Indian Estate Labour in Ceylon During The Coffee Period, (1830 - 1880).*

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PART I

I. THE LABOUR QUESTION

The labour problem was a peculiar characteristic of the new society which the plantation was helping to create in nineteenth century Ceylon. The Kandyans provided labour, if precariously, and sometimes even gratuitously[1] in the 1830's when there were only a handful of plantations. But within a few years they recoiled from the influx of planters and the manifold incidents of friction and withdrew into a state of some hostility to these intrusions of the coffee estates and European planters.[2] Some of them at least continued to perform the essential task of clearing the forests (on payment). At the same time, it would seem, some Low-Country Sinhalese migrated seasonally to the plantations and till the early 1840's worked as regular hands.[3] But they too withdrew from this role into those of domestics, traders, "artificers", carters and fellers of forest.[4] By the 1860's both groups of Sinhalese were undertaking contracts for weeding and holding besides those for felling forest[5] —that is to say "piece work"; but regular work on estates was objected to and avoided. They had not the need. Most had land of one sort or another[6] Though individualism was growing, there were strong family ties, no law of primogeniture and none who were so poverty stricken as to tie themselves to the wage-strings of, what was to them, a rather strange person, the white planter. It is said the Kandyans regarded estate-work as degrading and that caste contributed to their antipathy to such work.[7] Certainly the treatment meted out to the labourers by the planters of the 1840's served to further the local aversion to regular estate work.[8]

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* This is the first of two articles on the subject.

In the final analysis however, their access to land must have been the crucial factor.

Nothing infuriated planter, merchant and official more. These and other traits drew views on the "native character" that were far from complimentary.

> [The Native] is essentially a denizen of the forest: from this he draws his sustenance, and beyond what suffices for his daily and simple food, he cares nought but for his mouthful of Betel and his dreamless sleep devoid of any greater care than that of the lower kinds of animated nature.

said *The Ceylon Times*.[9] Born and bred in a climate which lauded the gospel of self-help and industry, if needed but a step for the "Anglo-Saxon spirit" to view the Sinhalese as grossly "indolent" and take their refusal to labour on estates as the supreme, and most inexcusable, example of their laziness;[10] even by 1847 some had given up all hope of procuring estate-labour "by stimulating the inert and contented Cingalese [*sic*]".[11] This doctrine was to remain a venerable article of faith in European circles through the century. It took exceptional men like Ward to shake themselves free of this doctrine and voice the following view:

> It is the regularity of hours—the discipline—the somewhat rought control exercised by the overseers—not the amount of work that the Sinhalese object to on the Coffee Estates; .... Besides, however repugnant the restraints of Plantation Labour may be to the Singhalese [*sic*], it is not to be supposed that as a Race they are incapable of exertion or insensible to the stimulus of gain. On the contrary it is a curious fact that all the hardest work connected with the Estates is done by [them. i.e. Clearing forest, "Bandy" transport, etc.] But in all these things they are to a certain extent their own masters. They work by Contract or by the job. They are not amenable to the Orders of an Overseer.[12]

Despite views from such a quarter, however, the hallowed practice of using the Sinhalese refusal to work on estates as proof of their indolence continued to hold sway.

Be that as it may, there was a need for immigrant labour. South India was near—nay more, ideal; for a pressure of population on the arable land in places, famine and near-famine on several occasions at

many places and extreme poverty all around provided very convenient 'propelling' factors. [14] All the planters needed to do was to provide the 'pull'. Higher wages than in India sufficed to attract Tamil immigrants spontaneously and with little urging. [15] 4d. at the outset, wages rose with competition and by the mid-1840's the estate cooly received 6d-9d. per day and, it is said, could earn from 15s-18s. a month; [16] in the Madras Presidency some labourers received 3d. a day even in 1858. [17] What is more, the fact that coffee culture necessitated a maximum supply of labour only seasonally (roughly July-December) combined with the proximity of the two lands to permit the immigrants to return to their homes. At the outset it was mainly a seasonal migration. In the 1830's this migration was a mere trickle. The first great influx was in 1840. [18] It was in fact illegal; it was not till 1847 that this stream of immigrants was legalized by the Indian Government with the proviso that Ceylon was not used as a springboard to transport immigrants elsewhere [19]

Given the nature of the 'push' factors in South India and the spontaneous form of the immigration, it is not surprising that the supply fluctuated. Several factors heightened this fluctuation. The travails of the journey were considerable and, not uncommonly, fatal. Long distances had usually to be covered to reach Paumben or Tuticorin on the Indian coast. Thence the sea journey to Mannar or Colombo in unregulated, crowded and unstable sailing vessels, if short, was far from pleasing. Only a small stream used the Tuticorin-Colombo route. Most travelled via Mannar. But Mannar to the hill-country was a long walk of over 150 miles—whether it was via Mihintale (near Anuradhapura) or via Puttalum and Kurunegala—largely through ill-peopled, ill-provided, tropical, malarial jungle beset with elephants and leopards. The coolies usually travelled in gangs. But to survive, the gangs had to leave the sick behind. Gangs were not always protection from exploitation by those who ran the sailing vessels; or against some of the local populace. [20] Gangs were certainly no protection from cholera and small pox which occasionally scourged immigrant and resident alike whether on the "North Road" or in the hill country. [21] In the 1840's, the North Road ran on two different lines but that through Puttalum and Kurunegala was the more used though immigrants heading for the estates in East Male and Hunnasgiriya tended to use the Mihintale route. [22] But with the opening of the Mannar-Madawachchi road in 1849-50 the Mihintale route became the "principal one"—a trend which Government welfare measures on this route in the 1850's firmly nailed in. The remains of the sheds on the Puttalum route were "dismantled" in 1861-62 but a trickle of immigrants still used it. [23]

Muttusamy the immigrant's troubles were not over once he reached the hill country. The transference to the colder climes of estate life largely over 2000, if not 3000 feet, above sea level certainly took some toll on the ill-clad immigrant [24] weakened as he was by the march in. In the 1840's, the treatment inflicted by the planters certainly added to his troubles. There is ample evidence to prove that the planters treated their labourers with "disgraceful injustice and cruelty"; [25] sick coolies were turned out of the estates; discipline was "exceedingly arbitrary and cruel" and worse than Negro slavery in a policeman, Colepepper's, opinion; [26] the housing (in "lines") and the medical aid afforded were far from adequate. What was worse, many planters did not pay the wages regularly or withheld them altogether [27]—a feature that was most common in 1847-48 when the coffee enterprise had slipped into a serious depression. [28] There were, then, several weighty aspects of travel and estate life to counterbalance the 'push-pull' factors.

This picture presents three broad facets under which the Immigrant Labour Problem can be considered. In the first place, the questions: from where the immigrants were to be drawn, on what terms, by what means and route. Secondly, that of their welfare on the journey. Thirdly, that of their welfare on the plantations in the Kandyan Provinces, including within its fold that important aspect of the laws pertaining to master and servant. Obviously the latter two had a bearing on the former in influencing the attractions of migration to Ceylon. Equally, if they chose a route which brought them to Colombo, the immigrants would not have to face the dangers of the North Road (that between Colombo and the highlands being shorter and through a more populous and healthier country) and the problems posed by providing welfare on the journey would diminish considerably. Equally, if recruitment was akin to the indentured system of the West Indies and Mauritius, the master-servant relationship in Ceylon would be affected.

II. POLICY AND WELFARE, 1840 - 1855

Given the nature of the 'push-pull' factors it is no surprise that, in the 1840's, the supply of labour was variable and at times inadequate. [29] In Tennent's view the "consequent contest to obtain" labour led to "all the accompanying evils of excessive wages, extra expenses and imperfect management." [30] The uncertainty alone displeased both official and planter. Inevitably, such a state of affairs

drew a crop of ideas and moves towards achieving an adequate and stable supply. One line of suggestion rather than action was to draw labour from other quarters—China in particular; or North India. In 1847 Government even had correspondence with Hong Kong on this subject but dropped the idea, largely on financial grounds.[31] In later years similar suggestions emerged from time to time, whether from official or commercial sectors,[32] but such schemes had their opponents as well,[33] and remained passing fancies.

Another line of thought was that of settling the Tamil immigrants in the old Tank country to the north of the Highlands where they could grow rice during the months in which they did not labour on the plantations. This idea was mooted, independently, by Tennent in Ceylon and the Colonial Office Committee reviewing the island's finances (sitting in London) in the year 1847.[34] It was received enthusiastically by the Emigration Commissioners and Grey in London.[35] Grey seems to have unsuccessfully extended this idea of transplanting Indian village communities to Mauritius as well;[36] in Ceylon he even visualised their extension, if initially successful, to the task "of restoring the cultivation of the deserted Districts of the Island" as hinted at by Tennent himself.[37] But both Emigration Board and Grey were careful to point out that Muttusamy should be assigned only small plots to prevent him losing the character of labourer.[38] The difficulties of doing so were unnoticed. The practicability of transplanting villages—and transplanting them into the malarial Dry Zone—was given no thought.

Airily conceived as it was, it was just as well for Muttusamy that this idea passed away peacefully with the 1848 rebellion and its aftermath of recriminations between numerous officials, including Torrington, Tennent and Wodehouse.[39] It was to emerge desultorily in various quarters from time to time[40] but also remained a passing fancy.

But it was not Government who led the way in seeking to augment and stabilise the immigrant supply. Planters and merchants were far more concerned with the problem. It presented too many financial and practical difficulties for them to handle. They sought, or demanded, the aid of Government. It being patent that improved conditions on the cooly routes would attract more labour, some asked Government to construct cooly sheds on these routes and see to their welfare in general.[41] In 1843 the *Colombo Observer* demanded that Government should see to the import of labour just as in the West Indies. "This was

to be a very familiar demand in the years ahead." [42]

Thus, quite early in the day, the laissez-faire notions of the time were presented with a challenge in an important sphere. Government was subject to the question of intervening in a field traditionally left to private enterprise. Private enterprise itself sought such intervention in the selfish interest. To the commercial sector it was "aid" rather than "intervention". Obviously, they set limits to what this Government "aid" should be and thought of it on fixed lines. As soon as official thought and action turned critical of the planter or initiated such administrative measures as Medical Aid Bills and officials charged with protecting coolies, the "aid" became "intervention", Government became a baneful autocrat and a storm of protest enveloped the officials concerned. [43]

In 1843 when faced with this challenge, Government (under Campbell) "ignored" these demands. [44] One need not look beyond the laissez-faire inhibitions of the day and the very novelty of the problem in Ceylon for the reason why. But by 1846 laissez-faire thought was being breached by the officials themselves. The Government Agent of the Western Province, Wodehouse—one of the most influential officials—drew attention to the fact that the immigrants *arrived* "in a great state of destitution"; that, as long as the existing "system of Immigration [continued], it [was] vain to hope for any improvement in [their] moral and social condition". On these grounds, because the shortage of labour caused "great inconvenience", and because of the prospect of greater inconvenience resulting from the need for more labour for the contemplated Railway, Wodehouse called for "systematic arrangements for the introduction of labourers and mechanics from all parts of India". He felt that little could be done for their benefit on the Northern routes and that they should be channelled to Negombo and Colombo by prohibiting landings at any other ports; [45] that depots under the charge of police officers should be constructed at these ports and along the route to Kandy, while health officers were to be stationed at the ports and the planters prohibited from discharging the sick without informing the "proper" officers first. Since Wodehouse was also a planter, [46] these ideas are not all that surprising; and it is no less surprising that he had discussed the scheme with other planters. [47] The labour crisis of 1846 which followed the sweeping effects of a cholera epidemic in 1845-46 [48] soon generated considerable agitation among the planters for some such aid from Government. They even chose to charge Government with neglect of immigrant welfare. [49] This was denied by Campbell [50] and was to

be denied later by Tennent, but the labour crisis was acute enough to influence Government thought. Wodehouse was the first to move. Teaming up with another official of standing, Saunders, and with an unofficial Councillor called Smith, he even drafted an Ordinance which proposed State-sponsored immigration. This was placed on the table of the Legislative Council. [51] Shortage of labour rather than immigrant welfare seems to have been their dominant concern for they were

> fully convinced that the very existence of Ceylon in a Commercial point of view [depended] upon the free and sufficient supply of labour from India and [were] fully alive to the consequences which must result to the Colony from any sudden or serious interruption of that supply. [52]

The scheme seems to have been on the lines laid down by Wodehouse earlier but had at least two notable additions, one vesting its execution in "Five Trustees" composed of two Government nominees and three Legislative Councillors, the other creating a Protector of Indian Labourers with powers "of a very serious nature." [53]

This series of events—labour crisis, agitation, accusation and draft—in the words of another student, "compelled the Ceylon Government to think afresh and to formulate a policy on Indian immigration". [54] This policy was outlined by the acting Governor, Tennent, and was inspired by a concern for the future of the planting interest that was common to many an official in Ceylon through the ages; as he put it,

> [in] looking to the prospects and future advancement of the Colony, [they could not] close [their] eyes to the fact that the extensive operations . . . . in progress, the large investment of capital, the resort of settlers and the application of European energy to convert the forests of the Interior into productive plantations, [were] all dependent on a steady supply of labour. . . . Yet at [that] moment, the planters [had] not the slightest assurance for the uniform continuance of that supply but, on the contrary, they [had] already been made aware of the risques they [ran] from its capricious fluctuations, as well as the possibility of its total interruption. [55]

His prescription contained a "very positive conception of the duties of Government". [56] Besides the idea of immigrant settlements, he suggested that Protectors of Coolies be appointed to inspect conditions on the

estates and to explain pertinent regulations to the immigrants, that, like the Government, planters be allowed to form three year contracts with labourers (one year being the limit), that protection, shelter and medical aid be provided on the immigrant routes. [57]

At about the same time laissez-faire was assailed in its very home for the Colonial Office Committee emerged with a very similar scheme; and whereas Tennent's pertained solely to the two facets of welfare on journey and on estate, they went further and suggested that a steam vessel be employed between India and Ceylon. [58]

Both Tennent and the Committee were convinced that it would not be difficult to finance these projects—an example of the extreme sanguineness of the time. Unlike the Committee however, Tennent's ideas were not so "positive" as to include Government—sponsored immigration within its limits. He drew the line at importing labour. He rejected the planters' resolution that Government was duty bound to undertake "the organisation and expenses of a systematic Coolie immigration" and argued that the conditions applying in the West Indies did not hold true in Ceylon. [59]

