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Sir P. Egerton M.P.
THE CASE OF CEYLON.

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THE CASE OF CEYLON.

CEYLON has protested by a memorial to the Queen against the irresponsible way in which their revenue of 1,000,000*l.* a-year is dealt with. The prayer of the people has been refused almost with contempt, and they now appeal to the public opinion of England.

Ceylon is the outwork of India. No words can better show its importance as a colony than those of that eminent colonial authority, Earl Grey, perhaps one of the greatest authorities on colonial matters in England. In a despatch addressed to Lord Torrington, then Governor of the island, in 1848, Lord Grey expresses himself thus : “ The great importance of that possession, the amplitude and variety of its native resources, the field it has opened to European capital and enterprise, its geographical position as the key of the Indian Ocean, and the great insular outpost of the British Empire in the East, its salubrious climate, its unrivalled harbour pointing it out as the great reserve station of our military and naval force in that quarter of the globe ; all these are considerations more than sufficient to invite the special attention of Her Majesty’s Government, and to induce me to leave untried no effort that could possibly be brought to bear to aid its development and disembarass its internal resources.”

It may be observed here that all that Ceylon demands is an adequate control through a Legislative Council, not elected, but *nominated by the Crown*, in the imposition and expenditure of its taxes, to the end that those taxes may be wisely laid, and liberally expended for the good of the island. Practically they ask no more than what clearly was in Lord Grey's mind in writing the despatch.

The revenues of the colony were in 1848 burdened by a heavy outlay on the fixed and the military establishments. Lord Grey desired that the former might be at once reviewed and remodelled, with a view to reducing the expense. The latter were to have been dealt with in a separate despatch, which Earl Grey, unfortunately for Ceylon, did not remain long enough in office to write.

The plan of reduction and reform thus contemplated was to be laid before the Legislative Council as, "*The most natural and impartial exponent of the enlightened public opinion of the colony,*" and in taking that step, the Secretary of State goes on to say, "*I am happy to avail myself of an opportunity of extending to that body a greater share of political and legislative power than they have hitherto enjoyed.*"

The despatch continues with reference to the council, "*I consider that the time is now come when it would be advisable to extend to the Legislative Council a control over the whole annual expenditure of the colony, instead of confining its power as hitherto to the contingent expenditure alone, a change for which the contemplated revision of the establishment seems to offer a convenient opportunity.*" And again, "*I have ascertained that the charges of the fixed establishments are paid with-*

“ out having been sanctioned by the Legislative Council upon the authority which has from time to time been given by the successive Secretaries of State for the different items of this expenditure. This arrangement I regard as highly irregular and objectionable. No part of the revenue of Ceylon is henceforward to be applied to any object whatever, except under the authority of the Legislative Council.” The Despatch thus concludes, “ I wish only to record thus formally in the outset my earnest desire for the immediate relief of the colony from the heavy burden of expenditure under which it labours, and my determination to carry out any measures for this purpose which may really tend to its social and financial prosperity.”

With Earl Grey, the people of Ceylon object specially to their expenditure being ordered from the Colonial Office, instead of being constitutionally voted by Council.

In 1833, when the present political constitution was given to the island, there were very few Europeans in Ceylon. Mr. Ferguson, editor of one of the local newspapers, in a summary of information he has published on the island, states that the population is now—

Natives	2,336,000
Burghers, European descendants, and persons of mixed blood	5,000
Europeans	3,000
Total	<u>2,344,000</u>
		£
The Revenue then amounted to	437,000
Expenditure	339,000
Leaving a balance of	98,000
The Revenue now is	1,000,000
Expenditure, about	1,000,000

	Cwts.
The Exports of Coffee were	32,000
They are now	800,000
	<hr/>
	£
The Yearly Imports from Great Britain were then ..	23,000
They now amount to -	1,000,000

Thus the expenditure has increased more rapidly than the revenue; but although the colony has augmented its imports and exports, the producer and labourer have not improved their condition. This test goes to prove that the system of taxation has been unwise, and the expenditure excessive and misapplied.

Let us now give a short summary of the constitutional history of the colony.

