and kind remembrance from Mrs. A. and myself to your dear mother, Grand Mama and all at the Walauwa.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,
[Sgd.] G. S. Amarasekera.

P.S. The a/c of the riots given in the Report does not blame the Sinhalese. The two points above referred to are given as the causes and gives details of what mighty things he and his college did during the riots. [emphasis added].

[Sgd.] G. S. A.

Now the Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News* S. J. K. Crowther⁷³ was given a copy. This we understand was also shown to J. L. C. Rodrigo,⁷⁴ an old Trinidadian, who was then the Editor of the *Ceylon Morning Leader*. Fraser had granted permission to Crowther to show the pamphlet to Perera, but on condition that he did not quote from it or use any material which Fraser had not already published in the Press. There is no evidence to show that Fraser had mentioned Ramanathan⁷⁵ and D. B. Jayatilaka by name as two others to whom the pamphlet may be shown under the same conditions, although

72a. The word *Hambaya* derived from *sampan-karaya* had no sinister connotation. But the member representing the "Mohammadans" in the Legislative Council, N. D. H. M. Abdul Cader (1879-1938) took heated exception to its use by Ramanathan in the Legislative Council on 24 October 1917; see *Hansard: Debates in the Legislative Council of Ceylon, Session 1917*, Colombo 1918 p. 388.

73. Samuel John Kirupairatnam Crowther, born 8 February 1888; B.A. (St. Edmund Hall, Oxford) 1907-1910, Curate, St. Paul's Church, Colombo; Editor, *Ceylon Daily News* 1918-1931; joined *Times of Ceylon* 1933, retired 1946.

74. Joseph Lionel Christie Rodrigo, born 31 July 1895; Government Scholar from Trinity College, Kandy, M.A. (Balliol College, Oxford); Editor, *Ceylon Morning Leader* 1921 to 1926; Professor Emeritus of Western Classics University of Ceylon, Peradeniya; married Evelyn, daughter of Dr. Solomon Fernando; See fn. 114 *infra*.

75. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan (1851-1931), Nominated Member representing the Tamil-speaking people, Legislative Council, 1879-1892, Solicitor-General 1892-1906, Elected Member representing the Educated Ceylonese, Legislative Council, 1911-21; His advocacy of the Sinhalese cause in the Legislative Council in August, September and October 1915 was such that "no Ceylonese ever reached that summit of fame before or since"; *Tribune* 25 September 1967; see also *Ceylon Daily Mirror* 26 November 1971, and M. Vytilingam *The Life of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan*, Vol. 1, Colombo 1971.

many years afterwards in 1953,⁷⁶ J. A. Will Perera⁷⁷ alleged that it was. As far as Ramanathan is concerned, he mentions Fraser in some places in his book, *Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon*,⁷⁸ but there is not even a hint of censure of any of Fraser's actions. D. B. Jayatilaka had never referred to Fraser in respect of these incidents except for writing to Fraser soon after the debate on the Colonial Office Estimates in 1917.

The confrontation in the Press between Fraser and Perera was now reaching its climax. Fraser had explained his conduct at the Kandy Y.M.B.A. Meeting. Perera challenged him in the Press. Fraser replied and had placed his pamphlet in the hands of the umpire, the Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News*. Now Perera who had never to his dying day been silenced by defeat,^{78a} returned to the charge arguing still. The pages of the *Ceylon Daily News* were splashed on 31 October with Perera's letter on the front page and an editorial note within.

The following is the full text of Perera's letter to the Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News*:

Dear Sir—Mr. Fraser in his rambling reply of October 27, has missed the real issues. He originally complained at the Kandy Y.M.B.A. that I had stated that Mr. Fraser "had written a pamphlet which he had sent to the House of Commons and which contained an attack on the Sinhalese". "Now the only pamphlet I ever wrote," "continues Mr. Fraser—"Mr. Godamunne has seen it—was not sent to the House of Commons but to the supporters of the School, and it did not contain any attack on the Sinhalese".

76. In J. A. Will Perera, *E. W. Perera, Patriot and Scholar*, Colombo 1953, p. 7.

77. J. A. Will Perera Journalist; author of *E. W. Perera: Patriot and Scholar*, Colombo 1953; "The late Mr. E. W. Perera's father was my father's cousin. His mother was my father's younger sister", *op.cit.*, p. 1; studied at Trinity College, Kandy 1911-17; Will Perera was a severe critic of Fraser. On 7 January 1950 shortly after Fraser arrived on his last visit to Ceylon, Will Perera published, *Fraser of Trinity in the Searchlight* Colombo, where he said "he [Fraser] was above all human and humane", but in 1953 soon after the death of E. W. Perera he recalled in his book the old controversy between E. W. Perera and Fraser in a scathing attack on Fraser. He returned to this attack on Fraser's death in 1962 in an article in the *Ceylon Observer* 11 February 1962. This brought a rejoinder from Will Perera's college mate S. E. N. Nicholas in the *Ceylon Observer* 5 April 1962. The Old Boys of Trinity (S. J. C. Schokman, Dr. Lloyd Abeyratne, C. E. Simithraarachchi, S. B. Yatawara, M. Rajanayagam, J. L. C. Rodrigo and D. B. Ellepola) jointly defended Fraser in the *Ceylon Observer* 25 February 1962; see also Adonis [J. L. C. Rodrigo] Fraser of Trinity, *Ceylon Daily News* 21 November 1949; S. E. N. Nicholas He Bequeathed Character, *Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated* 27 November 1949; S. J. C. Schokman The Rev. A. G. Fraser, *Times of Ceylon* 2 February 1962; C. Selvaratnam on Fraser, *Ceylon Observer* 19 February 1962; T. R. J. [ansen] The Rev. A. G. Fraser, *Times of Ceylon* 22 February 1962; E. R. de Silva Fraser of Trinity *Ceylon Observer* 9 March 1962; Victor C. Perera Fraser of Trinity, *Ceylon Observer* 10 March 1962 and J. A. Will Perera's reply to his critics *Ceylon Observer* 25 February 1962. On reading these one would find J. A. Will Perera more often wrong than right.

78. P. Ramanathan, *Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon, 1915*, Colombo 1916, pp. 14, 258 and 259; A statement by D. B. Seneviratne, a master of Trinity College, Kandy, appears in this book, pp. 256 to 259.

78a. He was irrepressible although he once remarked (jocularly?) "the politically dead do not speak".

To dispose of a preliminary point at once, Mr. Fraser says in his reply that he did not send the pamphlet to members of the House of Commons but to supporters of Trinity College of whom "probably about four were members of the House". I can only say that it is a strange coincidence that a pamphlet intended for the information of the supporters of Trinity College should find its way into the hands of Members of Parliament who took a warm interest on behalf of the Sinhalese on the eve of the Colonial Office Debate.

I replied on October 25, noting exactly what I did say. In short I stated, "Mr. A. G. Fraser, the Ceylon Missionary, had, according to the Colonial Under Secretary, testified to the disloyal nature and the organized character of the riots". I reproduced from the Official Record what Mr. Morrell, M.P. had urged on behalf of the Sinhalese, and the rejoinder by Sir A. Steel-Maitland, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, supporting the official case of conspiracy and disloyalty which the Sinhalese always denounced as a gross libel, backing his statement with the authority of Mr. Fraser in the words "that was the opinion of a perfectly unbiassed man like Mr. Fraser." To give Mr. Fraser an opportunity to explain before we took action Mr. D. B. Jayatilaka communicated with Mr. Fraser, who was then in England. This is the correspondence I referred to, as anyone reading who was not in a temper or in a hurry would have understood. I never knew that Mr. Fraser had any correspondence with the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies until his letter. Mr. Fraser says that he is quite entitled to have his views on the subject and to express them. Nobody denies this. But he must not deny the same liberty to other people if they consider his action and statement such as these to Sir A. Steel-Maitland as "an attack on the Sinhalese" and not an exuberant expression of friendliness.

In regard to the pamphlet, I stated in my last communication that "Mr. Fraser finally does admit that he had written a pamphlet, but denies that it did contain any attack on the Sinhalese or that it was sent to the House of Commons". I made an appeal to him for the third time to issue that pamphlet to the Press. I shall deal with this point later.

On October 27 Mr. Fraser contributed* nearly two columns in reply. To take the material points. He admits "I did not say the rioters were *disloyal or anti-Government* for I did not believe they were *except for a very few, though they were, I believe, organised*". (The italics are mine).

The Sinhalese case all along was that in no instance were the rioters "disloyal or anti-Government" and that "they were" not "organised". That they were so was the contention of Sir A. Steel-Maitland as "that was the opinion of a perfectly unbiassed man like Mr. Fraser".