But it was in Downing Street that opinion would count for most since immigration was not an issue in which the Colonial Office left matters solely to the discretion of those on the spot. In the event, Grey was swayed to some degree by laissez-faire notions. He did not go to the length of his Committee and, like Tennent, rejected the idea of State-sponsored immigration. [60] If this idea was being accepted with regard to Mauritious and the West Indies, as Dr. K. M. De Silva argues, the circumstances were exceptional and rose from "the grim possibility of a complete breakdown in their economy for want of labour" which followed Government's abolition of slavery. [61] Such cause and effect did not apply in Ceylon's case. Grey followed Tennent's line of defence and stated that a comparison could not be made. [62] This was London's standpoint right through the period under review:

> [questions relating to Cooly emigration] to Ceylon are not treated by either the Colonial Office or the Indian Government on the same footing as the emigration of Indian Coolies to the West Indies. The latter emigrants are paid for from public funds (although two-thirds of the funds are raised by taxing the Planters) and thus the Government comes to have an undisputed right to impose its own

> conditions,..... The emigration (what is little more than a *migration*) of Malabar Coolies to Ceylon is a matter of private business between employers and labourers and the right and duty of the Government to interfere is no more than the general right and duty of a Government having unlimited powers, to do the best it can for all persons coming within its jurisdiction.[63]

To Tennent's welfare suggestions, London was more favourable. The Emigration Comissioners approved of them "generally"[64] Grey felt that "[the] fact that the proprietors themselves [had] become alive to their own interest [with regard to the treatment of coolies] affords perhaps the greatest security for their improving the condition of [their coolies]"; briefly endorsed the principle of Government legislation in this sphere, and turned most of his attention to the idea of transplanting settlements. [65]

By 1847, then, the principle of State intervention on behalf of immigrant welfare was accepted, that of recruitment and conveyance by the State rejected. [66] An Ordinance pertaining to the welfare aspects was prepared by Torrington himself but hinged on a tax on the planters. [67] By November 1849, Torrington had decided to shelve it altogether, arguing that Government's criticisms had "had the effect of greatly ameliorating [the] condition [of the coolies] upon the estates. [68] The reason assigned was not only lame but, on the face of it, untruthful for it is too much to expect the treatment to have been reformed overnight. But Torrington's reasons may be surmised. For one thing, facing severe criticism for the manner in which he handled the rebellion of 1848 [69] but supported on this score by a considerable body of planters, Torrington would have been loth to alienate his much needed allies with regulations (for example, the Protector of Coolies) distasteful to them. In the second place, the depression overhanging the planting industry made a tax on the planters impossible, [70] and removed the financial pillar on which the project rested. Tennent's grant scheme remained mere good intention.

If Tennent's despatch of 21 April 1847 was notable for its fairly positive views on Government's responsibility, it was as notable for the manner in which it glossed over Government's failure in this very responsibility in the period before. His despatch also was a defence of Government's record and a vigorous counter-attack on the planters. Accusing the planters of trying to hide their ill-treatment and to shelve the blame for the labour crisis on Government, he proceeded to shelve the

major portion of blame on them while whitewashing Government at the same time. [71] He had ample material to beat the planters and he used this freely in his despatch, but it is of relevance to his abilities in chameleonic posture that, as Colonial Secretary, he wrote a letter to the Indian Government in which he played down the ill-treatment of the planters quite noticeably, stating that "the illness and emaciation" observable in coolies returning to India was "not to be attributed to neglect of their comforts on the estate so much as to their self-privation in their eagerness to save the largest possible amount .... within the shortest possible period". [72] His materials in favour of Government were far from ample. He presented a set of figures on Government expenditure for the "benefit" of the immigrants between 1843 and 1846 but these were utterly inadequate, misleading, and it would seem, intentionally so. [73] It is true that from 1843 there were thatched sheds about 10 miles apart on the Puttalum road, but on Tennent's showing itself the Mannar-Puttalum section was not in the best of condition; while no attention at all was bestowed on what was then the subsidiary route—that of Mihintale. [74] Tennent tried to make out that the immigrants arrived in a healthy condition and he is supported on this point by Morris, Colepepper and Walker; [75] but the general tone of all criticism of Government and all reference to the subject of mortality on the route is in terms of deaths on the way in [76] —the planters complaining because they were more interested in the state of the ingress and not as much as much in that of the egress. Speaking of the 1840's a planter, Millie, wrote :

> Few gangs of coolies arrived on the estates without some deaths occurring on the road, but more took place after arrival on the estates being worn with the journey and change of climate....It is generally some time before the cooly gets hardened. [77]

At any rate to quote an official, Twynam :

> There can be no doubt that from 1843 ~~and 1845~~ to 1850 there was comparatively great mortality amongst the immigrant coolies, and more especially between 1843 and 1845 at the commencement of the immigration, and the description given by [Doctor] Van Dort of the Coast cooly [in 1868-69—a false one for the time—] might apply with some truth to the wretched spectres with which the cooly immigration commenced. [78]

There is ample evidence in support of Twynam. [79] In the circumstances, in stating that "the difficulties and solicitude of [the cooly routes had]

been remedied to a great extent by the Government", Tennent seems guilty of gross deception, [80] (and so was Campbell); [81] in adding that the

> Condition and the facilities for ensuring [the immigrants'] comforts and protection in [the] Island [were] superior to those prescribed by Mauritius or the West Indies [82]

he was heaping absurdity on deception — for Ceylon did not have anything comparable to the regulations regarding the immigrants' voyages, their living conditions, food and medical aid on estates or the machinery for the supervision of these matters that were stipulated for in the sugar colonies in the 1840's.

Welfare measures on route and on estate continued to be inadequate even after Tennent's despatch and in the time of Sir George Anderson (1850-55) even though the Governor himself had been administering Mauritius before his advent to Ceylon. [83] There seems to have been some improvement with the diversion of the main stream of traffic to the Mihintale route and Twynam states that the immigrants of 1850 and 1856 were better off than the "miserable gangs" of the 1840's. [84] £1821-18-12½ was spent on the Mihintale route by 1854 [85] but it would seem that the sheds were in a "wretched" state. [86] When in 1854 the planting interest agitated for greater attention to the immigrant routes and requested Government to employ two iron-screw steamers between India and Ceylon [87] Anderson argued that "every legitimate facility [was] already afforded" by Government on the North Road while rejecting the latter request as one "which should properly be left to private enterprise and capital'." [88] The laissez-faire tenets of the day were still too strongly entrenched for either the forces of self-interest or those of humanitarianism to shift them and they could not have had a more notorious advocate than Anderson.

Thus it was that many an immigrant suffered and died on the journeys to and fro. That the mortality was high between the late 1830's and the mid 1850's is certain. How high it was the statistics at hand do not reveal—those available pertain only to the numbers arriving and departing at the ports under official eyes and are far too unreliable to serve as an accurate basis for mortality computations. [89]

It is said that a change in the nature of the Kangany system had added to the miseries of the immigrant. Whereas in early days the

gangs of immigrants had chosen their Kangany from their own number, by the 1850's a new class of Kanganies had emerged. This Kangany was despatched by the planter to procure labourers in India and given an advance of money for the purpose (while planters at times made them leave a gang behind as hostages for their return)[90] He "was now a mere planter's agent with no personal interest in the gang." [91] This theory concludes with an emphasis on the evils that followed. In Ward's words, the system was

> one of fraud and peculation. The Coolies [did] not get the benefit of one-third of the advances charged to the employer. Hundreds died of starvation upon the road. [92]

The theory is largely built on Ward's correspondence which, in turn, reflects contemporary opinion. That this change greatly contributed to Muttusamy's difficulties through indebtedness we shall see. But on the face of it, one cannot quite see how it had a major influence—as distinct from minor—on his journeys to and fro. Under the former Kanganies, they had the same route to face, often without advances and on scanty provisions of their own; and even then the sick were left behind. [93] One has a suspicion that official and planter over-emphasised the impact of this change—the planter in that the advances to Kanganies who absconded displeased him,[94] the Governor in that he could underline the view that the immigrant route could not be improved beyond a point and could put across his scheme of Government-sponsored immigration to Colombo by arguing that "it [was] admitted that the Cangany [sic] system [had] reached its utmost limits". [95]

III. Welfare and Government - Sponsored Immigration under Ward

This scheme was undertaken in 1858. Prior to that Ward had been sufficiently governed by laissez-faire inhibitions to be against such a venture.[96] Before examining the events and reasons that led him to change his views one must dwell on several other aspects of his policy in the field of immigrant welfare, for he was by no means an Anderson. From the outset he turned energetically to the task of improving conditions on the North Road. Apart from £250 as "grants-in-aid" towards new sheds being constructed by the planters, £1,550 was voted in 1855 for repairing old sheds, erecting new sheds and separate sheds as hospitals, clearing some roads and paying patrolmen on the route.[97] At least another £696 was spent on sheds in this period of administration, while £3,636-17-5½ was spent on the hospitals at Kandy, Matale and elsewhere on the immigrant routes[98] —hospitals which were largely used by immigrants. These measures were a distinct improvement and the situation in 1857 presented "a gratifying contrast" to the former state of affairs.[99] There were, according to a planter, fourteen sheds between Kandy and Alankulam (26 miles from Mannar) on the Mihintale route, at least four of which were constructed after 1855; all, bar two, were "in good repair."[100] Government officials on the route were certainly attentive to the needs of the immigrants.[101] The mortality could not but have decreased. Nevertheless sheds alone were no insurance, for their keepers (usually Sinhalese) often did not permit immigrants to use them unless it was raining and the supply of water was "both scarce and bad at almost every station".[102] A Report of 1861, however, reveals a better state of things with regard to water though finding both the supervision of sheds and provision of medical aid inadequate.[103]

Apart from measures pertaining to the land route, in 1857, 1859 and 1860 both India and Ceylon took steps in a field which had received scant attention before—that of overcrowding in the vessels in which immigrants were ferried across. Ordinances in those years and a further one in 1862 were aimed at preventing this.[104] It is difficult to ascertain how far this had any marked effect and it would be foolish to assume that the regulations were followed by those in command of the local sailing vessels. This had always been a sphere in which the immigrant —particularly he who was returning with his savings—was subject to exploitation.[105]

The Bogambara Hospital issue of 1859-60 merits attention because it presents an instance of Government undertaking a responsibility fulfilled by private bodies. The body in this instance was the Friend-in-Need Society of Kandy, indeed a most respectably composed one; but through varied causes conditions in this hospital were not in keeping with the respectability of the directors. When this was brought to light, Ward charged the directing committee "with callousness and lack of human consideration" [106] —though later he felt he had done them "some injustice".[107]

The Committee resigned. There was a subsequent reconciliation but the end-product was that

> "[a] 11 admitted that the medical relief of Immigrant Coolies had outgrown private means or private management—that the Government alone could supply it efficiently—[and that] very little expense [would be involved].[108]

Government took charge of Bogambara Hospital, Kandy. But planters were to be charged for each case sent there. More significantly Ward's Minute contained seeds of thought which were to be fulfilled a decade hence: considering

> "that Estate-owners should be called upon to combine together for the placing of certain groups of Estates under the care of young medical men"

and "that if [the numbers sent to Bogambara] should be unduly increased by the neglect of the individual Planters to secure their Coolies such Medical Assistance upon the Estates, as contemplated [above] it might become necessary to consider the question of general Assessment, the Government....not recognising the justice of exempting the Planting Interest, altogether, from liabilities, that devolve[d] upon every Estate Owner in the Mauritius and Demerara"[109] —a stand which amounted to a laudable form of blackmail.

What can one say of these welfare measures in Ward's time? Clearly an improvement in Government's activity in the period preceding, they nevertheless compare ill with what was achieved in the 1860's under MacCarthy and Robinson.[110] When he implied that the North Road would take a heavy toll whatever Government did[111] Ward was far from correct. Government's achievements in this sphere in the 1860's belie this view. It is also of some significance that Robinson

regarded 1862 as a dividing line between fairly satisfactory conditions on the route and an unsatisfactory state of affairs.[112] He was hardly fair in classing Ward's period with that before 1855 but his opinion does serve to present Ward's measures in a proper perspective. What is patent, moreover, is that Ward's activities were limited to welfare on the route. Except for the Bogambara Hospital issue, nothing was attempted with regard to welfare on the estates beyond constant exhortations to the planters that good treatment of the immigrants was in their best interest. Nor was any improvement effected in the Master-Servant law. Since the principle of Government intervention to secure good treatment on the estates had been accepted in theory in 1847-48 one would have expected some action in this sphere once good times returned, as they did, by 1855. Ward would have certainly had the cordial backing of the Colonial Office in such measures. On the other hand, any such steps would have raised the hornet's nest that was the body of planters when aroused; Ward was involved in negotiating an agreement for the Colombo-Kandy Railway in which the goodwill of the planters counted for much; he had many other projects to execute. In these circumstances, for him to have intervened to effect welfare on the plantations may well have been attempting too much at the same time, particularly in view of the Immigration Ordinance of 1858.

This Ordinance was a considerable step forward in policy and merits close study. The scene opens in January 1856—a time when the coffee estates of Ceylon absorbed at least 70-80,000 labourers at crop time[113]—when an idea which had been in the air for some time was presented in a detailed form by one MacClennan, a planter. Briefly, the plan was to establish an Agency on the Indian Coast to recruit labour, the Agent acting as the planters' banker in order to obviate losses on money advanced, as well as the channel for recruiting labour.[114] Many a planter took this suggestion up and wanted Government to undertake both Agency and conveyance.[115] "The conviction [was] gaining ground amongst the Planters that the [existing] system [could] long suffice."[116] But both view and prescription had their opponents in the commercial sector.

> Under the pressure of local and temporary difficulties....we have Planters every now and then starting up and demanding an organised system of import of labour under Government control.... We would advise our friends to let well alone.[117]

wrote the *Colombo Observer* arguing against any departure from the existing "unrestricted system whereby....demand and supply are left to influence each other.[11] The Planter's Association itself was cautious and a special committee of investigation reported against the Agency scheme though considering a banker of sorts in India to be necessary. [119]

Nevertheless, agitation for such an Agency and for Government-sponsored immigration continued. The reasons are clear. Though the system of advances to Kanganies was initially "a wonderful success" it had soon grown to proportions which displeased many a planter (though not all). The advances demanded had grown larger. Absconding Kanganies were not uncommon. Many continued to suffer from some uncertainty in their labour supply. [120] Letters of lament from planters grew increasingly and were particularly evident during the years 1856-57.[121] At the same time there were fears that the supply would not be able to meet the increased demand generated by the expansion of coffee and the increase in public works under Ward, while the progress of irrigation and other public works in India were expected to have their retarding influence.[122] Perhaps the greatest single cause was the fear that the supply was not adequate to cope with the demand once the projected Colombo-Kandy Railway was under way. [123] The Railway fast became the bogey of planters who were concerned about the labour supply; and the epidemic was soon to fasten on to Government as well.

