

REFORM
OF
The Ceylon Legislative Council.

BY

ARUNÁCHALAM PADMANÁBHA

Of the Middle Temple.

WITH AN ARTICLE BY

THE LATE WILLIAM DIGBY, C. I. E.

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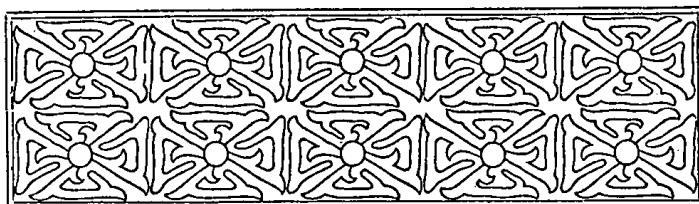
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REFORM OF THE CEYLON LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE article reprinted below was written by the late Mr. W. Digby, C.I.E. It appeared originally in the *Calcutta Review* of January, 1877, and was afterwards issued as a pamphlet. He was an English journalist of wide experience, and the senior partner of the London firm of Indian and Colonial Merchants and Agents, Messrs. Hutchinson & Co. His journalistic life in the East began on the staff of the *Ceylon Observer*, and he was afterwards Editor of the *Madras Times*, the *Liverpool and Southport Daily News*, and the *Western Daily Mercury*, Plymouth. In Madras he was selected by the Governor, the Duke of Buckingham, for the office of Hon. Secretary of the South Indian Famine Fund of 1878-9, which was originated by Mr. Digby, and succeeded in raising and administering no less than £800,000 and saving four millions of lives. Mr. Digby was for this service created a Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire. For his successful effort in securing (with the co-operation of Governor Sir Arthur Havelock and Mr. George Wall) the abolition of grain taxes and revenue-farming in Ceylon he was made an Honorary Member of the Cobden Club. His was a career of unflagging public-spirited activity. He was Secretary of the National Liberal Club, London; founder of the Indian Political Agency; editor of the *India*, the organ of the Indian National Congress; author of many works, including the well-known life of Sir Richard Morgan ("Forty Years' Citizen Life in Ceylon"), six volumes of the "Ceylon Hansard," "History of the Newspaper Press of India, Ceylon and the Far East," "Indian Problems for English Consideration," "Famine Campaign in India," "Food Taxes in Ceylon," "Life of Sir Arthur Cotton" (the great Indian engineer), &c. He died in London in the latter part of 1904, prematurely, of disease brought on by his self-denying, philanthropic labours. His memory is cherished with affectionate gratitude by hundreds of thousands in India and Ceylon who benefited by his labours, and by those (not a few) who were privileged to count him as a friend and to benefit by his wise counsel and sympathy, and by the example of a life of high ideals and strenuous beneficence.

The opinions of a man of his experience and insight on the reform of the Ceylon Legislative Council cannot but be of interest and help at this juncture when the subject is occupying the thoughts and deliberations of many. The present generation, accustomed to the Council of the present day, can have but little idea of what it was when Digby was a daily spectator and reported its proceedings in the *Ceylon Hansard*. The unofficial side was then adorned by such men as Sir Coomara Swamy, James Alwis, David Wilson, Sir W. Mitchell, James van Langenberg. The debates compared favourably with those of any legislative assembly and were followed with lively interest throughout the Island. Digby had great belief in the capacity of the Ceylonese, and, under the title of "An Oriental Crown Colony Ripe for Representative Government," he sketched this scheme in which, with other kindred spirits in the Island, he believed down to the end of his days. He was, however, in advance of the times, and on his departure from Ceylon the movement, deprived of his magnetic presence and undaunted energy, died in its infancy.

Thirty years have passed. The Island has progressed marvellously in education and prosperity. Our neighbouring continent of India has received substantial grants of legislative reform. But we stand where we were when our Legislative Council was established in 1833. There is no reason why, if after due deliberation we formulate and make known our wishes and show that we are in earnest, we should not receive boons, if not as substantial as Digby strove for, at least such as India has been granted. A Ceylonese gentleman, who recently pressed the subject on the attention of an official in Downing Street, received the reply: "Why don't you agitate for it? Do you suppose you will get anything without agitation? Do we in England? The political history of England has been one long series of agitations."

His Excellency Sir Henry McCallum has already given an earnest of his wish to secure the co-operation of the people. He has made the unofficial M. L. C.'s permanent members of a Standing Financial Committee and given them a majority of eight to three. This power over the purse is the chief of parliamentary powers. In investing the unofficial members with it, the Governor said: "It is felt that these proposals, if carried into effect, will invest the unofficial members of Council with far more real financial control than they at present possess and will also strengthen the hand of Government by affording to it opportunities of frequent consultation with its unofficial advisers on questions affecting the Financial Administration of the Colony."

A notable and statesmanlike utterance. The Governor knows that in Ceylon by its constitution as a Crown Colony the administration is vested entirely in foreigners who, however able and well intentioned, are liable to error from lack of knowledge and of sympathy with the

people. Many an administrative and legislative blunder in the past was due to this cause. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to good administration that the rulers should have the fullest opportunities of knowing the wants and sentiments of the people. He is too new to the Island to know that the fulfilment of his wish will be impeded in no small measure by a system under which the unofficial members are chosen by the Governor and not by their constituents. Men who owe their appointment to the Governor and whose continuance in office under the new Five-year Rule depends on his wish, can hardly be expected to be as free in their advice and the expression of their views as elected members, especially when measures are under consideration on which Government, with the best intentions but with imperfect knowledge of the people's needs, conditions and wishes, have set their hearts on. It is a false position from which the members should be relieved in the interests alike of the Government, the public, and of themselves.

Crown Colonies are excellent examples of a benevolent despotism. But it is beginning to be recognised that an efficient administration loses half its power for good without the sympathetic and active co-operation of the ruled. The *Pioneer*, the leading English paper in India, says: "The closer connection of England with India, the growing power and influence of the mercantile community, the growth in India of an educated class, have brought new currents of thought into play. The most perfect system of administration which the world has ever seen" (to wit, administration by the Indian Civil Service), "has come to be regarded by many, and an increasing number, as a top-heavy, bureaucratic hierarchy, Byzantine in method, if not in spirit, hide-bound by precedent and theory, detached from practical conditions, mechanical and doctrinaire. . . . One of the first necessities of the time is to prune off Government action, to let in light and shade. This will not be easy for officials struggling after perfection. They will have to be baptized again: to adore what they have burnt and burn what they have adored."

This idea lies at the root of the recent administrative and legislative reforms of Mr. Morley, the Secretary of State for India. The Prime Minister, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, said in a memorable speech not long ago: "*Good government can never be a substitute for government by the people themselves.*" It will be long before the people of Ceylon are allowed to govern themselves. But they might at least be put gradually in the way of doing so. Can there be said to be a gradual effort in this direction when so long a period as three quarters of a century has been allowed to elapse since the last step—and a small step it was—was taken? Ceylon was then little more than a military station. The marvellous material and moral progress since made is shown at a glance by this Table:—

CEYLON IN 1834 AND 1906.

	Population.	Scholars.	Revenue. Rs.	Expenditure. Rs.	Shipping. Tons.	Imports. Rs.	Exports. Rs.
1834	1,167,700	13,891	3,779,520	3,348,350	153,510	3,727,260	1,458,340
1906	3,984,985	276,691	35,030,660	32,644,214*	13,299,656	123,502,921	112,516,914

The Sinhalese, who number two and a half millions, and the Tamils, who number a million, are allotted three representatives—over a million apiece—and these “representatives” continue to be *nominees of the Governor*. Formerly they held their seats for life, but since 1890 their tenure of office is for five years and they are eligible for re-appointment. A member who showed a sturdy independence and public spirit—Mr. P. Coomara Swamy—was sent about his business on the expiration of his five years, and the lesson was not lost on his colleagues. If the Legislative Council is to be rescued from its inefficiency, it must be made reasonably representative, and the farce of nomination by Government and of one member to a million must cease.