In addition to the "pamphlet" Mr. Fraser speaks of "one other letter to Old Boys in the Forces", presumably also marked "private" and printed, which if published now may throw light on this controversy.

Finally to come to the pamphlet which I have repeatedly asked Mr. Fraser to communicate to the Press: the passage quoted by Mr. Fraser does not exhaust his reference to the riots and the rioters. The rest will not take more than a column of the "Daily News", and I feel sure that the Editor will extend his courtesy to publish them. I am unable to supplement Mr. Fraser's quotations for the simple reason that he has laid a strict embargo upon my use of the pamphlet which he had placed in the hands of the Editor.

I would therefore request Mr. Fraser to quote for the benefit of the public of Ceylon the rest of his account of the riots including the last three lines on page 20, the first four lines on page 21, and the last four lines on page 21. Then the public will be able to judge who is really trafficking in "terminological inexactitudes"—not to employ a term used by Mr. Fraser, which I was taught when a boy was never used by well-bred people.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD W. PERERA

Kotte, October 29.

The editorial note was as follows:

Mr. E. W. Perera today makes his answer to the Rev. A. G. Fraser's letter of the 27th instant. Mr. Fraser in his letter, meeting the charges brought against him by Mr. Perera, characterised Mr. Perera's statements as a lie. Mr. Fraser also left with us his impeached pamphlet for Mr. Perera's inspection on condition that Mr. Perera was not to make any quotations from it. We are constrained to make some observations on the pamphlet because Mr. Fraser in his letter appealed to us to state whether he had put the position of the pamphlet fairly or not. On the 27th instant when Mr. Fraser brought the pamphlet to this office, he very kindly went over the entire publication with us. On that occasion in the course of a hurried inspection we pointed out to him certain pages of Mr. Fraser's contribution, bearing on the riots which Mr. Fraser had not included in his quotation. Mr. Fraser replied that the pages indicated were not essential. We had not the time then to read those portions carefully. We have however done so now and we feel that in order to place the matter fairly before the public and in justice to Mr. Perera's contention, they ought to be published. At present Mr. Fraser does not want any quotations to be made either by Mr. Perera or by us from outside the passages quoted by him. But we hope that in the interests of truth he will permit their publication for which we shall be glad to place our columns at his disposal.

It will be seen that the umpire has had second thoughts on the subject. He did point out at the outset when Fraser "very kindly went over the *entire* publication" with him, that there were certain pages bearing on the Riots which had not been included in Fraser's published quotations. This does not surprise us, for Fraser was confining himself only to rebutting a charge of having a "novel and original theory" on the causes of the Riots, by reproducing his remarks relating to the causes. However the Editor had since his meeting with Fraser pleaded that he had had only a "hurried inspection" and had not "the time then to read those portions carefully". Very compelling reasons for a shift of position. Had there been immediate publication of the pamphlet as earnestly pleaded for by the Editor, it would have decided the issue once and for all (in Fraser's favour as we shall discover). But Fraser as might have been anticipated would not budge. The debate now ended.

What was the Parthian shot of Perera? Any disinterested man reading Perera's letter after informing himself in full of all the circumstances of the case would be compelled to come to only one conclusion. Far from Fraser's last letter of 27 October being as alleged by Perera rambling, it was Perera's final reply that was rambling and perplexing.

In the debate at the House of Commons on the Colonial Office Estimates in 1917, the main issue that was raised, as we have emphasised over and over again, was whether there was a conspiracy or not. Morell and King argued that there was no conspiracy. Much as Steel-Maitland would have wished to state that there was a conspiracy, he equivocated and finally in the vaguest of terms declared that "it was largely a matter of design". Fraser's name was added almost as an afterthought at the end, as one who would bear him out, but King had immediately protested that as far as conspiracy was concerned Fraser had definitely stated that there was no conspiracy. Perera however continued to take it for granted that every word of Steel-Maitland's speech in this connection had been underlined with the blue-pencil of Fraser's authority.

Perera also drew a red herring across the trail by assuming that the "one other letter to Old Boys in the Forces" which Fraser had indicated having written might also provide another controversy of a like nature. The object of Perera was to demand publication of private communications of Fraser bearing on the Riots on the ground that Perera was alleging rightly or wrongly that these had been prejudicial to the national cause. This was most unfair.

Having seen the pamphlet again at the *Ceylon Daily News* office, and having agreed not to quote without Fraser's permission, Perera had challenged Fraser in his concluding remarks to justify his position in the following crucial words which we shall repeat: "I would therefore request Mr. Fraser to quote for the benefit of the public of Ceylon the rest of his account of the Riots" including

- (a) the last three lines on page 20
- (b) the first four lines on page 21
- (c) the last four lines on page 21.

"when the public will be able", Perera challenged, "to judge who is really trafficking in 'terminological inexactitudes'". There was no response from Fraser. The debate having thus ended, Fraser withdrew into his shell of silence never to raise this subject again.

In Ceylon, we now know, Albert Godamunne, the Rev. G. S. Amarasekera, J. L. C. Rodrigo, E. R. de Silva, Victor C. Perera⁷⁹ and S. J. K. Crowther have read the pamphlet. The first five had not seen anything in it prejudicial to the Sinhalese. Albert Godamunne, a militant Kandyan Buddhist nationalist, for one, would have been the first to denounce it if it had been otherwise. S. J. K. Crowther, the Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News*, was very anxious that the pamphlet should be published, but regarding its merits or demerits he kept his own counsel. No wonder, every student of those times is eager to get hold of this mysterious and elusive pamphlet that was supposed to have contained an attack on the Sinhalese people by Fraser. This allegation had distorted Fraser's image in several quarters and had indeed, in our opinion spelt doom to his further career in Ceylon. A study of the actual facts thus becomes necessary to establish truth in place of rumour and conjecture.

We are told that the pamphlet is not available at the Trinity College archives, nor in those of the Church Missionary Society in London, although there is in the latter place a copy of a letter⁸⁰ from Fraser enclosing papers probably connected with this Report, and requesting the Committee to make a selection from those papers for publication. We have no doubt that the

79. Victor C. Perera, Proctor S.C.; "ardent and very loyal Trinitian", says Professor J. L. C. Rodrigo. See *fn. 77 supra*.

80. Dr. P. V. J. Jayasekera of the Vidyodaya University of Ceylon, Gangodawila drew our attention to this correspondence. In his unpublished Ph.D. thesis entitled *Social and Political Change in Ceylon 1900-1919*, University of London, 1969, Dr. Jayasekera writes on the Riots (which he calls "disturbances") in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

pamphlet will one day turn up. In the meantime the writer had come across among the *E. W. Perera Papers* in his possession some MSS entitled in Perera's own handwriting "*Extracts from Rev. Fraser's pamphlet circulated in England marked 'confidential' concerning the Riots and the part he took in quelling them*". We have good reason to believe that these *Extracts* which we publish as an Appendix⁸¹ to this article is an authentic copy and until the real pamphlet is forthcoming, this could shed some light on the controversy.

These apparently cover pages 12 to 22 of the pamphlet, and therefore include the alleged tell-tale passages from pages 20 and 21 the publication of which Perera had demanded. It would seem that pages 10 and 11 contained the passages regarding the cause of the Riots. These were quoted by Fraser in his letter and have also been reproduced above. The pamphlet, according to the Rev. G. S. Amarasekera is entitled "The Story of Another Year's Work, 1915. Trinity College, Kandy, Ceylon". According to him it was an illustrated pamphlet "which booms the college". He⁸² had also stated after reading it, that "the account of the Riots given in the report does not blame the Sinhalese". According to Fraser the pamphlet is a report of 106 pages of which only 12 in all referred to the Riots. Fraser had stated that it contained a cartoon for which he was not responsible and which was never considered as his. According to Travers Buxton the pamphlet was marked "for private circulation only". These particulars, it should be noted, are from written testimony given by those who have seen the pamphlet.

We shall now reconstruct the pages that related to the Riots. Already as we have seen Fraser had quoted that part of the Report that dealt with the causes of the Riots. Immediately following it were, it would seem, the extracts that have now become available. Together they should form pages 10 to 22 of Fraser's Report. On reading this reconstructed Report we notice that some parts (in an abridged form) had appeared in the *Trinity College Magazine* of November 1915⁸³ pages 32 to 35. Until the printed pamphlet is found and all doubts finally cleared, we shall have to rely on the material now available.⁸⁴ On reading this material one is compelled to note that Perera's attacks on Fraser were unwarranted. Leaving aside hard words and strictures,

81. Appendix C *infra*.

82. Amarasekera who was the incumbent of Holy Trinity Church, Kandy which was the College chapel at the time had strong personal differences with Fraser over the building of a new school chapel. See Ward *op. cit.*, pp. 107 to 113.