From 1815, when the interior of Ceylon was opened up by the enterprise of Englishmen, till 1833, the Legislature of the Island consisted of the Governor and his Executive Council, which was composed entirely of the higher members of the civil service. In that year a new political constitution was given to the colony, by which the power of enacting laws and appropriating the public revenues was conferred on a Legislative Council, composed of six members of the Executive Council, of whom the Governor was one; four official members not having seats in the Executive Council; six unofficial members, of whom three were to represent the European element, one the Burghers, and two the native sections of society; all nominated by the Governor. The Governor was President of the Council, and as such had a casting vote, as well as a power of veto as Governor.

The Legislative Council thus constituted had power

to discuss only such measures as might be submitted to it by the Governor and his Executive Council, the privileges of unofficial members being restricted to submitting to Government the project of a measure.*

In 1860, on the appointment of Sir Charles Macarthy to the Government, power was given by the Duke of Newcastle, following out the policy of Earl Grey, for any member of the Legislative Council to propose for discussion and legislation any subject which did not tend to impose a charge on the revenue.

In 1847, the practice was established of referring the nomination of the European members to the Chamber of Commerce in Colombo and the Planters' Association at Kandy, these being the two great associations of commerce and industry in the colony.

This was continued till 1864, when the present Governor, on the resignation of the unofficial members in a body, under circumstances stated in detail in the paper before referred to, took the nomination into his own hands.

The military expenditure, to which Earl Grey so particularly referred in his Despatch of 1848 as a great embarrassment to the revenue, instead of being reduced, as he had intended, has since then been enormously increased. And while the colony does not object, and never has objected, to pay its full share of the military outlay, it protests against being arbitrarily dealt with by the mere order of the Colonial Office.

* For the constitutional history of the colony, and many other details, the reader is referred to an able paper, entitled 'The Ceylon League; its 'Origin and Object,' which has been printed by order of the House of Commons, with a Despatch of Sir H. Robinson's of April 23rd, 1866.

In 1850, with a force of 4,084 men, the charge upon the revenue was 71,525*l.*; in 1860, with a force of 2,534 men, it was 116,147*l.* The colony now pays the whole of its military expenditure, which amounts to 170,000*l.* It appears from the War Office returns and the Indian budget, that while the Indian army, including horse-artillery and cavalry, the most expensive branches of the service, cost on an average 71*l.* per man, the troops, consisting solely of infantry, in Ceylon cost 88*l.* per man.

If the successors of Earl Grey and the Duke of Newcastle had continued their sagacious policy of extending the constitutional power of the Legislative Council, the embarrassments which weighed down the colony in 1848 would have long since been shaken off, and could never have grown into the serious grievances which now cause the universal discontent throughout the island. Lord Grey, let it be repeated, declared in 1848 that the time had arrived when the Legislative Council should have the control of the whole of the expenditure, and promised a Despatch directing immediate reduction of the military part of it.

Mr. Cardwell, in 1864, chooses not only to deny the Legislative Council the control and the colony the retrenchment promised, but has, without rhyme or reason or previous discussion, fixed upon the colony a round sum of no less than 170,000*l.* per annum, as a contribution for the whole of its military expenditure. In effect, at the present time, the Secretary of State, in practice, claims the control over that 1,000,000*l.*, which is all squeezed out of the colony by direct taxation.

Encouraged and greatly cheered by the despatch of 1848, the colony waited long and patiently, in spite of the annual increase of the military expenditure and taxation, in the hope that Earl Grey's policy might still be carried out, but a very different policy has since been pursued. In 1859 large sums of money were spent under the special order of the Governor, without any vote, and the island allowances of military officers was increased without reference to the Council. Then the military expenditure was felt to be unbearable, and in 1861 the Legislative Council adopted an address to the Throne, expressing the readiness of the Council and the colony to bear whatever burthen might be necessary for the maintenance of the needful military establishments, but praying for a full and impartial inquiry on the spot.

