

SIR CHARLES WOOD'S INDIAN POLICY, 1853-1866

By

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Abstract

Sir Charles Wood's presidency of the Board of Control (1853-1855) coincided with the dawning of an age of reform. Wood's Government of India Act reformed the Indian legislature, abolished the civil patronage and provided for establishing a law commission in England. Prompted by educationalists, Wood closed Haileybury College and opened the civil service to university graduates. Advised by reformers of long Indian experience, he issued his famous education despatch. Under pressure from the Manchester school, he prosecuted public works and railways vigorously, and pursued a pacific diplomatic policy.

As Secretary of State after the mutiny (1859-1866), Wood was faced with reconstructing the foundations of British rule. Regarding the reduction and improvement of the military forces as essential to financial and military stability, he demanded retrenchments and, though opposed by his Council and by Canning, abolished the Local European army. Partly to win the support of prominent Indians, he endorsed Canning's "conciliatory" policy - the "adoption despatch", the delegation of administrative functions to landlords, and the nomination of Indian legislative councillors. Seeking to avoid friction between Indians and English settlers, and having a Whiggish regard for liberty and property, he was concerned to safeguard civil rights and customary rights to land. He consolidated Britain's raj, and preserved

Indians from exploitation, by exercising fully his overriding authority. However, he failed to provide adequately for social and economic regeneration. Though he favoured extending the permanent settlement and constructing irrigation works, his failure to establish a new and elastic source of revenue led him to retard these improvements. Again, his attachment to the doctrines of laissez-faire and self-help undermined his good intentions with regard to education and railways. His policy reflects many of the strengths and weaknesses of mid-Victorian Whiggery.

Preface

In 1962, the year that I began this thesis, Dr D. Southgate's The Passing of the Whigs, Mr M. MacLagan's 'Clemency' Canning, Dr S.N. Singh's The Secretary of State for India and his Council, and articles by Dr T.R. Metcalf on land policy in India, and by Professor O. MacDonagh on the attitude of the Manchester school towards imperialism, were published. The appearance of this spate of studies has materially advanced my own work. In the same year, Dr D. Williams completed a D.Phil. thesis on policy formation at the India Office during the 1858-1866 period, which he generously allowed me to consult. I have had the good fortune to work in a field which the labours of scholars have very recently rendered stimulating. For the selection of the subject, and for encouragement and guidance in exploring it, I am indebted to Dr K.A. Ballhatchet. Only his research students, who have themselves benefited from his criticisms, will appreciate the extent of this indebtedness.

I am obliged to the Earl of Halifax for permitting me access to sections of the Hickleton Papers, and to Major T.L. Ingram for placing them at the City Library, York, for my use. The student of Sir Charles Wood's career owes a special debt to Major Ingram for his catalogue of the Papers. I have enjoyed the additional benefit of drawing upon Major Ingram's knowledge of Wood and of his forbears, both through conversation and by reading his unpublished commentaries upon the Papers.

Contents

Abstract		Page	2
Preface			4
Introduction	The Portfolio for India		6
Chapter 1	Portrait of a Whig		13
	2 Government at Home		45
	3 Government in India		77
	4 Law Reform and Civil Rights		107
	5 The Civil Administration		141
	6 The Charter for Education		175
	7 Railways and Public Works		199
	8 Imperial Diplomacy		240
	9 Land Tenures and Revenue Settlement		279
	10 Military Reconstruction		319
	11 Finance		353
Conclusion	Achievement of a Whig Imperialist		388
Bibliography			399

Introduction

The Portfolio for India

Sir Charles Wood was President of the Board of Control for India from January 1853 until February 1855, the duration of Lord Aberdeen's government. He came to the office at a particularly interesting stage in the British administration of India. The term of the East India Company's Charter of 1833 was almost at an end, and Britain's future course with regard to the government of India remained to be determined. Wood found committees of both houses of parliament engaged in collecting evidence upon the nature and effects of the administration since 1833. The testimony indicated that there was little room for congratulation upon the extent to which the noble intentions of the reformers of the eighteen-thirties had been embodied in executive action.

The Charter Act of 1833 was to have inaugurated an age of reform. The dedication of Lord Bentinck, Thomas Babington Macaulay, James Mill and Sir Charles Trevelyan had been pledged to that end. But schemes for the rationalization of the legal system, the dispersion of education, the competitive recruitment of civil servants, and the regeneration of the economy by enlightened fiscal and land policies, had foundered on the rocks of impecuniousness or apathy. Wars in Afghanistan, Sind, the Punjab and Lower Burma had drained the Company's coffers. Vested interests in patronage had defeated the attempt to select civil

servants by competitive examination. Indecision in high places had thwarted the progress of law reform. Education wanted a directing hand, an informing principle, a uniformity of purpose. Taxes on land had been too high or too capricious to permit large agricultural improvement, and expenditure on communications and irrigation had been insufficient to stimulate production.

Besides having to decide the future of the existing governing authorities at home and in India, Wood was faced, therefore, with a widespread disarray of administrative policies. He started with a virtually complete ignorance of Indian conditions. He sought counsel in many quarters, and received it from others without solicitation. He corresponded fully with the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, then in full career, and had his talented secretary, T.G. Baring (later Lord Northbrook, and Viceroy of India from 1872 until 1876), summarize past policies and present opinions. He talked and corresponded with Macaulay and Trevelyan, both of whom he knew well, with retired judges and officials, journalists, engineers and missionaries, with English jurists and educationalists. The establishment at the East India House had views to put, and the radicals of the Manchester school a case to make. During 1853 and 1854, this tangled skein of opinion and interest was woven into a pattern of reform. The Company's Court of Directors was reconstructed, the Governor-General's Council redesigned, patronage in the civil service abolished, a law commission appointed, an education charter prepared,

blueprints of railways and public works approved, defensive alliances on the North-West frontier completed, and a policy of peace imposed.

Before the new order was fully established, the Aberdeen Cabinet fell apart. Wood joined Lord Palmerston's first government, expecting to remain at the Board, "where," he wrote, "I had got things into order, and wished to watch over my own children."¹ But he had served a four-year apprenticeship at the Admiralty, and at that critical stage of the Crimean War he was required to go back there as First Lord. During the next four years, the fabric of reform became tattered. In 1855 the plans for the forceful annexation of Oudh, in 1856 a war with Persia, and over the years 1857-58 the mutiny, claimed Britain's attention. The rule of the Company came to an end in 1858 with a Tory bill. Lord Stanley, the premier's son and the first Secretary of State for India, together with Lord Canning, the first Viceroy, made the initial moves towards the reconstruction which was required in every major department of administration. Wood retained his interest in Indian affairs even though they passed out of his hands. For some time, he kept up an occasional correspondence with the Governors-General. Of course the mutiny arrested his attention, and he was a prominent speaker during the debates on the bills for the transfer of the government to

¹Wood to Sir F. Baring, 27 February 1855, in T.G., Earl of Northbrook, Journals and Correspondence of Francis Thornhill Baring, Lord Northbrook, 2 vols., 1902-5, privately printed, II, p. 63.

the Crown.

When Palmerston formed his second government, in June 1859, Wood was again given the portfolio for India. He remained at the India Office until February 1866, by which time he had given India all that he had to offer. In 1861 he refused to transfer to the War Office, so that he might mature and execute his Indian policy.² His six and a half years as Secretary of State came at a period that was critical for British rule and for the future of India. The sepoy mutiny had shaken Britain's confidence in the foundations of her control. The military forces stood in urgent need of reorganization. The insurrection in Oudh had discredited the policies which Dalhousie had pursued in relation to land settlement and the states. Alarming increases in the public debt and in the annual charges had cast doubt upon the financial viability of the Indian empire. The introduction of some of the improvements which had been projected during the 1853-55 period had been delayed. In particular, the construction of the network of trunk railways was behind schedule, and the codification of the laws and the process of judicial reform were incomplete.

The task of reconstruction was immense. It was not just a matter of restoring administrative order or of gathering up old threads and reweaving them. The organization of the governing

²Palmerston to Wood, 29 June 1861, and Wood to Palmerston, 29 June 1861 (copy), Hickleton Papers.

powers had to be considered afresh. The authorities had changed. In India, Dalhousie had encouraged, and Canning permitted, the emergence of a quasi-independent Legislative Council, quite contrary to Wood's intentions. This body became an embarrassing forum for the expression of the grievances and prejudices of British residents in India. In addition, under the pressure of post-mutiny business, the organization of the executive had been found wanting. At home, the Court of Directors had been superseded by the Council of India, whose opinion the Indian minister was obliged to consult. Composed largely of former directors or officers of the Company, the Council was hypersensitive where the rights of civil or military officials were concerned, and loth to accept desirable changes in the structure of the services. Sometimes it seemed to be wedded to existing administrative policies, at others to consult India's interests to the exclusion of those of imperial Britain. Wood had, therefore, to revise the governing authorities in India and to establish a workable relationship with his own Councillors.