83. We are obliged to S. J. C. Schokman of Colombo for this copy of the Magazine, which was edited by J. L. C. Rodrigo and R. C. Edwards.

84. Compare *Extracts* (Appendix C) with Ward *op. cit.*, pp. 100 to 105 where Ward quotes from a letter dated 1 June 1915 from Fraser to the Church Missionary Society, London, and also from other correspondence and Reports available to him. Miss V. L. O. Reimann author of *History of Trinity College, Kandy*, Colombo 1923, also deals with the Riots, pp. 173 to 178. These accounts have a common characteristic which can best be described in the Rev. G. S. Amarasekera's homely idiom as "booming the College". There is no attack, whatsoever, on the Sinhalese people.

and avoiding such terms as "lie", one must regretfully conclude that all this trouble had come through the clash of two dominant personalities, each in his own way unyielding and tenacious, who would rather employ the arts and artifices of debate to gain their ends than seek *rapprochement* through a friendly give and take. In the present case the initial fault lies fairly and squarely with E. W. Perera, as the hitherto "un-republished" part of the Report would reveal.

These *Extracts*, it will be agreed, show that Fraser had endeavoured in the words of the Rev. G. S. Amarasekera to "boom the College" giving details of "what mighty things he and his College did during the Riots". The report was directed to the head and heart of the British benefactor. It was an informal and intimate communication, with no pretence to graces of style, somewhat rambling, very personal and on the face of it strictly intended for a limited and exclusive audience.

In these circumstances one should be able to appreciate the reluctance of Fraser to give unnecessary publicity to what was in effect private correspondence. While there is good ground for it to be subjected now, like all other literary remains, to the scrutiny of scholars it would have been most unreasonable to expect, far less to demand, contemporary publicity for such communications.

Today we are familiar with masses of private correspondence, secret papers, love letters and other evidence of the lives of great and little men who have lived their days and passed away, laid bare to the public gaze. These make the characters real and human, not mere images graven for adoration as tribal gods or household deities. Truth, the greatest of all human objectives, is thus vindicated.

In the present case, while some might even blush when reading the Report, no fair-minded person would say that Fraser had slandered a nation or its people. Fraser, as we would have observed, was first charged with having declared to Steel-Maitland that the Riots were a "conspiracy", a "rising or rebellion", "disloyal" and of "organised character", meaning thereby that the people had conspired and organised to overthrow the Government.

When these wild charges were found to be untenable, the position had shifted and Fraser was asked to publish the "novel and original theory" of the Riots, that he had advanced in a secret pamphlet (ostensibly a College Report) circulated among the Members of the House of Commons. Fraser immediately complied with this request furnishing the required extract, but hotly denying at the same time that it was circulated among Members of the House of Commons except among four friends of Trinity College, Kandy, who were also Members of Parliament.

Then publication of specific extracts from the Report from pages 20 and 21 was demanded. These particulars, which Fraser refused to publish for reasons of his own are now available and they form (more or less), as far as we can reconstruct Fraser's Report on the Riots, the passages underlined in the *Extracts*. Do these or any other passages in the *Extracts* indicate that Fraser had alleged conspiracy or an anti-government organised rebellion on the part of the Sinhalese Buddhists as was assumed by E. W. Perera? The answer is quite clearly in the negative.

APPENDIX A THE GAMPOLA PERAHERA CASE

This case, D.C. Kandy No. 2246, was instituted on 3 April 1913 at Kandy by the Basnayake Nilame⁸⁵, the chief lay officer and trustee of the Wallahagoda Devale in Gampola, against the Attorney-General of Ceylon as representing the Crown. The plaintiff claimed a declaration that he was entitled to the right of conducting a religious procession, the Esala Perahera at Gampola, without restriction and based his right upon the fifth provision of the Kandyan Convention of 1815 which was described as a "solemn Treaty of Cession between the British Crown and the Kandyan Sinhalese which could not be varied by subsequent legislation".^{85a} The District Judge (Paul E. Pieris⁸⁶) delivered judgement^{86a} on 4 June 1914 in favour of the plaintiff: the judgement is reproduced in *Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume*, Colombo, 1956, at pp. 156-174. The defendant appealed against this judgement in S.C. No. 245 D.C. Final, and the Supreme Court consisting of two judges (W. S. Shaw⁸⁷ and T. E. de Sampayo⁸⁸) allowed the appeal and set aside the Judgement of the District Court on 2 February 1915 (see Basnayake Nilame vs The Attorney-General, 18 *New Law Reports* pp. 193-213).

85. Wickramsinghe Nawaratne Panditta Wasala Abeykoon Ganwilla Herat Mudianselage Tikiri Bandara Ellekewala.

85a. See printed Record of Privy Council Appeal No. 90 of 1961, p. 10 (4), *PPERI* and *CNA* 65/236.

86. Paulus Edward Pieris, later Sir P. E. Pieris Deraniyagala Samarasinha Siriwardhana (1874-1957), B.A. (Trinity College, Cambridge), L.L.M. and Litt.D. (Cantab.), Barrister-at-Law, Inner Temple 1895, Ceylon Civil Service 1896-1935, Trade Commissioner for Ceylon in England; Organiser of the National Day movement in 1913; historian and patriot. "He critically examined the various fables that had been put in circulation by the British, and demonstrated that stories like the pounding of the decapitated heads of Ehelepola's children, were sheer propaganda, inventions as false as the horror tale of the Black Hole of Calcutta. He painted Sri Wickrama as a hapless monarch hedged in by enemies and surrounded by traitors, a forlorn figure not knowing whom to trust, striving in vain to maintain the independence of the Sinhalese", Thalagodapitiya *op.cit.*, p. 136.

86a. Pieris declared in this judgement, "This is the first time that the nature of the Convention has been brought before a court of law for a judicial interpretation", p. 167. This is not quite correct: see *G. A. vs Suddhana* 5 Tambyah 39, cited in 18 N.L.R. at p. 210.

87. Sir Walter Sidney Shaw (1863-1937) Barrister-at-Law Middle Temple 1888, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court, Ceylon 1914-21, knighted 1921.

88. Sir Thomas Edward de Sampayo (1855-1927) Puisne Judge Supreme Court Ceylon 1915-1924; "As a Sinhalese", he wrote on 15 October 1915 to Sir Alfred Lascelles (formerly Chief Justice Ceylon), "I am thoroughly ashamed" of "the existing poison", of Sinhalese nationalism; C.O. 54/792 (50319), quoted by Charles S. Blackton *op.cit.*, p. 238 *fn.* 15.

The plaintiff petitioned the Privy Council in P.C. Appeal No. 90 of 1916. E. W. Perera, D. B. Jayatilaka, J. H. Sproule,⁸⁹ Sir John Simon⁹⁰ and De Gruyther⁹¹ appeared for him, while W. H. Upjohn⁹² and H. M. Givven appeared for the respondent. Following a settlement⁹³ of the dispute in Ceylon, the appellant offered to withdraw the appeal at the first hearing on 14 May 1917 and sought a declaration from the Crown, which was to be embodied in the Order of the King-in-Council, to the effect that "upon the respondent stating that the Government of Ceylon has no intention of disregarding the Kandyan Convention the Appeal is by consent withdrawn, each side paying its own costs".⁹⁴ This offer was rejected by the respondent, and on the other hand the judgement of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council delivered on 17 June 1918 (see 20 *New Law Reports* pp. 376-377) incorporated a passage from a letter⁹⁵ from the respondent's solicitors, to which the Lords of the Judicial Committee expressly drew attention. This passage ran: "We would point out that after the rebellion of 1818 a proclamation was issued in November of that year, and from that date down to the present time the Government of the island has always been administered upon the footing that all persons inhabiting the island should have full liberty of conscience, and the free exercise of all such modes of religious worship as were not prohibited by law, provided they be contented with the quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the same, not giving offence or scandal to the Government. And it has further been a principle of administration that all laws, whether they assume the form of an enactment or the form of a compact, must be regarded as liable to such changes by competent authority as in process of time and under changing circumstances the general interests of the colony or the interests of law and order may demand".

Copies of the Privy Council brief and the correspondence between the solicitor for the appellant and the solicitors for the respondent are among the *E. W. Perera Papers* in the possession of the present writer.^{95a} A verbatim report of the proceedings of the Privy Council of the 17 June 1918 appeared in the *Ceylon Daily News* of 31 August 1918. The writer is obliged to J. Malalgoda of Colombo for drawing his attention to this report and for providing him with the press-cutting. The short-hand notes of the earlier proceedings of the Privy Council of 14 May 1917 will be found among the Colonial Office Records in the Public Record Office, London.