Already by an unwritten law two of the members are selected by their constituents—the Planters’ Association and the Chamber of Commerce—and they are usually the most efficient and helpful members on the unofficial side. Why should not this principle be extended to the other Unofficial Members? The good men among them will have no difficulty in securing election. Hon. Mr. Ferguson, M.L.C., has for years urged a modified system of election, and who has greater knowledge of Ceylon and its people than this colonist of half a century? The system of nomination by the Governor and of racial representation, however suitable for the year of grace 1833, is quite out of date now. If it is to be retained, it should only be for the purpose of supplementing the system of election, so that if any particular interest or race, which is of sufficient importance to be represented in the Council, fails to be represented among the elected members, the Government should have the power of nominating a member to represent that race or interest.

Apart from the advantage to good administration from the co-operation of the people, its educative value should not be overlooked. A great English writer, Mr. Bagehot, declared the cause of English originality, whether manifested in thinkers like Locke, Newton, Darwin or in artisan inventors, to be the English habit of discussion. “Government by discussion quickens and enlivens thought all through society, it makes people think no harm can come of thinking. In England this force has long been operating, and so it has developed more of all kinds

* Exclusive of Rs. 1,850,339, for public works extraordinary, chargeable to Loan Fund.

of people ready to use their mental energy in their own way and not ready to use it in any other way, than a despotic Government."

So long, therefore, as a Government majority, which under present circumstances is essential, is secured, the Government would be consulting the interests alike of the rulers and the ruled, and facilitating the realization of Sir Henry McCallum's wish, by measures for securing free discussion and co-operation of the people in public matters. Digby's scheme provided for a Council of 41 members in which every district and important interest was represented, with 13 officials and 28 elected members. A scheme more suitable to the times would perhaps be to reduce the elected members to 18, and to raise the official members (including the unofficials nominated by the Governor) to 23. The qualification for electors might be, in Municipal and Local Board towns, the same as for electors in these towns, and in other towns some similar property or literary qualification. If a restricted qualification is deemed necessary, that of a juror might be adopted. A man who is fit to decide questions of life and death should be fit to say who shall represent him in the Legislative Council. The literary and property qualification for a Councillor might be the same as for a Municipal Councillor.

The elected members might be assigned as follows:—

Chamber of Commerce	...	...	...	1
Planters' Association	...	...	...	1
Western Province.				
City of Colombo	...	...	...	1
The rest of the Province	...	...	...	2
Central Province	...	...	...	2
Southern Province	...	...	...	2
Northern Province	...	...	...	2
Eastern Province	2
N.-W. Province	2
N.-C. Province	1
Uva Province	1
Sabaragamua Province	1

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The minimum number of official members might be 15 and of nominated unofficials 3, leaving five to be distributed in either of these classes at the discretion of the Governor. The proportion of elected members to the others would be 18 to 23 and leave the Government majority quite secure. The present proportion is 8 unofficial to 9 official.

With elected members in the Legislative Council, the admission of an unofficial member or two into the Executive Council will be facilitated,—a much needed reform. In May 1903, as the result of an unanimous vote of the Legislative Council, Sir West Ridgeway recommended to the Secretary of State the addition of two unofficial members to the Executive Council as "tending to satisfy the public opinion which is in favour of more effective representation in the Government of the

Colony" and as it "would formally place at the disposal of the Governor advice and information which it is not always possible to obtain from official sources." Mr. Chamberlain would not accept the proposal, because the unofficials were not elected members but nominees of the Government. He mentioned that in Mauritius, where unofficial members are now placed in the Executive Council, "the change followed as a corollary of the admission to the Council of Government of elected representatives of the population," and that in Cyprus and several other Colonies, where unofficials have seats on the Executive Council, "there is an elective element on the Legislature."

Is there any reason why those Colonies should have an elective element in the Legislative Council and unofficials in the Executive Council, and not Ceylon? Is Ceylon inferior to them in education or prosperity? Let the following Table show. Is she not conspicuous for her loyal attachment to the British Throne?

CEYLON COMPARED WITH OTHER CROWN COLONIES.

	Popula- tion, 1905.	Revenue. 1905.	Imports. 1905.	Exports. 1905.	Shipping. 1905. (Tonnage entered & cleared.)	Scholars. 1905.	Constitution of Legislative Council.
Bahamas	58,175	£ 77,293	£ 308,544	£ 222,805	1,251,379	6,078	2 Houses, of which one consists of 29 elected members and the other of 9 nominated members.
Barbadoes	199,542	192,291	1,042,563	935,844	1,700,787	25,710	2 Houses, one consisting of 24 elected members the other of 9 nominated members.
Bermuda	20,209	53,321	543,222	116,428	671,461	1,801	[Number of electors 1644] 2 Houses, one containing 36 elected members and the other nine nominated members.
British Guiana	303,390	522,493	1,662,206	1,994,394	794,440	29,811	[1,310 electors.] 2 Houses, one of 7 official and 8 elected members and the other of the above and 6 additional elected members elected as financial representatives.
Ceylon ...	3,950,123	2,293,022	7,662,482	6,832,671	11,157,925	263,233	No elected members, 8 nominated unofficials, 9 officials.
Cyprus ...	250,887	238,213	482,079	438,241	805,568	25,808	12 elected, 7 officials.
Jamaica ...	817,560	1,001,548	1,941,938	1,843,180	2,791,448	48,183	14 elected, 10 nominated, 6 ex-officio.
Mauritius	386,128	693,304	1,796,293	2,456,203	740,733	18,194	10 elected, 8 ex-officio. and 9 nominated.

A. PADMANABHA.

AN ORIENTAL COLONY RIPE FOR REPRESENTATIVE
GOVERNMENT.*

BY THE LATE

WM. DIGBY, C. I. E.

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 "HISTORY OF THE NEWSPAPER PRESS OF INDIA, CEYLON AND THE FAR EAST," "INDIAN
 PROBLEMS FOR ENGLISH CONSIDERATION," "FAMINE CAMPAIGN IN S. INDIA," &c.;
 HON. MEMBER OF THE COBDEN CLUB FOR SUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO ABOLISH
 GRAIN TAXES IN CEYLON; HON. SECRETARY, INDIAN FAMINE RELIEF FUNDS
 1877-79; SECRETARY, NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB, LONDON; &c., &c.

I.

AN OPEN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL: THIRTY-THREE YEARS' WORK.

"There is no more important Institution in the Island than this Council. Whatever be the estimation in which it is held by the official or unofficial community here, I know that it is held in high estimation by English Statesmen, who look to it as the centre of much good. Mr. Bright has referred to it in eulogistic terms.† And on the extension of English liberalism, as involved in the establishment of Colonial Councils, even Lecky, the historian, has many a thrilling period. It will be a disgrace, therefore, that in a British dependency any misunderstanding should prevent the full development of liberal institutions of which Englishmen are so proud that they have conferred them on us; and of which the natives of this country should be equally proud, in that they find in them the nucleus of self-government."

These words were uttered in stentorian tones by a Tamil legislator (Sir, then Mr., Coomara Swamy) in whose voice could not be traced the slightest foreign accent. The occasion was the discussion of a motion impliedly censuring the authorities for curtailing the period of the session, and the remarks were made on a hot, oppressive afternoon in December, 1872; the scene was the Legislative Council Chamber of Ceylon, where, around a large table of a horseshoe pattern, sat sixteen gentlemen, ten

* For the history of this Article see page 1.