The minister who held the portfolio for India needed to be patriotic and altruistic. He was responsible both for the security of British rule and for the good government and improvement of India. As President of the Board, Wood could devote his attention primarily to the latter responsibility, though his time for achievement was short. As Secretary of State, it was difficult for him to do that at first, but he did stay in office

long enough to have ample opportunity for initiating reforms. His two periods of office gave him full scope for formulating a comprehensive policy for India, though he faced situations of extraordinary difficulty. The divergence and range of the matters requiring attention called for a minister who could grasp facts and ideas rapidly, one who was efficient in the delegation and discharge of business, and accomplished in the art of handling men. The minister's work was further complicated by the disposition of the home authorities. With regard to Indian affairs, the respective positions of the minister, the Court or the Council, the Cabinet, parliament, and, after the mutiny, of the Queen, were exceedingly difficult to define precisely. The responsible groups and individuals frequently differed over policies. Informal lines of communication tended to develop among the authorities at home, and between them and officials in India. There were also doubts as to the relative functions of the minister and the Governor-General. Frustrations arose inevitably from the difficulties of corresponding at so great a distance, and as a result of the home government's practice of corresponding directly with the Governors of the subordinate presidencies. To get things done, the Indian minister required a tactician's flexibility of mind and approach, a dexterity in adapting his course to the situation. The office almost encouraged deviousness. The successful incumbent required a rather ~~more~~ rare combination of personal attributes and

administrative skills. Wood came to Indian affairs in the prime of his public life. It is of some importance to examine the abilities and ideas that he brought with him.

Chapter 1

Portrait of a Whig

Charles Wood was born in 1800, the eldest son of Sir Francis Lindley Wood. Sir Francis inherited his title from his uncle, the first baronet, who had been a wealthy merchant of the East India Company and a friend of Charles Watson Wentworth, the second Marquess of Rockingham and a Whig Prime Minister. Sir Francis had been trained as a lawyer, though he never practised. He was an astute man, with extensive business interests and substantial estates in Yorkshire. He was prominent in Yorkshire local affairs and he held the office of Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding. He did not himself stand for parliament, but, like his uncle before him, he was a staunch Whig and a friend of the Wentworths, the family of the Earls Fitzwilliam, who exercised a strong influence over elections in the West Riding well into the nineteenth century. Charles Wood's forbears were successful men of affairs who had acquired a certain standing in Yorkshire. In 1828, Sir Francis bought Hickleton Hall. Through the eminence that Charles achieved the family became known throughout England as "the Hickleton Woods". The relationship between father and son was close. To a father's influence may be ascribed Wood's confident manner, his practical bent of mind, his enjoyment of the sports of the country gentleman, and his initial attachment to the political principles

which he espoused throughout his long life.¹

Wood was sent to Eton, whence he went on to Oriel College, Oxford. He crowned successful years as a schoolboy² and gentleman commoner with the distinction of a double first in Classics and Mathematics.³ His tutor, E.T. (later Provost) Hawkins, adjudged him "the cleverest person^o he had ever had as a pupil."⁴ At Oriel Wood made two important friendships - with George Grey and Francis Baring.⁵ Both men later became his colleagues in Russell's Whig Cabinet of 1846-52. He was to marry into the Grey family, whilst Baring's son, Thomas, was to become his secretary at the India Board. By 1820 there was already abroad in Oriel the spirit of religious enquiry which was later manifested in the Oxford Movement.⁶ Keble was one of Wood's examiners.⁷ Unlike his brother, Samuel, who became a follower of Newman,⁸ and his son, Charles Lindley, who gave his life to the service of Anglo-Catholicism,⁹

¹The main sources of this background information are unpublished papers by Major T.L. Ingram, who catalogued the Hickleton Papers. A roneoed copy copy of the catalogue is in the Students' Room at the British Museum. See also J.G. Lockhart's biography of Wood's son (Charles Lindley, Viscount Halifax, 2 vols., London 1935-36, esp. I, pp. 1-11), which draws substantially upon the Hickleton Papers.

²Ingram's catalogue, entry A2.29.

³The Historical Register of the University of Oxford ... to ... 1900, Oxford 1900, p. 209.

⁴Quoted by M. Creighton, Memoir of Sir George Grey, privately printed, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1884, p. 17.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 22.

⁷Ingram's catalogue.

⁸Ibid., entry A2. 40-42.

⁹Lockhart, op. cit., passim.

Wood was never drawn to the Tractarian and Ritualist movements.¹⁰ In religion he was neither zealous nor, probably, deeply devotional. He was a pious man to whom the moral dictates of Christianity seemed inescapable. They reinforced his Whiggish sense of public duty.

In 1821, Wood came down from Oxford and travelled abroad.¹¹ He soon developed a predilection for a political career. He was volatile and gregarious, a popular companion with a good deal of warmth and charm, of an active rather than a contemplative disposition.¹² He was well-suited for the management of public affairs in the nineteenth century. In 1826, Lord Fitzwilliam prevailed upon Lord Yarmouth to accept Wood as the member for Grimsby, a seat which Yarmouth virtually controlled.¹³ Three years later Wood married Lady Mary Grey, the youngest daughter of the second Earl Grey.¹⁴ The marriage was as felicitous as it was politically fortunate. The warmth of Wood's affection for his father became matched by a personal relationship which brought him "as perfect and unalloyed a happiness as ever man enjoyed."¹⁵

¹⁰ Ibid.; Halifax to Gladstone, 21, 22, 26 and 28 October 1874, Gladstone Pap., B.M.Add.MS. 44186, fols. 62-72.

¹¹ Ingram's catalogue, entry A2.33.

¹² T.G., Earl of Northbrook, Journals and Correspondence of Francis Thornhill Baring, Lord Northbrook, 2 vols., 1902-5, privately printed, Vol. I, p. 103; G.O. Trevelyan, Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, 2 vols., [London 1876], 1932 ed.; Vol. I, p. 188; Earl of Ilchester (ed.), Elizabeth, Lady Holland to Her Son, London 1946, pp. 184-6.

¹³ Lockhart, op. cit., I, p. 12.

¹⁴ Ingram's catalogue, entry A1.4.34.

¹⁵ Halifax to Gladstone, 15 July 1884, B.M.Add.MS. 44186, fol. 195.

Wood was now a member of the most powerful Whig family of the day. Lord Grey's eldest son, Lord Howick, was already prominent in the party. He soon became Wood's closest friend. Another of Grey's daughters had married the wily and astute Edward Ellice, who was to be the party whip during the Reform Bill crisis. In 1830, Grey became Prime Minister and he made Wood his private secretary.¹⁶ Two years later, he installed him as Political Secretary to the Treasury.¹⁷ The position gave Wood a status from which he could address his seniors with assurance, and it helped to develop in him a political acumen which was to be apparent in his handling of Indian affairs.¹⁸ In 1832, he was returned as the member for the cotton manufacturing borough of Halifax, which he continued to represent until 1864.

From being Chief Whip under Grey, Wood fell to the junior position of Under-secretary to the Admiralty in the ministry which Melbourne formed in 1835. He had realized that he held the former office only by dint of his special relationship with Grey,¹⁹ and he was quite content to apply himself to learning the business of a

¹⁶ A. Aspinall (ed.), Three Early Nineteenth Century Diaries, London 1952, p. 25 and n.2.

¹⁷ Wood to Grey, 3 July 1832, Howick Pap., The Prior's Kitchen, Durham.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Wood's letter to Ellice, 28 March 1833 (copy), Ellice Coll., National Library of Scotland; to Sir J. Hobhouse, 3 May 1833, Broughton Pap., B.M.Add.MS. 36467, fol. 148; to Lord Spencer, 24 November 1834, in Sir D. Le Marchant, Memoir of Viscount Althorp ..., London 1876, p. 523.

¹⁹ Wood to Grey, 6 May 1833, Howick Pap.

department.²⁰ In 1839 he distinguished himself with a timely parliamentary defence of the naval estimates.²¹ In August of that year his loyalty to the Greys led him to resign his place when Howick, under pressure from his father, left the Cabinet.²² Wood's bent was towards finance at this stage and he pursued the interest during the fading years of Melbourne's government and throughout the period of Tory rule which followed them. His chance came in 1846 when Baring refused the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and Russell offered it to him. The same year his father died and he succeeded to the baronetcy and inherited Hickleton Hall. He remained at the Exchequer until the Whigs went out of office in 1852. When Lord Aberdeen formed his coalition, Gladstone, who had attacked Wood's budgets tellingly, was preferred as Chancellor and Wood began his association with Indian affairs. In February 1855, with Britain facing all the difficulty of the Crimean War, Palmerston transferred him back to the Admiralty as First Lord. He remained there until the government was defeated in 1858. His administration of naval affairs was not characterized by organizational changes, as Sir James Graham's had been.²³ His

²⁰ See, e.g., his notebooks of the time, B.M.Add.MSS.49571-5.

²¹ Hansard, 3rd ser., xlv, 4 March, cols. 1212-53; Northbrooks Journals, I, p. 136. Ingram's catalogue mentions congratulatory letters from Grey, Melbourne, Russell etc (entry A4.182).

²² Grey to Howick, 8, 12, 16, 24, 28 August; Wood to Howick, 27, 28 August, 1 October; Howick Pap.

²³ Wood's Admiralty papers are deposited in the British Museum (Add.MSS. 49531-49593).

already considerable interest in foreign affairs was stimulated, and his experience of the war went to confirm his distaste for hostilities. In January 1856, he assured Bright that he would "not grudge not using the sword however much pains [sic] ... [he] may have taken in sharpening it."²⁴ Bright's "Angel of Death" speech moved him deeply.²⁵ In the mid-nineteenth century he was an inveterate opponent of any unnecessary interference in European affairs.²⁶ In 1859 he returned to Indian affairs for what were probably his most useful six years in office.