APPENDIX B

A PORTION OF THE DIARY OF REV. J. SIMON DE SILVA

June 4th, 1915:

For some 3 or 4 days a state of utter lawlessness has prevailed in Colombo and throughout the country. Mob law has reigned supreme in all parts of Colombo, and the mobs have done their sweet will with the boutiques and shops and other property of coast Moormen

89. James Hugh Sproule, born at Badulla, Ceylon; Barrister-at-Law; President of the Ceylon Association in England; died 1924 (?).

90. Sir John Allsebrook Simon, 1st Viscount (1873-1954), described by Perera as a "brilliant Advocate". His annual income at the Bar at one time was reputed to be over £50,000. He was Attorney-General with a seat in the Cabinet 1913-15; Home Secretary 1915-16; He served in the War in France 1917-18; Chairman of the Indian Statutory Commission 1927-30, Foreign Secretary 1931-35, Home Secretary 1938-37, Chancellor of the Exchequer 1937-40, Lord Chancellor 1940-45. He joined the National Liberals in the British House of Commons 1930. He opposed compulsory military service during the first World War; his second wife Kathleen Harvey was a "well-known anti-slavery crusader".

91. Leslie De Gruyther, Barrister-at-Law, Middle Temple 1885; King's Counsel 1908; died 11 November, 1937.

92. William Henry Upjohn (1853-1941) Barrister-at-Law 1881, Queen's Counsel 1897, retired 1936.

93. See *Ceylon Morning Leader* 18 August 1916 and 12 March 1917, *Ceylon Morning Leader Overland Edition* 14 December 1916; also copies of correspondence between E. Delgado of 8 Warwick Court, Gray's Inn, W.C.1, Solicitor for the Appellant and Burchells of 5, The Sanctuary, Westminster S.W., Solicitors for the Respondent, *PPERI*.

94. See copy of letter dated 17 May 1917 from Delgado to Burchells, *PPERI*.

95. See copy of letter dated 5 November 1917 from Burchells to Delgado, *PPERI*.

95a. *PPERI*.

(Hambankaraya)⁹⁶ and in many cases of Moormen and Baiyas.⁹⁷ The rioters have moved about in large gangs in broad daylight, and looted goods, assaulted the tambyas,⁹⁸ killed many of them without any hindrance from the Police who would seem to have been utterly helpless. There have been reprisals sometimes, but until martial law was proclaimed (far too late, I think), enormous damage to property and to some extent to life has been done not only in Colombo but in nearly all out-stations. It has been a terrible sight to see the rowdy crowds rushing about in a fit of frenzy beyond the power of anybody to control them. The military have shot down a good many already, and martial law has been extended to most other provinces as well as Colombo. It is too soon to determine the immediate causes—except to note that the trouble began on Wesak night⁹⁹ (May 28th) at Kandy in a quarrel between some carollers and Mohammedans there.

June 8th, 1915:

The disturbances have practically come to an end, and the Moormen are seen to be going about once more. Very considerable damage has been done in the outstations, but the proclamation of martial law had an excellent effect and matters are now well under control.

What an ugly nightmare it all has been. One feels inexpressibly distressed and perplexed over what has happened. The Sinhalese nation stands disgraced today.

June 12th, 1915:

The disturbances are over and things are becoming normal once more. Martial law is still in force and several prominent Sinhalese people have been arrested and their homes searched. We feared that my connection with the National Day Movement would lead to their visiting my home too, but they have not done so.

June 14th, 1915:

Martial law still prevails and there is grave inconvenience to everybody in consequence. All the Sinhalese papers have been stopped, and I especially regret the temporary suspension of the *Dinamina*¹⁰⁰ to which I began to contribute.

June 20th, 1915:

The country is under a gloom still. Martial law continues and it is announced that it will continue till August. Some of the well-to-do leading Sinhalese (Buddhists) are being hauled up and some of them, it is alleged, are to be court-martialled. A large number of people in the villages have been, it is understood, shot already and how many else are being shot, nobody knows.

96. See fn. 72a. *supra*.

97. A term used to describe Muslims from Baluchistan, who are also called (wrongly) "Afghans". They were originally itinerant vendors of cloth who became usurious money-lenders.

98. A loose, and affectionate, Tamil word meaning "younger brother" which came to be used in addressing the "Moormen" who are Tamil-speaking.

99. About 1-30 a.m. 29 May, close to "Salgado's bakery", at Castle Hill Street; A Ratnayake, later President of the Senate says that as a little boy he was present at this crucial moment by the side of his father P. B. Ratnayake of Katugastota who appealed to the crowd to be calm and peaceful. Inspector of Police F. T. Coore and Proctor E. L. Wijegoonewardene of Kandy were also on the scene. For an account of Ratnayake's arrest, internment, trial and acquittal see Armand de Souza *op. cit.*, pp. 209, 210.

100. A Sinhalese newspaper founded on 17 December 1909 by H. S. Perera formerly of the staff of the *Sarasavisandarasa* a journal started by the Buddhist Theosophical Society. "It was bought by D. R. Wijewardene and his brother 'D.C.' the first newspaper venture jointly or separately", Hulugalle *op. cit.*, p. 95. On 2 March 1915, centenary of the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom, the *Dinamina* published a special issue with reproductions of the Lion Flag and photographs of Sri Wickrama Raja Singha and one of his Queens. *PPA*; see Blackton *op. cit.*, pp. 236, 237.

June 25th, 1915:

Finished preparing 'Life of Neesima' for the press. I think its publication will be particularly appropriate and useful at the present time as exhibiting true patriotism as different from the pseudo patriotism in our midst which is responsible for much of the trouble that has come upon us. What a depressing sense of unsettlement and uncertainty still prevails. Practically all the influential Buddhist leaders have been arrested and are now in prison pending inquiry.

Saw Mr. Rigby¹⁰¹ again about the state of affairs in the country and tried to persuade him to take some action by himself if some concerted action on the part of heads of churches is impossible. It would seem that the military authorities are going to take yet more drastic measures with a view not merely to punish wrong doers but to destroy every possibility of future trouble. To what lengths these measures will be carried out, it is impossible to know. What one feels greatly concerned about is, that the Government is laying in store, without intending it doubtless, a great harvest of bitterness for the future.

July 9th, 1915:

The 'reign of terror' continues. Several people have been condemned by Court Martial to death, and this morning [sic] Mr. D. D. Pedris' young and only son¹⁰² was shot. It has sent a feeling of horror throughout the country. It appears the old man offered to pay Government lakhs of rupees if only his son could be spared, but it was to no avail. Some 15 or more are to be shot in the next two or three days and others are to be transported for life.

July 10th, 1915:

The court martialling and sentencing of people to death continues. N. S. Fernando's son¹⁰³ (D. D. Pedris' son-in-law) is among the condemned to die. It is to be feared that some of those who have been already executed or are to be executed are innocent people. Never has the country been so stirred to its depths as now. There is a great fear, a feeling of deep despair and a dread uncertainty about the future. One's heart bleeds indeed for the people.

101. Rev. William H. Rigby, Wesleyan Methodist Minister; served in Ceylon 1884 to 1917; Chairman South Ceylon District 1907-1917.

102. Diyunuge Edward Henry Pedris, a member of the (mounted) section of the Colombo Town Guards; Governor Chalmers in a letter dated 8 July 1915 to the Secretary of State wrote, "the Brigadier General saw fit not to refer the matter to me and the death sentence was carried out", C.O. 54/782 (35109) quoted by Dr. Kumari Jayawardena *Economic and Political Factors in the 1915 Riots, Journal of Asian Studies* (U.S.A.), Vol. XXIX: 2 February 1970, p. 232 fn. 46. See also *Pedris vs Manufacturers Life Insurance Co. Limited* where the next of kin of Pedris claimed Rs. 25,000/- the sum for which Pedris was insured in 1907; *New Law Reports* Vol. XIX pp. 321-333; On 10 July 1915 Inspector of Police F. P. Samarasinghe was executed, also by shooting, in this case following confirmation of the sentence by Chalmers "after consulting the Executive Council", see *Ceylon Morning Leader* 7 and 12 July 1915.

103. Namunidewage Albert Wijesekera. It is interesting to note that in this case too "the Officer Commanding the Troops has directed that the capital sentence shall not be executed until an opportunity has been afforded to His Excellency the Governor in Executive Council to consider whether the clemency of the Crown shall be exercised", —*Ceylon Morning Leader* 9 July 1915. Wijesekera's death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, but he died in jail shortly afterwards.