It was about this time that a Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into and report upon colonial military expenditure declared that it was highly injudicious to attempt to fortify the colonial possessions of Great Britain; that their safety in time of war must depend upon the protection to be afforded them by the Imperial navy; and that it would be therefore needless and unjust to garrison those places to any greater extent than was necessary for their internal defence, or to guard them against piratical attacks. It added that the British colonies should be called upon to bear a larger proportion than hitherto of their military expenditure, whilst it suggested that in certain cases, such as the colonies of Australia and New Zealand, the whole amount should be borne by them. The committee furthermore

declared, that when any colony should be called upon to pay the whole expenses of its military, that colony ought to be allowed to decide upon the amount of the force required for its internal protection.

We will now see how this principle was carried out by Mr. Cardwell.

In the Session of 1863, when the Supply Bill had been introduced, and the revenue all but appropriated, an additional sum of 30,000*l.* for military contribution to the mother-country was demanded by the Governor on the order of the Secretary of State. This demand was resisted by official and un-official members alike, but the former were constrained by the Secretary of State's command to vote in opposition to their previously expressed opinions.

The 30,000*l.* was accordingly taken from the votes for works and buildings, and was added to the military expenditure, swelling the latter to 126,000*l.*

In this state of affairs the unofficial members determined to bring matters to a crisis, and, supported by all the official members but three, succeeded in rejecting certain of the military votes; but, in the month of August following, the local Government received a reply from Mr. Secretary Cardwell in reference to the disallowance of the military votes by the Legislative Council, in which the Acting-Governor was instructed to make the payments from the colonial funds, and apply to the Council for a covering vote for the amount. These orders were not immediately carried out. The local authorities shrank from this forced collision with the Council, and the Colonial Secretary and Queen's Advocate, who had both voted against the military items, entered in the Executive

Council strong protests against this impolitic and harsh proceeding, as hurtful to the feelings and detrimental to the dignity of the Council, and at the same time leading to results which it would be most desirable to avert. These remonstrances were forwarded home, but in vain. The Secretary of State was told by the Ceylon Executive that it would be undesirable to compel the Government majority to force those votes through an unwilling Council, and that "*the more desirable course would be to authorize the payment of the rejected allowances as a charge sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government, in the same manner as the other allowances paid to the military.*" But Mr. Secretary Cardwell thought otherwise, and succeeded in rendering the mode of payment as offensive as possible to a colony, which, through its representatives, had protested against repeated slights and continued neglect.

On the 2nd of November, 1864, the Colonial Secretary for the colony laid on the Council table copies of the Despatch in reply to the above-mentioned protests, and of a Memorandum on the military expenditure of the island, which accompanied it.

This Despatch not only repeated the instructions in reference to the reversal of the votes of Council, but instructed the local Government to prepare, and pass without delay a *permanent* ordinance for increasing the yearly amount paid by the colony for its military establishments, until it should reach the sum of 170,000*l.* It is true this was accompanied by the promise of an inquiry by the Council, or by a commission; but any decision that might be arrived

at after such inquiry was anticipated in the Despatch, which concluded with the assurance that the Legislative Council should consider this decision as the answer of Her Majesty to their loyal and respectful address. These rejected votes were then forced through the Council by the official majority alone.

After stating that the colony has no political rights, and settling the annual payments by which the military expenditure is to be so largely increased for the future, the Memorandum concludes with a draft statement of the necessary ordinance, taking care at the same time that the Council shall clearly understand that "*Her Majesty's Government do not intend by this proposed ordinance to set up any absolute limits of future demand on the colony.*"

These instructions are prefaced by what is in effect a contradiction of principle, by practice which is as extraordinary as the demands in the Memorandum are arbitrary and exacting.

Mr. Cardwell thus proceeds to enunciate the principle:—

"The principle laid down by Lord Grey, that *appropriation should in every case, without exception, rest upon a Legislative enactment—in no case upon a simple instruction from the Secretary of State—is unquestionably a sound and just one; indeed, it may be called one of the cardinal points and first conditions of any sound and regular system of finance.*"

Now comes the manner in which this principle is to be carried out in practice:—

"*And Her Majesty's Government have now decided to give effect to this principle in the case of Ceylon, provided appropriations, present and prospective to the*

“ extent contemplated by the present Memorandum, are permanently made by ordinance for military services, and provided also due steps are taken by ordinance to carry out the views of Her Majesty’s Government, with respect to railway appropriations.”