By 1865, when Palmerston died, Wood seems to have become weary of office. He had been a cabinet minister almost continuously since 1846. He was ill with a "gouty affection" during the summer.²⁷ For some time he had expected that the life of the government would end with the death of Palmerston. In November 1865, he fell from his horse and suffered concussion.²⁸ The accident was more of a pretext than a reason for his resignation in the following February. That same month he was elevated to the peerage as Viscount Halifax. Two years later, he refused Gladstone's offer of a

²⁴ Wood to Bright, 22 January 1856, Bright Pap., Add.MS. 43388, fols. 33-6.

²⁵ G.M. Trevelyan, Life of John Bright, London 1913, p. 245.

²⁶ See e.g., Wood to Ellice, 29 September 1840, Ellice Pap.; Wood to Russell, 10 August 1848, P.R.O. 30/22/7D; A.C. Benson and Viscount Esher (ed.), Letters of Queen Victoria, 3 vols., London 1907, Vol. III, p. 465 ff.; Wood to Duke of Somerset, 8 January 1860, B.M.Add.MS. 49561, fol. 49.

²⁷ Wood to Sir H.B. Frere, 3 July 1865, Wood Papers, India Office Library.

²⁸ Wood to Lord Lawrence, 17 November 1865, *ibid.*

cabinet seat,²⁹ suspecting that the government would pursue more popular policies than those to which he had always subscribed. However, finding himself in sympathy with the tenor of Gladstonian liberalism, he joined the government in 1870 as Lord Privy Seal³⁰ and remained until it was defeated at the 1874 elections. He delivered his last speech in the House of Lords in 1878, but he continued to correspond on public affairs regularly and with alertness almost to his death in 1885.

Many of the problems which Wood faced at the Treasury were similar to those with which he was to grapple at the Board of Control and at the India Office. He served his apprenticeship to finance out of office, during the 1840-46 period. In 1840, he became chairman of a parliamentary committee on banking and currency.³¹ Peel, who was one of its members, formed a flattering opinion of him,³² and their views upon currency questions became "very nearly concurrent".³³ Wood supported warmly Peel's famous Bank Charter Act of 1844.³⁴ He was also an early admirer of the policy of free trade which Peel incorporated in the great budgets

²⁹ Halifax to Gladstone, 10 and 15 October 1868, B.M.Add.MS. 44184, fols. 236, 241-5.

³⁰ Halifax to Gladstone, 3 July 1870, *ibid.*, 44185, fol. 25.

³¹ Sir F. Baring, as Whig Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposed the appointment of the committee in March 1840 (Northbrook's Journals, I, p. 160).

³² Peel to Wood, 7 June 1844, Peel Pap., B.M.Add.MS. 40546, fol. 213.

³³ Peel to Wood, 9 May 1844, *ibid.*, 40544, fol. 117.

³⁴ Wood to Peel, 8 May 1844, *ibid.*, fol. 113; Hansard, lxxiv, 20 May 1844, cols. 1347 ff.

of 1842 and 1845, though he took him to task for failing to dismantle the preferential duties on colonial produce.³⁵ As the member for Halifax he developed a keen awareness of the effect of tariffs upon commerce.³⁶ From 1841, he was a consistent advocate of free trade in corn,³⁷ not of the total repeal of the duties at once, but of "such an alteration as ... [would] establish a regular trade."³⁸ He also accepted the teachings of the political economists upon laissez-faire. In 1844, quoting the authority of Adam Smith, he stood besides Bright as an opponent of a bill to limit the working day in factories to ten hours.³⁹

Wood's first task at the Exchequer was to relieve Ireland from the ravages of "a famine of the 13th century acting upon a population of the 19th."⁴⁰ To meet the emergency, Peel and Sir

³⁵ Ibid., lxi, 21 March 1842, cols. 981-91; lxxvii, 17 February 1845, cols. 582-92.

³⁶ E.g., ibid., lviii, 11 May 1841, cols. 221, 229-30, 234; lxvi, 15 February 1843, col. 667.

³⁷ E.g., ibid., lvii, 30 April 1841; lix, 27 September 1841, cols. 877-8; lx, 14 February 1842, cols. 390 ff.; lxvi, 15 February 1843, cols. 672-4.

³⁸ Ibid., and Wood to Howick, 7 October 1841, Howick Pap. Wood explained to Howick that he did not "attach much value to the fixed duty except as the only possible compromise - & as doing very little harm" (letter of 20 December 1843). The Dictionary of National Biography gives the misleading impression that Wood accepted free trade policies tardily.

³⁹ Hansard, lxxiv, 3 May 1844, col. 682; 13 May, cols. 1074-6.

⁴⁰ Russell's phrase, cited in C. Woodham-Smith, The Great Hunger, Ireland 1845-9, London 1962, p. 408. Both Mrs Woodham-Smith and Dr R.D.C. Black (Economic Thought and the Irish Land Question, 1817-1870, Cambridge 1960) have written recent scholarly accounts of the famine.

Charles Trevelyan, the Assistant Secretary to the Treasury, had arranged for the government to buy corn and to send it to Ireland, and to organize public works so that the destitute might earn the money with which to buy it. Soon after he came into office, Wood formed the opinion, which Trevelyan shared, that the continued purchase of corn by the government would discourage merchants from importing food into Ireland. He announced, therefore, the cessation of government purchases.⁴¹ Wood and Trevelyan also became convinced that the prodigal provision of employment on public works was causing the landowners and the tenants to deny any responsibility for their labourers and to make presentments for works even where there was no real distress.⁴² Government interference had, they contended, disrupted the food market and deranged the labour market.⁴³ In February 1847, Wood announced that the public works would be closed down in the following August.⁴⁴

Wood proposed a plan whereby he expected to feed the hungry and at the same time to provide the conditions for an improved

⁴¹ Hansard, lxxxviii, 27 July 1846, col. 29; 17 August 1846, col. 778. Trevelyan expressed his views at length in articles for the Edinburgh Review in 1850, reprinted as The Irish Crisis, London 1880 (2nd ed.). The decision not to buy corn was not enforced vigorously. Supplies were purchased in England, especially to relieve the most distressed districts in Western Ireland (Hansard, lxxxix, 21 January 1847, col. 224).

⁴² Ibid., and 1 February, col. 675.

⁴³ Wood to Lord Bessborough (Lord Lieut. of Ireland), 25 September 1846, Russell Pap., P.R.O. 30/22/5C; Wood to Russell, 7 October 1846, P.R.O. 30/22/5D; Wood to Ellice, 23 October 1846, Ellice Coll; Hansard, lxxxix, 1 February 1847, cols. 675 ff.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

order of society.⁴⁵ The truly destitute were to be sustained by gratuitous supplies of cooked food. The costs of such relief were to be met by the increasingly ruthless collection of local rates. Wood told the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland that the landowners must be faced with the ultimatum: "Employ the people at wages, or you will have to keep them by the rates."⁴⁶ He announced, early in 1847, two measures which would supply the landowners with the means of offering employment.⁴⁷ First, they would be encouraged to borrow funds from the government with which to improve their estates. Second, if their estates were encumbered with debts, they would be enabled to sell portions of them, thereby improving their financial liquidity. By encouraging landowners to employ labourers in the improvement of their estates Wood hoped to destroy the root cause of famine in Ireland - "the social system of the potato." Instead of cultivating tiny plots at a subsistence

⁴⁵ Ibid. Wood discussed his proposed plans for Ireland with Mr J. Young, an associate of Peel's, at a "tête-à-tête dinner" on 15 January 1847. Young presumed that Wood intended "the whole to ... [go] to [Peel]" and the next day summarized Wood's schemes for the latter (Young to Peel, 16 January 1847, B.M. Add.MS. 40598, fols. 38-42). See also Young to Peel, 14 January 1847, cited in C.S. Parker, Sir Robert Peel from his Private Correspondence, 3 vols., London 1889, III, pp. 480-1.

⁴⁶ Wood to Bessborough, 21 December 1846, P.R.O. 30/22/5F. In 1849, Wood levied a stringent rate-in-aid upon Ireland to raise funds for the relief of the west (Hansard, ciii, 2 March 1849, cols. 148 ff.).

⁴⁷ Ibid., lxxxix, 1 February 1847, cols. 675 ff.

level of production, the Irish cottiers should be attracted to day labour on improving estates.⁴⁸ Wood also hoped to entice improving English landlords to Ireland, for the sale of encumbered estates and the desertion of potato plots would throw cheap land onto the property market.⁴⁹

Wood's policy was adequate neither as a plan for famine relief nor as a means of improving the social order.⁵⁰ During "the great hunger" of 1845-9, about one and a half million people perished.⁵¹ Wood refused adamantly to contemplate anything approaching the thorough-going bureaucracy which was required to mitigate the evil at a local level. "Let us," he wrote to Russell, "do all we can to improve the local machinery, but for God's sake do nothing so fatal as to attempt to put it aside."⁵² He always blamed the worst effects of the famine upon the failure of Irishmen, especially the landlords, to accept any responsibility for helping to administer relief. "The starvation," he commented in 1848, "has arisen from the conduct of the Irish officials and guardians."⁵³ It was, he recalled later, "entirely thrown on the Govt. officers to find the means of administering food to

⁴⁸ Ibid., and 12 February 1847, cols. 1233 ff.

⁴⁹ Wood to Russell, 20 May 1848, P.R.O. 30/22/7C; Wood to Lord Monteagle, 22 November 1848, in R.D.C. Black, op. cit., p. 39.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 38-40; C. Woodham-Smith, op. cit., pp. 408-10.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 411.