July 11th, 1915:

Visited the friends who are incarcerated in Welikada gaol—D. B. Jayatilaka, the Senanayakes,¹⁰⁴ the Hewavitarnes,¹⁰⁵ newspaper editors and a number of others. I broke down at the sight of them in their pitiful plight, these wealthy influential men, most of them. I spent sometime with them and saw on their behalf immediately after, Messrs. Highfield,¹⁰⁶ Dibben,¹⁰⁷ Ewing¹⁰⁸ and Restarick.¹⁰⁹ I have decided to try to get up a deputation of Sinhalese Ministers with Mr. Rigby to introduce the case and one or two other leading missionaries to wait on the Governor, who will receive us on behalf of these friends. I had a busy time seeing people in connection with the above. Saw nearly all the men whom we expect to join. There has been a deputation of Sinhalese Christian laymen yesterday, with somewhat hopeful results.

July 17th, 1915:

Most of my time this week has been taken up with trying to arrange for a deputation of Sinhalese clergymen and pastors to wait on the Governor. We had a meeting on Thursday at St. Luke's School room, Borella, with Rev. G. B. Ekanayake¹¹⁰ in the Chair to discuss the matter. Previously Mr. Rigby had written to His Excellency requesting the interview, to which His Excellency replied asking that we send him a statement of our views in the first instance. This has been prepared, but as we want Mr. Rigby, Mr. Dibben and Mr. Ewing to go with us, a further meeting is to be held on Monday. The delay is very unfortunate for "time is life".

-
104. Don Charles Senanayake (1878-1931), Proprietary Planter, Mine owner and Merchant; Frederick Richard Senanayake (1882-1926), see *fn.* 61 *supra*; Don Stephen Senanayake (1884-1952) first Prime Minister of Ceylon; entered the Ceylon legislature in 1921 and continued as a member until his death on 22 March 1952; in November 1945 he succeeded in bringing the Ceylonese communities together to vote for the acceptance of the Constitution offered by the U.K. Government in the White Paper of 31 October 1945. It was a "notable personal triumph for Ceylon's great leader", Sir Charles Jeffries, *Ceylon—the Path to Independence* London 1962, p. 107; Jeffries further wrote, "he was, to most Ceylonese even to his political opponents, the personification of the nation", *op. cit.*, p. 136.
105. Dr. Charles A. Hewavitarne and Simon Hewavitarne, brothers of the Anagarika Dharmapala, see *fn.* 23 *supra*; Edmund Hewavitarne another brother died in jail at Jaffna, see letter dated 18 July 1917 from R. H. Whitehorn, Private Secretary to the Governor to Dr. C. A. Hewavitarne expressing "His Excellency's sincere sympathy and regret" obviously for a miscarriage (rather "travesty") of justice: *Ceylon Morning Leader* 21 July 1917.
106. Rev. Henry Highfield 1865-1955, Wesleyan Methodist Minister, Principal Wesley College 1895-1925.
107. Rev. Arthur Edwin Dibben, M.A. (Cantab.), Secretary of the Ceylon Mission of the Church Missionary Society; arrived in Ceylon 1890.
108. Rev. John A. Ewing, served in Ceylon 1902-1934; held the post of Field Secretary of the Baptist Mission for several years; died in U.K., 4 June 1951; author of "Lanka, the Resplendent Isle", London 1913.
109. Rev. Arthur E. Restarick (1861-1933) Wesleyan Methodist Minister, served in Ceylon 1884-1933, Colombo City Mission 1912-1917.
110. Canon George Benjamin Ekanayake (1866-1943), occasional leader-writer to the *Ceylon Independent*; "bishop maker", see *Canon Ekanayake of Colombo* by Percy Wickremasinghe, Colombo 1949, p. 43. Ekanayake's photograph appeared on the first page of the *Ceylon Morning Leader* 12 February 1924 the day of the election for the bishop, flanked on either side by photographs of the candidates, Fraser and Carpenter-Garnier.

Today I went to give evidence for Goonasingha,¹¹¹ but was not called. Court martials are being held daily and people condemned to death or penal servitude.

July 18th, 1915:

Visited Welikada gaol and saw the friends in custody again. Oh, that I might do something to help in bringing about the discharge of these people.

July 19th, 1915:

A meeting was held at the Galle Face Mission House (Mr. Dibben's) this morning to discuss the letter to the Governor and to arrange the deputation. Very good meeting. *Had the valuable advantage of the presence of Mr. Fraser of Kandy who is using the great influence with Government on behalf of the people.* Messrs Rigby, Dibben and Ewing, with several Sinhalese ministers were there. A letter to His Excellency was prepared. (emphasis added).

* * *

August 2nd, 1915:

Wrote to Messrs. Ramanathan and Moonemalle¹¹² giving my views for the Council Meeting next Saturday.

* * *

August 28th, 1915:

Went over to Wijewardenes¹¹³ to meet their lawyers in regard to the case against the *Dinamina* in which I am summoned to give evidence. Saw Mr. Hewavitarne and others. They want some of us to go to England in a deputation in regard to the present state of affairs and what has already happened in connection with the riots. It is possible that D.B. Jayatilaka and I may be asked to go for the present, whilst arrangements are made for a later and more influential deputation. Dr. Hewavitarne and Dr. Fernando are of the opinion that we should go without loss of time.

* * *

August 30th, 1915:

Went over to D. B. Jayatilaka's in regard to case against the *Dinamina*. Mr. Ewing too was there.

August 31st, 1915:

The termination of martial law by the Governor has just been gazetted, so one feature of the terrible nightmare is over.

111. Alexander Ekanayake Goonesinha (1892-1967), journalist and Labour Leader; founded the Young Lanka League, the Ceylon Labour Union and Ceylon Labour Party; pioneer agitator for manhood suffrage and Trade Union rights for urban labour; editor of the *Searchlight*, the *Nation* (along with E. T. de Silva 1884-1926), and *Young Lanka*; was defeated by S. W. R. Dias Bandaranaike (1899-1959) in a contest to represent the Maradana Ward in the Colombo Municipal Council, 1927; member of the State Council for Colombo Central; member of the House of Representatives for Colombo Central and Minister without Portfolio in D. S. Senanayake's Cabinet; Ambassador of Ceylon in Indonesia; copies of his fragmentary autobiography handed by him shortly before his death to the present writer are at the Library, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya and at the Evelyn Rutnam Institute, 35 Guildford Crescent, Colombo 7; see A. E. Goonesinha *My Life and Labour* a series of articles in the *Ceylon Observer* July/August 1965.

112. T. B. L. Moonamalle (1868-1938), Proctor S.C., Nominated Member representing the Kandyan Sinhalese in the Legislative Council 1906-1917; Member of the Kandyan Reforms Deputation to Lord Milner, the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

113. See *fn.* 68 *supra*.

September 25th, 1915:

Our dear friend Dr. Solomon Fernando¹¹⁴ has suddenly passed away. He spoke at this afternoon's Meeting of the Sinhalese in the Public Hall, filled with numerous touches that one has ever heard and almost immediately after sitting down his heart failed and within about ten minutes he was gone. The rest of the proceedings were curtailed and the vast gathering was solemnised. What an end it was, how fitting and beautiful. He lived for others—his heart has grieved for every one in distress, and no one has felt more keenly for our people during their recent sufferings than he. And he died for them.

February 1st, 1916:

Wrote to Dr. Scott Lidgett,¹¹⁵ Editor of the *Methodist Times* with reference to the late disturbances and requesting his help for Mr. D. B. Jayatilaka's mission. Wrote also to Jayatilaka.

February 11th, 1916:

I have written a long letter to Mr. Henry Haigh¹¹⁶ as I did last week to Dr. Scott Lidgett, explaining the late troubles and commending to them the mission of D. B. Jayatilaka.

*

*

*

February 27th, 1916:

Had a long talk with F. R. Senanayake¹¹⁷ as to assisting our friends in England.

April 16th, 1916:

Heard from D. B. Jayatilaka. Was cheered to learn that my efforts to get friends interested in his mission have been not without results. The *Methodist Times* has afforded him an interview and written very well about our matter.

May 12th, 1916:

Went with F. R. Senanayake to see Mr. Fraser in order to seek his help in approaching the Governor in connection with riot prisoners still in incarceration. (emphasis added).

APPENDIX C

**EXTRACTS FROM REV. FRASER'S PAMPHLET CIRCULATED IN ENGLAND,
MARKED 'CONFIDENTIAL' CONCERNING THE RIOTS AND THE
PART HE TOOK IN QUELLING THEM¹¹⁸**

Friday, May 28th Buddha's birthday, passed off without any tumult in Kandy. There were great crowds in the street, and I took my wife a walk through them, and they were orderly, even if a little expectant and excited. A few here and there had clubs. About 3 a.m. after most people had gone to bed, the riots broke out with an attack on that mosque, which had been most aggressive in its objections to *dansals* and processions. It was an

114. Dr. Solomon Fernando (1850-1915), "Few people are aware that Solomon Fernando literally walked to his death, for he was ailing with a weak heart; he could not resist the personal entreaties of D. S. Senanayake and others. He kept his tryst with destiny, but left the motherless children, to whom he was passionately devoted, orphans of the storm"; J.T.R. in the *Tribune* 25 September 1967, p. 3.