It was in these circumstances that late in 1856 a Company was formed in London by one Corbett to undertake the transport of immigrants to Ceylon on a profit-making basis while embracing the tasks of a regular steamship service round the island and other administrative needs as well — the latter, tasks for which Government had already passed money to purchase a steamer.[124] Ward received this plan enthusiastically. In this sphere, unlike, say, in that of irrigation works, he considered a private scheme better than a Government one.[125] He agreed to stay Government's application for a steamer. But his acceptance was with the proviso that the Company must place its ship at the disposal of Government (for payment) for the Pearl Fishery and whenever otherwise requested. [126] This sort of proviso was unpalataable to the Company, pleased though they were with Ward's reaction.[127] Planters in Ceylon too were

> firmly convinced that any other work in which the Steamer might be employed ought to be entirely subordinate and secondary to this grand special object of facilitating the transport of coolies. [128]

At the outset the commercial interest, with some exceptions, gave whole-hearted support to this private scheme. They suggested a 5% Government guarantee or a subsidy from the general revenue. With "some hesitation" Ward agreed to a loan of £10,000 without interest for five years.[129] So it was that Ceylon moved towards immigration by a private company on an organised scale instead of the competitive and disorganised immigration under the private initiative of immigrants, kanganies and planters. But it was all to be a chimera and not because of Ward's proviso. In consistence with their suspicion of the Ceylon Railway Company but in contrast to their early support and much to Ward's exasperation, the planters backed out—largely, it would seem, because of their opposition to a Company directed in London.[130] By 1858 the protracted negotiations had come to nought.

But Ward's reaction to this project reveals the direction of his thought, and it is no surprise that by June 1857 he was emphasizing the need to secure a sufficient supply of labour for the Estates,

> as it [was] upon their continued productiveness that the remuneration of every other branch of industry depend[ed], and more especially of those in which the Sinhalese engage most readily.[131]

In 1857 there was a deficient supply of labour, heightened perhaps by rumours coincident with the Indian Mutiny and certainly increased by an outbreak of cholera on the North Road.[132] This deficiency caused delays and losses in gathering the coffee crop[133]—a factor which could not but give official and planter ground for concern. Government too, found itself short-handed in labour but took great care not to tread on the planters' corns in competing for it at the inappropriate time (crop time).[134] Ward argued that

> It [was] not only the Planters, but the Department of Public Works, that suffer [red] from the dearth of labour and it [was] impossible to benefit the one without [the other sharing] the advantage.[135]

On top of this Ward had come to fear the increased demand that would follow from the Railway works[136] (expected to commence around 1858). At the same time the labour crisis spurred the planters to mount their agitation. The idea of an Agency on the Coast rose to popularity once again.[137] Letters on the labour question rained fast and furious and the issue was constantly overdramatised.[138] It was at this stage late in 1857 that Ward outlined his ideas to meet the fact that labour,

> "scanty at all times in the Planting Districts [was] becoming more so, as the Public Works extend[ed]; while both Government and Planters [were] threatened with a new....rival, in the Railway, which would alone absorb one-third of the labour [then] available."

He felt that some form of combination was necessary, that transport from India to Ceylon had to be undertaken because conditions on the North oad could never be improved so as to prevent all distress, that in order to establish

> "certainly as regards the passage, at low rates and at stated periods ....Government must take a part in the enterprise,....that some principle similar to that....in operation in the Mauritius must be adopted—that agencies must be established—and steam communication organised—and that the costs thus incurred must be reimbursed by an assessment or Capitation Tax"

on the planters, Government and the Railway Company according to the number of coolies they imported.[139]

To Ward's chargin, and quite inconsistently, the Planters' Association positively refused "to provide any portion of the funds required for the Indian Agencies"[140]—a refusal governed by divided opinion, muddled thinking and an extreme parsimony when it came to providing any money. Rather than force the issue Ward played a waiting game till the planters came round to his views.[141] These views grew in strength in the meanwhile. The Railway Engineer, Doyne's, tour of the South Indian areas whence labour was drawn even stimulated Ward to pen the opinion :

> we must sink or swim together, and have no doubt that we shall *swim*, with proper co-operation which shall not be wanting on my part.[142]

By May, the planters were co-operating and a scheme was presented to London largely drawn up by Doyne. There was to be an Agency in India charged with the task of recruiting and advancing money to immigrants—depots being established at the several ports of embrakation. A regular steamship service was to be established between these ports and Colombo—the steamers to be bought or chartered. An Immigration Commission in which "all the principal interests" would be represented was to be the executive arm supervising the Indian Agency and the Steamers and all matters connected with the immigrant

question. [143] This Commission was to be given large "discretionary powers". At the same time it was stressed as "an essential condition" that there should be "no preferences" and "no compulsion"—the labourer being free to contract with whomsoever he liked. [144] Ward was also insistent that "the system itself [should] be a self-supporting one"; he was prepared to provide funds from the general revenue for the steamers and the depots in Colombo and Indian, [145] but wanted "all annual and incidental expenses ... defrayed by an annual charge." This charge was a Capitation Tax not exceeding 3s. per head on each labourer imported by any employer of labour. [146] Subsequently the basis of assessing this capitation tax was altered in detail as a concession to the planters since they did not employ all their labourers through the year.

An Ordinance on these lines (No. 15) was passed in the same year. Laissez-faire had been breached in one of its most fortified parts. It is patent from our earlier description that one of the aims was to prevent the fluctuations in supply characteristic of the past and to place the supply of labour on "a safe and permanent basis" [147] in the face of the increasing demands of the time. An associated aim was that of forestalling "as far as possible the very heavy annual losses which the Planters sustain [ed] in making advances and [preventing] the extortion practised, on the Coolies by [the planters agents]." [148] But at the same time the Ordinance was a combination of employers—Planters, Merchants, Railway Company and Government—to maintain wages at its existing level, for Ward (and the planters) feared the prospect of a rise in wages greatly—considering even a general rise of one penny liable to bring the planting industry to its knees. [149] This object, indeed, is patently reflected in the very composition of the Immigration Labour Commission —a planter (chosen by the Planters' Association), a merchant (chosen by the Chamber of Commerce), Doyne, and an official from the Public Works Department. [150]

But there was a further object which was equally stressed and which we must equally underline. From the outset Ward—and even sectors in the planting interest [151] — stressed the humanitarian aspect of such a scheme. By landing the immigrants at Colombo they would be saved the trials of the North Road, while in the near future they would not even have to walk the 72 miles to Kandy but could use the Railway. This in turn, Ward perceived, would increase the immigrant influx because their sufferings on the North Road acted as a "drawback". [152] He was convinced that "it [was] no exaggeration to say that many hundreds of these poor creatures perish [ed] annually from want"

and that "[a] very large amount of human suffering [would] be put an end to by this arrangement". [153] Clearly, he employed the issue of immigrant suffering on this journey to press his scheme for sponsored immigration. Perhaps the humanitarian aim alone would not have bestirred Ward into such an action if there had been a steady, adequate labour supply and no threat of a rise in wage rates but this is not to deny Ward's sympathy for the immigrants.

Given the nature of the aims it is no surprise that laissez-faire abandoned its position. But it was not without query. Ward was fully aware that the Ordinance would be received in London with "hesitation and caution" because so novel. [154] The initial reactions in London, however, showed no such qualms. The Emigration Commissioners felt that on "the expediency of the general principles upon which the scheme [was] based, there [could] be no question". [155] They were particularly enamoured of its welfare aims and expressed surprise that nothing had been attempted on these lines at an earlier date. Both Labouchere and his successor, Lord Stanley, approved of the plan. [156] London's queries pertained largely to the details. Having completely misunderstood its nature, they opposed the capitation tax on the ground that it would arouse hostility among the local people. Among other points, they suggested that "the existing spontaneous immigration" be permitted to continue "till some experience of the success of the new system [was] obtained." [157] Nevertheless, Strachey and the new Secretary of State, Lytton, had considerable doubts about the scheme [158] and these were soon to be bolstered by the opinions of the Colonial Secretary in Ceylon, Sir C. J. MacCarthy [159] who arrived home on leave around April 1859. These doubts led to considerable delay in sanctioning the Ordinance, much to Ward's annoyance [160] —and it was eventually sanctioned with some reluctance and with the warning that it was viewed "as an experiment deserving of being tried but requiring great caution in the manner in which the powers conferred by it are exercised". [161] They demanded strict supervision over the Immigration Commission.

It was not these wide powers but rather the high expenses that soon began to worry both London and the various interests in Ceylon. As events proved, the scheme was launched with patent underestimation of the costs it would entail. [162] It was also brought into operation in great haste and too much was expected of it in too short a time for Ward was very keen to achieve a stable supply in the 1859 season. [163] Haste was particularly impossible in the case of procuring suitable steamers. Various bodies in England and George Wall (a planter on leave) were "commissioned" to find two such steamers in England. [164] In the mean-

while the "Manchester" was purchased from its owners, after due examination by the Master-Attendant of Calcutta.[165] Government was distinctly unlucky here. Apart from costing them £5,500, the loss on working the "Manchester" was considerable; [166] what was worse, the ship soon broke down and needed repairs. [167] About this time, the contract with the Ceylon Railway Company was broken off. [168] This did not remove the underlying fears which had in part motivated the scheme, for the Railway project had not been dropped as such. The immediate danger, however, receded. But of greater significance to the immigration scheme was that their coffers were left short of an anticipated interest-free loan of £10,000.

With only one steamer on the India-Colombo run it is not surprising that the influx of immigrants to Colombo for the 1859 crop fell "very far short both of the demand and of the expectations of the Commissioners". [169] For this reason, partly because the planters had not made adequate arrangements of their own under the old system and in part because of a good harvest and a demand for labour on public works in South India, the supply of labour in 1859 was inadequate. [170] As early as August 1859 the Immigration Commissioners showed signs of pessimism; [171] both Commission and Government frantically stressed the need to have the steamers (ordered from England) by April 1860.[172] By January 1860, to Ward's intense annoyance, the two unofficial Immigration Commissioners left the sinking ship "upon the most frivolous of pretences"; but were persuaded to return to their charge within a few weeks. [173] The colonists were having second thoughts about the scheme [174] while Strachey in London felt it "a very questionable one", regarding the planters' success in clearing a big crop with 30 to 40,000 less coolies than before as proof of its redundancy. [175] There was "considerable diversity of opinion" among the planters "as to the advisability of continuing or dissolving the Commission", but after discussion with Ward they resolved on giving it "a year's further trial". They considered that the scheme "had been tried under so many disadvantages during the first twelve months that [they could not] yet judge of its results." [176] It must have come as quite a shock to all concerned to find the "Manchester" unserviceable and to hear from London that wooden steamers of suitable specifications were not to be found in England.[177] Ward and his advisers were driven to request that suitable iron-screw steamers be built or purchased.

Reverse was stacked upon reverse. At an earlier date [178] the Immigration Labour Commission had reviewed an old idea—that of

seeking for labour in new districts in India rather than in the old. To pave the way for this measure Government passed an Ordinance (No. 15 of 1859) enabling all employers to enter into lengthened engagements of three years. [179] These could be signed both in India and Ceylon. In order to tap such new areas the Agent in India, Captain Graham, was ordered to abandon his field in South India and proceed to the Northern Circars. [180] But in the meanwhile in London, while Strachey had "no objection to its principle", [181] the Colonial Office and the Emigration Board felt the Ordinance was "incomplete" and, at any rate considered it necessary to have the approval of the Madras Government. [182] Both Madras and the India Office proved unexpectedly obdurate on this matter and the Ordinance was disallowed by June 1860. [183]

With no prospect of any steamers for a while and unable as the Commission were to offer any labour to employers, [184] it is no surprise that the "Colonists" regarded the scheme "as an expensive failure". [185] Since MacCarthy viewed it with dislike as well [186] the repeal of Ordinance 15 of 1858 was a foregone conclusion. The Planters Association did request that Government should vote £20,000 for the purchase of steamers and suggest that the import duty on rice be raised [187], but they did not have the backing of the "planting community" on the latter point and general opinion strongly favoured the repeal of the Ordinance. [188] This was eventually done in October 1861. [189]

It is clear that the scheme had laboured under many disadvantages from the outset. The crucial weakness was the failure to get an adequate number of ships on the Colombo-South India run, apart from the fact that the "Manchester" proved a costly and disastrous purchase. Thereby "an integral part" [190] of the scheme was never brought to being and it was on these grounds that Ward maintained that it had never had "a fair trial [191]". This was to be a major cause of its failure. But its architects, both planters and officials, have only themselves to blame. They pitched their anticipations too high. Rather than setting their sights on a stable supply for 1861 or 1862, they expected too much too soon (by 1859).

In other ways too, attitudes in Ceylon governed the failure of the Ordinance, if in a rather negative sense. Its authors wanted, and through underestimations expected, the scheme to pay its own way. Once these anticipations proved utterly illusive, they recoiled in great disappointment from their creation.. [192] If, on the other hand, they had been aware of this possibility and been determined to bear some

losses for the sake of an adequate and stable supply of labour on a route which afforded improved welfare for the coolies, they would not have backed out so hastily just because the expenses rose. As MacCarthy put it, the scheme burdened the planters with additional taxation without corresponding results. [193] This alone made the Ordinance a failure from the planters' point of view. This is what makes the lack of steamers the major factor. At the same time, the desire to recoup expenditure meant that immigrants were charged for their passages—a single journey costing adults 3s and children 1-2s per head, despite the efforts of some individuals to get this reduced. [194] This would have eaten into the immigrant's savings, meagre as they were. A man of habit, it is doubtful if Muttusamy would have been all that enamoured of this new, more expensive, route when the traditional North Road and Paumben crossing, even with all its difficulties, lay before him. The existence of this old, route must have had some bearing on the success of the scheme. There was no real remedy for this. To close the old route until the scheme was a guaranteed success would have been a drastic step even if practicable.