⁵² Wood to Russell, 2 December 1846, P.R.O. 30/22/5F.

⁵³ Wood to Russell, 9 April 1848, P.R.O. 30/22/7B.

hundreds of thousands, unassisted by Irish residents, high or low."⁵⁴ His failure even to consider replacing the inadequate local Irish government by English officials stemmed from his view of the narrowness of the function of central government. The attitude, which was derived in part from his attachment to the English institution of local self-government, was fortified by the doctrine of laissez-faire.⁵⁵

Wood's aversion to government action also caused his scheme for social improvement to founder. He deprecated a constructive plan of Peel's, by which the government would set up model farms,⁵⁶ and another, of Lord Clarendon's, "to effect improvement by means of 'agricultural instructors'."⁵⁷ He would not help with the distribution of seed.⁵⁸ His experience, first of the failure of the public works relief system of 1846-7, and, later, of the deficiencies of "local effort", led to a growing reluctance to help

⁵⁴ Halifax to Gladstone, 16 December 1870, B.M.Add.MS. 44185, fols. 103-5; see also Halifax to Sir S. Northcote, 16 February 1880, Idlesleigh Papers, B.M.Add.MS. 50040, fol. 213.

⁵⁵ Neither Dr Black nor Mrs Woodham-Smith has given prominence to the restraints which the Whig government's attachment to the traditional principle of local self-government imposed upon government action during the famine. Yet, from Wood's letters on Irish policy, and from his expression of his views upon local government in England at that time (see below), it seems certain that the influence of the principle must have been considerable. Both Black (pp. 244-5) and Woodham-Smith (p. 410) have attributed rather too many of the weaknesses of Whig policy to the doctrine of laissez-faire.

⁵⁶ Copy of memo. by Peel, given to Lord Clarendon on 2 April 1849, B.M.Add.MS. 40601, fols. 90 ff.; Wood to Peel, 6 April 1849, *ibid.*, fols. 139-44.

⁵⁷ Woodham-Smith, p. 409.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

the Irish. He became disinclined to question the adequacy of his policy, and prone to explain Ireland's failure to regenerate by the "helplessness" of landlords and farmers.⁵⁹ He attributed the failure to grow grain to "the besetting sin of Ireland - ... dependence on Govt."⁶⁰ The "vision of Govt. interference induced present owners to cling ... to their encumbered estates."⁶¹ He waited, prepared to do nothing, confident of the logic of political economy, which suggested that land prices must fall eventually to a point at which English capital would flow in to improve Ireland.⁶² But that never happened. English capital was chary of "crossing the water". Some thirty odd years later, Wood at last acknowledged that "something" constructive had to be done for Ireland, and was prepared to accept the need to "try a peasant proprietorship".⁶³ His long and steadfast adherence to doctrines which prohibited constructive action for the improvement of Ireland was a sad augury for his career as an Indian administrator.

⁵⁹"It is melancholy to see how all our efforts to aid them are perverted, & I am coming fast to the opinion that they must be left to struggle through on their own means chiefly. The more we help them, the more helpless they become" (Wood to Delane, 13 September 1848, cited in A.I. Dasent (ed.), John Thadeus Delane, Editor of "The Times" ..., 2 vols., London 1908, I, p. 84).

⁶⁰Wood to Peel, 6 April 1849, B.M.Add.MS. 40601, fols. 139-44.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.; Wood to Peel, 19 December 1849, *ibid.*, 40602, fols. 359-64.

⁶³Wood to Gladstone, 10 February 1881, B.M.Add.MS. 44186, fols. 158-61.

His budgets were, on the whole, little more hopeful.

Like Peel before him and Gladstone after, Wood made the substitution of direct taxation for taxes on consumption a plank of his financial policy. Peel first introduced the income tax in 1842 to finance the repeal of export duties on manufactures and to relieve some seven hundred and fifty articles from import duties.⁶⁴ He extended it for a further like period of three years in 1845 for a similar purpose. In 1853, Gladstone obtained its renewal as the means of remitting or reducing customs duties on some two hundred and fifty further items.⁶⁵ Wood always contrived to retain the tax but he gave the House of Commons little reason to expect that he would use its proceeds constructively. Yet he was a convinced free trader. One of his first actions was to provide for the extinction of the colonial sugar preference,⁶⁶ and he tackled the preferential duties on timber and coffee.⁶⁷ In 1848-9, he toiled energetically and successfully for the abolition of the navigation laws.⁶⁸ Had he been eager to take a large step towards free trade, he must, for some time, have been frustrated.

⁶⁴ Sir S. Northcote, Twenty Years of Financial Policy, A Summary of the Chief Financial Measures Passed between 1842 and 1861, with a Table of Budgets, London 1862, pp. 20ff.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 194 ff.

⁶⁶ Hansard, lxxxviii, 27 July 1846, cols. 54 ff.

⁶⁷ Ibid., cxiv, 17 February 1851, cols. 703ff.

⁶⁸ Wood to Russell, 20 August 1847, P.R.O. 30/22/6E; Hansard, xcix, 8 June 1848, cols. 546 ff. Wood was in close communication with Peel to ensure the passage of the bill on this measure (Wood to Peel, [?29] April, [?6] May, 8 and 18 May 1849, B.M.Add.M.S. 40601, fols. 277-9, 281, 288, 290).

The famine, and the commercial crisis which a boom in railway investment precipitated, were convincing reasons for his failure to reduce duties in 1847 and 1848.⁶⁹ In 1849, even with the income tax, his budget was delicately balanced.⁷⁰ However, in each of the more favourable years of 1850 and 1851, he insisted upon retaining a half of a healthy surplus,⁷¹ rebuffing demands for the repeal of the duties on advertisements and on paper.⁷²

Wood lacked the qualities of a successful Chancellor of the Exchequer. In 1848 and in 1851, he was forced to modify his budgets substantially, on the first occasion by surrendering his suggested increase in the rate of the income tax,⁷³ on the second by shortening its intended term of incidence from three years to one.⁷⁴ In 1850, he had to give up a portion of the stamp duty which he proposed to levy on large transactions.⁷⁵ His inability

⁶⁹ Hansard, xc, 22 February 1847, cols. 316-37; xcvi, 24 February 1848, col. 1271; xcvi, 6 March 1848, col. 242. In 1847, Wood borrowed £8 m. to defray the costs of relief in Ireland. In 1848, he had to borrow £2 m.

⁷⁰ Hansard, cvi, 22 June 1849, cols. 740 ff. Wood's stocks stood high in 1849. On 8 August, Greville noted: "... Wood ... has risen, having made some very good speeches and done his business well" (L. Strachey and R. Fulford (ed.), The Greville Memoirs 1814-1860, 8 vols., London 1938, VI, p. 184).

⁷¹ Hansard, cix, 15 March 1850, cols. 972 ff.; cxiv, 17 February 1851, cols. 703 ff; Northcote, op. cit., pp. 123-53.

⁷² Hansard, cx, 16 April 1850, col. 391; 7 May 1850, col. 1242; Bright's diary for 14 March 1851, in R.A.J. Walling (ed.), The Diaries of John Bright, London 1930, p. 121.

⁷³ Hansard, xcvi, 28 February, 1848, cols. 1392ff.

⁷⁴ A. Briggs, 1851, Historical Ass'n. General Ser. G18(1951), pp. 8-9. On both occasions he submitted to committees of the House of Commons examining aspects of his budgets.

⁷⁵ Hansard, cix, 15 March 1850; cxiv, 17 February 1851, cols. 703 ff.

to carry the House with him arose partly from deficiencies in his presentation. He was a poor public speaker. A colleague, alluding to the "unhappy defect" in his delivery, likened him to "a man ... who, trying the experiment of Demosthenes, forgot to pull the pebbles out of his mouth."⁷⁶ Another observer noted that "Providence had not endowed him with the gift of articulate pronunciation."⁷⁷ An unkind journalist wrote of his "gulositous voice which rendered him incomprehensible for twenty minutes out of every sixty minutes."⁷⁸ However, Wood's speech impediment merely aggravated the House's impatience with his measures. He was tolerated as a competent if cheeseparing economiser in the straitened circumstances of the 'forties, but at the opening of the buoyant 'fifties, in the year of the Great Exhibition, his parsimony seemed inexcusable. He failed to relate his last two budgets to the mood of the country or to the needs of the economy. His want of a flair for finance was painfully apparent when, two years after offering up the last of his "beggar's wallets",⁷⁹ Gladstone presented his first budget. Gladstone secured the income

⁷⁶ Sir J. Hobhouse's note of 23 June 1848, in Lady Dorchester (ed.), Recollections of a Long Life by Lord Broughton (John Cam Hobhouse), 6 vols., London 1909-11, VI, p. 222.

⁷⁷ A. West, Recollections, 1832 to 1886, 2 vols., London 1899, I, p. 193.

⁷⁸ [E.M. Whitty], History of the Session 1852-3, A Parliamentary Retrospect, London 1854, p. 151, reprtd. from The Leader, 4 June 1853. Whitty wrote with an anti-Whig bias and a satirist's exaggeration. He took great delight in caricaturing Wood (e.g., *ibid.*, pp. 53, 148-52, 178, 202).