† Doubtless this allusion is to the following passage from one of the Right Hon'ble John Bright's speeches on India, delivered in the House of Commons on June 24th, 1858. Alluding to Presidency Councils, the Hon'ble Member said:—"I should propose to do that which has been done with great advantage in Ceylon. I have received a letter from an officer who has been in the service of the East India Company, and who has told me of a fact which has gratified me much. He says:—'At a public dinner at Colombo in 1835, to the Governor, Sir Wilmot Horton, at which I was present, the best speech of the evening was made by a native nobleman of Kandy, and a Member of Council. It was remarkable for its appropriate expression, its sound sense, and the deliberation and ease that marked the utterance of his feelings. There was no repetition or useless phraseology or flattery, and it was admitted by all who heard him to be the soundest and neatest speech of the night.' That was in Ceylon. It is not, of course, always the best man who can make the best speech; but if what I have read could be said of a native of Ceylon, it could be said of thousands in India."—*Speeches of John Bright*, Vol. i., p., 52. W. D.

officials, six unofficial nominees: the assembly was presided over by the Governor of the Colony, *ex-officio*. Over all, pendant from the star-gilt ceiling, swung slowly a heavy punkah, which contributed a little coolness to the fervid atmosphere. The remarks, to a stranger, might seem a little magniloquent, perhaps not incorrectly, so far as the present constituted Council as an aid to liberalism is concerned. Such, however, is not altogether the case. It is true that so apathetic have the inhabitants of the Colony shown themselves about the farce of representation which obtains in that assembly, that only on rare occasions do the public go to hear the speeches or witness the procedure. Yet the institution has a history of its own which is worth telling: a description of the work it has done will show that it has existed to good purpose, and that the time has now come when it should give place to a House more in accordance with the times, and, what is of greater importance, with the improved position of the people and their increased fitness for a measure of self-rule. Ceylon is a Crown Colony, and a Crown Colony is described in an authorised publication, "The Colonial Office List," as a Colony "in which the Crown has the entire control of legislation, while the administration is carried on by public officers under the control of the Home Government."

When, in 1833, Ceylon was entrusted with a deliberative Council to assist the Governor in legislation, the Island bore but little resemblance to the actively commercial and busily intellectual country it now is. The only article of export of commercial importance was cinnamon. This was a monopoly in the hands of Government, and upon good prices being obtained for it depended whether there would be a deficit or surplus when the year's accounts were made up: the authorities were, for the nonce, dry goods' traders, watching every fluctuation in the market with feverish eagerness. Little connection was had with the interior, which was full of mountains covered with dense forest; roads there were practically none, save the great artery formed by Sir Edward Barnes, the aorta of inland communication. The plains outside the mountain zone were inhabited by an ignorant population of agriculturists, ignorant from their isolation; while all over the land, the Buddhist priests were sunk in sloth, and altogether unmindful of conferring "merit" upon the people by calling them together to hear *bana* (the word of Buddha). The finances of the Island were burdened with a heavy military charge, and deficits were chronic, the Island being only saved from almost Turkish bankruptcy by a series of successful pearl fisheries. Taking the year 1834 as the first in which a record of schools appears in the Blue Book, by reference to a few statistical statements an idea of the (then) position of the Colony may be obtained. With a revenue of £377,952 there was a military force of 6,227 men. In 1875, the revenue was £1,354,123, and

the fighting force just overtopped one thousand. [In 1906 the revenue was over two and a third million pounds (Rs. 35,030,660.)] In 1834, thanks to the earnest efforts of the missionaries, there were 1,105 schools (800 were private schools, receiving no Government aid) with 13,891 scholars. Forty years later,—and herein is, perhaps, the greatest lapse of duty on the part of the English rulers of the Island,—there are (1874 returns) only 1,458 schools with 66,385 scholars, while from 1863 to 1871 the number of schools was once as low as 716 and always less than one thousand. [In 1906 there were 4,006 schools and 276,691 scholars.] The annals of forty years ago were undeniably dull, and pall upon the student of contemporary records. Further, of the Governors' speeches, in which one expects to find the largest range as well as the greatest height of the life of the period: during perusal thereof, the supposition grows upon the reader that a merchant's circular, dealing with an article of commerce, *viz.*, cinnamon, and having a few extraneous subjects introduced to give colouring and interest, has been substituted for a vice-regal speech. The redeeming feature of the period was the great activity of European and American missionaries in the pulpit and in education. It does not follow that they were more active,—they were not nearly so many in number—then than now; but, in those days, so few figures passed across the stage, and the scene was so seldom changed, that the missionaries figured more largely in history than they do now, when the boards are crowded and the stage is diversified with a multitude of groups representing many interests. Scarcely anything touching the Ceylonese appears until Mr. Stewart Mackenzie was Governor: the intense sympathies of a man of more than ordinary culture, a ruler in advance of his times, led him to hew at what was left of the structure of domestic slavery, and to hasten its early fall. In 1829, so unsatisfactory was the state of affairs in Ceylon that a commission, consisting of Lieutenant-Colonel Colebrooke and Mr. C. H. Cameron, was appointed by the home authorities. The immediate occasion of the appointment of this commission would seem to have been the financially disastrous position of the Colony, already alluded to. In 1827 the revenue was £264,375 and the expenditure £411,648, while in the previous year the deficit was £115,879, nearly half the income, which would be much as if Sir John Strachey were to state in March or April next that whilst the revenue for the year was £50,000,000, expenditure had run up to nearly £90,000,000! Full and exhaustive reports were made by the Commissioners, and the outcome of their enquiry was the establishment of an improved system of judicature. Amongst other things recommended, was the establishment of a Legislative Council, and a despatch was sent to Sir Robert Wilmot Horton, the Governor, the fourth paragraph of which ran as follows: “.

. . . . Now we do hereby signify and declare our pleasure to be ; that the said Legislative Council of our Island of Ceylon, shall always consist of fifteen persons [exclusive of the Governor], of whom nine shall be at all times persons holding offices within the said Island at our pleasure, and the remaining shall at all times be persons not holding such offices." The constitution of this assembly was confessedly imperfect. At that time even, prior to the passing of the first English Reform Bill, it was felt that such a Council, not elective in any sense, and representative only through nomination, could not last long. Lieutenant-Colonel Colebrooke said it was "imperfect," but very properly remarked that it would "constitute an essential part of any Colonial legislature for which the Island may be prepared at a future period." His fellow Commissioner, in words to be subsequently quoted, was even more emphatic in looking upon the proposed Council as merely tentative, and introductory only to a representative assembly worthy of the name. The time for that assembly to be called into being has now come ; but before attempting to show this from present data, it may be interesting to glance briefly at the work done by this, the first "open" Legislative Council in the East, during the forty years in which it has held its sessions.

In the first days of the new Council, dissatisfaction arose ; the Governor, Sir Robert Wilmot Horton, not filling up the seats of unofficials till the third session, whilst a memorial from aggrieved British merchants regarding this action was treated with scant justice. This treatment from such a man was the more surprising as Sir Robert Horton had been a member of a Liberal Administration in England, had been a Poor Law Commissioner (his book on Pauperism is useful to the Poor Law Reformer of the present day), and was altogether a man of whom quite the contrary of that which marked his career in Ceylon, would naturally be predicted. The boon of assisting in legislature was given so grudgingly that all grace was taken from the gift, while it was shown in a memorial to the Secretary of State, that had the unofficial seats been filled up* as the memorialists contended they ought to have been, two Ordinances which were passed in the first session, which bore hardly upon the people, would have been shorn of the injustice which marked

* The Sinhalese seat and the Tamil and Muhammadan seat were filled by the appointment of Government Officials who had to be retired on full pension for the purpose. The Sinhalese Member was Mr. Philips Panditaratna, 3rd Maha Mudaliyar and Interpreter of the Supreme Court, uncle of Sir Henry Dias, grandfather of Mr. Peter de Saram, Police Magistrate, and great-grandfather of Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranayaka, Maha Mudaliyar. The Tamil and Muhammadan seat was filled by A. Coomaraswamy, Mudaliyar of the Governor's Gate, Interpreter to the Governor, who has had the rather unique distinction of being followed in Council by five members of his family, his son-in-law Edirmanasinga Mudaliyar of the Governor's Gate, son Sir Coomara Swamy, and grandsons Messrs. P. Ramanathan, K.C., C.M.G., P. Coomara Swamy and P. Arunachalam, C.C.S., Registrar General.

them. Leave to introduce bills was also asked for, but refused—to be granted, however, nearly a score of years later. While there was much in the infant institution to excite ridicule, in some things it commanded admiration. For instance, from the first, the meetings were open to the public, the reason for this being publicly stated, *viz.*, that the inhabitants of the Island and people in England might know what was going on. The House of Commons, in spite of Mr. A. M. Sullivan's efforts to the contrary in 1875, has not yet reached this honestly-avowed stage. Speech-making was early a characteristic of Ceylon M. L. C.'s, and Indian "exchanges," in days when topics were few for Anglo-Indian journalists to descant upon, would complain that there was nothing in the Ceylon papers save reports of Council proceedings.