115. Rev. John Scott Lidgett, Wesleyan Methodist Minister, Leader of the Progressive Party in the London Country Council 1918-1924; *The Methodist Times* of 23 March 1916 had an article on "*The Troubles in Ceylon; Why a Commission of Inquiry is asked for?*" and supported it with editorial comment.

116. Rev. Henry Haigh (1853-1917), Wesleyan Methodist Minister; Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society; ex-President of the Wesleyan Missionary Congress.

117. See fn. 61 *supra*.

118. These extracts are taken from a manuscript copy in *PPERI*; The latter part of this manuscript in E. W. Perera's handwriting concludes with "p. 12-22. Report For Private Circulation only—The Riots p. 90-94". The title beginning "Extracts from....." is also in E. W. Perera's handwriting. A complete photostat copy of this document is in the Library, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.

empty shell next morning, but none of us felt much sympathy for the Moors or any indignation against the Sinhalese. No one had been killed or hurt, and the Moors had brought the attack on themselves, by their religious intolerance.

On Saturday, the 29th, crowds, began to collect towards evening. A little before 9 o'clock, I went down in dinner dress, and without a stick or anything of the kind, just to see if trouble was likely, and to give any help I could. I soon saw mischief was afoot. One shop, a jeweller's, had been smashed in. The Superintendent of Police had been assaulted. The crowd were armed with clubs, and had great beams to use as battering rams. They were led by Low-Country Sinhalese—a much less religious, and more deliberately dangerous set of men than were in evidence the previous night.

I saw an order given by one of these leaders, and the mob, in answer rush to the main trading street of the town. I ran after them, and, though only one minute behind them, found them already at work, when I got round the corner. With great beams they were trying to burst open a Moor Shop and dwelling house. Bricks were hurtling through the air at it, and clubs battering also on its wall and shutters. One man was climbing on to the roof to untile it and to get it from above. I jumped for him and hauled him down by his heel. Then I stood with my back to the shop and laughed to the crowd. They quite cheerfully laughed back at the sight of their sprawling leader, and I slowly lit a cigar. That interested them all, and bricks ceased to fly. I think they considered the cigar clean out of place at such a time, a sort of genial profanity. Then we talked. After much discussion, they finally told me they must attack the Moors but they were loyal to the Europeans. "Well", I said "if you are loyal to the Europeans, I am one and you must obey me, and go and seek your Moors where I am not". They agreed. Then they went a hundred yards further down and started on another place, where I followed them.

But soon after, at the other end of the street, a Sinhalese was shot by a Mohammedan and meantime, too much arrack was being drunk. So I collected a party of six¹¹⁹ masters and old boys, told the head of the police that if he would guard the centre of the town, we seven would do what we could for the dangerous suburbs of Katukelle and Gatembe.

Then began a night of work. We started off on this mission after 11 p.m. We had gone only a little over half a mile when we came to a stable yard full of rowdies, all armed. They told us they were going to defend the Temple of the Tooth from the Moors. They were as a matter of fact, going to attack the Katukelle and Gatembe Moors. However, to the Temple of the Tooth they had appealed, and as it is in the centre of Kandy, and besides all the police, there they should go. By sheer impudence we drove them there—a cool hundred of them. Until 2 o'clock we kept Katukelle. But another road passes a few hundred yards south of Katukelle, and joins the main road leading to Gatembe, Peradeniya and Colombo behind it. Knowing we were on the main road, a large mob advanced along the south road. We heard them and ran to the junction. There they soon came upon us, well over 500 of them, led by the biggest Sinhalese I have ever seen—a man 6 feet 3 inches, armed with a club and knuckle-duster. Many were drunk—maddened, all were eager to get to Gatembe mosque. Then came a sporting struggle. We could not turn them, but we could delay them. I sent Asche the Australian, back to tell the authorities that we were powerless to prevent the destruction of Gatembe and could only delay it for an hour or so. The rest of us one American, one Burgher, one Englishman, two Sinhalese and myself, started the work of making time. We argued, threatened, expostulated, and started to march with them to Gatembe, 2½ miles away. Every now and again we stopped to re-argue the case, the big man threatening us, and me in particular with the martyr's crown. We were all scattered amongst the crowd, and on one occasion, I turned from my place at the head of the procession, and saw Roberts the American about three paces behind. I said "Come along here, we may as well march together and enjoy our walk". He answered "No, I am staying right here to see that that limb of Satan does not get you with his club or knuckle-duster". The "limb" understood no American, and as it was the first row Roberts had ever been in, I thought he was showing some sense. As we neared Gatembe mosque, we came on the local police station. I ran into it to ring up the Kandy police, and

119. "Fraser went back to the College to get help and he collected six masters with walking sticks: [C.E.] Simithraaratchy [later Principal of Trinity], Jansz and Goonetilleke, Ceylonese, [H.J.C.] Asche Australian; [W.H.] Roberts, American and [A.C.] Houlder, English". Ward *op. cit.*, p. 102.

to see if I could get any assistance. It was a fatal act. I had scarcely rung up Kandy when with a yell, the mob rushed the mosque. We had held them off 1½ hours but now we were helpless. At 4 the Police turned up in a strong body, but by then the mosque and some houses had been gutted by the mob and their contents burned in the road. Meantime Kandy had been made quiet. The worst part of the mob, of course, was in Gatenbe. Some prisoners were taken. Then wearily we tramped home, over three miles, to a bath and a hour in bed before beginning Sunday's duties.

On Sunday (30th May) morning, I asked all in the Senior classes who were willing to volunteer as special constables. As many would have relatives sympathising, if not actually taking part in the riots, I warned them that they might have to charge with the bayonet or shoot. However out of a possible sixty from the boarders, fifty volunteered, the remainder offering to serve in defence of the compound. At 2-30, we marched off, over forty, without arms of any kind, to the police station to be sworn in. As we returned at 3-30 absolutely unarmed and expecting no trouble near there, we came round the right angle turn from Hill Street into Trincomalee Street, with the Trinity College gate only 200 yards ahead of us. And between was a crowd of about a thousand, armed with knives and clubs attacking a Moor house. Two Moors were killed, we were told, and a Sinhalese man lay bleeding and stabbed in front of us. The police, under a European officer, were too few in numbers to adequately protect the house attacked. Stones and bricks were flying. I ordered my party to charge. In they went, not a stick or weapon amongst them, fists and hands and the weight of a disciplined body their only power. But they scattered the crowd and took twenty prisoners. These I made them let go when they had done what they could to identify them, and ordered them to proceed to the police officer for further instructions, and to help him in the real danger spot, the attacked house. We could not both keep prisoners and defend the house. The officer handed over the house to our keeping. Inside were two badly wounded Moors, the men who had, in hunted terror, stabbed the Sinhalese lying on the road. Then the police moved off, taking the wounded Sinhalese and a prisoner, the giant of Saturday night. Ten of my forty-three went to help the police to get away with their prisoners, but the giant was rescued by the crowd after they had got into Hill Street. Five more I sent to the College, to make clubs to arm my fellows, and about thirty of us stayed at the door attacked. A screaming dishevelled Sinhalese woman, whose husband had just been killed, led the attack and urged on the crowd. They could do little though, as we stood together in a semi-circle and were helped vigorously by an Old Boy, a great local chief. An hour later, the Punjabi troops arrived and scattered the crowds, and we proceeded to the College for an early tea-dinner before starting to patrol the streets, from 6-45 p.m. to 4-00 a.m.

For patrol work we divided our party into groups of twelve, each with a master and a boy in charge. Three groups took turns in marching the streets for three hours at a time. One group slept whilst we marched; another guarded the college and cricket field. The fourth group of twenty were cyclists, and did patrol work all round the environs of Kandy, for eight hours straight on. They had the most exciting time of us all, and alongside of two motor cars full of Punjabi troops, went on one occasion, ten miles to Kadugannawa, where the crowd were out. There they charged with the troops into the burning streets, helped them to scatter the mob, placed the ringleaders into the motors, and came home tired but highly praised by the officer in charge, and therefore, delighted.