⁷⁹ Whitty's expression, *ibid.*, p. 111.

tax, at a rate which was to diminish annually, as the basis of duty remissions which sent trade and manufacturing bounding forward.⁸⁰ Wood was a free trader, but he had not the wit to match doctrine and circumstance. He was hampered by an imagination in which the spectre of instability loomed larger than the vision of progress.

Wood's abilities and ideas were further revealed by his extra-departmental activities. From the passing of the first Reform Bill, but particularly from the repeal of the Corn Laws, until the Reform of 1867 Wood was an architect of Whig survival and the peacemaker of the liberals generally. He admired the Act of 1832 as "an efficient, substantial, anti-democratic, pro-property measure."⁸¹ Like Grey and Howick, he deprecated the readiness of Melbourne and Russell to barter democratic concessions for the support of the radical members whom the Act had introduced to the Commons.⁸² However, he realized that even under the existing electoral structure the Whigs could not always afford to oppose the radicals. He impressed this fact upon Lord Fitzwilliam, advising

⁸⁰ Northcote, op. cit.

⁸¹ Letter from Wood to his father, cited in Lockhart, op. cit., p. 17.

⁸² Ellice to Lord Durham, 24 March 1835, in A. Aspinall, Lord Brougham and the Whig Party, Manchester 1927, p. 294. See also the letters cited in note 22 above, in relation to the resignations of Wood and Howick in 1839; and Viscount Esher (ed.), The Girlhood of Queen Victoria, ... Her Majesty's Diaries ... 1832-1840, 2 vols., London 1907, II, pp. 194, 197-8, 201.

him to work towards an electoral alliance with the townsmen of Yorkshire.⁸³ In 1847, he stressed that "the liberal strength ... [was] in the towns," and that "the Whig gentry of the [West] Riding in the old sense of the word ... [did] not exist." The Whigs must place themselves "at the head of the liberal party", accepting town candidates as their colleagues at the elections.⁸⁴ In parliament, radical demands for electoral reform were a thorn in the side of Whiggery. If the franchise were much extended, the Whigs could not hope to retain their electoral footholds. On the other hand, as Melbourne had realized, they could scarcely hope to govern alone. To preserve their powerful position in politics the Whigs had to be consummate strategists. Wood played the power game with impeccable skill. Disraeli, no minor authority on political tactics, considered him "a first-rate man",⁸⁵ "though somewhat unscrupulous, but endowed with tact and knowledge how to manage men."⁸⁶

It was clearly in their interest for the Whigs to minimize their dependence upon radical support. As early as October 1841,

⁸³ F.M.L. Thompson, "Whigs and Liberals in the West Riding, 1830-1860", E.H.R., lxxiv (1959), pp. 214-39, esp. pp. 228-38.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 228.

⁸⁵ Cited in Marquess of Crewe, Lord Rosebery, 2 vols., London 1931, I, p. 32.

⁸⁶ Cited in J.G. Lockhart, op. cit., p. 18, from Countess of Strafford (ed.), Leaves From the Diary of Henry Greville, 4th series, London 1905, p. 270.

Wood anticipated the possibility of a Tory schism over free trade. That would prepare the way for "a govt. of the liberal part of them and an addition from our side, carrying liberal commercial measures, and excluding the radicals."⁸⁷ In January 1843, he advised Russell "that the liberal party alone could not govern the country," and to "look to a split among the tories, & [to] his being in such a position as to be the inevitable leader if Peel threw up."⁸⁸ Peel did break up his party and Russell succeeded him as Prime Minister. But the liberal Tories declined the latter's invitations to join his administration, and from 1846 until 1852 the Whigs were left struggling limply and alone.⁸⁹ Wood's tactic now became to neutralize any inclination of the Peelites to oppose the government by developing his earlier limited acquaintance with Peel into a strong personal association. Their correspondence was extraordinary, considering that their formal relationship was that of political opponents.⁹⁰ Wood consulted Peel frankly on Irish policy,⁹¹ currency and monetary matters,⁹²

⁸⁷ Wood to Howick, 14 October 1841, Howick Pap.

⁸⁸ Letter of 7 January 1843, *ibid.*

⁸⁹ J.B. Conacher, "Peel and the Peelites, 1846-1850", E.H.R., lxxiii (1958), pp. 431-52.

⁹⁰ Dr Conacher has discussed the correspondence at some length (*ibid.*, esp. pp. 442-6).

⁹¹ See above.

⁹² E.g., Wood to Peel, 28 April, 1 and 6 May, 25 August, 11, 12, 25, 26 October, 10, 13, 15 November, 11 December 1847; 28 and 31 January, 27 March, 18 and 21 July, 11, 14, 15, 21, August, 2 October 1848; in Peel Pap. B.M.Add.MSS. 40598, fols. 192, 219, 227; 40599, fols. 222-4, 293, 300, 304, 307-12, 372-9, 385, 389, 483; 40600, fols. 28, 34, 113, 350, 358, 380, 401, 403, 415, 458.

the navigation laws⁹³ and fiscal measures.⁹⁴ Peel's lieutenant, Sir James Graham, suspected "that the Government studiously endeavour[ed] to convey the impression that on currency and banking questions they ... [had] the benefit of ... [Peel's] advice, and ... [were] fortified beforehand by the certainty of ... [his] support."⁹⁵

Wood also pressed Russell frequently to offer offices to the Peelites - to Lincoln, Herbert and Dalhousie in 1847,⁹⁶ and to Newcastle, Frederick Peel and Cardwell in 1851.⁹⁷ But individual Peelites were loth to leave their fold, and Russell lacked enthusiasm for a reconstruction of his government to effect a fusion.⁹⁸ The government stumbled along after Peel's death in June 1850, resigned in February 1851, then, for want of an alternative, returned for one uneasy year more. In 1852, during Derby's short first administration, Wood was in "very constant communication" with both Whigs and Peelites to achieve the accord which was necessary

⁹³ See above.

⁹⁴ E.g., memo. by Peel, February 1847, B.M.Add.MS. 40598, fol. 84; Wood to Peel, [?20] February, 21 February 1848, *ibid.* 40600, fols. 66, 70; memo. by Peel, February 1848, *ibid.*, fol. 67; Wood to Peel, [?28] February 1848, *ibid.*, fol. 85.

⁹⁵ Graham to Peel, [?1] November 1847, *ibid.*, 40599, fol. 370. On 18 May 1849, Wood wrote to Peel of their communication over the navigation laws: "Nobody but Lord John [Russell] knows that I have seen you or communicate directly with you. The Cabinet ... knew that I have an indirect communication with yours, not you, as to probable votes" (*ibid.*, 40601, fol. 290).

⁹⁶ Wood to Russell, 14 August 1847, P.R.O. 30/22/6E; Wood to Howick, 26 August 1847, Howick Pap.

⁹⁷ Wood to Russell, 28 September 1851, P.R.O. 30/22/9F; 15 December 1851, P.R.O. 30/22/9J(1).

⁹⁸ Wood to Howick, 25 August 1851, Howick Pap.; memo. by Prince Albert, 27 February 1852, in Letters of Queen Victoria, II, p. 453.

if the Tories were to be voted out.⁹⁹ He took a leading part in the discussions of December from which the Aberdeen coalition government emerged, and he contrived to increase the Whigs' share of the appointments when Russell seemed to forget the interests of his supporters.¹⁰⁰ He wrote to Howick, then the third Earl Grey, that as a result of the coalition the Whigs would "not be so dependent on the Radicals". "The old Whig party," he continued, "had not foundation enough in the country without the section of the Peelites, & now having got together we must keep so."¹⁰¹ The coalition was, however, rent by personal jealousies and sectional conflicts and the radicals remained in a strong position to exact concessions from it.¹⁰² In February 1855, it fell apart from internal dissensions, and Palmerston was left with primarily Whig material from which to shape the Cabinet that faced the problems which the Crimean war and the Indian mutiny posed. Not until 1859 was a strong liberal party installed in government.

A major threat to the survival of Whiggery in the face of a more radical and popular liberalism was the dissension of the moderate liberal leaders. In 1881, Henry Grenfell, who had been

⁹⁹ Wood to Russell, 13 and 20 August 1852, P.R.O. 30/22/10D.

¹⁰⁰ Wood to Ellice, 21 and 24 December 1852, Ellice Coll.; Wood to Grey, 21 December 1852 (2); C.S. Parker, Life and Letters of Sir James Graham, 1792-1861, 2 vols., London 1907, I, p. 199; H. Reeve (ed.), The Greville Memoirs, 8 vols., London 1888, VII, p. 28.

¹⁰¹ Wood to Grey, 27 December 1852, Howick Pap.

¹⁰² See chap. 7, below.

Wood's private secretary for a short time, recalled that "on all occasions in which difficulties [had] occurred between members of the various Cabinets in which ... [Wood] served, he was most eager and efficient to restore harmony by personal communication."¹⁰³ Wood left a long account, in journal form, of the conflicts and crises within liberalism during the period from 1835 until 1867, and of his own efforts to overcome them.¹⁰⁴ The journal and his correspondence constitute convincing testimony of his dedication to his party and of his consequent assumption of the role of peacemaker. One leader or another seemed always to be disposed to rebel or resign. In 1845, Russell refused a commission to form a government because Howick would not serve if Palmerston went to the Foreign Office.¹⁰⁵ In 1851, Russell dismissed Palmerston because of his intransigence over foreign policy.¹⁰⁶ Two years later, the latter resigned because he disliked the former's proposals for a Reform Bill.¹⁰⁷ The next year (1854), Russell wanted to resign when his colleagues objected to his pursuing his Bill in war time,¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³The Spectator, 15 August 1881, cited in B. Mallet, Thomas George, Earl of Northbrook, London, 1908, p. 35. Grenfell was a friend of T.G. Baring's, and succeeded him as Wood's secretary when Baring became Under-Secretary of State for India in 1859.