A recent inquiry into the failure of the immigration scheme attributes vital, and almost the major, importance to the failure to get the Lengthened Engagements Ordinance to satisfy the conditions posed by Madras. [195] One cannot see how this affected the issue one jot, except in so far as it added to the general disappointment of planting circles. In the first place, there was nothing to prevent them 'shipping' a man from the Circars to Colombo and entering into engagements in Ceylon. Moreover, the Ordinance 15 of 1859 was passed because ruling circles had "overlooked" the measures of 1847-48 which made immigration to Ceylon legal. [196] There seems to have been no real necessity for this Ordinance. [197] In the third place, events of the 1860's were to show that the old sources of supply in South India were adequate to fulfil Ceylon's increasing needs. Hypothetically speaking, if the Commission succeeded in getting an adequate number of steamers on the line and persuaded most immigrants to use it, lengthened engagements did not matter in the least as far as the supply was concerned. [198]

IV. Policy and Outlook in Ceylon and in London 1861 - 1880

Even if the immigration scheme had had moderate success, it would have been hard put to negotiate its way through the Administration of MacCarthy. Disliking the scheme from the outset,[199] his views were clearly coloured by a strong tincture of laissez-faire for he contended that its failure was proof that complex Government machinery was no substitute for the "free action of private enterprise".[200] In arguing that one could not "burden the Colonial Revenue with so heavy an expense" (£20,000) for a venture benefiting one class,[201] he revealed both a desire to avoid class legislation and to keep expenditure down. He once referred to "the species 'Planter' of the genus Homo" being "an essentially [blatant?] variety of the human race" and with his Colonial Secretary, Gibson, regarded them with contempt.[202]

He was, nevertheless, aware of the importance of the labour problem. He believed that more could be achieved in aid of the planters in "the field of administrative and executive action" rather than by legislation, and expressed his willingness to do what he "legitimately' could[203] (clearly within financial limits). So it was that he readily took up the suggestion that Government should recruit for itself 5000 labourers from new districts in India and imported a body of Sikhs from the Punjab—an action which ended in complete fiasco because the Sikhs refused to work on the roads on the ground that it was degrading.[204] The suggestion was presented by the Immigration Labour Commission who argued that, because Government employed so much labour on public works "[t]here [was] a feeling entertained amongst employers of labour that the example should be set by Government [in the introduction of immigrants from] new Districts."[205] In this manner the planters neatly plumped one of their pet projects in Government's lap (even if directly for Government's benefit). If Coffee was "king", its coffers were never utilised in majestic munificence.

But MacCarthy's main attention was directed to the North Road and the crossing at Mannar. He agreed to establish two sailing vessels as a regular ferry while resisting the demand for a free passage and imposing a rate of 6d per head per single journey (later 1s); and he stationed an European superintendent on a fixed salary to supervise these arrangements.[206] At the same time Government instigated measures to ensure greater official supervision and to provide medical aid along the North Road, besides keeping the sheds in repair.[207] These aspects were continuously in Government's purview during the 1860's and it

is totally against the facts to maintain "[i]n the period 1860 to 1875,.... the Government withdrew from an active interference in immigration." [208] Even MacCarthy's implication that immigration was being left to the "free action of private enterprise" does not fit the fact of regular Government ferries at Mannar. The new arrangements differed from Ward's immigration scheme in several respects—there was no combination between the major employers of labour, no corporate body administering immigration, no Agency recruiting labour, and the sea-crossing was from the Indian Coast to Mannar not Colombo. But they possessed a strong element of Government intervention. In this sense, MacCarthy merely substituted a simpler and less expensive system of immigration on a different route to that proposed by Ward, but followed his principle.

In repealing Ward's scheme, Government in Ceylon made no reference at all to one of its original aims, that of welfare—and this lends support to the theory that the supply motive was not merely its immediate cause but the more important one. The Emigration Commissioner's however, had not lost sight of the humanitarian aim; while sanctioning its repeal they drew attention to Ward's description of the immigrant's sufferings; while willing to give up the conveyance of immigrants they were insistent that Government should do all it could to protect the "ignorant immigrant". [209] Rogers himself noted that it was essential to "remedy [the existing] evils both as a matter of

> humanity and because the good or bad results of the emigration in the welfare of the emig [rants] must very materially influence the Government of India in facilitating or discouraging it";

and a despatch was sent on these lines. [210] Through the 1860's the Colonial Office not only showed an admirable, if natural, tendency to keep Colombo on its toes, but refused to accept their explanations at face value. [211]

MacCarthy, as we have seen, had already moved to improve facilities on the North Road and needed little prodding. By 1862 there were three Government vessels operating a regular packet service from Mannar while old sheds on the Mihvitale route were repaired, some new hospitals built, two medical practitioners appointed and £250 voted to improve a portion of the road. [212] Between 1862 and 1863 eighteen wells were sunk on the route (in Mannar and Nuwarakalawiya districts) and Dyke considered that "it would be difficult to overrate the relief these ..... afforded to the coolies". [213] On personal inspection in mid 1862 MacCarthy found the conditions "very satisfactory". [214] While

the packet service had "had great difficulties to contend with at the outset",[215] it had soon achieved great success monopolising the transport and driving "the native boats" "out of the field".[216] As against the 43,000 odd transported largely by "native vessels" in 1861, Government vessels ferried 69,347 immigrants to Ceylon in 1863 and 84,000 in 1864.[217] Government expenditure on the immigration service in 1863 and 1864, including wages, amounted to £8,739-14-5½ [218] and around £4000 would have been spent in 1862. Nevertheless Dyke reported that "several of [the sheds] were in very bad order"[219] while Major-General O'Brien argued that even under "favourable circumstances the mortality on the North Road [was] considerable and [that] the coolies..... arrive[d] generally in a weak and sickly condition".[220] The latter view must be taken with a grain of salt because O'Brien, like Ward, was engaged in special pleading. He was strongly disposed to support the Madras and Colombo Steamship Company's proposal to run a regular service between Madras and Negapatam on the one hand and Colombo on the other with the aid of a Government subsidy. As such he would have tended to paint conditions on the North Road in the worst possible light.

The renewal of efforts by private enterprise to run a scheme which Government had given up is of interest in itself but the reaction to these suggestions in London reveals a perspective of even greater significance. Since planters had hankered after another scheme even while consenting to the repeal of Ward's Immigration Ordinance and since requests for additional reassures were not lacking in the 1860's,[221] the M.C.S. Company's suggestion is not all that surprising. But the commercial interest was by no means whole-heartedly committed to such ideas. The Planters' Association was very cautious and the Colombo Observer had returned to a position of steadfast opposition to Government-sponsored immigration and Agencies on the Indian coast.[222] While the M.C.S. Company did not follow up its proposal, the idea was actively taken up in 1860 by a Bombay Company. Government agreed to subsidise them to the tune of £4,000 a year for running services round the island as well as those between Colombo and the South-Eastern coast of India.[223] By late 1867 this Company had suffered heavy losses and received permission to withdraw from its contract.[224] Private enterprise had learnt the hard way and withdrew, battered but wiser.

When the first of these projects reached London in 1864, the Emigration Commissioner, Walcott, wondered whether immigrants would "abandon" the existing route and raised the traditional question whether

"the expense to the Local Government and the general policy of granting a subsidy to a commercial venture of this kind" justified sanction. Answering the latter himself, he stated that the "Colonists" could well

> "contend that they [were] in great need of labour, that there would be no objection to the appropriation of public money directly for immigration—and that the proposed plan [was] only an indirect mode of effecting the same object"—

that on these grounds and in view of the trifling cost, it could be sanctioned. He also wondered if

> "Ceylon should be exempt from the rule applied to all the other labor importing Colonies under which only one-third of the Immigration expenditure [was] defrayed by the General Revenue and the remaining two-third by the Planting Interest",

but felt that it was not necessary "to clog [the scheme] with this condition" because of its "temporary and experimental nature".[225]

Elliot, for his part, felt that the sale of the "Pearl" was a good bargain and that Government enterprise was not justifiable once private channels were ready to undertake such tasks.[226] The Secretary of State, Cardwell, felt that

> "the object [was] important ..., the cost small and ... the revenue of the Colony... well able to bear it"

and approved of it as an "experiment".[227] In writing on these lines to the Treasury, the Colonial Office took care to point out that the proposal was not "at all analogous to West Indian immigration" because the expenditure was "trifling", the immigrants were not "indentured to the Planter for a term of years" and the scheme was not so much importation as the "placing [of] a safe and commodious mode of transport" within reach of an immigrant who had to negotiate a perilous journey.[228] The standpoint taken reflects three points. The principle of Government aid or sponsorship of immigration was not seriously questioned though there was a clear preference for private enterprise where it was available. But London was not disposed to be ultra-liberal from the financial point of view and were set on extracting a due share from those benefiting (i.e. the planters). Thirdly, it was accepted that the circumstances in Ceylon differed in some degree

from those of the West Indies. The acceptance of Government's responsibility was particularly significant in view of the great reluctance to accept it in 1858-59 and the failure of Ward's immigration scheme in 1861. This difference in reaction was partly due to a change in the personnel who reviewed the subject. Strachey did not see this particular despatch and neither Lytton nor MacCarthy were present. At any rate, the scheme of a subsidy was far simpler and cheaper than Ward's (if no less a failure).

While these efforts were being made to encourage immigrants to use the Colombo route the main stream of immigrants continued to flow through Mannar and along the North Road. Though some individuals were still able to conjure up fears for the future,[229] through most of the 1860's and 1870's the estate labour supply was sufficient and at times even "abundant",[230] proving the fears raised in Ward's time rather exaggerated. On the other hand, the demand was such that with the exception of the South Indian famine years of 1876 to 1878, one could not speak of a surplus. Gregory's words are revealing:

> The labour market in Ceylon is never in excess of the demand. So far from it, the Planters are constantly pressing the Government to take steps to promote increased Tamil immigration, without however offering a single feasible suggestion as to how that increase is to be effected. A sudden requisition on the part of this Government for 500 or 600 labourers would unquestionably create serious inconvenience and loss to the planting community. . . . So careful has the Government of Ceylon been hitherto not to interfere with plantation labour that it has been a standing rule that no Pioneers should be recruited in the Island but should be imported direct from the Malabar Coast.[231]

Government was not the only large-scale competitor. The renewal of work on the Colombo-Kandy railway meant that there was a third agency seeking large bodies of labour (1863-67). In the 1860's the Railway Contractor paid the best, Government the least.[232] In 1965 the Contractor even raised his wages to 15d a day and advertised among Government labourers.[233] This was competition to the hilt but the planters do not seem to have suffered. Government certainly did. They had labour difficulties from 1862 to 1864 at least.[234] As far as estate wages went however, there was no real increase and in this sphere too the events of the 1860's belied the fears prevalent in 1857-58. Despite an increase in prices,[235] immigrant wages on estates remained

at 7-9d a day, [236] at most a minute increase from those of the 1840's. The claims of custom and a position of bargaining from strength no doubt worked to the advantage of the planter.

It must, at least, have been some comfort to the immigrant that conditions on the Mannar crossing and the North Road were much improved. Robinson's Administration continued to bestow steady attention to this route. From 1865 to 1869 the expenditure was £24,945-14-7¼ averaging almost £5,000 an year. [237] This bore fruit in few deaths on the journey. Liesching reported that

> "whatever may formerly have been the fatigue and hardship endured by immigrant coolies, that state of things no longer existed." [238]

Templar complained that many erroneous impressions existed in European circles on this score, that the

> "sleeping, watering and hospital accommodation ... [was] nearly all [the immigrants could] want, and in some respects more than they [would] use."

He did not "imply" that none died on the road, but believed that

> "as a general rule, such as die[d] by the way would have died"

in any event. [239] It is true that these officials were trying to meet contrary impressions in Ceylon and London. This should make one circumspect about accepting their evidence but the facts speak for themselves and maps illustrate most of the facts: from the port of arrival to Dambulla inclusive there were fifteen sheds, with a hospital attached to most and a kangany and two patrolmen at each shed charged with the task of patrolling the road. [240] Some agents did complain of the "very Defective" state of the sheds around 1868-69 [241] but L. Liesching on the spot gave a much better report [242] and what counted for more were the wells, the patrolmen, medical aid and the availability of provisions in boutiques on the North Road. Thus, even before pressure emanated from London, conditions on the route in the late 1860's were fairly satisfactory. This pressure began in late 1869 and was so incessant that it stirred Colombo to even greater interest in the North Road. The additional touches in the years that followed can, therefore, be ascribed largely to London's influence. Strange to say, this pressure was animated by an erroneous, if worthily motivated, appraisal of the

situation in Ceylon.

These largely erroneous impressions arose in large part from a report by a Doctor Van Dort on the condition of immigrants (or "Malabar Coolies" as they were called by contemporaries) and in part from despatches on the state of hospitals in Ceylon.[243] Van Dort took the number of immigrant arrivals and departures and assumed the difference between them to represent the deaths. While the Emigration Commissioner, Murdoch, was aware that many immigrants had settled in Ceylon, he considered the mortality to be high. He was patently governed by the picture of the North Road presented by Ward in 1858 and not only assumed that it held true in 1869 but seemed to think that Government had done little to improve matters on the journey.[244] The hospital returns led Fairfield to note that the

> "death rates [were] generally high [in all hospitals] and in some cases stupendously so. In Ratnapura Hospital [it was] 418 per cent on the daily average sick population.... In Kandy .... it [was] 201%. But in Matale .... it [was] 1464% .... [but he understood that] a large part of the patients in the Hospitals of the Northern Districts [were] a wretched class called Malabar coolies, creatures who eat filth and offal and [even?] clay and gravel."[245]

Van Dort's report in particular drove Murdoch and the Colonial Office to call Colombo's attention to Government's moral obligation to prevent the "scandalous mortality" on the North Road and to suggest a system of rations akin to that adopted in Mauritius.[246] This was resisted by Colombo but because of the hospital death rates London remained unsatisfied and continued its pressure.[247] Robinson was aroused to provide comprehensive evidence on the true state of affairs on the North Road and to point out that the immigrants came to the hospitals only as a last resort and often with one foot in the grave and that the death-rate at Matale was not high in relation to the number of immigrants in the vicinity.[248] The evidence satisfied Fairfield that Van Dort's "whole estimate, though having the appearance of a careful calculation, [was] a tissue of guesswork"; and that his description of the "filthy" feeding habits of the immigrants was "denied and ridiculed by those well-acquainted with the coolies".[249] While Murdoch was now satisfied that much had been effected on the North Road, Fairfield remained dissatisfied on this score, chiefly on the argument that the sheds had fallen into disrepair some years back and that there was nothing to prevent this happening again.[250] Murdoch noted that it was difficult

to reconcile Dr. Coghill's description of the immigrants entering hospital at Matale with the evidence on Government measures on the route.[251] The correspondence only spurred the Colonial Office to review the position of the immigrant in Ceylon, comparing it with conditions elsewhere. A memorandum by Fairfield[252] presented the situation in a table which can be best presented thus :

Comparative statement of Costs to Planter of a Coolie in British Guiana, Mauritius and Ceylon.