That is to say, this principle being unquestionably a sound and just one, on condition that you will first make a permanent charge on the revenue for 170,000*l.* for military services, and carry out the views of the Colonial Office with regard to certain other appropriations, but not otherwise, you shall have the full benefit of it.

When we consider that the official members form the majority in the Council, and, as was said on one occasion by one of them in the very discussion on the military votes to which this Memorandum was an answer, are bound to vote according to the Secretary of State’s order, whatever their opinions may be, the benefit is likely to be as strongly appreciated by the colony as Mr. Cardwell’s application of the principle.

It was upon the receipt of this Memorandum that the six unofficial members then—Messrs. C. A. Lorenz, G. Wall, W. Thompson, J. Capper, J. Alwis, and J. H. Eaton—finding that they were powerless in the Council, and could no longer hope to be of real service to the colony by remaining in it, and considering themselves to occupy, therefore, a false position, tendered their resignation to the Governor in a respectful and dignified letter, in which they set forth at length their reasons for the step they had taken.

They then determined still to continue the battle for the rights of the colony upon another field, and

for this purpose formed a political association, embracing all sections of the inhabitants, and which is now known as the "Ceylon League."

Committees were at once formed in different parts of the island, communicating with a central committee in Colombo, and as soon as the position of the League warranted it, a committee in direct correspondence with that at Colombo was also established in London.

Ever since its formation the "League" has been strongly supported, not only by the Europeans, but by large numbers of the more intelligent amongst the native classes.

Its object is, by all fair means, to press the grievances of the colony upon the consideration of Parliament, in the hope of finally obtaining that reform in the constitution which was contemplated by Lord Grey in 1848, and for which the colony has been patiently waiting under circumstances of particular aggravation for the last twenty years.

The planters and merchants are the backbone of the colony; it is by their enterprise that Ceylon has been converted from an almost unknown and barbarous island into one of the most valuable of England's dependencies, and has become "the great insular outpost of British Empire in the East." To commerce and planting the colony owes all that belongs to it of wealth and prosperity. In these pursuits almost all the Europeans and burghers, and large numbers of the natives, are employed, and with them their interests are closely united.

It is by the energy, industry, and determination of men of this stamp that the British Empire has

sustained her unparalleled success in colonization, and such are the men who now ask that their hard-won prosperity may be secured to them by a liberal policy of Government.

The effect of the policy which has been so long pursued by the Home Government with regard to Ceylon may be clearly seen in the decay of the public works and general inefficiency of the various branches of the public services.

To justify the large demands made by the Imperial Government upon the revenue of the island by the policy of the local Government, a system of parsimonious and disastrous economy has been applied to all the public departments; and not content with starving reproductive expenditure, large surplus balances of revenue have been kept in hand out of all public control.

Lord Grey, in his Despatch of 1848, carefully pointed out the fallacy of this system of finance, and even the present Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, although a very strong advocate of the present policy of Government, says in a Despatch in April, 1860 :—“ The restrictions imposed by the present “ regulations, as regards the expenditure of surplus “ balances, are no longer necessary or fair. A liberal “ outlay on reproductive works is of vital importance “ to the growing prosperity of this colony.” Sir Emerson Tennent, in his admirable book on Ceylon, referring to the manner in which the public departments were served while he was in the colony, says : “ The advocates of administrative reform, when their “ labours shall have been successfully closed at home, “ will find an inviting field for exertion in recon-

“ structing the system on which the colonial business “ is carried on in Ceylon.” This system has, however, been continued up to the present time. What are the consequences ?

The Police Force is underpaid, and so inefficient, that at present it tends rather to encourage crime than to repress it.

The Educational department has been so neglected that it is a disgrace to the colony.

In the Fiscal department the subordinate officers are so few in number and so badly paid, that the work has frequently come to a dead lock. It is often impossible to obtain service of a process, and, consequently, the just claims of creditors are frustrated.