¹⁰⁴Hickleton Papers, 5 books marked "A" to "E", entry A8 in Ingram's Catalogue. There is also a typescript copy of books "B" to "E", which runs to some 800 pages.

¹⁰⁵The incident is discussed fully in an anonymous article, "Notes on the Greville Memoirs", E.H.R., I (1886), pp. 105-37; Wood's journal, book A.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., book B.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., book C; Wood to Russell, 9 and 25 December 1853, P.R.O. 30/22/11; memo. by Prince Albert, 25 December 1853, Queen's Letters, II, p. 573.

¹⁰⁸Wood's journal, book B; Wood to Russell, 28 February,

and in 1855 he left the Aberdeen government because he disapproved of the way in which the war was being conducted.¹⁰⁹ Throughout the 'fifties, he and Palmerston were forever at loggerheads. Yet no liberal government could be strong without them both serving in it. Wood cajoled them constantly upon the need for amity. He succeeded in delaying Russell's resignation from Aberdeen's Cabinet and in persuading Palmerston to withdraw his. In 1858, Charles Greville wrote of Wood as "the man who ... [had] been constantly communicating with Lord John in behalf of the Whig Cabinet."¹¹⁰ The next year, Wood played a leading part in arranging for the troublesome pair to declare their willingness to serve together. Their announcements prepared the way for seven years of stable liberal government.¹¹¹

Whilst Wood hoped to sustain Whig power primarily by securing the unity of the party and the fusion with the Peelites, the play

108 (contd)

26 March, 10 April 1854, P.R.O. 30/22/11; S. Herbert to Russell, 28 February 1854, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Wood's journal, books C and E; Wood to Russell, 7 and 9 December 1854 (copies), and Russell to Wood, 9 December 1854, Halifax Papers, B.M.Add.MS. 49531, fols. 76-92; memo. by Prince Albert, 25 January 1855, Queen's Letters, III, p. 91; Wood to Russell, 11 February 1855, P.R.O. 30/22/12.

¹¹⁰ Greville Memoirs, entry for 13 May 1858, Reeve (ed.), VIII, p. 197. Russell held office in Palmerston's first administration for only a few months during 1855.

¹¹¹ Wood to Ellice, 17 January, 20 and 21 May 1859, Ellice Coll.; Wood to Russell, 16 May, 30/22/13; to S. Herbert, 24 and 26 May, in Lord Stanmore, Sidney Herbert ... A Memoir, 2 vols., London 1906, II, pp. 189-90, 192-3; to Baring, 28 May and 4 June, Northbrook's Journals, II, pp. 114-16; Wood's journal, book D.

of the opposition had to be considered. The Tory tactic which eventually "dished the Whigs" in 1867 was to enter into a parliamentary compact with the radicals over the reform of the franchise. During the Tory interregnum of 1852, Wood feared the prospect of Disraeli's trying "something dashing & captivating" and suspected that his "game" might be "liberal measures with tory men."¹¹² The Whigs could not allow the radicals to think of them as implacable opponents of Reform. In the absence of strength they must conciliate. Russell was always ready to propose a moderate measure of Reform, and in the twilight of his first government Wood was at work preparing one.¹¹³ During 1852, Wood thought that to delay Reform would only render "more decisive measures necessary." "The time," he wrote, "may be delayed but the story of the Sibylline Books is always true in these reforms, whether it be parliamentary or commercial reform which is in question."¹¹⁴ His plan was to offer up a carefully devised bill, a thing of checks and balances, the shadow not the substance of democratic reform. Greater representation might be given to the "numbers" in the towns by halving the £10 qualification, but to

¹¹² Wood to Russell, 20 August 1852, op. cit., Wood described Disraeli as "the artist of the dissolving views" (to Russell, 23 July 1852, P.R.O. 30/22/10C).

¹¹³ Russell to the Queen, 14 October 1851, Queen's Letters, II, p. 391; Greville's Memoirs, (Strachey and Fulford ed.), VI, p. 304.

¹¹⁴ Wood to Russell, 10 August 1852, P.R.O. 30/22/10D.

balance the popular tendency of this provision he sought "something to counteract the mere £5 ers."¹¹⁵ It was "a desideratum to give more power to the higher classes of our mercantile and manufacturing population."¹¹⁶ This might be supplied by "giving the franchise to some sort of select bodies. The Universities, the Inns of Court, & some few such bodies ... might be enfranchised." So would he "keep up the character of the H[ouse] of C[ommons]," which "Bright & Co. would lower ... to their own level." However, the advent of war, the long persistence of the great authority of Palmerston, an inveterate opponent of Reform, and the buoyant prosperity of the mid-Victorian years, conspired to delay a liberal Reform bill until 1866. Russell's succession to the premiership at Palmerston's death made a bill inevitable. The moderate measure which Russell proposed contained checks against the mere representation of numbers. Wood was convinced that "a substantial measure [of Reform] must be carried before the question ... [was] disposed of."¹¹⁷ He believed that Robert Lowe and the other Whig dissidents, whose opposition caused the defeat of the Bill, were strengthening the radicals' hand against the Whigs.¹¹⁸ The liberals' defeat over Reform was the prelude to "the passing of the Whigs."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵Wood to Russell, 26 July, P.R.O. 30/22/10C.

¹¹⁶Wood to Russell, 4 August 1852, P.R.O. 30/22/10D.

¹¹⁷Wood to Grey, 3 April 1866, Howick Pap.

¹¹⁸Wood to Grey, 30 March 1866, *ibid.*

¹¹⁹Dr D. Southgate's expression, The Passing of the Whigs, 1832-1886, London 1962.

Wood possessed an instinctive understanding of the structure of political power, an acute awareness of the logic of political situations. He did not, however, deploy his considerable aptitude for manoeuvre for personal ends. His resignation of 1839 was hardly calculated to advance his career, and only the persuasiveness of his Cabinet colleagues averted a second resignation in 1850.¹²⁰ His manner was not such as to curry favour. Colleagues commented upon his "brusquerie",¹²¹ and Grenfell testified that "he certainly never cultivated the arts of popularity."¹²² Before he was ever admitted to a Cabinet, he addressed himself to the party's leaders with a frankness which showed a courageous disregard for the effect of his words upon his personal future.¹²³ Throughout his career, he made a habit of bringing before his chiefs unpleasant facts about their conduct, whenever he thought that his homilies

¹²⁰ Greville Memoirs (Reeve ed'n.), VI, p. 350; Dasent's Delane, I, p. 102. This was after the defeat of the government over the Don Pacifico question.

¹²¹ Fragment of Lord Campbell's, 28 October 1847, in Hon. Mrs. Hardcastle (ed.), Life of John, Lord Campbell, 2 vols., London 1881, II, p. 209; Granville to Canning, 23 August 1859, P.R.O. 30/29/21.

¹²² The Spectator, op. cit. References to Wood's unpopularity were frequent. E.g., in June 1848, the Duke of Bedford, Russell's brother, spoke of Wood as "exceedingly unpopular" (Broughton's Recollections, VI, p. 221). The next year, the Duke "said that ... Wood ... was not liked, as he was overquick with Deputations" (C. Arbuthnot to Peel, 30 July 1849, Add.MS. 40602, fols. 47-8). In February 1855, Sir F. Baring described Wood as "unpopular" (Northbrook's Journals, II, p. 58). At the same time, he was spoken of as "a very honest man" (Broughton, op. cit.), one whose "character in the city was high as an honourable man" (Northbrook, op. cit.).

¹²³ For accounts of conversations with Russell and Palmerston, see Wood to Howick, 7 January 1843 and 6 April 1844, Howick Pap.

might benefit the party. He had, as one of his secretaries, Algernon West, remarked, "all the qualities of a party whip." He exercised them to the benefit of the Whigs.¹²⁴

But Wood did not deploy his talents in the service of unprincipled party warfare. For him the authority of Whiggery meant the persistence of an aristocratic, as opposed to a democratic, form of government, and that he regarded as an object of national importance. From 1841 until 1845, when the Whigs were too weak to govern alone and might only have held power by offering democratic bribes to the radicals, he favoured leaving the Tories to "fully and fairly develop their policy."¹²⁵ The value of the Tories as defenders of the constitutional status quo disappeared with their party's schism in 1845. A stable conservative government became an impossibility.¹²⁶ In February 1855, Wood also despaired momentarily of the liberals - the Peelites and the Whigs - keeping the radicals at bay. During that month, Russell had brought down the Aberdeen coalition, and then failed to attract sufficient support to form a Cabinet. Derby had refused a commission from the Queen. Palmerston had become premier, but

¹²⁴ H.G. Hutchinson (ed.), Private Diaries of Sir Algernon West, London 1922, p. 2.

¹²⁵ Wood to Howick, 14 October 1841, Howick Pap.