The benefits of free trade were early recognised—and that is nearly all, for fiscal arrangements which necessitate the existence of farmers of taxes on locally-grown rice, the exactions and impositions of whom are described in strong language, still flourish in full force [since abolished, 1893] while imported food bears a burden which falls heavily on the poorer classes of the community. An attempt to deal with food taxes in 1839, led to the abolition of the fish tax, a tithe, and the fishermen, mainly Romanists, at once voluntarily set apart this sum for religious purposes.

What cannot fail to strike the reader of the "Governors' speeches"—next to the very ordinary nature of their contents, until Mr. Stewart Mackenzie introduced a practice which once marked the chief orators of the House of Commons, *viz.*, quoting from the ancient classics, and reciting lengthy Latin sentences,—is the erratic dates at which the Council met. Cause for surprise, however, is taken away, when it is observed that the Colony was then so much of a military post, and little else, that the principal measure of one session was an Ordinance providing bullock carts as a means of transport for troops. A sort of controlling power over the public purse was given in 1839, but it was not until ten years later that Earl Grey announced, in a despatch, the truism that none were so well able to properly spend a nation's money as the legislators of that nation; yet, in little more than a decade of years later, the unofficial members resigned in a body, because the vote for military expenditure was controlled in London instead of at Colombo. Jealousy in this respect is very keenly felt; and the session of 1875-76 was marked by a strong expression of public opinion, stormy personal debates and divisions, because the Secretary of State added £400 a year to the pension of the retiring Chief Justice, Sir Edward Creasy, without consulting the Colony. An Ordinance to cover this payment had to be withdrawn, pending the publication of despatches for which permission had to be sought. Under pressure through the Council and otherwise,

avowed Government connection with paganism—the Kandian Convention of 1815 necessitates some connection still)—in Ceylon came to an end.

Privilege was precious to the budding legislators of Ceylon as it is to, say, the “superior person” of St. Stephen’s, Westminster; and when, in 1840, certain members wished to protest against the passing of an Ordinance, when all the forms of the House had been complied with, Governor Stewart Mackenzie said:—“I hold that, in point of fact, in this as in every other deliberative, which is also a legislative, assembly (except, perhaps, the House of Lords in Great Britain), the only legitimate protest of any member is his vote against the measure under discussion, which, as the names and votes are regularly taken down, forms his recorded protest.” Even if it were necessary, the facilities in Ceylon do not permit the writer of this to consult authorities on the moot point, which is now conceded to unofficial members of the Council; but two facts may be mentioned which go to bear out the correctness of the opinion expressed by the Colonial Governor, *viz.*,—(a) Professor Thorold Roger’s “Protests of the Lords,” recently published, and (b) Mr. Plimsoll’s protest against the abandonment of the Merchant’s Shipping Bill in the House of Commons in 1875, which protest was refused acceptance by Mr. Speaker Brand, and only found its way to the public through copies being given to the reporters to the newspapers.

Railway Formation; Military Expenditure—the conduct of Home authorities in this respect was very ungracious; Tank Restoration; Land Registration; Creation of Municipalities, large (in cities and big towns), lesser (in minor towns), and least (Village Councils); have been the other topics which have most exercised the minds of members of the Island Legislature. Viewed in whatever light one may choose, the railway has been most potent in its influence on the land, a type of the material works which help mental and moral progress in the present time. The Ceylon Railway has greatly opened up the country to Europeans and Ceylonese; it has brought hitherto partially antagonistic races together, and has done much to advance the Colony almost to the level of more progressive, only because entirely Anglo-Saxon, communities, till there are now few countries to which it need yield the *pas*. The extension of railways now in progress and contemplated will add so much to what has been already attained, that the moderate measure of reform sketched further on in this paper, as needed to meet the wants of the present time, will scarcely suffice to satisfy what will be demanded with energy and persistence. Why, for once in a way, should not political wants be met as they arise, and the injustice which leads to great agitation be avoided? In Ceylon the Ceylonese travellers contribute the large railway passenger totals, which it is the pride, annually,

of the Traffic Manager to record: it is the produce of the estates owned and worked by Europeans which contributes its handsome quota to the gratifying result of a large surplus every year.

Consequent upon the strides made in the past few years, equalling what had taken two decades or a generation previously to achieve, a rapid glance at the legislation of the past six years, as recorded in the local *Hansard* volumes may not be inappropriate.

(a) FINANCE.

The custody of the purse, the holding of the purse-strings, is altogether in the hands of Government. Honourable members have the right of closely scrutinizing every item, a right they exercise with much persistency, and often with great good to the public. The theory is that no money shall be spent until the sanction of the legislature has been obtained; but this is not always adhered to, and supplementary votes, to cover expenditure already incurred, are not unknown. The revenue is, all things considered, large. If a similar amount were raised in India, proportionate to the population, hundreds of millions sterling would remain for the disposal of the Finance Minister. In addition to Rs. 15,000,000 now [in 1876] raised as general revenue [in 1906 Rs. 35,000,000], there are Municipal taxes and various local cesses which, in a measure, would correspond with the local expenditure of presidencies and native States. However, it is useless to carry on the comparison between the money-chests of little Ceylon and huge India. Upon some classes of the community, and they among the poorest, taxation falls heavily; in the case of a cooly with a wife and one child living in Colombo, one-twelfth of his year's wages are absorbed in taxation. This is so unjust, and is capable of such facile adjustment, that the anomaly cannot exist long after full light is thrown upon it. Indian publicists, acquainted with the outcry, almost rebellion, which followed in India on the imposition of a direct money tax (on incomes), on visiting Ceylon, generally express almost incredulous surprise on being told that an ordinary cooly, in common with all other able-bodied males save immigrant coolies, annually pays in hard cash the equivalent of six days' labour, for the up-keep of the roads. The author of the measure enacting this was Sir Philip Wodehouse, now Governor of Bombay, and it came into operation in 1849. A great injustice involved is, that the rate is not graduated; the wealthy merchant or high-placed civilian paying exactly the same as his cooly or horse-keeper; no more, no less. During the past few years surpluses of large amounts have overflowed the treasury, and most has been spent in "public works of acknowledged utility," as the legislative formula runs. The following table shows the main sources of revenue and expenditure.

ESTIMATE OF THE REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE OF CEYLON FOR THE YEAR 1876.

REVENUE.	Rs. Cts.		EXPENDITURE.	Rs. Cts.		Rs. Cts.	
			<i>Charges sanctioned by Ordinances Nos. 1 of 1870 and 8 of 1872.</i>				
			ESTABLISHMENTS.				
Arrears of Revenue of former years ...	250,000	0	Civil	1,143,371	75		
Customs	2,800,000	0	Judicial	628,635	0		
Port and Harbour Dues	100,000	0	Ecclesiastical	87,200	0		
Land Sales	760,000	0	Public Instruction	41,750	0		
Land Revenue	1,000,000	0	Medical	104,702	0		
Rents, Exclusive of Land	400,000	0	Police	23,500	0		
Licenses	2,000,000	0	Prisons	10,650	0		
Stamps	1,110,000	0	Convict Establishment	15,705	0		
Taxes	45,000	0	Colonial Store	25,821	25		
Postage	5,000	0				2,081,335	0
Fines, Forfeitures, and Fees of Court ...	86,000	0	<i>Sanctioned by Ordinance No. 12 of 1867.</i>				
Government Vessels	50,000	0	Contribution towards Military Ex-			1,300,000	0
Sale of Government Property	1,350,000	0	penditure				
Reimbursements in aid of Expenses			<i>Sanctioned by Ordinances Nos. 9 of</i>				
incurred by Government	300,000	0	1869 and 6 of 1870.				
Miscellaneous Receipts	280,000	0	Railway Interest and Sinking Fund ...			618,666	0
Interest	150,000	0					4,000,001
Pearl Fishery			<i>Charges voted by the Legislative</i>				
Special Receipts	8,000	0	Council in Appropriation Ordi-				9,448,608
Receipts by the Crown Agents in			nance for 1876				
London	5,000	0					13,448,609
Railway Receipts	2,750,000	0					15
	13,449,000	0	Works charged on Balances				1,451,917
Draft from Balances	1,451,917	73	Do. Surplus Funds				58,416
Do. Surplus Funds	58,416	50	Do. Loan Board Funds... ..				34,986
Do. Loan Board Funds... ..	34,986	53					53
			Surplus Revenue				390
Total ... Rs.	14,994,320	76				Total .. Rs.	14,994,320
							76

Council Chamber, Colombo, 15th December, 1875.