	Wages per year per coolie	Total Cost per year per coolie
British Guiana	£18-5-0	£23-10-0
Mauritius	£ 6-0-0	£18-14-6
Ceylon	£10-4-0	£12- 4-0

It was natural that Herbert should minute :

> I think we shall be forced to the conclusion that it will be the duty of Ceylon to expend a much larger amount than at present on the supervision of this immigration. They get their labour very cheap in Ceylon and can well afford to remove what is now discreditable to the Colony.[253]

In writing to the Governor he felt that "perhaps" it should

> be hinted that if the condition of these coolies while passing through the country .... [could not] be speedily and very materially improved, it [would] become necessary to consider whether arrangements must not be made as in other colonies for the reception of the immigrants by the Government on their first landing....and their supervision and maintenance until engaged.[254]

In this manner London moved towards more action and more welfare, presenting Herbert's points (in suitably modified language) and reiterating their suggestion of supplying free rations to the incoming immigrants.[255] The despatch ended: "I am confident that you will agree with me that it is a matter of serious consideration whether your Government can be held to have adequately discharged its duty in this respect."

Robinson disagreed on several points. While agreeing to the issue of free rations to immigrants left behind by their gangs, he pointed out that London's suggestion was impracticable and would only make Ceylon, in Liesching's words, "a pauper asylum for the South of India" [256] —reasoning that was quite sound. He continued his efforts to dispel the misconceptions held in London on conditions on the North Road, among other things, affirming that Government had done all that it could legitimately achieve for the coolies in this sphere. But he felt that more could be achieved on behalf of the coolies on the estates and broached the idea of "some provision" of medical relief in the planting districts besides that of the central hospitals already existing. [257] London's doubts must have been deeply ingrained for they reiterated the suggestion of rations for coolies enroute to the estates besides other ideas and called for the new Governor, Gregory's, views on them; [258] and while someone—probably Fairfield—had the insight to note a factor which the authorities in Ceylon had hardly taken any cognisance of :

> The fact that the Coolie becomes the debtor of the Kanganie for all he eats is a very important feature of the case—which I think has not been noticed. It greatly strengthens the argument for licensing. [i.e. licensing of the kanganies.][259]

Gregory disagreed with the Colonial Office views as vigorously as Robinson had done, pointing out that the hospital death rates were no guide to the condition of the immigrants, expressing satisfaction with the arrangements at Mannar and on the North Road as well as the manner in which planters treated their coolies; he rejected London's suggestions that kanganies should be licensed and that free rations should be issued on the grounds of impracticability, though agreeing to a system of rations for stragglers and measures to check the kanganies' responsibility for their gangs on the journey in. At the same time he was preparing legislation to ensure that the planters afforded organised medical aid for immigrants on estates [260]

The Colonial Office was forced to accept this position but they had doubts on this score which refused to subside. So Meade wrote :

> I should accept [Gregory's] proposals so far as they go which is not to any very great length. We can do no more and must trust the Governor not to make rose-coloured reports without good grounds for so doing tho' recent experience makes me un-

comfortable on this subject

and Kimberley himself jotted beside Meade's last sentence: "I have no faith in them".[261] On the point of the high mortality rate in certain hospitals of the Central Province, however, Gregory's

> explanations [had] removed from Lord Kimberley's mind all impression that the unfavourable statistics of these hospitals indicated a want of efficiency in their management as compared with the other hospitals of Ceylon.[262]

But they also informed Gregory

> "that viewed as a whole the picture of [the] Coolies' condition presented by the administrative officers of your government in this correspondence is difficult to reconcile with the accounts which have been constantly given by the medical officers .... in the correspondence respecting the high rate of mortality in the Coolie Hospitals by Matale, Gambola [*sic*] and Badulla." [263]

In the meanwhile Gregory stationed an officer at a bridge near Damoulla to ascertain whether kanganies brought their gangs over fully intact; the kanganies were issued with "passes" which indicated the numbers in their gangs in Mannar and enjoined to receive certificates for any left in hospitals on the North Road. But only 26 "passes" were issued by November 1872 and Gregory refused to pass penal enactments which would subject the kanganies to punishment.

> Any new enactment is regarded with so much aversion in the East that I dread taking a step which might interfere with the free course of immigration,

he said, adding that legal enforcements would be established once the kanganies were accustomed to this system. He also argued that they could easily evade the regulations by persuading their gangs to say that they were travelling without a kangany.[264] It is clear that Colombo was reluctant to undertake the difficult, if not impossible, task of controlling the kanganies. From Government's failure to refer to these "passes" when the Colonial Office raised the issue once again in 1878 one would infer that it had not been persisted in.

In pressing for improved welfare for the immigrant the Colonial

Office was clearly motivated by the humanitarian sentiment that it traditionally accorded to their welfare in all colonies;—but one is driven to wonder why this sentiment had lain largely dormant in the 1840's and early 1850's. It was aroused by Ward in 1858-59 but not with the same intensity and same concentrated attention as in the years 1869-72. The false notions generated by Van Dort and the incidence of death in certain hospitals accounted in great part for this heightened attention. Perhaps some of the new personnel in the Colonial Office had some hand in it. Perhaps there was an increase of benevolence in the climate of British thought. At the same time, the revelation that the planters of Ceylon were paying much less for their labour than their counterparts in the other colonies confirmed their inclinations to demand more of Government and planter in Ceylon. What is striking is that, unlike in 1858-59 under Lytton, but even more than in the years 1864 to 1865, London accepted the principle of Government responsibility in this sphere as a matter of course. The doubts they had with regard to conditions in Ceylon of the time were largely exaggerated, based on unreasonable grounds and arose from an ignorance of the circumstances that was not unnatural to men seated in London. Some of the reforms they mooted were as unrealistic as they themselves were remote from Ceylon. Even if originating in considerable ignorance however, their pressure had pleasing effects and in this sense the ignorance was just as useful as the humanitarianism associated with it. In the first place, while the authorities in Ceylon had already developed welfare measures on the North Road to considerable lengths they were forced to additional measures which improved it. But the greatest significance lies in that Colombo was driven to move into a field left untouched before—that if the immigrant's medical welfare on the estate. Even if the idea originated with the Principal Civil Medical Officer in Ceylon (Dr. Charsley), the Medical Aid Ordinance (No. 14) of 1872 was an outcome of London's constant pressure.

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1. *The Examiner*, 16 June 1853, "On Coffee Planting in Ceylon", C. R. Rigg, p. 382. [I am obliged to Dr. K. M. De Silva for leading me to this article.]

British Parliamentary Papers, [hereafter cited as *B. P. P.*], Reports from Committees, Vol. XII, (1850), Second Report from the Select Committee on Ceylon, Evidence of George Ackland, [planter and merchant], 5 June 1849, para. 3185.

2. *Ibid*, paras. 3185-88.

3. CO 54/235, Tennent [Lieut. Governor] — Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847; and Encl. W. Morris [Assistant Government Agent] [A. G. A. Kurunegala]

—Col. Sec., 30 March 1847.

The Examiner, 16 June 1853, "On Coffee Planting in Ceylon", C. R. Rigg, p. 382.

4. *Idem.*

5. 1868 *Administrative Reports,* Sabaragamuwa, F. R. Saunders [Jnr.] A. G. A., n.d. [1869] App. A, Extracts from letter, Saunders—G. A., Western Province, No. 411, 26 Aug. 1868, p. 25.

In the "South" they occasionally picked crops as well, "induced by the high rates of pay", *Colombo Observer,* 20 March 1865, Overland Summary.

6. CO 54/235, Tennent — Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847.

CO 54/315, Ward — Lord John Russell, No. 15, 8 June 1855.

7. I. H. Vandendriesen, "Some Aspects of the History of the Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-85, Ph.D. Economic History, London, 1954, pp. 176-77.

CO 54/235, Tennent — Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847, Encl., C. H. De Saram [Police Magistrate and Commissioner of Requests, Gampola]—Col. Sec., 8 Feb. 1847. De Saram (a Ceylonese) says that only low castes worked on the estates. This is dubious. It was certainly not true of the 1850's and 1860's.

8. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847; see *Infra,* pp. 7-8 [The above explanation treads a familiar groove carved by many a modern student for example—Vandendriesen, op. cit. pp. 176-78; K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy and Missionary Organizations in Ceylon* 1840-1855, (London, 1965), pp. 235-36.

9. *Ceylon Times,* 5 June 1855.

10. *The Examiner,* 16 June 1852, "On Coffee Planting in Ceylon", C. R. Rigg, p. 382.

Ceylon Times, 23 Jan. 1863.

11. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847.

12. CO 54/331, Ward—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere, No. 219, 27 Nov. 1857. See also 1857 *Blue Book Reports,* Ward—Lytton, No. 3, 5 July 1858, pp. 245-46. But immediately after his arrival Ward voiced something akin to the more common view, no doubt reflecting the opinions of the official coterie around him—CO 54/315, Ward—Lord John Russell, No. 15, 18 June 1855.

13. *Governor's Addresses,* Vol. 11, Robinson, 4 Oct. 1866, p. 93.
Ceylon Times, 23 Jan. 1863.

14. C. Kondapi, *Indians Overseas* 1838-1949, (Madras, 1951), pp. 2-5. Vandendriesen, *op. cit.,* pp. 244-45.

15. CO 318/172, Captain Wilson [Emigration Agent for the West Indies in Madras]—Hawes, 3 Jan. 1847. [I am obliged to miss I. M. Cumpston's book for this reference.]

16. *The Examiner,* 16 June 1852, "On Coffee Planting in Ceylon," C. R. Rigg, p. 382.

B. P. P., Reports from Committees, 1851, Vol. VIII, Part I, Third Report from the Select Committee on Ceylon (1850 Session), Evidence of Anstruther, [a former Colonial Secretary], 5 July 1850, p. 735.

CO 54/250, Torrington—Grey, No. 148, 15 Aug. 1848, Encl. Memo by Wodehouse, [G. A., Western Province], 14 Aug. 1848. 18s. seems an overstatement in view of the fact that in the 1850's and 1860's 12s.-17s. seem to have been the average monthly wages [*infra.*, pp. 57, 101] and set against assertions that wages of that time were slightly higher than in the 1840's [*infra.*, p. 57].

17. CO 54/334, Ward—Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1858, Encl., Memo on the Supply of Labor to Ceylon, W. T. Doyne, 13 May 1858, Doyne was the Chief Railway Engineer.

See also *Colombo Observer*, 12 June 1856. However, in the Wynaad coffee plantations, labour seems to have been paid 4½d. per day [*Colombo Observer*, 19 March 1857, Letter from Wynaad to "the Madras Athenaeum".] Note that in the Mullaitivu District of the Vanni, North Ceylon, even in 1872, an agricultural labourer received 3d.-4d. a day [1872 *Administrative Reports*, Mullaittivu, C. H. Withers, Acting A. G. A., 28 Feb. 1873, p. 140].

18. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847, Encl., W. Morris—[Tennent], 30 March 1847.

When Miss Lucy Colaco states that kinship of language, religion and social customs helped to draw Indian labourers to the Ceylon plantations she is far from the truth. The South Indian was akin to the Tamil in North Ceylon but not to the Kandyan. L. Colaco, Labour Emigration from India to the British Colonies of Ceylon, Malaya and Fiji during the years 1850-1921, (London 1957), M.Sc., Economics, p. 11.

19. Miss J. M. Cumpston, *Indians Overseas in British Territories*, (London 1953), p. 116.

20. CO 54/235, Tennent—Grey, No. 6, 21 April, 1847.

CO 54/238, Torrington—Grey, Confidential, 16 Aug. 1847, Encl., Wodehouse [G. A., Western Province]—Tennent [Col. Sec.], Confidential, 6 March 1846. [Those who used the Tuticorin route were usually from Tinnevelly and Madura districts—but this route was far more expensive].

21. Cholera was transmitted by the immigrants and was not common in Ceylon. The epidemic of 1845-46 was particularly virulent and fatal (K. M. De Silva, "Indian immigration to Ceylon—The first phase c. 1840-1855", *The Cey. Jour. of Hitt. and Social Studies*, Vol. 4, (July-Dec. 1961), p. 116].

22. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847, Encl., W. Morris—[Tennent], 30 March 1847.

CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl. 1, *Correspondence on the Condition of Malabar Coolies in Ceylon*, No. 8, W. C. Twynam, [G. A. Jaffna]—Col. Sec. n.d. p. 15.

23. CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 6, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl. 1, *Correspondence on the Condition of Malabar Coolies in Ceylon*, No. 8, W. C. Twynam, [G. A., Jaffna]—Col. Sec., n.d., pp. 15-17.

CO 54/367, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 43, 27 Feb. 1862.

24. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847.

25. William Boyd, "Ceylon and its Pioneers", *Ceylon Literary Register*, First Series, Vol. 11 (1888), p. 296.

CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847; and the enclosures —letters from Colepepper, Walker, Waring, W. Morris, C. H. De Saram—all officials in the Kandyan Provinces [There is a possibility that the case was slightly overdrawn in that they would have been most guided by the picture within the year preceding—a year in which cholera took heavy toll. Strange to say, none of these letters took cognisance of this factor].

26. *Ibid, Encl.*, J. S. Colepepper [Superintendent of Police, Kandy]—Col. Sec., 18 Jan. 1847.

27. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847.

CO 54/252, Torrington—Earl Grey, No. 221, 11 Dec. 1848. See K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy*, (London, 1965), pp. 247-48, 250-53, for a fuller description of conditions on the estates in the 1840's. All this is no matter for surprise given factory conditions in contemporary England. Cf. also the irregularity of payment of wages to Indians in Mauritius. [Miss I. M. Cumpston, *Indians Overseas in British Territories* 1834-53, (London, 1953), pp. 90-91.]

28. K. M. De Silva, "Indian immigration to Ceylon 1840-1855," *op. cit.*, p. 129.

29. K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy*, (London, 1965), pp. 236-37, 243.
CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April, 1847.

30. *Idem.*

31. CO 54/240, Torrington—Earl Grey, No. 155, 12 Nov. 1847.

32. *Ceylon Times*, 10 March 1856.

Colombo Observer, 17 April 1856; R. Power, [G. A., Central Province] had apparently advocated the importation of Chinese.

33. *Idem.;* The Observer opposed the idea: "Nothing but moral and material disaster could follow".

34. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847. *Reports on the Finance and Commerce of Ceylon* [hereafter R. F. C.]. Report of a Committee appointed for the Review and Consideration of the Colonial Reports on the Finance and Commerce of the Island of Ceylon received from Sir C. Campbell, 13 April 1847 [hereafter cited as C. O. Committee Report]. They probably picked the idea up from Tennent's Report on the Finance and Commerce of Ceylon, 22 Oct. 1846.