¹²⁶ During Derby's first administration, Wood wrote to Grey: "A conservative govt. may do & if we could get a decent one it would be the best solution of matters - but we have not such an article in existence" (18 October 1852, *ibid.*).

the leading Peelites had joined him only to desert within days. Wood lamented the "impulse to the present outcry against aristocratic government [which] the events of the last three weeks ... [had] given."¹²⁷ The aristocratic leaders of the liberal and conservative parties had "disgraced representative government in the eyes of the world." "Any popular assembly with a popular feeling is," he then reflected, "a dangerous element if under no check, and we have now had no check on them for weeks, and shall have a weaker one than ever."¹²⁸ At that time, Baring wrote to Wood of the importance of the leadership of the Whigs, whom he described thus:

A body of men connected with high rank and property, bound together by hereditary feelings, party ties, as well as higher motives, who in bad times keep alive the sacred flame of freedom, and when the people are roused stand between the constitution and revolution and go with the people, but not to extremities.¹²⁹

Wood agreed "that an aristocratic heading (to use a short phrase) ... [was] most desirable and necessary for the liberal party" and deplored the disunion of the liberal aristocrats.¹³⁰

The dedicated Whig was, at heart, a devoted constitutionalist. His enmity towards radicalism was born of a regard for the forms of the existing constitution, and for the traditions and practices which were associated with them. He valued the tradition of

¹²⁷ Wood to Herbert, [late] February 1855, in Stanmore's Herbert, I, pp. 266 ff.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Letter of 15 February 1855, in Northbrook's Journals, II, p. 55.

¹³⁰ Wood to Baring, 17 February 1855, ibid., p. 57.

disinterested leadership, accepting the epithet "aristocrat" only in the sense of "a man of independent character, of independent mind, and independent fortune."¹³¹ Of such men the governing body had "always mainly consisted" and, he said, "I hope always will consist."¹³² He claimed that the spirit of aristocratic leadership was exemplified in the triumph of free trade, the surrender of the privilege of protected prices for corn "for the sake of the general good."¹³³ He also prized the customary abstention of government from interference with the individual's rights and property. He opposed the ten hours in factories bill on the ground that it was "most unjust ... to the workman to interfere ... as to the management of his own labour, his most sacred property."¹³⁴ Interference between master and man,¹³⁵ buyer and seller,¹³⁶ or landlord and tenant,¹³⁷ was

¹³¹ Hansard, cvi, 2 July 1849, col. 1215.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid. Wood used the phrase in relation to the corn laws on 11 May 1841: "As one of that protected class he was willing to forego his individual advantage for the sake of the general good" (ibid., lviii, col. 230).

¹³⁴ Ibid., lxxiv, 3 May 1844, cols. 682-3.

¹³⁵ Wood to Grey, 15 April 1846, Howick Pap.

¹³⁶ Hansard, cxl, 23 May 1850, col. 272.

¹³⁷ Halifax was incensed at the bills concerning Irish land tenures and the English game laws which Gladstone introduced during 1880-81. He wrote to Northbrook that "interfering with the free action of individuals ... [was] contrary to every feeling and principle in which he had been brought up" (Mallet's Northbrook, p. 163). In a letter to Lord Goschen, dated 29 July 1881, he remarked: "It used to be an article of the Liberal creed to get rid of all legislative interference with what men did in the way of business, with two exceptions only. 1. If it was injurious to the public.

a violation of individual freedom and the rights of property.

He affirmed ^{that} "government should not interfere when matters could be managed without them."¹³⁸ The principle of laissez-faire was fully consistent with the traditional Whig regard for individual liberty and property. He applied the principle of non-interference to local self-government, which he regarded as "the rock upon which [rested] the stability of all the institutions" of England.¹³⁹ In 1849, he resisted a Tory attempt to transfer certain charges from the local rates to the Exchequer.¹⁴⁰ The change would weaken local government and tend to create a centralized and bureaucratic system. He esteemed the security which was afforded by the existing form of the constitution, and drew salutary contrasts with the conditions which would arise if democratic concessions were extended in advance of the spread of education to the lower classes of society.¹⁴¹ He expected that household suffrage would give rise to new leaders, "pilots without principles", whose touchstone would be "public opinion",¹⁴² and who would override the

137 (contd)

2. To protect those who could not protect themselves. All the bills introduced by the present Govt. run counter to this principle I cannot tell you how much I have felt on this change of views on the part of those with whom I have acted for so long" (Hon. A.D. Elliot, Life of George Joachim Goschen, First Viscount Goschen, 1821-1907, 2 vols., London 1911, I, pp. 252-3).

¹³⁸ Halifax to Grey, 2 November 1867, Howick Pap.

¹³⁹ Hansard, ciii, 14 March 1849, col. 725.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. See also Wood to Russell, 21 December 1850, P.R.O. 30/22/8C.

¹⁴¹ Wood enunciated the principle of gradually extending the franchise as education spread through society in his personal statement upon his resignation of 1839 (Hansard, li, 31 January 1840, cols. 975 ff.).

¹⁴² Halifax to Grey, 2 November 1867, Howick Pap.

individual's freedom from interference and the right of local self-government. "We used to hold," he wrote in 1867, "that the state should do nothing which individuals associated or single could do for themselves. The principle is going out of fashion. Govt. control or govt. interference is called for in everything. Local self-government is at a discount & we are tending to a bureaucracy."¹⁴³

Sir Charles Wood was a man of high intelligence, impressive energy and firm principles. He approached public life with a high seriousness. His knowledge of public affairs became immense.¹⁴⁴ Yet the impact of his long career upon British life was not large. As a Chancellor of the Exchequer he seemed unconstructive and uncertain. At home his labours were directed at preserving or stabilizing rather than at developing. In tackling the Irish famine, he underestimated the difficulties, expected too much of the victims of circumstance by way of self-help, and refused to countenance government action on the scale required to improve the social and

¹⁴³ Halifax to Grey, 15 October 1867, *ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ West, who had previously been Sir J. Graham's secretary, and later became Gladstone's, was "struck with his extraordinary power of work" (Private Diaries, p.2), and described "his knowledge of all political affairs" as "probably unique" (Recollections, I, p. 198). Lord Morley wrote of "Lord Halifax, on whose ability and experience both the Queen and Mr Gladstone set special value" (The Life of William Ewart Gladstone, 2 vols., London 1905, I, p. 887). On 10 August 1855, The Times described Wood as "one of the working bees of the political hive", on 6 February 1866 as an "indefatigable administrator".

economic order. Neither in England nor in Ireland did he seem able to match his policies to the sweep of events. In the matter of government, he showed greater acumen. He was at home in the world of power politics and constitutional controversy. During the mid-nineteenth century, the structure of politics was cast in the mould which his hands helped to fashion. But again his efforts were directed at retaining, stabilizing and reconstructing, rather than at developing. He never questioned that government by a liberal aristocracy was a national blessing. West remembered him as a man "deeply versed in all the traditions of the old Whigs."¹⁴⁵ The highminded grounds upon which he based his case for the preservation of Whiggery were, and are, certain to be regarded with scepticism in some quarters.¹⁴⁶ At the beginning of 1853, when he went to the Board of Control, he embarked upon a career which would test them. India presented countless opportunities for the exercise of disinterested leadership and independent judgment, and for the display of respect for freedom and the rights of property.

¹⁴⁵ Private Diaries, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ Recently, Dr Southgate has written: "The Whigs were trimmers In the last resort ... [Whiggery] was apt to seem merely a series of propositions about political tactics" (op. cit., pp. 78-9).

Chapter 2

Government at Home

The Charter Act of 1833¹ stripped the East India Company of its commercial character, but extended its charter as an administrative body to April 1854. Except in matters of diplomacy, the Court of Directors generally exercised, in practice, the initiative in determining Indian policies. The President of the Board of Control might arrange Indian foreign policy himself directly. With regard to other questions he operated as a check upon the Company's activities, and the flow of official papers between the East India House, in Leadenhall Street, and the Board, in Cannon Row, reflected this relationship. Wood's Tory predecessor, J.C. Herries, had arranged for committees of both houses of parliament to enquire into the operation of the Charter Act and into administrative achievement since 1833.² When Herries left office, in December 1852, evidence had been taken on the existing arrangements for governing India, but the larger task of investigating the condition of the country would take several months more to complete. The questions facing Wood were, first, whether to extend the Company's charter, and, second, whether to propose legislation immediately or to delay it until the committees had finished taking evidence. If he wished for

¹3 & 4 William IV, c. 85.

²Parliamentary Papers (H.C.), 1852-3, xxvii-xxxiii.

time to mature a measure, he might gain it through a continuing act of short duration.

Wood took his decisions quickly. On 20 February he advised Lord Aberdeen of the desirability of "continuing with perhaps some modifications the present governing powers." The government should "introduce a bill . . . , not being a mere continuance bill for a year or so." He regarded details of administration as irrelevant to the question of government, though they might "well form the subject of separate bills" to be proposed later.³ During the first week of March, a "Ministerial plan" along these lines was "freely talked of in the clubs."⁴ The radicals gave early warning of their intention to oppose any renewal of the Company's charter.⁵ They blamed the Company for India's lack of "material improvements" since 1833, and, believing that the parliamentary committees would uncover evidence which would justify this view, urged the government to delay permanent legislation.⁶ The Company, they argued, was a "screen" which shielded the Indian minister from the

³Wood to Lord Aberdeen, [20 February 1853 (secretary's date)], Aberdeen Papers, B.M.Add.MS. 43198, fols. 109-12. See also Wood to Grey, 7 March 1853, Howick Pap.

⁴"Hadjee" [Sir T.E. Perry], in The Times, 14 March 1853.