ARTHUR N. BIRCH, Colonial Secretary.

[To the figures given by Mr. Digby for 1876 are added for comparison the figures for 1906. Since he wrote, the revenue has increased from fifteen million rupees to thirty-five millions and the expenditure from fifteen millions to thirty-four and a half.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE 1906.

ACTUAL RECEIPTS.

				Rs.	Cts.
Customs	...	...	...	8,358,542	10
Port, Harbour, Wharf	...	...	...	2,086,793	30
Licenses, Excise, &c.	...	...	...	7,602,012	96
Fees of Court, &c.	...	...	...	1,421,061	69
Post and Telegraph	...	...	...	1,237,790	91
Government Railways	...	...	...	10,092,928	31
Interest	...	...	...	580,737	87
Miscellaneous Receipts.	...	...	...	440,019	35
Land Revenue	...	...	...	594,288	48
Land Sales	...	...	...	2,616,485	95
				<hr/>	
				35,030,660	92

ACTUAL PAYMENTS.

HEADS OF EXPENDITURE.

				Rs.	Cts.
Charges on account of public debt	...	...	...	3,648,732	25
Military expenditure	...	...	...	2,868,478	40
Pensions	...	...	...	1,412,571	91
Exchange	...	...	...	143,267	58
Personal emoluments	...	...	...	8,469,424	41
Other charges	...	...	...	9,406,887	43
Miscellaneous services	...	...	...	777,450	39
Public Works (annually recurrent)	...	...	...	2,325,602	27
Irrigation Works do.	...	...	...	164,268	57
Railway department, new construction	...	...	...	964,034	52
Increase of salaries	...	...	...	353,782	66
Public Works, extraordinary (Chargeable to Loan Fund)	...	...	...	1,850,339	12
Charged to revenue pending	...	...	...	—	—
Raising of loan	...	...	...	—	—
Public Works—extraordinary	...	...	...	1,913,542	62
Irrigation	...	...	...	196,171	87
				<hr/>	
				34,494,554	00

The public debt is very small, and is incurred solely for reproductive works, such as railways and a break-water; in each sinking funds are provided. So prosperous has the Island been, that one railway, the extension to Gampola, was constructed out of current revenue, and the debt on a continuation of this line will be redeemed in a very few years, when a hundred miles of one of the best paying railways in the world will be in the hands of Government, perfectly free of liability. [At the time this was written the railway from Colombo to Kandy and Nawalapitiya had been finished, about 92 miles: about 470 miles have been since opened, viz. to Matale, Matara, Bandarawela, Jaffna, Yatiyantote, Nuwara Eliya.] During the earlier days of the Council's existence, the proposal was made to raise loans for educational schemes, the loans to be liquidated by a sinking fund added to interest. The proposal, however, was firmly resisted by the (then) Governor, to the lasting detriment of the Colony. Save from food taxes, [since abolished by the efforts of the writer, the late Mr. Geo. Wall and the Governor Sir A. Havelock, 1892] and that on salt, the system on which the revenue is raised is sound: when the Home authorities cease to control the spending of it, there will be cause for congratulation.

(b) LEGISLATION FOR CEYLONESE INTERESTS.

Considering that, according to theory, the affairs of Ceylon are administered by the British for the Ceylonese, one cannot repress an exclamation of surprise at the few measures in the statute book which directly concern the Sinhalese, Tamils, Moormen, and Malays. The reason of this, however, is not far to seek. Slavery disappeared soon after the British took possession of the Island. Education was fostered, perfect personal liberty secured to all, without distinction of religion, race, or colour, and an improved system of judicature provided an honest judge: each of these measures was secured with little or no legislation, the Charter having established the superior courts at the time the Council was called into existence, while slavery was finally abolished by an Ordinance of two short clauses, and education became a matter of administration affected by annual votes in the Supply Bill. Much, indeed, has been done, and, in some respects, the position of the people is better than it was under the native monarchs: possibly, greater haste would have led to less solidity, but this is doubtful. Certain foundations have been laid; the time has now come for a superstructure to be erected upon them, and the people introduced to a wider sense of freedom and larger liberty, by which they may exercise the right of free citizens to control themselves rather than to be controlled by others. The very acts which have been passed by the old

Council, now straining from enlarged life to burst its bounds, have made this necessary. Give freedom to a people who have soundness at bottom, remove disabilities from their path, and not only does labour on their behalf cease, but they go on to do similar work for others. Seed has been sown and the time for the harvesting of results has come.

In the early days of the Council the zeal for education was great; the fruit is seen in the fairly well-educated generation of men who are now fit, with European assistance, to legislate for themselves. The conflicting religious interests of the Island, in years gone by, rendered much progress in education extremely difficult; long and stormy were the fights on the subject, until a system of grants-in-aid for purely secular results allayed the storm, and settled the "religious difficulty" which still vexes English statesmen. The energy expended in the struggle, when that struggle came to an end, was not so sedulously turned into the channels of teaching as ought to have been the case; domestic slavery was gone, and the equality of all men, first taught by the Semitic race under the influence of the teaching of Christ, became a part of the inheritance of the Ceylonese individual. The *gamarala* (villager) suffered much from cattle trespass and cattle stealing, and became greatly demoralized thereby. Government stepped in and checked the evil; later on giving the aggrieved party power, in Village Council assembled, to do this for himself. Religious bondage, slavery to the soil, which especially fettered the tenants of Temple lands, as *rajakaria* (enforced labour for the king) had embraced the whole population, certain favoured classes excepted, was made a thing of the past to those who were willing to commute degrading services for a specie payment. Pecuniary aid and scientific assistance were granted to restore the ruined tanks, to repair the retaining bund, to fit in sluices, and once more to cause precious rain-water to lie upon the land and nurture the beautiful green springing blade of the rice-plant. As much was done in a few years as had been completed in a generation of the rule of the old kings, whose deeds, owing to the lapse of years, seem to the strained vision, as it peers across the centuries, fabulously large; this, too, without oppression of the people. Peculiar phases of disease, resulting from bad food and impure water, were specially grappled with, and hospitals erected for the succour of the sick; whilst, in many parts of the land, medical aid, through duly-qualified doctors, was supplied. That the people have not more fully availed themselves of the advantages of European medical treatment, is due mainly to their own prejudices and apathy. When "the skies above are as brass and the land beneath as iron," which, unfortunately, too frequently happens in the East,—in Ceylon, however, thanks to its insular position, less frequently than India,—relief works are opened, and direct assistance

given. It is the boast of England that, bad as are her Poor Laws, no one *need* die of starvation within the four seas of Britain, as sustenance at least is provided for all; yet a writer in the *Contemporary Review* (September, 1875) tells of many authenticated deaths from starvation in one year. So prompt are the authorities of Ceylon, so watchful the officials, and so pertinacious the unofficial members of Council and the newspaper Press, that no death from lack of food need take place in the Island. Very different this to what happened less than a score of years ago, when it was found that several hundred persons had actually died of starvation, and nothing was known of this by the public till the official, who had charge of the district, took his papers from the pigeon-hole of his desk and compiled his Annual Report. The crowning work of the existing Council, above the registration of titles and restriction of entails, so far as purely Ceylonese interests are concerned, was the passing, five years ago (1871), of the Gansabhawa Ordinance; by which Village Municipalities and Village Tribunals have been revived, and, so far as the administration of communal affairs is concerned, they are working with as much perfection as anything human can be expected to attain. One high in authority in Ceylon, in a good position for observing the working of these institutions, says, in a letter: "So far as I can ascertain, everything is working admirably. I once told Sir Hercules Robinson [under whose rule the Gansabhawa Ordinance was passed] by letter, that had he done nothing else it ought hereafter to be inscribed on his tombstone, 'he restored Village Councils to Ceylon.'" Waves of conquest have rolled over India from Central Asian border-lands to the narrow spit of land where the continent dips into a great waste of waters stretching to the Southern Pole, but nowhere did conquest remove or overlay the foundation-stone of the Aryan social fabric. The empire changed, and at court, now one conqueror, now another sat on the imperial throne. But the depths of the social strata, the village system of "home rule," and the inhabitants thereof, were little more disturbed than are the minute *globigerina* which are laying a chalk bed in the mid-Atlantic, discomposed by a terrific storm which the while is swamping a stout ship or straining the stanchions of an iron steamer. Only the British "raj," among conquerors in the East, unwittingly applied a sponge to these ancient institutions, and, to some extent, wiped them out. Fruitless and regrettable task—for fuller experience shows that a durable structure of administration by the people for the people, can only be reared on ancient lines. Consequently, in India the *panchayat* is being revived, and in Ceylon the Gansabhawa has been made once more to serve the many wants of village daily life; and to arouse the local ambition and energy of the people which had been crushed by the despotism of the ancient kings. To repeat, British rule