35. CO 54/241, Elliot and C. A. Wood—James Stephen, 27 July 1847; and draft, Earl Grey—Torrington, No. 67, 7 Aug. 1847, T. F. Elliot was on the Emigration Board from 1840-47 and then transferred to the Permanent Assistant Undersecretaryship in the Colonial Office. W. H. C. Murdoch and C. A. Wood were Emigration Commissioners for a long time and so was Frederic Rogers from 1846-1860 before he became the Permanent head of the Colonial Office (1860-1871) succeeding Merivale (1847-1860) who had followed Stephen.

36. J. M. Cumpston, *Indians Overseas in British Territories*, 1934-54, (London, 1953), p. 113, India House and the Mauritius Council opposed the suggestion as being contrary "to all the habits and customs of the people". They, at least, were far more grounded in realism than the authorities in Ceylon.

37. CO 54/241, Elliot and Wood—Stephen, 27 July 1847, draft, Earl Grey —Torrington, No. 67, 7 Aug. 1847. [For a fuller treatment of the ideas of settlement see K. M. De Silva, "Indian immigration to Ceylon, 1840-1855", *op. cit.*, pp. 123-27. Grey even suggested that Chinese could be settled but Torrington, after investigation, reported against it; p. 127. In late 1848 Tennent gave "a diabolical twist" to this idea by suggesting that lands confiscated from the Kandyan rebels should be utilised for this purpose; p. 130].

38. One cannot, therefore, agree that their ideas "were not designed to benefit the plantations" though wholeheartedly agreeing that they were "unrealistic". [K. M. De Silva, *Ibid.*, p. 130]—a criticism which applies to Tennent's ideas in this sphere as well.

39. K. M. De Silva, "Indian Immigration to Ceylon 1840-1855", *op. cit.*, p. 131. He stresses that the rebellion underlined the political risk of such a step for in the autopsy on this event conducted in London several witnesses pointed out that the Kandyans disliked the immigrants, and for this reason it was "quietly but permanently shelved". Certainly, 1848 shocked both London and Colombo sufficiently to temper former innovationist ideas [M. W. Roberts, Some Aspects of Economic and Social Policy in Ceylon 1840-1871, (Oxford 1965) D.Phil., History, pp. 32-33].

40. *Ceylon Times*, 23 Oct. 1866, [John Capper was the editor].

41. K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy*, (London, 1965), pp. 237-38.

42. *Idem*, [However the Chamber of Commerce opposed this idea in 1848 *The Examiner*, 12 Jan. 1856; so did the *Colombo Observer* in later years— *Overland Observer*, 17 Jan. 1856].

43. Thus in 1847 the planters breathed fire and water on Tennent [CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 7, 21 April 1835], while in the 1870's they opposed Gregory's Medical Aid Ordinance [Vandendriesen, "History of the Coffee Industry in Ceylon" pp. 290-92]. Also see [R. W. Jenkins], *Ceylon in the Fifties and Eighties*, (Colombo, 1886), p. 71.

44. K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy*, (London, 1965), p. 238.

45. CO 54/438, Torrington—Grey, Confidential, 16 Aug. 1847, Encl., Wodehouse—Tennent, Confidential, 6 March 1846, Emphasis added. [It is noticeable that his reasoning on this point was similar to that influencing Ward in 1857-58 and it would seem that the idea was passed down the official grape-vine. The reference to the Railway was in connection with the projected Ceylon Railway Company which even completed a trace from Colombo to Kandy (by Thomas Drane) in 1846. The project came to grief with the depression of 1847-48].

46. K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy*, (London, 1965), App. VI, pp. 297-298. In February 1845 the Civil Servants were ordered to sell all their lands in

Ceylon but on the Governor's representations the Secretary of State, Stanley, agreed to allow all land purchased before 1 February 1845 to remain as their possessions as lnog as they did not supervise its cultivation [L. Mills, *Ceylon under British Rule,* 1795-1932, (London, 1933), pp. 77-78]. Wodehouse remained a proprietor even in 1857 [*The Ceylon Almanac and Annual Register,* (Colombo, 1857), pp. 468-75).

47. CO 54/238, Torrington—Grey, Confidential, 16 Aug. 1847, Encl., Wodehouse—Tennent, Confidential, 6 March 1846.

48. K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy,* (London, 1965), pp. 243-46. The immigrant arrivals in 1844 and 1845 were 74,840 and 72,526 respectively, but in 1846 were only 41,862. (These statistics are very unreliable but are sufficient for comparative purposes.) Figures from Vandendriesen, *op. cit.,* p. 134.

49. CO 54/227, Campbell—Earl Grey, No. 72, 11 Nov. 1846; and Encl. The Memorial of the Planters, Traders, and other European and Native residents in Kandy and its neighbourhood interested in an extensive immigration of Indian Labourers into the Island of Ceylon, n.d.

50. CO 54/227, Campbell—Earl Grey, No. 72, 11 Nov. 1846; and Encl Col. Sec. [Tennent]—S. Butler, 11 Nov. 1846. Campbell also stated that he had "not considered it to be the province of the Government to take any active part either in inviting or promoting the transit from India to Ceylon".

51. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April, 1847.

Ibid, Printed Encl., Wodehouse, Saunders, Smith — [Governor] Campbell, 9 Dec. 1846.

Tennent's despatch mentions this draft and one's natural assumption would be that it was tabled by the unofficial Councillors (representing the commercial sector), as Dr. K. M. De Silva does assume [*op. cit.,* p. 244] but the enclosure above reveals that officials had a hand in it.

52. *Idem.*

53. *Idem.* The Ordinance itself is not enclosed and one has to cull its contents from what is said of it in the letter. The idea of a separate body to administer these responsibilities was also a feature of Ward's scheme of 1858.

54. K. M. De Silva, "Some Aspects of the Development of Social Policy in Ceylon 1840-1855, with special emphasis on the influence of missionary organisations," Ph.D. thesis, (London, 1961), p. 473.

55. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847.

56. K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy,* (London, 1965), p. 253.

57. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847.

58. *R. F. C.,* C.O. Committee Report, 13 April 1847.

59. CO 54/235, Tennent—Grey, No. 7, 21 April 1847. "I consider that the charges of their immigration and maintenance are the proper concern of those at whose special invitation and for whose special advantage they resort to this island."

60. CO 54/241, Elliott and Wood—Stephen, 27 July 1847, Draft, Earl Grey—Torrington, 67, 7 Aug. 1847. The Emigration Commissioners too were against this step.

61. K. M. De Silva, Development of Social Policy in Ceylon, 1840-1855, (London, 1961), Ph.D. History, p. 455.

62. *Ibid*, p. 454.

63. CO 54/476, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, 4 May 1872, Private letter, Henry Taylor—Robert Meade, 9 July 1872.

64. CO 54/241, Elliott and Wood—Stephen, 27 July 1847.

65. *Ibid*, Draft, Earl Grey—Torrington, No. 67, 7 Aug. 1847.

66. See also *Governor's Addresses*, Vol. I, Torrington, 30 Aug. 1947 p. 209 and Vandendriesen, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-207, 210.

67. K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy*, (London, 1965), p. 258.

68. CO 54/261, Torrington—Earl Grey, No. 163, 15 Nov. 1849.

69. *B. P. P.*, Reports from Committees, Vol. XII, (1850); and Vol. VIII, (1855), *passim*. This eventually led to his recall.

70. The export duty on coffee was even repealed in 1848 to aid the planters.

71. Dr. K. M. De Silva comes to a similar conclusion [*Social Policy* (London, 1965), pp. 246-52]. In assigning the shortage of labour in 1846 largely to ill-treatment by the planters, Tennent remained totally blind to the impact of the cholera epidemic of 1845-46 which, one can reasonably suppose, had a retarding influence on the normal influx in the middle of 1846 among a people so partial to rumour. The great influx of immigrants, amounting to a surpluus, in 1847 also belies the degree of importance attached to the influence of ill-treatment in the year 1846.

72. CO 54/235, Tennent—Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847, Encl. 12, Col. Sec. —G. A. Bushby, Sec. to the Govt. of India, No. 8, 29 March 1847.

73. K. M. De Silva takes the same view [*Social Policy*, (London, 1965) pp. 248-49, 253] but Vandendriesen challenges this view [" 'Indian immigration to Ceylon; the first phase, c. 1840-1855'—A Comment" *The Cey. Jour. of Hist. and Social Studies*, Vol. 7, (July-Dec., 1964), pp. 218-29]. One set of figures pertained to expenditure on what were styled as "institutions exclusively used by the immigrants" but this only amounted to £2794-17-11¼ for the years 1843-46 inclusive. £9035-14-7½ was spent in the same period on "institutions" used both by immigrants and "natives" but these figures are inadequate—roughly £5266 was on "Small Pox hospitals" and £1109 on Pauper Hospitals and their exact locations are not given; from another angle about £6000 of this sum can be attributed to the Western, Southern and Eastern Provinces (at an arbitrary guess subtracting £1000 from the Western Province for the years 1843-1844 when the North-Western Province had not been hived off) where few immigrants were found at this time. The Northern Province included the Jaffna Peninsula and other districts generally outside the immigrants' range. "Institutions" used by both "natives" and immigrants is a vague concept in any event.

74. CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871. Encl. 1, *Correspondence on the Condition of Malabar Coolies in Ceylon*, No. 8, W. C. Twynam [G. A., Northern Province]—Col. Sec. n.d. [1869-70], pp. 15-16. Twynam was A. G. A., Puttalum 1845-50; A. G. A., Jaffna 1850-56; A. G. A.,

Mannar 1856-58.

CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847.

75. *Ibid,* Enclosures [Letters from Morris, Colepepper and Walker], Vandendriesen [*op. cit*] follows this view.

76. CO 54/227, Campbell—Earl Grey, No. 72, 11 Nov. 1846, Encl., The Memorial of the Planters, Traders and others European and Native residents of Kandy.....n.d.

CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1858.

77. Millie, *Thirty Years Ago,* (Colombo, 1878), Chapter XIV, no pagination.

78. CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl. 1, *Correspondence on the Condition of Malabar Coolies in Ceylon,* No. 8, Twynam—Col. Sec., n.d. [1869-70], p. 15.

79. A. M. Ferguson, *The Ceylon Directory for* 1866-68, (Colombo 1868), pp. 178-83.

The Examiner, 19 June 1852, "On Coffee Planting in Ceylon", C. R. Rigg, p. 389.

80. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847.

81. CO 54/227, Campbell—Earl Grey, No. 72, 11 Nov. 1846; and Encl., Col. Sec. [Tennent]—S. Butler [a leading merchant], 11 Nov. 1846.

82. CO 54/235, Tennent—Earl Grey, No. 6, 21 April 1847.

83. K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy,* (London, 1965), pp. 265-69.

84. CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl., 1, *op. cit.,* pp. 15-16.

85. CO 54/309, Anderson—Earl Grey, No. 60, 25 Oct. 1854, Encl. 3. Return by Dyke [G. A., Northern Province, on the actual expenditure on sheds, on payment of Watchers and on aid to the destitute in the districts of Mannar and Nuwarakalawiya] 20 June 1854. [This excludes the Matale portion of the journey].

86. C. G. A., *Colombo Observer,* 28 May 1857. Remarks on [W. A. Swan's report on the state of the "Cooly Route"], 17 April 1857, [by the editor].

See also CO 59/9, *Ceylon Times,* 5 Dec. 1854, Memoranda by Mr. Gordon [a planter].

87. CO 54/309, Anderson—Earl Grey, No. 60, 25 Oct. 1854, Encl., G. Pride—The Secretary of State for the Colonies, 9 Oct. 1854.

Ceylon Times, 13 Oct. 1854, Report on a "Public Meeting in Kandy" held on the 7th October.

88. CO 54/309, Anderson—Earl Grey, No. 60, 25 Oct. 1854.

89. This subject is dealt with in detail in my "Observations on Mortality Computations" which is due to appear in a forthcoming issue of *The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies,* Vol. 8, No. 2 (1966).

90. Millie, *Thirty Years Ago,* (Colombo, 1878), Chapter III.

91. Vandendriesen, *op. cit.*, p. 226. A similar view in K. M. De Silva, *Social Policy*, (London, 1965), pp. 264-65.

92. CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1958.

93. CO 54/238, Torrington—Earl Grey, Confidential, 26 Aug. 1847, Encl., Wodehouse—Tennent, Confidential, 6 March 1846.

94. *Infra*, p. 98.

95. CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1858.

96. *Idem.*

97. *Ceylon Times*, 6 July 1855, Col. Sec.—The Secretary of the Planters' Association, 4 June 1855.

S. V. Balasingham, The Administration of Sir H. G. Ward—Governor of Ceylon 1855-60, (London, 1954), M.A. History, p. 100.

98. CO 54/324, Ward—Labouchere, No. 235, 12 Dec. 1856. 1859 *Blue Book Reports*, Ward—Newcastle, 20 15 June 1860., Encl., Return of Some of the principal Public works....1855-60; and Return of Hospitals built....1855-60. [Part of the latter figure came from the money voted in 1855].

99. *Colombo Observer*, 28 May 1857, Remarks on W. A. Swan's [Report on the state of the Cooly Route], 17 May 1857.

100. *Ibid*, Extracts from W. A. Swan's Report, 17 May 1857.

101. Ceylon Government Archives [hereafter C.G.A.], Lot 41/163, Flanderka [A.G.A., Anuradhapura]—Dyke [G.A., Northern Province], No. 47, of 24 April 1856 and No. 128 of July 1856.

102. *Colombo Observer*, 15 June 1857, Letter from P. Canacaseppa [a Kangany]—[his employer, a planter in Matale East, reporting on conditions on the North Road, having been despatched for that purpose], 30 May 1857.

103. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson [Secretary to Immigration Commission] —Col. Sec., No. 2030, 18 May 1861, Encl. [Report on the North Road] by Captain Graham [Agent of the Commission], 17 April 1861.

104. CO 54/331, Ward—Labouchere, No. 205, 12 Nov. 1857.

Vandendriesen, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-49. [The Immigration Commission set up in 1858 had a hand in some of this legislation in that they brought it up—C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Minutes of Proceedings [17 Jan. 1859?]; and letter to Col. Sec., 5 April 1859].

105. *Colombo Observer*, 15 June 1857, Letter from P. Canacaseppa—[his employer, a planter], 30 May 1857.

106. Balasingham, The Administration of Sir H. G. Ward, Governor of Ceylon, 1855-60, (London, 1954), M.A. History, pp. 111-112 quoting Ward.