The strength of the Surveyor-General's department has been so reduced, that the existing staff is unable to keep the current work of the office in hand, whilst the general survey of Crown lands has entirely fallen into neglect.

A report on the Public Works department, drawn up by an equal number of officials and unofficials in 1863, stated that the value sacrificed through incompetency and other causes had been estimated upon evidence at from five to ten per cent. of the total expenditure, in other words, from 5,000*l.* to 10,000*l.* per annum.

Various other reports have been made from time to time on the general inefficiency of these departments, and most of them must have been before the Secretary of State for the Colonies at the time when Mr. Cardwell's Memorandum was composed in 1864. In some an inquiry has been conceded, and others are undergoing revision; but, owing to a want of

proper representation in the Council, very little has yet been done towards resuscitating these various services, so important to the material welfare of the colony. This also has become a very serious grievance.

With a perseverance that shows how important these considerations have become in the public estimation, in 1866, the Throne was again addressed in the Memorial alluded to in the outset, and which was signed by 2,500 persons of all classes of the inhabitants. Of these signatures about 550 were those of Europeans. The Petition was forwarded in a Despatch of the present Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, in April, 1860.

The Petitioners, after expressing the warmest attachment and most devoted loyalty to Her Majesty's throne and person, and setting forth their grievances, pray for such a modification in the constitution as may seem suited by Her Majesty to the requirements of the island, and in so doing do not presume to fix the mode or measure of the concessions they ask for, but make a suggestion as to an arrangement of the present Council which would give the unofficial element a majority in measures of supply.

At the present time by far the greater number of the natives are comparatively uncivilized and uneducated, and consequently incapable of forming any sound opinion on any question of civil polity, but there are many whom education and natural abilities have fitted to take their place with Europeans in the local Government.

On reading the Despatch, which was intended to be an answer to the Petition it contained, one cannot

fail to be struck with the idea that to the determined opinions of the present Governor may Mr. Cardwell's Memorandum of 1864 chiefly be attributed.

Nothing more opposite in every respect to the enlightened sentiments of Lord Grey in 1848 can be imagined than the suggestions for the guidance of the home Government contained in this Despatch.

It begins by criticizing the signatures of the Petitioners, and proceeds to show that at present direct representation, an idea never for one moment entertained by the Petitioners, would be impossible.

It sets up throughout a false issue, and endeavours to answer just complaints by alleging an unreasonable demand never in any sense made by the memorialists.

Lord Grey wished to make the Council as representative as possible, by gradually increasing its representative element step by step, as the progress of the colony should justify and its interests demand it. It was for this reason that, in 1847, the nomination of the three European members was given to the Chamber of Commerce and the Planters' Association, and in nominating the three other unofficial members who represented the native sections of society, the Governor was always supposed to select those gentlemen who, in his judgment, would best represent the opinions of those various sections. Sir Emerson Tennent, in describing the Government of the island, and speaking of the Legislative Council, says :—“ The Legislative Council contains *representative* men, selected by the Crown with becoming regard to the various races and interests of the island; still, the paramount authority of the Governor can overrule their deliberations, and their labours may be nullified by the

“interposition of his veto. The powers of the Governor constitute a *paternal* despotism, modified “only by the distant authority of the Queen.”

To this extent then the Council was always representative, and the “Ceylon League,” who originated the Petition, and the Petitioners themselves, suggest that the time has now come when, in accordance with the policy enjoined by Lord Grey, the representative character of the Council should be advanced another step.

That the present Governor is of a very different opinion is not only shown by his Despatch, but by the course he has pursued. As we have seen, when the unofficial members retired in 1864, contrary to the unvarying practice for eighteen years, he took the nomination of their successors into his own hands again; and at the present time, as he himself says, the unofficial element in the Council is represented by only two Europeans instead of three, and three natives.

Instead of advancing then, and increasing the representative element, the course pursued since 1864 has been to push it back, and tends rather to reduce the colony to the system of government pursued before 1833, than by a liberal system of progressive reform to extend the privileges of the constitution then bestowed on the island.