in Ceylon has been particularly beneficent; true policy and enlightened statesmanship would argue that the trust and confidence aroused should be taken hold of, fostered, and directed to lasting good. "You have taught me self-government, and have raised high hopes and ambitions within me," may remark the educated Ceylonese, addressing his present rulers, "now you will surely not deny me the privilege to exercise my powers? You have made of me a man. Stand just a little aside, (I do not mean, go away altogether), and permit me to attempt manly things." Can the appeal be rejected? Forty and four years already [now seventy-six years] have the people served an apprenticeship: shall they not now enter the Promised Land of Representative Government, for which they have longed, and to rightly appreciate which, all their political training has been directed?

(c) EUROPEAN INTERESTS.

The fact that Ceylon, upon the partial ruin of the West India Colonies when slave emancipation took place, rose into importance as a scene of European labour, which might at first sight seem to be a means of keeping back the Ceylonese from self-rule and self-control, has had an exactly contrary effect. Though it may seem as if the legislation of Ceylon during the past forty years has been, in the majority of cases, apparently for European interests, native interests have been *pari passu* served. This is true of nearly all the distinctively European Ordinances, though it must be confessed the good which has resulted to the people was not in the original programme, and has merely been an illustration of the truth, that more ends are involved in particular acts than are dreamed of by the promoters. Ordinances have been passed in European interests to aid immigration, provide railway extension, medical aid for coolies, the formation of roads by grants-in-aid from the general revenue. Two Ordinances may be specified as specially passed to please the coffee planters, *viz.* (1) Ordinances to exempt manures from tolls, and (2) a bill providing special legislation against coffee stealing. The introduction of the last-named measure caused great commotion, as the well-known maxim of the English common law, "assume every man innocent until he be proved guilty," was altered to making every native who was found on a coffee estate—(estates are un-fenced and are "path-ed" in every direction) explain for what purpose he was there; if necessity arose, making possessors of picked coffee prove that it was honestly obtained, and prohibiting the possession of green (unripe) coffee under a penalty. Being "special legislation," it was stoutly resisted on the unofficial side of the House, and a long debate ensued. The bill was nevertheless read a second

time, but in committee repeated divisions took place. There was much in favour of this measure being passed; it was drawn upon the recommendation of Sir Edward Creasy, Chief Justice, who had found that high prices for coffee had fostered crime, and that the heaviest sentences imposed under the existing law against theft, was inadequate to check the evil. Two years' working of the Ordinance has justified its introduction. District Judges and Police Magistrates are not now much troubled with cases of coffee stealing, though prices have reached, and continue to maintain, an almost unexampled height. What is often asked for in Indian Presidency towns, in the interests of European employers, *viz.*, registration of servants, has been introduced into Ceylon with the best results. The measure was denounced, at its inception, as inquisitorial, but a year's working led to the weeding of bad servants out of the ranks of "helps;" now it is as popular with *employés* as with employers, and its operations are to be extended.

Even with its system of nominated representatives, the Council has been of great service in educating the people in the advantages of deliberative assemblies; and it may now be considered what kind of institution is required to meet the necessities of the case were the present Chamber, its work done, removed from the place it has so long occupied. It was created by a despatch from the Colonial Office; it may be removed by equally facile means. Outside agitation for reform may, and will, be carried on. Nothing can be done inside the Chamber, as certain instructions to the Governor forbid the question of the constitution of the assembly being broached at any of the meetings by any of the members, a most unfair and arbitrary rule.

II

THE PEOPLE AS THEY ARE AND THE CHAMBER THAT IS NEEDED.

"The peculiar circumstances of Ceylon, both physical and moral, seem to point it out to the British Government as the fittest spot, in our Eastern dominions, in which to plant the germ of European civilization, whence we may not unreasonably hope that it will hereafter spread over the whole of those vast territories.—*Report on Judicial Establishments and Procedure in Ceylon.* By C. H. Cameron, 1830-31.

POLITICAL FRANCHISE.

Nil.

The two immediately foregoing lines appear in the centre of a page of the annual Blue Book, and, unlike other title-pages in the volume, has no section of details following. There being no political franchise, the question is prompted, in spite of what has already been written: "Is

the inhabitant of Ceylon worthy of the franchise, and capable of rightly exercising such a trust?" The late Rev. Spence Hardy, a missionary of long standing in Ceylon, has described its climate by the experience of two individuals, the one reciting all the disadvantages and drawbacks of an Oriental clime, the other summarising the many undoubted benefits. If a stranger were not informed that the descriptions referred to one and the same place, he would never of himself infer that they did so. Similarly, two Englishmen resident in Ceylon may be taken, and if questioned with reference to the people, may give diverse answers. One will assuredly say that they are indolent, untrustworthy, untruthful, pretending to be attached to the British, whilst all the time they bitterly hate them, and so on, until there is not an offence against the decalogue, or sin against society, which they are not held to be guilty of. Another Englishman, one who has mixed much with the people, will remark that undoubtedly the people have some bad qualities,—in short, are human,—that some of them have not the regard and love for truth which Englishmen are reputed to possess, but that they should not be unreasonably blamed on this account, as their antecedents have not been such as to cause them to be devoted to veracity. Subject races, the world over, slaves and others habitually oppressed, have never been notorious for truthfulness. That goes along with freedom. Further, he will say that the Burghers have many intellectual and kindred gifts, particularly those of a kindly nature; that the Tamils are honest in business, energetic and pushing; the Moorman and Malay very good behind the counter, on the bungalow verandah with a pedlar's pack, or as masons; whilst the Sinhalese, given fair opportunities, are not one whit behind any of their co-temporaries of other races in the Island: whilst it is as true of the Sinhalese and Tamils as it is of the Burghers, that, with moderate facilities, they exhibit intellectual gifts and acquirements which make them the equals, in this respect at least, of Englishmen resident in the Colony. It should never be lost sight of in dealing with Eastern races, those in Ceylon in particular, that the manner in which they were ruled in the past was such as to stifle all energy, all personal effort, and to make them mere puppets in the hands of a dissolute monarch, surrounded generally with courtiers who fooled their master's whims to the top of their bent. All things considered, the inhabitants of Ceylon, those of Dravidian or Malayan race, as well as those of Aryan extraction, have developed a faculty for self-government, and have progressed as rapidly as any race of people could do, with the consequence that they are now fitted to occupy a higher position in the scale of nations than that they have hitherto filled. Perhaps, of the half-dozen nationalities represented in the population of Ceylon, the true "sons of the soil," the Sinhalese, are least thought of by Europeans as possessing abilities which should

entitle them to a position of equality with the alien rulers; yet, known as individuals, they are learned and industrious, and as communities, not without a deal of energy. This latter characteristic has been especially displayed in the working of the Village Communities' Ordinance; and the Administration Reports of the Government Agents contain many facts which might be cited in proof of the assertion. Fruit of the richest and ripest kind is being garnered from the agriculturists, a class wanting the active life of the town. If this is so in the hidden recesses of the jungle and among paddy-fields, what may not be expected of those in whose minds the leaven of the century is working, who would be the main body of electors in a scheme of reform, by whose suffrages the members of the representative institution for which the Colony is now ripe, would be sent to legislate? The success of the Village Communities' Ordinance has been turned against it; and some who are not disposed that their Ceylonese fellow-citizens should have equal rights with themselves object to it, because there have not been rowdy violence and keenly contested elections when Village Councils have been formed. That there has been neither bribery nor rowdyism, one would think was rather a proof in favour of the institution than an argument to show that it has failed. It only needs that the Tamils, who have their own governing bodies, meeting weekly for the transaction of business concerning the community, should turn a similar amount of attention to public matters, to place them on a level with the Sinhalese in this respect, and both races combined, with a good infusion of Burghers and Europeans, would make as active and intelligent a community as could almost be desired. It is not argued that there would at once be the smoothness of procedure and facility of working which marks institutions of ancient growth and long continued practice; it would be a pity if there were. Better that there should be mistakes and something of awkwardness at starting, with the chance of further attaining unto perfection, than that success in such matters, which has been gained at great cost by others, should be too easily acquired. If the object were obtained with little or no trouble, it would not be rightly valued.