107. CO 54/351, Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 44, 5 March 1860.

108. *Idem.*

109. *Ibid.*, Encl. 2, *Minute by Ward*, 5 March 1860.

110. *Infra*, pp. 49-53, 58-59.

111. CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1858.

112. CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871.

113. CO 54/327, Corbet—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere. 27 Oct. 1856. But Dr. Elliott placed it as 160,000 at crop time on the basis of 2 labourers per acre —C.G.A., *Colombo Observer,* 4 May 1857, Report on Public Meeting held at the Chamber of Commerce, Colombo, 2 May 1857.

114. *Colombo Observer,* 3 April 1856, A "Paper" by MacClenna.

115. *Ibid.,* 17 April 1856, Letter to Editor from "W.C."; and 7 July 1856, Two letters to the editor.

116. *Ibid.,* 3 April 1856.

117. *Overland Observer,* 17 Jan. 1856.

118. *Colombo Observer,* 28 April 1856; Also see Letter to Editor from "B. W."

119. *Ibid.,* Report of Meeting of the Planters' Association, 2 June 1856; 27 Nov. 1856, Report of Sub-Committee of the Planters' Association appointed in May on the Labour question.

But in March 1857 they were advertising for an Agent on the Coast *Colombo Observer,* 19 March 1857.

120. Millie, *Thirty Years Ago,* (Colombo, 1878), Chapter III.

121. *Colombo Observer,* 19 Jan. 1857, Letter from "W.S." [a planter in Hewaheta] dated 9 January.

Ibid., 29 Jan. 1857, Letter from [a planter in Ambagamuwa].

122. *Colombo Observer,* 15 Jan. 1856.

123. *Colombo Observer,* 3 April 1856, A "Paper" by MacClennan.

Ceylon Times, 20 March 1856.

124. CO 54/321, Corbet—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere, 27 Oct. 1856.

CO 54/324, Ward—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere, No. 226, 29 Nov. 1856. Corbet had been resident in Ceylon either as a planter or merchant.

125. *Idem.*

126. C.O. 54/324, Ward—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere, No. 234, 12 Dec. 1856.

127. *Colombo Observer,* 1 June 1857, Report on a General Meeting in London [of the Ceylon Cooly Transport and Steam Navigation Company] 17 April 1857.

128. *Ibid.,* Report of a Public Meeting held at the Chamber of Commerce, Colombo on the 2nd of May, [George Wall's speech as reported].

129. *Governors Addresses,* Vol. I, Ward, 19 Nov. 1857, pp. 399-400.

130. CO 54/340, Ceylon Railway Company—Merivale, No. 35, 16 Sept. 1858, Encl., Doyne—Ward, 21 Jan. 1858. *Colombo,* 15 Jan. 1857.

131. CO 54/329, Ward—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere. No. 112, 23 June 1857,

132. *Governor's Addresses,* Vol. I. Ward, 19 Nov. 1857, pp. 399-400.

133. *Idem.*

134. CO 54/327, Ward—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere, No. 10, 15 Jan. 1857; and Encl., T. Skinner, Commissioner of Roads—Col. Sec., 28 Nov. 1856.

CO 54/329, Ward—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere, No. 112, 23 June 1857.

135. *Governor's Addresses,* Vol. I, 19 Nov. 1857, pp. 399-400.

136. *Idem;* See also Co 54/331, Ward—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere, No. 241, 29 Dec. 1857.

137. For e.g. CO 54/331, Ward—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere, No. 203, 11 Nov. 1857, Encl., Cutting from the *Colombo Observer,* with a report on proceedings in the Legislative Council.

138. *Colombo Observer,* 1857, *passim.;* for e.g.—"The Labour question is actually becoming one of life and death to us" [6 April 1857. Letter to Editor from "Old Caledonian"]; See also 20 April 1857. Letter to Editor from "L.M.E." and the editorial, 29 Jan. 1857.

139. CO 54/331, Ward—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere, No. 241, 29 Dec. 1857.

140. CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 Feb. 1858. This was around December 1857 [CO 54/331, Ward—Labouchere, No. 241, 29 Dec. 1857.] Doyne too considered the leading men in the commercial sector quite intractable and impractical. [CO 54/340, Ceylon Railway Company—Merivale, No. 35, 16 Sept. 1858, Encl., Doyne—Ward, 21 Jan. 1858].

141. CO 54/331, Ward—Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere, No. 241, 29 Dec. 1857. CO 54/337, Ward—Sir E. B. Lytton, No. 131, 15 Nov. 1858.

142. CO 54/340, Private letter, Ward—[Lord Stanley?] 14 April 1858. Enclosed with Ceylon Railway Company letters under heading Miscellaneous Offices.

143. CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1858.

Ibid., Encl., Memo by Doyne on "The Supply of Labour to Ceylon", 12 May 1858.

Ibid., Encl., Ward—The Chairman, Planters' Association, 25 May 1858.

144. *Idem.*

145. CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1858; *and* Encl., Ward—The Chairman, Planters' Association 25 May 1858. Government provided £10,000 (the 1857 vote subsidising the Cooly Conveyance Company being transferred) and the Railway Company agreed to loan £10,000 without interest C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Immigration Commission's Report for the Half-year, 1859.

146. CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1858, Encl., Ward—The Chairman, Planters' Association, 25 May 1858.

147. *Governor's Addresses,* Vol. I, Ward, 8 Dec. 1858, p. 429.

148. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Immigration Commission's Report for the Half-Year, 1859.

149. CO 45/337, Ward—Sir E. B. Lytton, No. 131, 15 Nov. 1858.

150. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Immigration Commission's Report for the Half-Year, 1859.

151. *Idem.*

152. CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1858, Encl., Ward—The Chairman, Planters' Association, 25 May 1858.

153. CO 54/337, Ward—Sir E. B. Lytton, No. 131, 15 Nov. 1858. Also see C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, MacCarthy [Col. Sec.]—Chief Secretary to the Government, Bengal, 31 Jan. 1859.

154. P. Naguleswaran, "History of the Working Class Movement in Ceylon," *Ceylon Historical Journal,* Vol. I, (1952), p. 236. Also see *Governor's Addresses,* Vol. I, Ward, 28 July 1858, p. 417.

155. CO 54/339, Murdoch—Merivale, 9 Aug. 1858.

CO 54/348, Murdoch—Merivale, 28 Feb. 1859.

156. CO 54/337, Ward—Sir E. B. Lytton, No. 131, 15 Nov. 1858.

157. CO 54/334. Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1858, Memo by Strachey, 22 Oct. 1858; and Draft (by Strachey) Sir E. B. Lytton—Ward, No. 88, 29 Oct. 1858. See also Minute by Carnarvon. 27 July 1858 and CO 54/339. Murdoch—Merivale 9 Aug. 1858. [Note that the Jamaica Immigration Ordinance came before the Colonial Office late in 1858 and was rejected by the Colonial Office in the shape it was sent, while Carnarvon wrote numerous memos on Chinese Immigration, "French importation of Labourers" "Slave Trade" etc. between April and June 1858 in particular; Carnarvon MSS, PRO 30|6|132 and 133].

158. CO 54/356, Murdoch—Rogers [now Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies], 31 May 1860, Minute by Strachey. Strachey was the "Precis Writer" in The Colonial Office from 1848-1870 and in practice assumed the role of Financial Adviser. Since he had served in the East India Company he was consulted on many matters concerning peculiarly local situations in Ceylon.

159. CO 54/356, Murdoch—Rogers [now Permanent Under-Secretary of State], 31 May 1860, Minute by Strachey, 4 July 1860. But Carnarvon was for it [CO 54/348, Murdoch v Rogers—Merivale, 28 Feb. 1859, Minute by Carnarvon, 8 March 1859] CO/343, Ward—Lytton, No. 88, 27 April 1859, Minute by Strachey, 14 June 1859.

160. 1858 *Blue Book Reports,* Ward—Sir E. B. Lytton, No. 135, 4 July 1859, p. 102. [Ward used all his persuasive powers to the full pointing out that "singular unanimity" in Ceylon with regard to the need for such a scheme [CO 54/337, Private letter, Ward—Sir E. B. Lytton, 161, 9 Dec. 1858]; that Lord Harris in India had no objection considering it rather "as a safety valve for the population of the Madras Presidentcy" [CO 54/443, Private letter Ward—Sir E. B. Lytton, 14 Jan. 1859 enclosed among despatches] and arguing: "It is the Planter's Bill, not mine and as they tax themselves to carry it out, they will not see why the permission to do so should be refused by the Queen's Government." *Ibid.,* Private letter, Ward—Lytton, 29 Jan. 1859.]

161. CO 54/338, Ward—Sir E. B. Lytton, No. 161, 9 Dec. 1859, Draft [by Strachey], Sir E. B. Lytton—Ward, No. 83, 9 June 1859. See also CO 54/346, Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 84, 27 Oct. 1859, Minute by Strachey, 10 Dec. 1859.

162. CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1858, Encl., Memo by Doyne on the Supply of Labour to Ceylon, 13 May 1858; and Encl. Ward—The Chairman, Planters' Association. 25 May 1858.

163. "Time is now of the greatest importance to the Colony" [CO 54/334, Ward—Lord Stanley, No. 35, 27 May 1858].

164. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Minutes of the Commission, 25 March 1859; and Secretary to the Commission [Dawson]—George Wall, 26 July 1859. [Wall had been the planting representative on the Commission before he left on leave]. CO 54/348, [Letters from the Admiralty].

165. CO 54/343, Ward—Sir E. B. Lytton, No. 88, 27 April 1859. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Minutes of the Commission, 6[?] Jan. 1859. [In 1859 the item "Cost of Steam Vessels" was listed as £6,490 17s. 1d. by the Commission]. [C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 1931, 21 Nov| 1860, Encl.].

166. The loss on its working for August—September 1859 was £2,651 9s. 0d. [*Ibid.*, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 327, 14 Oct. 1859] while in 1859 the "Expenses due to Steam Vessels" amounted to £6,238 13s. 5d., [*Ibid.*, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 1831, 21 Nov. 1860, Encl.).

167. CO 54/351, Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 54, 15 March 1860. Repairs were estimated at £7,000 which was more than it cost on purchase. The ship was out of action by February 1860 at least. [C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Minutes of a meeting of the Commission, 12 April 1860].

168. CO 54/346, Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 55, 16 Sept. 1859.

169. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 327, 14 Oct. 1859. The gunboat "Insolent" was also used for a while [CO 54/345. Ward—Newcastle, 43. 29 Aug. 1859].

170. CO 54/346, Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 84, 27 Oct. 1859.

171. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—George Wall, 24 Aug. 1859 (attached to Dawson—Col. Sec. No. 128. 24 July 1859).

172. *Idem.*

CO 54/345, Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 43, 29 Aug. 1859.

173. Newcastle MSS., Folio 10, 982, Ward—Duke of Newcastle, 15 Jan. 1860; and Folio 10, 983, 14 Feb. 1860.

174. CO 54/351, Ward—Newcastle, No. 3, 13 Jan. 1860, Minute by Strachey, 28 Feb. 1860.

175. CO 54/356, Emigration Commissioners—Merivale, 22 March 1860, Minute by Strachey, 29 March 1860. The Duke of Newcastle expressed doubt about Strachey's point [Minute, 31 March 1860] but it is true that the influx of labour was one-third short of the normal.

176. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, McMinns—Col. Sec., No. 1971, 14 Dec. 1860, Encl., Report of the Immigration Labour Commission for the first quarter of 1860; and [copy of resolutions agreed on at the meeting held on Kandy on the 2nd March at which several planters were present].

177. CO 54/345, Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 43, 29 Aug. 1859 Draft (by Elliott), Duke of Newcastle—Ward, No. 21, 11 Feb. 1860.

178. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 257, 23 Sept. 1859.

179. CO 54/351, Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 3, 13 Jan. 1860; and Enclosures.

[See my article on "The Master-Servant Laws of 1841 and the 1860's and Immigrant Labour" in *The Cey. Jour. of Hist. and Social Studies,* Vol. 8, No. 1, (1966) for further details].

180. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—Captain Graham, No. 976, 6 March 1860. Having done much spadework in the South, Graham was rather opposed to this. He disobeyed orders, turned up in Colombo, and was sharply taken to task [*Ibid.,* Minutes of a meeting of the Commission, 12 April 1860; and Dawson—Col. Sec. 1625 and 1629 of 23 and 29 June 1860 respectively].

181. CO 54/351, Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 3, 13 Jan. 1860, Minute by Strachey, 28 Feb. 1860.

182. *Ibid.,* Draft, Newcastle—Under-Secretary of State for India, 11 April 1860.

CO 54/356, Emigration Commissioners'—Merivale, 22 March 1860.

183. *Ibid.,* India Office—[Rogers, the new Under Secretary of State for Colonies] 14 May 1860; and Encl., J. J. Franklin [Protector of Immigrants]—Chief Sec., Fort St. George, 30 Nov. 1859; and T. Pycroft [Chief Secretary, Madras]—Col. Sec., Ceylon, 16 Dec. 1859.

CO 54/351, Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 3, 13 Jan. 1860, Draft; Duke of Newcastle—Ward, No. 91, 7 June 1860.

184. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 650, 7 Feb. 1860; and Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 1426, 28 April 1860, Minute by [James Swan, an Assistant to the Colonial Secretary].

185. CO 54/356, Murdoch [Emigration Commissioner]—Rogers, 31 May 1860, Minute by Strachey, 4 July 1860.

186. *Idem.*

187. CO 57/29, Executive Council Minutes, 20 May 1860.

CO 54/363, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 212, 30 Oct. 1861.

188. *Idem;* and Enc., Col. Sec.—The Secretary, Planters' Association, 15 Oct. 1861.

189. *Idem.* But by August 1860 the order for the construction of ships had been suspended [CO 54/357, MacCarthy (in England)—(Rogers), 3 Aug. 1860]. while the services of the Agent in India had been discontinued by October [C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 1881, 20 Oct. 1860]. Cf. Burma, where Government sought to import Indian labour but eventually gave it up in 1876 because they failed in their efforts and because they conceived private enterprise could undertake the task more effectively [J. S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice,* (New York, 1956) p. 89].

190. CO 54/363, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 212, 30 Oct. 1861.

191. 1859*Blue Book Reports,* Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 20, 15 June 1860, p. 138.

192. CO 54/356, Murdoch—Rogers, 31 May 1860, Minute by Strachey "This is a subject of very great financial importance....an expensive failure".

CO 54/363, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 212, 30 Oct. 1861; and Encl. 2, Col. Sec.—The Secretary, Planters' Association, 15 Oct. 1861.