The Governor, arguing against any change in the Council, tries to show in his Despatch that, supposing the “Legislative Council” had the full control of the revenue, and so exercised it as to vote a smaller sum than requisite for the proper military expenditure of the island, the only alternative on the part of Her Majesty’s Government would be to overrule the deci-

sion of the local Legislature by an order in Council; but then, if it were so, the fact of the vote being passed by a majority in a Council composed of equal numbers of official and non-official members would naturally have the effect of enforcing a more careful consideration of what would be the most equitable course for the Home Government to pursue, than the mere protest of a small minority.

In dealing further with the question of the reformed Council and the expenditure, the Governor argues from the premise that the unofficial members alone are to have the control of the revenue, if they should happen to combine on any particular occasion. This is suggested on the Petition, but probably from the same force of reasoning that induces a man whose only hope is in a compromise, to ask for more than he would really be satisfied with. These arguments would not meet the case of a Council with an equal number of official and unofficial members, with an official President.

The Despatch then proceeds to dispose of the unofficial members as a class, in the following manner: With reference to the unofficial member we hear that he is generally a merchant or planter, "with little or "no knowledge of the island beyond the capital or "the coffee districts. He is a mere temporary resident, whose sole aim and object is to acquire a "competency in the shortest possible time, so as to "escape from the island for ever. He is a member "of a small and dominant class, whose interests often "conflict with those of the majority of the inhabitants, and is entirely irresponsible to the public or "the Government."

This is the way in which the Governor reports of the only representatives of the European part of the population. True it is, that those of whom he has had most experience have often thought it their duty to oppose his policy in the Council, but surely they deserve something better than contempt.

The published letters of Messrs. Ackland and Wall display a knowledge of the political questions now affecting the colony, and an ability to deal with them that would reflect credit on any politician; and be it remembered that it was with reference to a correspondence with one of these gentlemen that Lord Grey said, twenty years ago, "*The real remedy for the financial embarrassments of the island is clearly perceived, and well understood on the spot.*"

The planters and merchants are certainly a small, and may be a dominant class, but they form the whole non-official portion of the Europeans, and it is upon them alone that the whole material prosperity of the colony depends, while the great majority of the inhabitants to whom it is so convenient to refer are half uncivilized, and almost entirely uneducated. Of this class Lord Grey says in 1848:—

"In the present social condition of Ceylon, with a large native population but partially educated and imperfectly informed, unacquainted with any but a despotic form of civil polity, and unfitted for self-government, because, unaccustomed to self-control, it would be obviously impracticable to introduce at present the principle of direct representation into the legislative body of the colony. *But as there exists, and will probably continue to*

“ increase, a body of *European proprietors, capitalists,*
 “ *merchants in the very centre of this native population,*
 “ *as on their influence and example, their industry and*
 “ *wealth, the prosperity of the colony must mainly depend,*
 “ *it must naturally be the desire of the British Govern-*
 “ *ment to recognize in this class, at least, the nucleus of*
 “ *a future population of freemen, around which nature,*
 “ *intelligence, and education may cluster, and which may*
 “ *hereafter be the basis of a more extended representation.”*

Since then, as he predicted, the European element was largely increased, but Sir Hercules Robinson holds it in much smaller estimation than Lord Grey did even then. The official member is then most favourably contrasted with the unofficial, as having more knowledge of the island; as not being allowed to embark in commerce or planting, and therefore unprejudiced; as having no interest in the colony, except as far as his credit and consequent advancement by the Home Government are concerned; and, finally, as being directly responsible for his *opinions, votes,* and conduct to Her Majesty's Government. For these reasons, it is suggested that he should make a far superior legislator than the prejudiced and interested unofficial.

The Governor does just acknowledge that a *proportion* of these unofficials has been found frequently to exercise a very beneficial influence upon the transaction of legislative business, but considers that a compliance with the prayer of the Petition would not facilitate the good government of the colony. He proceeds to compare the local Government with that of some of the districts in India, but in answer to that it may be said that long ago, when it was suggested to the Home Government that Ceylon

should be governed under the same system and be considered part of the Indian Empire, it was decided that the interests of the colony demanded that it should have a distinct and separate Government; and it may fairly be suggested that the West Indian colonies, in which the political conditions are somewhat similar to those existing in Ceylon, would be a fairer comparison than the only one which is presented in the Despatch.