Spite of the instances before their eyes in the present able Ceylonese members of the local legislature, Europeans in Ceylon often find it difficult to imagine that dark-skinned gentlemen, habited somewhat differently from themselves, should possess statesmanlike ability, or be able by power of speech to take a good grasp of a subject, and reason logically upon it. As though facility of utterance and a logical mind were matters of dress! It doth not appear in *Hansard*, nor hath it ever been recorded in contemporary history, that the country members of the House of Commons, who second the reply to the Queen's speech, are more eloquent than other members of Parliament, although they

rise to address the speaker in all the bravery of a Deputy-Lieutenant's uniform, gorgeous and unique as that was before an order of court changed the tapering swallow-tails into the more decorous lappets of a surtout coat! Strong sticklers for the rights and privileges granted to them, Ceylonese legislators would in all probability become; the pages of the *Ceylon Hansard*, for the past two years, give ample evidence of this. Sturdy patriotism and not subservient time-serving would, it may safely be predicted, be the prevailing characteristic of the Ceylon House of Representatives.

The material interests of the Island, alike of European and Ceylonese, demand that legislative power, to a greater extent than is now possessed, and a machinery which will work more smoothly and rapidly than the present, should be provided. Proof of this is seen in the backward state of many of the Provinces exclusively Ceylonese, and one of the most important parts of the Island, the Jaffna Peninsula in the north, being so completely shut out from the Capital and the more progressive parts of the Island as to seem almost a foreign land. It is a Tamil who suggests, in the newspapers, the placing of a mail cart on a road just completed, which would bring Jaffna within twenty-four hours' journey of Colombo, and it is a European Government which peremptorily refuses to do this. The consequence of Jaffna being thus shut off from the rest of the Island is that a great part of her active people, the keenest in the community, go across the "silver streak," and the Madras Presidency and the Straits Settlements have the benefit of their talents. [The railway has since been opened, 1905]. To the European a reform is most urgently required. A remarkable illustration is afforded in the feeble and dilatory manner with which the Home Colonial authorities have dealt with the subject of railway extension, while "some one should be hanged" for criminal waste of time in regard to water works for Colombo. It is impossible to fairly rule Ceylon from Downing Street, six thousand miles distant, and it is little short of a crime to attempt it. Materially this is true. Socially and politically it is equally patent. After nearly eighty years' occupation of the Island, only a miserably small sum is expended for educational purposes, and the system of education is not an iota ahead of what was taught in English grammar and day schools in the early part of the century. This would not have been the case had the inhabitants been given more power in Council: proof that this is no mere assertion, made at random, may be found in one fact. As soon as the Gansabhawa Ordinance gave the people control over education they established schools with great rapidity *for girls* as well as for boys; made attendance compulsory on pain of fine, with the further punishment that if the parent continued contumacious, he should be deprived of his vote for the Village Council,

and declared ineligible to sit as an assessor in the tribunal to try breaches of communal law. On-lookers, struck by the advanced position Ceylon has attained, compared, say with one of the Indian Presidencies, think that there is great cause for gratulation. But when all the circumstances are taken into consideration, the feeling should be one of shame that so little has been done. Twelve years under a Representative Government, might be trusted to do as much as a generation of the present system has accomplished.

It may be not inappropriate here to sketch the kind of assembly for which the Colony is now ripe, placing as a porch to the edifice to be described, an abstract of the population of the various divisions of the land. In the distribution of seats, numbers have been kept in view to some extent, though the proportion of existing schools has been considered.

POPULATION OF CEYLON 1871.

WESTERN PROVINCE.				
Colombo District	...	...	...	578,721
Sabaragamua District	...	...	...	92,277
Kegalla District	...	...	...	105,287
				776,285
CENTRAL PROVINCE				
Kandy District	...	...	...	258,432
Matale District	...	...	...	71,724
Nuwara Eliya District	...	...	...	36,184
Badulla District	...	...	...	129,000
				495,340
SOUTHERN PROVINCE..				
Galle District	...	...	...	195,416
Matara District	...	...	...	143,379
Hambantota District	...	...	...	60,960
				399,755
NORTHERN PROVINCE.				
Jaffna District	...	...	...	246,185
Manaar District	...	...	...	25,545
Mullaitivu District	...	...	...	10,058
				281,788
NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCE.				
Kurunegala District	...	...	...	207,885
Puttalam District	...	...	...	61,199
				269,084
EASTERN PROVINCE.				
Batticaloa District	...	...	...	93,220
Trincomalee. District	...	...	...	20,070
				113,290

REFORM OF THE CEYLON LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

25

NORTH-CENTRAL PROVINCE.

Nuwara Kalawiya District ...	...	...	...	58,972
Tamankaduwa ...	...	...	...	4,768
Demala Pattuwa ...	...	...	...	6,980
				70,720

[The figures given above are those of the Census of 1871. Those of the 1901 Census are given below for comparison :

POPULATION OF CEYLON, 1901.

Western Province ...	...	...	...	920,683
Colombo Municipality...	...	...	...	154,691
Colombo District (exclusive of the Municipality)	...	...	...	387,886
Negombo District ...	...	...	...	148,249
Kalutara District ...	...	...	...	229,857
Central Province ...	...	...	...	622,832
Kandy District ...	...	...	...	377,591
Matale District ...	...	...	...	92,203
Nuwara Eliya District ...	...	...	...	153,038
Northern Province ...	...	...	...	340,936
Jaffna District ...	...	...	...	300,851
Manaar District ...	...	...	...	24,926
Mullaittivu District ...	...	...	...	15,159
Southern Province ...	...	...	...	566,736
Galle District ...	...	...	...	258,116
Matara District ...	...	...	...	203,750
Hambantota District ...	...	...	...	104,870
Eastern Province ...	...	...	...	173,602
Batticaloa District ...	...	...	...	145,161
Trincomalee District ...	...	...	...	28,441
North-Western Province ...	...	...	...	353,626
Kurunegala District ...	...	...	...	249,429
Puttalam District ...	...	...	...	29,779
Chilaw District ...	...	...	...	74,418
North-Central Province ...	...	...	...	79,110
Anuradhapura District ...	...	...	...	79,110
Province of Uva ...	...	...	...	186,674
Badulla District ...	...	...	...	186,674
Province of Sabaragamuwa ...	...	...	...	321,755
Ratnapura District ...	...	...	...	132,964
Kegalla District ...	...	...	...	188,791]

PROPOSED HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

- 13 Officials, Heads of Departments, viz., the Major-General, the Colonial Secretary, Queen's Advocate, Auditor-General, Government Agents—Western, Central, Southern, Northern, Eastern, North-Western, and North-Central Provinces; Surveyor-General, and Collector of Customs.
- 1 European, elected by Chamber of Commerce (Colombo and Galle),
- 5 Colombo,—(elected by people) representing European, Burgher, Tamil, Sinhalese, Moor and Malay communities,
- 1 Kandy (race indifferent).
- 1 Galle ditto.
- 1 Jaffna ditto.
- 1 Dimbula, Dickoya and Maskeliya (coffee districts).
- 1 Uva ditto.
- 1 Districts north of Kandy, including Kadugannawa and Kurunegala on the west.
- 1 Districts east of Kandy, including Hantane, Nilambe, Pussellawa, Ramboda, &c.