On Monday, we made all the school work from 8 to 11, ordinary morning school, sleep from twelve to three, and fall in for drill at 4-30. The Mohammedans came to us in the morning, and asked us to take over their women and children. So by Monday night, we had 85 Mohammedan women and children refugees in our compound. That meant careful guarding, for a Sinhalese newspaper, which had much to do with stirring up the ill-feeling which led to the riots, and which was read by many rioters, reported that we had the refugees in our compound, so the fact was widely known by Tuesday evening, and of course, was even well rumoured by Monday. We, therefore, called out all our boy scouts also, and posted them as pickets around our too vulnerable compound, keeping a strong body of twenty seniors in the centre of the compound, ready to go to any point or points. The rest of us took up the streets and cycling work as before. Martial Law was proclaimed in Kandy on the Thursday and we exchanged our clubs for rifles with ball cartridges and bayonets. By this time, every available boy had joined our military section, for they had seen the victims of the mob, also they knew we were out to save life and not to destroy and that we meant to be hurt rather than to hurt. The second night of Martial Law, I came with my section of twelve boys on a mob of about a 100 in Katukela. I ordered the mob to disperse or get into their houses. They refused. Then I ordered the boys to fix bayonets,

and added low "slowly". Bayonets were fixed, and then I yelled "Charge!" and rushed on the crowd with my small baton and laid it on their backs and shoulders. Expecting equal violence from the bayonets they fled. The bayonets pointing in their rear, hurried them up, and soon none were left. We chased them up a close alley. There we packed them into the nearest houses and let none out again that night. Thus they were scattered and none wounded.

Soon after, I was in pitch darkness leading my twelve along the edge of a deep ravine feeling my way. One of the boys cried "Sir, you might fall and get hurt, I'll lead" and suiting the action to the word, he immediately jumped in front of me. His jump landed him 25 or 30 feet below, with his fixed bayonet pointing downwards luckily. He escaped with a few bruises, but in the darkness it took a long time to get him and his rifle up again.

Three times one morning, between 3 and 4 a.m., attempts were made to rush our compound from the woods above, but they ended without even a blow, as our fellows, summoned by the scouts, charged up in a steady double, the tramp, tramp, evidently scaring the would-be rioters. From all over the Island we have heard of deeds done by our Old Boys: A leading Kandy Moor came to me one day to tell me of his escape from a crowd in the Southern Province. He was descending the river in a boat, followed along the bank by an angry crowd. They came to a swamp where another stream flowed in and had to make a detour. But into the swamp dashed one Sinhalese and called to the Moor to put in and he would change clothes with him. The Moor did, and went on his way by land, dressed as no Moormen ever dressed before, but secure. As they parted, the Sinhalese gave him an envelope and said "That's my name, when you get to Kandy, take it to Trinity and tell the Principal that even isolated Old Boys can do something". In many other places, in villages and country towns they have sheltered refugees. One small, undersized weak man, dared to shelter ten. A lady teacher of the College, living with an old father and mother in a house in the middle of the rioting, dragged a severely wounded Moor into her house. I came on a house being attacked by a crowd eager to get at the Moors inside. Blocking the way was an old Boy—a Sinhalese Chief—his arms stretched across the doorway, telling them they could only get in over him.

Only one of our Old Boys has been in the Riots, I believe, and he left us from the lower school, and he was guilty of mischief only.

Government have told us that they recognise our work, and as an earnest of their gratitude have remitted a claim of Rs. 1,000/- they were urging against us for past rent in connection with our new cricket field. Of all the colleges, we alone, in this time of war and scarcity of munitions, are allowed to retain our rifles.

Some curious situations arose. The Governor¹²⁰ came to Kandy on Tuesday afternoon, June 1st.^{120a} The Buddhists came to me, to know if I would go with them to him and represent their case. Soon after, the Moors asked me to give them sure convoy to the Gov. and go with them to represent their case! I saw the Gov. described the deputations, and he agreed to meet them on Wednesday morning which he did. They met him separately and together. I went out at 6-30 a.m., on Wednesday in a small motor with Mr. Mulgrue

120. Sir Robert (later Lord) Chalmers (1858-1938), "the financial genius of the British Treasury who prepared the famous Budget of Lloyd George in 1909 creating a sensation all over England and ultimately precipitating the Parliament Act", W. Thalagadapitiya, *Studies of Some Famous Cases of Ceylon*, Colombo 1963, p. 95; Governor of Ceylon 1913-16; on 2 June 1915 Chalmers proclaimed Martial Law and "completely" handed over "absolute power to the Military" under Brigadier General Henry Huntly Leith Malcolm (1860-1938) who himself admitted that this was "most unusual"; on 18 November 1915 the London *Times* reported that Chalmers was offered by cable an appointment in the Treasury by Prime Minister Asquith and that he had accepted it. Perera has contended that Chalmers was "recalled". P. T. M. Fernando deals with this matter fully in his article in *Modern Asian Studies* cited *supra* fn. 10. See also *Ceylon Daily News* 27 September 1919 p. 3; Despite Chalmers' "warm tribute" to Malcolm in his despatch to the Colonial Office dated 24 June 1916 (C.O. 54/782), he is recorded as having taken strong action when a circular Order dated 26 July 1915 drafted by Malcolm was submitted to him by Stubbs with the latter's minute disapproving of a Section marked 4 which read, "If any bridge is destroyed the Headman and leading men of the neighbouring villages will be seized and, if they do not give up the perpetrators, may be shot". Chalmers took a grave view of the matter and showed

and we picked up the four most hated and most eminent Mōs. One was the man from whose shop the first fatal shot was fired. One was the head of the Mosque that was destroyed. One was the man who had led on the movement against the Buddhist processions. The last was a leading merchant. We added a fifth representing the highest type of Ceylon Mohammedans. Talking to them and getting the expressions of their ideas clear for the interview took a long time. And the Buddhists took even more out of me. All met together, Buddhist and Mohammedan in the College Library, the antagonistic deputations being friendly and agreeing to common action. And finally at peace and united in what they should ask, we all walked to the Governor's House, where I left them to present their own cases. I got back for my first meal, barring early tea, at about 12.30. Then the interviews were over at 2 o'clock, and I gave the Mohammedans safe conduct through the streets in a Buddhist car. Meantime the Governor sent for me. I had, however, half an hour first with the Buddhists, and promised to get a clear proclamation from the Governor as to the action he would take—severe till riots were stopped, then unprejudiced consideration for all grievances. This the Governor gave me, and I believe it did good, for it showed that the Government was not for any one party or religion but for law and order. At 5.30 I saw the Buddhists again and got them to publish the Governor's note with full letters of explanation and appreciation in their press.

Later when the Kandy Town Guard was formed, I was elected Officer Commanding by the Europeans. Of course I could not take the job, for I have too much to do, and am not out to fight, but temporarily I acted as second in command till Martial Law was over, for both Sinhalese and Burgher leaders asked me to do so, as a guarantee that race prejudice would not come in. Before this however, the Mohammedans had come to me and offered to provide a thoroughly equipped body of 500 men if I could be their O.C.! How much for a messenger of peace?

(p. 20) There is the other side of the picture too. *No one in Kandy or Colombo is probably as hated amongst some classes of the people as I am. They think I ought to be their friend, and that I am not. In the seized correspondence, the ring-leaders of the riots, who aimed at much more than an attack on Moors, had specified me as the first person to be got rid of, and the "Fraser microbe" was to be "rooted" out of the Sinhalese youth.*¹²¹ Threatening letters have come to me frequently, and wild stories are spread of my evil intentions against the Sinhalese and Buddhists. My boys watched me and guarded me during the riots as though I had been the much threatened heir of an Eastern Throne. Now troubles are practically over. Mutterings continue, but they will not materialise, I think. Anyhow we are prepared now.

Some of our boys have done great service to Government in dressing as labourers, railway men etc., and going to the more dangerous districts, to find out when, where and from whence attacks might be expected. Such lonely work required much courage and self-possession. Then they went to places where Sinhalese and Moors are combining to ruin

Malcolm a draft of a letter which he had addressed to him where Chalmers warned Malcolm that if anyone was shot under this order it would involve "both the responsible volunteer and yourself in a charge of murder". "Accordingly", he wrote "I ask you to revise forthwith the existing para 4". He also made the General to understand in this draft letter that the General was issuing orders "in the exercise of the responsibilities which I have charged you under my Martial Law Ordinance". Happily paragraph 4 was deleted from the final order. See *CNA 65/232 Confidential File Riots 1915*. Malcolm who was according to Perera "retired on half pay in December 1915" commanded a brigade in the British Expeditionary Force in France when he returned from Ceylon, and in fact left the service only on 10 December 1917 on the ground of 'age'. "Some of Malcolm's contemporaries had doubts about his sanity", says P. T. M. Fernando quoting from Dr. M. W. Roberts' "Interviews with T. W. Roberts and H. E. Newnham". Rhodes House Library, Oxford. On the occasion of Chalmers' departure from Ceylon in December 1915 Armand de Souza under the pseudonym "Vasconcel" published an eulogistic poem in his paper *Ceylon Morning Leader*, where he wrote "We bid you from our hearts God-speed.... Since England calls you at her need". Chalmers was made a Privy Councillor (Ireland) 1916, G.C.B. 1916 and 1st Baron of Northiam 1919. Chalmers lost both his sons in the Great War, one on 25 May 1915, and the other sometime after the Ceylon Riots.