Remarking that the Commission were hardly fair in the way they had dismissed Graham, Bailey (Assistant Col. Sec.) wrote :

> "In the last sentence lies the gist of the whole affair—the Commissioners & Planters are of opinion—very likely quite correctly—that they will get quite as many coolies without an agent at £1,000 an year [and Graham's dismissal] will relieve them of so much of the Tax." [C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 1881, 20 Oct. 1860, Minute by Bailey, 24 Oct. 1860].

193. CO 54/363, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 212, 30 Oct. 1861.

As Ward penned: "there can be no doubt that the large proceeds of the tax (£20,000) entitle all who contribute to it to expect large results" [1859 *Blue Book Reports,* Ward—Duke of Newcastle, No. 20, 15 June 1860, p. 138]. The tax referred to was the capitation tax falling largely on planters—£20,000 an year being the proceeds.

194. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, The Commissioners—Col. Sec. 21 July 1859, Encl., Advertisement Notice.

Ibid, Minutes of a meeting of the Commission, 30 Aug. 1859. The "native vessels" at Mannar charged 1s per head for a shorter crossing but it was "well-known" that as much as 4s per head [had] been demanded [when] the coolies [were at sea"]. [C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 2030, 18 May 1861, Encl., [Report on the North Road by] Captain Graham, 17 April 1861].

195. Vandendrieson, History of the Coffee Industry 1823-85, (London, 1954) Ph.D., Economic History, pp. 239-41.

196. C.G.A. Lot 6/2644 [Enclosed in volume, an undated (probably 1860) memorandum by someone in the Col. Sec.'s Office, Colombo. It was possibly John Bailey]. See also *Ibid,* Capt. Graham—Dawson, 2 Feb. 1860.

197. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644 [Undated (1860?) memo by? Bailey?].

CO 54/369, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 87, 24 April 1861, Encl. in Encl., Secretary to the Government of India—Chief Secretary, Fort St. George, 31 March 1862.

198. A contemporary journalist implied that the main cause of failure lay in the "inexperience and unfitness of its Indian Manager [i.e. Captain Graham]" [*Ceylon Times,* 29 Sept. 1863]. The reasoning is ridiculous. Even if Graham had signed on enough immigrants, there were no steamships to bring them to Colombo.

199. CO 54/365, Murdoch—Rogers, 23 Dec. 1861, Minute by Cox [a senior clerk], n.d. "Sir C. MacCarthy was always opposed to it [the immigration scheme]".

200. CO 54/363, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 212, 30 Oct. 1861.

201. *Idem.*

202. Newcastle MSS, folio 10, 998, MacCarthy—The Duke of Newcastle, 18 May 1863.

M. W. Roberts, Some Aspects of Economic and Social Policy in Ceylon 1840-1871, (Oxford, 1965) D.Phil., History, p. 41.

203. CO 54/363, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 212, 30 Oct. 1861, Encl. 2, Col. Sec.,—The Secretary, Planters' Association, 15 Oct., 1861.

204. CO 57/29, Executive Council Minutes, 24 June 1861.

CO 54/380, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 171, 30 Sept. 1863.

205. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 2057, 3 June 1861.

206. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 2044, 20 May 1861, Memo by J. S. James Swan, 6 June 1861.

Ibid, Minutes of a meeting of Commission, 7 June 1861.

207. CO 57/29 and 31, Executive Council Minutes 24 June 1861, 3 Dec. 1861 and 19 July 1862.

C.G.A., Lot 41/174, R. Morris [A.G.A. Nuwarakalawiya]—G.A. Northern Province, No. 107, 11 Dec. 1861, and No. 1, 6 Jan. 1862.

208. P. Naguleswaran, "History of the Working Class Movement in Ceylon", *Cey. Historical Journal,* Vol. I, (1952) p. 238.

209. CO 54/365, Murdoch—Rogers, 23 Dec. 1861.

210. *Ibid,* Minute by Rogers, 4 Jan. 1862.
Ibid. Draft [by Murdoch], Duke of Newcastle—MacCarthy, No. 10, 12 Jan. 1862.

211. CO 54/372, Murdoch—Rogers, 24 April 1862.

CO 54/367, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 43, 27 Feb. 1862, Draft, Duke of Newcastle—MacCarthy, No. 69, 9 May 1862.

212. CO 54/367, MacCarthy — Duke of Newcastle, No. 43, 27 Feb. 1862.
CO 54/370, „ „ „ No. 172, 30 Aug. 1862.

213. 1863 *Blue Book Reports,* O'Brien—Rt. Hon. E. Cardwell, No. 197, 30 Aug. 1864, Encl., [1863 Administrative Report, Jaffna District and Northern Province], Dyke, 12 May 1864, p. 138.

214. CO 54/370, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 172, 30 Aug. 1862.

215. C.G.A., Lot 6/2644, Dawson—Col. Sec., No. 2097, 23 Aug. 1861.

216. CO 54/370, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 172, 30 Aug. 1862.

217. *S.P.I. of* 1865, Notes on Tours of Inspection of Ceylon; Northern Province, Major-General O'Brien, n.d. [Feb. 1865], p. 5.

218. 1867 *Administrative Reports,* Mannar, W. C. Turynam [A.G.A.], 17 Jan. 1868, App. F., p. 93.

219. 1864 *Blue Book Reports,* Robinson—Rt. Hon. E. Cardwell, No. 134, 16 Sept. 1865, Encl., [1864 Administrative Report, Northern Province and Jaffna District], Dyke [G.A.], July 1865, p. 153.

220. CO 54/391, O'Brien—Rt. Hon. E. Cardwell, No. 150, 15 July 1864.
O'Brien, the Commander-in-Chief of the Troops in Ceylon, acted as Governor from 1 December 1863 to 31 March 1865.

221. CO 54/363, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 212, 30 Oct. 1861. *Ceylon Times,* 29 Sept. 1863; 21 July 1863.

222. *Colombo Observer,* 1 Feb. 1864; 6 June 1864; and 18 Feb. 1864 reporting on a meeting of the Planters' Association. Quite typically this body considered an Agency too costly and suggested that Government should carry it out—*Ceylon Times,* 3 Nov. 1863.

223. CO 54/414, Robinson—Earl of Carnarvon, No. 195, 6 Sept. 1866. Government was to sell the ship "Pearl" to this Company for £5,000.

224. CO 54/437, Lieut. General Hodgson—The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, No. 79, 2 Oct. 1868. Hodgson acted as Governor when Robinson went on leave.

225. CO 54/396, Walcott—T. F. Elliot, 8 Sept. 1864.

226. *Ibid.,* Minute by Elliot, 17 Sept. 1864. The "Pearl" needed repairs soon.

227. *Ibid,* Minute by Cardwell, 21 Sept. 1864.

228. CO 54/396, Walcott-Elliot, 8 Sept. 1864, Draft [by Cox with additions by Rogers], Colonial Office—Hamilton, 29 Sept. 1864.

229. *Colombo Observer,* 18 Jan. 1864; 20 March 1865.

230. *Ibid.,* 29 Sept. 1864; 20 July 1865; 29 Nov. 1866.
Ceylon Times, 19 Feb. 1867.
Ceylon Hansard, 1879, 10 Dec. 1869, R. B. Downall's speech, p. 128.

231. CO 54/492, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 7, 8 Jan. 1874.

232. CO 54/392, O'Brien—The Rt. Hon. E. Cardwell, No. 197, 30 Aug. 1864, Encl., Report of the Public Works Department for 1863, Major Skinner. He complained that labour imported from India at great cost was seduced away. The wages paid on the Railway were 1s. per day [C. 1202 "*Ceylon Times*" 10 July 1863.] Women and boys received 7½d. per day. According to Gibson in 1861 the "average rate of pay of an ordinary labourer and of the Pioneer force [was] but 7½d. a day" [CO 57/29, Executive Council Minutes, 27 Feb. 1861].

233. CO 54/404, Robinson—The Rt. Hon. E. Cardwell, No. 134, 16 Sept. 1865, Encl., Report of the Public Works Department for 1864. This was 50% more than that paid by Government.

CO 57/35, Executive Council Minutes, 29 Feb. 1864. Before raising the P.W.D. wages however, Government consulted the Planters' Association, and eventually decided against a general rise and opted for a batta system in special cases so as to equalise Government's wages with those paid on estates [*Ibid,* 29 Feb. 1864, and 7 May 1864].

234. CO 54/377, MacCarthy—Duke of Newcastle, No. 108, 8 July 1863.

CO 57/35, Executive Council Minutes, 29 Feb. 1864.

235. A. M. Ferguson, *The Ceylon Directory for* 1866-68 (Colombo 1868) Letter from "A Degenerated Superintendent", 21 June 1866.

CO 54/415, Robinson—Earl of Carnarvon, No. 228, 12 Oct. 1866.

236. *Infra,* p. 101.

Also see *Ceylon Times,* 10 July 1863. According to a planter [*Colombo Observer,* 22 Feb. 1866. Letter to editor from "An Old Planter", 5 Feb. 1866] "nothing show[ed] more truly the craft of the [Sinhalese] race than the fact that while the honest Tamils' pay [had] but slightly increased, the [Sinhalese artisans]

more than doubled theirs'."

237. 1869 *Administrative Reports*, Nuwarakalawiya, L. Liesching, A.G.A., 2 April 1870, p. 107.

239. 1870 *Administrative Reports*, Mannar, P. A. Templar, A.G.A., n.d. p. 102. He also pointed out that coolies returning from estates were healthier than those arriving. He cited the statistics of 1870 when of the 24 who caught cholera, of those returning the majority survived, of those on their way in, all succumbed.

240. 1872 *Administrative Reports*, Manner, Allanson Bailey, A.G.A., 19 June, 1873, p. 126.

Ibid, p. 106 for map.

CO 54/405, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl. in Encl. 1, Sketch maps of the route by J. D. Grinlinton, 23 Feb. 1871.

241. CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl. 1, *Correspondence on the Condition of Malabar Coolies in Ceylon*, No. 4, Russell [G.A. Central Province]—Col. Sec., 6 Dec. 1869, p. 12; and No. 8, Twynam [G.A. Northern Province]—Col. Sec., n.d., p. 17.

242. *Ibid*, No. 2, L. Liesching [A.G.A., Nuwarakalawiya] — Col. Sec., 11 Oct. 1869. See also 1870 *Administrative Reports*, Mannar, P. A. Templar, A.G.A., n.d., p. 102.

243. CO 54/448, Robinson—Earl of Granville, No. 176, 23 Dec. 1869.

CO 54/450, Murdoch—Rogers, 3 July 1869, which summarises Van Dort's report.

244. *Idem*.

245. CO 54/448, Robinson—Earl of Granville, No. 176, 23 Dec. 1869, Minute by E. Fairfield, 15 Dec. 1870. At this stage Fairfield, an Oxford Graduate, was a clerk, Third Class, in the Colonial Office.

246. CO 54/444, Lieut. General Hodgson—Earl of Granville, 10 April 1869, Minute by Rogers, 15 June 1869; and draft, Earl of Granville—Robinson, No. 115, 26 June 1869.

CO 55/117, Earl of Granville—Robinson, No. 130, 24 July 1869.

247. CO 54/456, Robinson—Earl of Granville, No. 149, 22 June 1870, Draft, Earl of Kimberley—Robinson, No. 49, 16 Sept. 1870.

248. CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, and Encl. 1, *Correspondence on the Condition of the Malabar Coolies in Ceylon, passim*.

249. *Ibid*, Minute by Fairfield, 22 April 1871.

250. CO 54/463, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Minute by Fairfield, 22 April 1871.

CO 54/470, Murdoch—Herbert, 26 May 1871 [Herbert had taken Rogers' place].

251. *Idem*. This view was oft-repeated by the Colonial Office in the next year or so.

252. CO 54/463, Robinson—Kimberley, No. 60, 28 Feb. 1871, Memo by Fairfield, 28 Feb. 1871. These figures were very approximate.

253. *Ibid,* Minute by Herbert, 2 May 1871.

254. CO 54/470, Murdoch—Herbert, 26 May 1871, Minute by Herbert, 6 June 1871.

255. *Ibid.,* Draft, Earl of Kimberley—Robinson, No. 138, 17 June 1871.

256. CO 54/468, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 289, 26 Nov. 1871.

257. CO 54/468, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 289, 26 Nov. 1871. The idea of medical aid seems to have originated with the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Charsley [*Ibid,* Encl. 2, Charsley—Col. Sec., No. 232, 6 June 1871].

258. CO 55/120, Earl of Kimberley—Gregory, No. 38, 15 Feb. 1872.

259. CO 54/468, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 289, 26 Nov. 1871, [Marginal comment in pencil—probably by Fairfield, who, in another marginal minute further down, sketched an idea for licensing the kanganies at the Indian ports], 20 Jan. 1872.

260. CO 54/475, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 30, 10 April 1872. Also see its enclosures.

CO/477, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 99, 9 July 1872.

261. *Ibid,* Minute by Meade, 11 Sept. 1872; and marginal comment by Kimberley. One is not certain whether his "recent experience" was with reference to Ceylon or some other colony. See also *Ibid,* Minutes by Henry Taylor, 22 Aug. 1872; by Fairfield, 7 Sept. 1872; and by Kimberley, 13 Sept. 1872.

262. CO 54/476, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 56, 4 May 1872, Minute by Fairfield, 4 July 1872. Henry Taylor, however, was not quite satisfied [Minute, 5 July 1871] while an year earlier Fairfield had commented: "when we complain of the mortality in these hospitals the doctors say it is the fault of the Planters; when we complain of the condition of the coolies, the Planters say it is the fault of the doctors, and between them we get little satisfaction."

[CO 54/465, Robinson—Earl of Kimberley, No. 159, 21 June 1871, Minute by Fairfield, 18 Aug. 1871].

263. CO 54/477, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 99, 9 July 1872, Draft, Earl of Kimberley—Gregory, No. 213, 1 Oct. 1872. This para. was inserted as an afterthought on Taylor's instigation. Several interesting minutes on this point can be found in the C.O. files of the time. See Vandendriesen, History of the Coffee Industry, *op. cit.,* p. 287. Vandendriesen agrees that the conclusions they drew from the hospital statistics were "erroneous" [p. 288].

264. CO 54/479, Gregory—Earl of Kimberley, No. 237, 14 Nov. 1872. This despatch also challenged the point made by the Colonial Office in their despatch of the 1st October and reiterated the fact that district hospitals served a large immigrant 'catchment' area. Gregory pointed to the hospitals on the North Road itself as a better guide: of the 748 cases treated in 1871, 38 or 5.8% had died, 11 of cholera.