WESTERN PROVINCE.

- 3 Colombo District.
- 1 Sabaragamuwa District.
- 1 Kegalla ditto.

CENTRAL PROVINCE.

- 1 Kandy District.
- 1 Matale ditto.
- 1 Nuwara Eliya and Badulla.

SOUTHERN PROVINCE.

- 1 Galle District.
- 1 Matara ditto.

NORTHERN PROVINCE.

- 1 Jaffna District, including Manaar.
- 1 Mullaittivu ditto.

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCE.

- 1 Kurunegalla District.

EASTERN PROVINCE.

- 1 Batticaloa and Trincomalee.

NORTH-CENTRAL PROVINCE.

- 1 Anuradhapura District.

- 41 in all, including Speaker to be nominated from amongst the members.

The qualification for the franchise might be,—in Municipalities the contribution to municipal taxes; in planting districts, the managing or assisting in the management of an estate, such manager or assistant to be over twenty-one years of age; while in outlying districts, possession of property of a certain value, or payment of rates levied by local

improvement boards, or having a vote for Village Councils, should constitute qualifications for a vote for the legislature. A clause in the Charter granting some such scheme as has been shadowed forth, might permit the House year by year to add to the voting power of a district by permitting newly constituted Gansabhawa voters to be added to the register. The union between town and village life and national affairs, could not fail to be in the best degree stimulating and healthily beneficial to the people. A veto upon legislation might be placed in the hands of the Governor, who, in his turn, would be responsible to the Home authorities, to whom he would send full minutes of proceedings. The present Executive Council, consisting of four chief officials, should be enlarged, having as many elected members as officials: these members should hold office for three years only, and, if Europeans, should have been in the Island at least three years. The Governor should not have a seat in the assembly,* but a Speaker should be selected. Salaries should be given to the "unofficial" members of the Executive, who should hold portfolios of agriculture, and similar matters. Elections might be triennial, and the sense of responsibility could then be brought prominently before the people, who also could not fail to benefit by the frequent communications which would take place between members and their constituents. The representative of "gay wisdom" in the House of Commons, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, addressing his constituents recently, reminded them that when members of the Lower House were dismissed from Westminster, the Queen sent them "to their duties in the country." He confessed he was puzzled to know what these duties were: in his own case, for instance, as a County Magistrate the principal duty seemed to be to license one set of people to make another set drunk. The phrase quoted might be a reality in Ceylon, if only members of the right stamp were elected, and this would certainly be the case if the reform were initiated *con amore*. A member's duty so far as the purely Ceylonese constituencies were concerned, would be only half-fulfilled by three or four month's legislation in the year. Properly carried out a member would only fully perform his duty when he made frequent visits to the people he represented, and thereby bring them into contact with the civilization and progress of the age, in the

* It is lowering to the dignity of the Queen's Representative to take part in the often rough give-and-take style of oratory of such institutions. Mixing in petty matters the vice-regal office is not raised in esteem. Governors are but men, and they naturally take much interest in measures which have emanated from a conclave of which they form a part, *viz.*, the Executive, which initiates all Ordinances. Amongst the traditions of the present House is one which tells of a Governor highly offended at persistent opposition to a Government bill, deliberately turning his chair round and sitting with his back to an Hon. member during the whole time he was speaking. Further, the President became very wroth, broke the rules of the House in regard to the bill, and was only restored to his wonted composure by the Senior Member temporarily occupying the Chair, whilst His Excellency went to one of the open windows and watched some military athletic sports being carried out on a *maidan* near! W.D.

active life of which, he would show, they were taking a part. Given arrangements of the nature indicated, there would be provided, what is now greatly needed, *viz.*, scope for the ambition of able men among the Ceylonese who, if they find their lawful aspirations checked, may thwart rather than aid in the solution of social and political problems which England in the East has to meet. At present the way for advancement is not made plain in the manner indicated.

The cry is often uttered that, in matters of legislation, India wants rest. Perhaps so; rest at least from ill-considered, injudicious interference with the people, but it is, on the face of the remark, monstrous to insinuate that English rule has been so beneficent from Cashmere to Comorin that her rulers may henceforth "rest from their labours" for their "works will follow them." Nothing is farther from the truth in India, and nothing is less in accordance with fact in Ceylon. The last-named land has mineral resources to develop, but they are few: its wealth consists in its broad acres, and apart from the uppermost slopes of the highest hills there is, perhaps, not more than a hundred thousand acres which could not be made annually to yield produce. There are tracts of cultivable lands, supplied with tanks repaired and fit for use, or needing only very slight additions to make them available for storage of water, waiting to be colonised: this will never be done under the present system of rule. Under a popular Government what is desiderated might be accomplished; it is as certain as anything actually unattained can be that it would be done. This is not the only way in which rich results would be sure to follow from more generous and enlightened policy of rule. With things remaining as they are, while there is some cause for congratulation at what has been done, there is more occasion for regret and shame that so much lies unattempted.

III.

RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION.

The whole case, from a material point of view, for the establishment of wider and more popular institutions, may be shown in a double row of figures. The present Council was established in 1834: if suitable for the state of things existing then, it is unsuitable now. Every single item in the "Statistical Review of the Progress of Ceylon," appended to the Blue Book shows this, as will appear from comparing the following returns:—

Population.	Military.	Births.	Marriages.	Deaths.	Schools.	Scholars.	Revenue.	Expenditure.	Shipping.	Imports.	Exports.
1834.							£	£	Tons.	£	£
* 1,167,700	6,227	21,930	7,527	17,486	1,105	13,891	377,952	844,836	153,510	372,726	146,834
1875											
2,459,512	1,716	67,285	13,837	63,363	1,570	73,020	1,354,123	1,220,160	2,216,403	5,261,240	5,375,410
1906.											
† 3,984,985	1,468	141,847	18,005	136,271	4,006	276,601	2,335,877	2,176,281	13,299,656	8,228,528	7,501,127

This marvellous development, as great for an Asiatic Colony as the rise of Chicago or Melbourne in American or Anglo-Saxon communities, demands better treatment than it at present receives from the Colonial Office. Nothing more nor less than the measure of freedom which fathers give their sons when the latter are too old to be kept at home. Not that Ceylon, as a consequence of greater freedom, is likely to desire to break away altogether from England: rather would the bonds which connect her with the British dominions be riveted. The diverse races in the Island, instead of seeking to acquire dominance one over the other, are being drawn together and to think and act as one people: distinctive race-names are giving place to the comprehensive and descriptive appellation of Ceylonese. It is not possible to conceive of a time when British agricultural interest in Ceylon will cease. It is too profitable to be given up by those engaged in it, as is sometimes urged would be the case, were justice done to the people in the manner indicated in this paper. An English Governor will necessarily rule whilst connection with Great Britain is kept up. Compensation may be found probably in Ceylonese attaining high honours in the Imperial Parliament, or even in being sent to rule distant Provinces of the federated constitution of the future. Experience proves that it is not wise to make local magnates supreme local rulers.

To sum up, the contentions of this paper may be formulated in the following propositions, which, it is hoped, have to some extent been proved, and which show the desirability for those who have the power to grant reform, not to be slack in well-doing, but by just and generous dealing to stave off agitation and bring affairs as they exist in concert with institutions which have yet to be created. It is maintained—

(a) That the interests of the Island suffer grievously from the necessity for referring everything to Downing Street, London, for decision;

* Estimated for 1834.

† Figures for 1906 added for comparison.

(b) That full justice is not done to the Island, because those most acquainted with its wants are denied a proportionate share in its government ;

(c) That, with almost unexampled opportunities, all progress save that which is material, has been comparatively slow and intermittent : much has been done, vastly much more might have been accomplished ;

(d) That the people of the land have displayed an astonishing fitness for self-government, and that, therefore, the duty of the English rulers is to recognise the manhood it has developed, and to give fair play to the qualities it has been the means of bringing forth ;

(e) That the experiment of ruling the East through the people of Eastern lands will, of necessity, have to be made ; and that a better theatre than Ceylon for the inception of the new rule, cannot be conceived, the action of the people themselves having already taken the proposal out of the region of experiment ; and

(f) Opportunity calls for action.

WM. DIGBY.