^{120a} See fn. 56a *supra*.

¹²¹. "the last three lines on page 20", Perera, *Ceylon Daily News* 31 October 1919 p. 1.

their private enemies by false evidence. For the most miserable part of the riots was this aftermath of false swearers and testifiers of private grudges, and they were Sinhalese, too, sometimes, though chiefly Moors. This is much the most depressing part of a trying time. Innocent men undoubtedly have suffered and sometimes it was their own neighbours who were primarily responsible.

*By the by, the giant of the Knuckle-duster and club, was caught later and tried by Court Martial. I had to appear against him, so saw my first Court Martial. It was a very fair, responsible, businesslike Court, short, direct but patient.*¹²² The giant got fourteen years.

There I was chiefly occupied in getting people, I believed, to be wrongly accused out on bail, and helping them to use wisely the evidence they had.¹²³ Also I had some of the Mdn. leaders up and persuaded them to bring pressure on their riff-raff to cease bringing up purely vexatious and false cases into court. Few who were sentenced to death,¹²⁴ we were able to get reconsideration for as we were able to bring fresh evidence and to secure finally their acquittal. Others, too, we have been able to get reductions for.

The "Planters' Gazette" commenting on the riots remarks "The curse of Ceylon, so far as can be seen, has been indiscriminate education without a solid religious foundation". That has been made clear in a movement in which the secular and Buddhist schools have taken only too strong a part.¹²⁵ On the other hand, never has our religious teaching here, and battle against race prejudice¹²⁶ received as powerful a vindication in the eyes of all. Even the fool who runs can read it this time. And we have had good cause to be proud of the "Sons of Trinity". All over the Island they have done their part well, and here boys unarmed have scattered armed crowds. Moreover, they have, most of them thought through to their action, and realised why they were taking it. To some it meant being against their relations and their up-bringing. Some only, two or three, have been removed from school for it. But whilst opposing men of their own race and often of their own faith, they have done it not lightly or merely as followers of their present leaders, but the older ones certainly as patriots, who have considered and understood the issues at stake. We are proud of them.

122. "the first four lines on page 21", Perera *Ceylon Daily News* 31 October 1919 p. 1.

123. In his letter dated 21 July 1915 to Rev. E. H. M. Waller of the C.M.S., Fraser wrote, "Our work is going on still in regard to the Riots. Now-a-days the Moors are in the ascendant and are bringing lots of cases on false evidence against Buddhists and my Bungalow now is thronged by Buddhists. Yesterday I was the means of bailing out thirty I believe."—*C.M.S. Archives* in London—We are obliged to Dr. P. V. J. Jayasekera for this reference. Fraser was responsible in apprehending two Muslims who had tried to blackmail A. Ratwatte (father of Sir Cudah Ratwatte) and D. E. Ranasinghe, Inspector of Schools in the Education Department; see Souza *op.cit.*, pp. 213, 214 and 217; also Ramanathan *op.cit.*, p. 68 fn.

124. Three of them were "P. C. H. Dias and his two kinsmen Messrs. Arthur and Harry Dias. A son of Mr. P. C. H. Dias has informed one of us that both Fraser and Rev. W. J. T. Small who was then Principal of Richmond College interviewed the Governor on behalf of the condemned men and the sentences of death were revoked. One son of Mr. P. C. H. Dias was then attending Richmond College and the others Trinity College". See letter of Trinity College Old Boys, *Ceylon Observer* 25 February 1962; Another case was that of Don Jacolis Rupasinghe Goonewardena, Vidane Aratchi of Kaluaggala Peruna, Hanwella and known as Borulugoda Ralahamy, who was sentenced to death by Court Martial at Hanwella on 18 July 1915. The sentence was not confirmed and he was released later on the ground that the "evidence against Goonewardena was unreliable". His son Harry Goonewardena was studying at Trinity at the time. Philip and Robert Goonewardena, later members of the Ceylon Legislature, were also his sons; See Souza *op. cit.* pp. 140, 141; *CNA* 65/225 pp. 127, 130; Secretary of States reply to a question by Philip Morrel, *Hansard* (British House of Commons) 6 March 1917.

125. "the last four lines on page 21", Perera *Ceylon Daily News* 31 October 1919 p. 1.

126. See Ward *op. cit.* 1 p. 184, where Fraser is described as saying: "I am not prepared to run Achimota [the College inaugurated by Fraser in Ghana] on a basis of racial segregation". In April 1924 Fraser delivered a sermon in Westminster Abbey, London, "which caused great indignation" among European settlers in Africa.

APPENDIX D

ELECTION OF THE BISHOP OF COLOMBO IN 1924

This election, which the present writer recalls having attended as a spectator, took place on 12 February 1924 at St. Peter's Church, Fort, Colombo. The Press and persons who did not belong to the Church of England were excluded from the meeting. There were two candidates, Fraser and Mark Rudolph Carpenter-Garnier,¹²⁷ a learned divine and Librarian of Pusey House, Oxford. The Bishop had to be elected by a Special Synod consisting of qualified members of the Clergy and Laity, and the successful candidate would have to poll over two-thirds of the votes cast by the Clergy and the Laity, each voting separately.

The voting on that day was as follows:

<i>Clergy</i>	—	Carpenter-Garnier	..	55
		Fraser	..	30
<i>Laity</i>	—	Carpenter-Garnier	..	129
		Fraser	..	43
At the Second Poll:				
<i>Clergy</i>	—	Carpenter-Garnier	..	57
		Fraser	..	23

It will be noted that the Laity which was mostly composed of Ceylonese voted overwhelmingly¹²⁸ for Carpenter-Garnier, but the Clergy which had a considerable proportion of Europeans had to poll twice in order to gain the requisite two-thirds majority for Carpenter-Garnier.

It has been claimed in some quarters that Fraser lost this election because he belonged to the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.), the "Low-Church" Section of the Church of England. As one who was present on the occasion and who had observed the feeling evidenced in the animated canvassing that prevailed there, and who had since studied the matter more closely, the writer does not wholly agree that this was so.

Nobody denies that there were two opposite camps, the C.M.S. and the Anglo-Catholics within the fold of the Church, and that Fraser and Carpenter-Garnier were outstanding representatives of the respective groups. But the factor that weighed most in the minds, at least of the Laity, was the legend that Fraser had been anti-national during the Riots, thanks to the impression created by E. W. Perera. As a matter of fact, if the present writer had been qualified to vote then, he too would have voted against Fraser.

An anonymous writer signing himself "An Honest Churchman" wrote on the eve of the election in the *Ceylon Daily News* (p. 3) on 11 February 1924, "The accusation brought against him [Fraser] in connection with the Riots of 1915 and his failure to clear himself will be remembered not only by many Christians, but a very large percentage of non-Christians in the Island. Rightly or wrongly many people of this island look upon him with suspicion . . ." (emphasis added). Another writer, also anonymous, calling himself "Churchman", wrote in the same issue of the *Ceylon Daily News* (p. 3), "Mr. Fraser is looked upon with feeling very much akin to distrust by a large number of church people. The Hon. E. W. Perera's charges against Mr. Fraser are still unanswered and Mr. Victor Corea's¹²⁹ recent letter to the Press expresses his own and others views of Mr. Fraser's candidature, and they are both Churchmen" (emphasis added). Such was the campaign waged against Fraser.

127. Rt. Rev. Mark Rudolph Carpenter-Garnier (1881-1969), D. D. Lambeth 1924, Librarian of Pusey House Oxford, 1921-24; Bishop of Colombo 1924-38; Canon of Salisbury 1938-44.

128. This result was anticipated by C. A. Boteju; see his letter to *Ceylon Morning Leader* 7 February, 1924.

129. Charles Edward Victor Corea (1882-1962), member the Parish of St. James Church, Chilaw; colleague of Goonesinha, see fn. 111 *Supra*; first President Young Lanka League; first President the Ceylon Labour Union; Corea's letter appeared in the *Ceylon Morning Leader*, 8 February, 1924, p. 3.

The Anglo-Catholics and the C.M.S. were in the writer's view more or less evenly balanced at the time, both among the Clergy and the Laity;^{129a} but the bogey of anti-nationalism which was whipped up during the election and which reached a crescendo on the eve of the election, supported by the crusading campaign of one of the most powerful figures in the Church Militant in Ceylon, the Rev. G. B. Ekanayake,¹³⁰ an Anglo-Catholic and a dedicated nationalist effectively turned the scales against Fraser.



129a A complete list of members of the laity and clergy who were qualified to vote and who were present at the election is given in the *Ceylon Morning Leader* 13 February, 1924.

130. See fn. 110 *supra*.