The Despatch concludes by admitting some of the grievances of the Petitioners, particularly that of the restrictions on the expenditure of the surplus balances, and states that a liberal outlay is of vital importance to the growing prosperity of the country, but does not suggest any other remedy for those embarrassments, which ever since 1848 have greatly increased year by year.

What concessions, then, on the part of the Imperial Government would make peace? At a time like the present, when many think that dangers are impending over our Indian Empire, should we keep open these sores of discontent in Ceylon? The demands of the colonists, as represented by the "League," are moderate in themselves, and are not pressed in any disloyal spirit of complaint. They are perfectly willing to pay the necessary taxes; all they say is, Give us by a fair representation of the unofficial element in the Council, such a control over the expenditure of the revenue raised by taxation in the island as was promised us by Lord Grey—such a control as will ensure that the public services are well and adequately supported, and we will cheerfully pay whatever, after a full and

fair inquiry, is determined to be necessary for military expenditure.

Why not equalize the number of official and unofficial members, allowing the official members at the same time to express their conscientious opinions by their votes on financial matters, and give the Council, so constituted, the control over the expenditure that they ask for? In any event, the Governor would still have his power of veto, and the President of the Council a casting vote. Why should the Imperial Government refuse to Ceylon the same privileges it has conferred on Jamaica, on Trinidad, and our West Indian colonies generally, where the numbers of official and unofficial members in the Legislative Council are equal, and public opinion is consequently more adequately represented? Let the Chamber of Commerce and the Planters' Association nominate a third of these unofficial members, and the Governor the remainder. This would make the Council fairly representative, and the expression of its opinion of more value both to the Governor and the Secretary of State.

It is suggested on the Petition, that in matters of finance the President should be an unofficial. This is no doubt open to objection, but a suggestion in one of Mr. Ackland's letters that the commanding officer of the forces should be President of the Council instead of the Governor, is worthy of consideration on the ground that the Governor having already discussed a subject and decided upon it in the Executive Council, would be more likely to be prejudiced upon it than a President who would come fresh to the discussion.

Whatever may be the opinions entertained by Sir H. Robinson, these things are undeniable :—

1. That the pledges made by Lord Grey in 1848 have been violated.

2. That all constitutional rights and practice have been violated by the arbitrary orders of Mr. Secretary Cardwell, and the breach of a practice before observed for eighteen years in the election of the unofficial members of the Council by Sir Hercules Robinson.

3. That yet this very Governor admits that the Colony has a most serious unredressed grievance, as regards its surplus balances and needful expenditure.

4. That the actual producing classes are suffering from an unwise administration, ignorant or careless of their wants.

5. That the remedy is obvious, reasonable, and long promised, and is still withheld, so that the Colonial Office, without one atom of responsibility to Parliament or the Colony, have the entire control of 1,000,000*l.* of revenue, and all the patronage of the island.

If any reader is sufficiently interested in the constitutional history of Ceylon since 1833 to wish for a detailed account, he will find all he requires in the admirable paper, published by the League in Ceylon,

part of which has been lately printed by order of the House of Commons, with Sir Hercules Robinson's Despatch of April 23rd, 1866. In the Appendix* to that paper, the following documents, amongst others therein referred to, are set out at length :—

Letter of Resignation of the Official Members in 1864.

Manifesto of the Ceylon League.

Mr. Wall's Letter to the Planters' Association.

Mr. Ackland's Letters to Lord Grey in 1848.

Lord Grey's Despatches to Lord Torrington, February 24th and July 17th, 1848.

Address of the Legislative Council to the Queen in 1861.

Mr. Cardwell's Despatch and Memorandum of September, 1864.

* This Appendix has not, unfortunately, been reprinted in the Parliamentary papers, but sufficient reference is made to the documents to show the gist of their contents.