⁵Wood to Lord Dalhousie, 8 March 1853, Wood Papers, India Office Library (W.P., I.O.L.).

⁶Bright's speech, Hansard, 3rd series, cxxv, 11 March 1853, cols. 37-47. For the speeches of other radicals on this occasion, see cols. 55, 57-8, 63.

parliament to which he was responsible. They would sweep the Company away, leaving India to be governed directly by the responsible minister of the Crown.⁷ To this demand Wood presented implacable opposition.⁸ His Bill left the machinery of the home government intact,⁹ and renewed the Company's charter for an indefinite term. The "modifications" for which he provided were intended to improve the Court of Directors as "an executive council of government". The members of the Court were reduced from twenty-four to eighteen, and one third of them were to be nominated by the Crown from "the ablest persons . . . experienced in Indian affairs."¹⁰

Some obscurity attaches to the motives of the government in extending the Company's charter. There is some reason to suppose that the measure was intended as a prelude to the abolition of the Company in the short term. The indefinite term of the Act, and the provision for the appointment of Crown nominees bear this construction. Each of the three members who "brought in" the Bill - Lord John Russell, Sir James Graham and

⁷The radical case was most fully developed in speeches of opposition to Wood's Bill (Hansard, cxxvii-cxxviii, June-July 1853 - see the speeches of Bright, Cobden, Blackett, Phillimore, Danby Seymour and Digby Seymour).

⁸Ibid., cxxvii, 3 June 1853, cols. 1097-8.

⁹16 & 17 Vic., c. 95.

¹⁰Wood to Chairman and Deputy Chairman of E.I. Company, 5 July 1853, Letters from Board to Court, Vol. 17, I.O.L. The Crown was to appoint three directors immediately. The full complement of six nominees would be achieved gradually as the existing directors retired in rotation.

Wood himself¹¹ - passed comments upon these provisions which suggest that the abolition of the Company was then in their thoughts. Wood wrote to the Governor-General:

The possibility of terminating ... [the Company's] power at any time, and the nucleus of a council to assist the Indian Minister, are as far as they go steps towards, or rather, facilities for that termination of matters.¹²

During the debates on the Bill, Graham said that the Crown nominees to the Court "would form the nucleus of a consultative body hereafter which should be the council of the sole minister of India named by the Crown."¹³ On the authority of this statement, Professor Dodwell concluded that the Act was a step, taken "consciously", towards the direct control of the Crown over India.¹⁴ In 1857, Russell recalled that he had "wished in 1853 to have a clause fixing the termination of the Company's rule in 1858."¹⁵ At the same time, the indefinite term of the Act, and the inclusion of nominees in the Court, might be regarded as evidence of an intention to prop up the Company for no inconsiderable period. On occasion, Wood denied that he had any wish to condemn the Company to an early extinction. On 8 November 1853,

¹¹"Government of India Bill ... 9 June 1853", Parl. Colls., No. 120, I.O.L.

¹²Wood to Dalhousie, 8 November 1853, W.P.

¹³Hansard, cxxix, 11 July 1853, cols. 68-70.

¹⁴H.H. Dodwell, "Imperial Legislation and the Superior Governments, 1818-1857", ch. I of Cambridge History of India, 1932, Vol. VI, p. 16.

¹⁵Russell to V. Smith, 4 December 1857, Russell Papers, P.R.O., 30/22/13.

he wrote to Dalhousie:

That the Court of Directors and the government of the East India Company are permanent institutions no one can believe, but I do not consider the present Act as necessarily bringing them to an early termination, and I hope it will not.

Three years later, he wrote to Edward Ellice, whose brother had been the Chairman of the Company when he had introduced his Bill: "I will do all I can to keep the concern as it stands on its legs"¹⁶

The doubts concerning the ultimate intentions of the government in proposing the Act of 1853 reflect divisions that were present within the Cabinet at the time. In February, Russell, Aberdeen and Wood all favoured an early bill to extend the Company's charter.¹⁷ In March, it seemed that Derby and Disraeli might try to align the Tories with the radicals in opposition to such a bill.¹⁸ There may also have been a division within the government over the question at that stage. Greville noted in his journal that the "question of the Indian government" was "a matter of great difficulty for the Government to deal with." "They are," he explained, "threatened by enemies, and pressed by friends and half friends." Recalling the fall of the Fox-North ministry of seventy years earlier, he looked upon the

¹⁶ Wood to Ellice, 13 September 1856, Ellice Coll.

¹⁷ Wood to Aberdeen, op. cit.

¹⁸ Wood to Grey, 14 March 1853, Howick Coll.; Wood to Dalhousie, 24 March 1853, W.P.

conjunction of an Indian reform bill and a coalition government as ominous.¹⁹ Certainly, the case against an early bill became stronger as the debates on Gladstone's first budget dragged on into the latter half of May.²⁰ The opposition would be able to accuse the government of trying to rush important legislation through at a late stage of the session.²¹ On 18 May, Russell was said to be still "anxious to expedite the progress of the Indian measure".²² However, other members of the government favoured a delay. Within a few days, the Queen was writing to Aberdeen of her concern at "a dissension in the Cabinet" over proceeding with the bill.²³

On 28 May, before leaving his office to attend a meeting of the Cabinet, Wood expressed doubts as to there being time enough for an Indian bill.²⁴ At the Cabinet, Russell urged his colleagues to proceed. His position gained strength when the Duke of Argyll arrived with a private letter from Dalhousie, which

¹⁹H. Reeve (ed.), Greville Memoirs, VII, p. 52.

²⁰Wood to Dalhousie, 24 May 1854.

²¹This was alleged during ^{the} debates on Wood's Bill (e.g., by Lord Stanley, Hansard, cxxviii, 23 June 1853, col. 608).

²²Aberdeen to Wood, 18 May 1853, Aberdeen Pap., op. cit., fol. 138.

²³Queen to Aberdeen, 27 May 1853, in Letters of Queen Victoria, II, p. 543.

²⁴Wood to Grey, 28 May 1853, Howick Pap.

stressed that to leave the forms of government undecided would have an unsettling effect upon India.²⁵ Sir William Molesworth, the radical, persisted in pressing for the abolition of the Company. Herbert, Gladstone, Granville and Clarendon favoured a continuing bill of a short duration. Lansdowne and Graham wanted to delay any legislation until the autumn. In the end, Russell carried Aberdeen, Palmerston, Wood, Newcastle and Argyll with him to secure a majority in favour of immediate legislation.²⁶ Wood "had to work like a horse" to prepare his Bill for presentation to the Commons on 3 June.²⁷ There are indications that the breach in the Cabinet was still wide when he rose to deliver his opening speech. On 2 June, Aberdeen wrote to Russell that it was "unfortunate that Wood's Bill should be launched tomorrow, in the expectation of a general support on the part of the Government."²⁸ A parliamentary reporter described the atmosphere on the government benches in the Commons as one of expected dissension.²⁹ A few days later, Wood told Dalhousie that the

²⁵ Wood to Dalhousie, 8 June, 6 and 8 October 1853, W.P.; Duchess of Argyll (ed.), Duke of Argyll's Memoirs, London 1906, 2 vols., I, p. 420.

²⁶ Wood's journal, book C, Hickleton Pap.

²⁷ Wood to Grey, 4 June 1853, Howick Pap.

²⁸ Aberdeen to Russell, 2 June 1853, P.R.O. 30/22/11.

²⁹ [E.M. Whitty], History of the Session 1852-3..., p. 150. Whitty reported suspicions in the House that Wood spoke only for the Whigs, but Wood's account of the division in the Cabinet suggests that there was no split of a Whig-Peelite nature (journal, book C).

government had been "anxious to make no more change than we could help, for the present House of Commons is a very uncertain one."³⁰ The Act can hardly be described as the product of a united government with a settled intantion. It is clear, however, that for Wood and certain other liberals the form of the home government for which provision was made had more than a short-term appeal.

In 1833, Macaulay, then Secretary of the Board of Control, had explained to the Commons the Whig government's perpetuation of the Company's administration:

That this house is, or is ever likely to be, an efficient check on abuses practised in India, I altogether deny What we want is a body independent of the government, ... not a tool of the Treasury, nor a tool of the opposition The Company ... is such a body.³¹

During the 1853 debates, Wood made similar appeals to this principle of "double government", as it was called. The radicals wanted "single government" by an Indian department with a responsible minister at its head. Wood contended that this would "introduce party considerations into the administration of India."³² Furthermore, because of parliament's ignorance of India, a single or standard departmental form of organization, such as existed at the Colonial Office, would conduce to worse rather than better government. He argued that "in the present state of information with regard to India, the experience of

³⁰Wood to Dalhousie, 8 June 1853.

³¹Cited in C.H.I., VI, p.4.

³²Hansard, cxxvii, 3 June 1853, col. 1148.

persons whose lives ... [had] been devoted to Indian subjects ... [was] a better security for good government than the sole check to be exercised by the House of Commons."³³ Single government would exacerbate the errors of a past replete with examples of great injustices committed in India by well-meaning English theorists who had lacked experience of Indian conditions.³⁴ Wood developed the case for double government in private letters and memoranda. Writing to Dalhousie, he expressed "great misgivings as to the effect of more parliamentary interference", and opined that "great evil" could arise through "the habitual misrepresentations of party."³⁵ His private notes on the debates over his Bill refer to speakers' "mistakes in facts & figures" and contain lamentations that "but a few [men] now or ever will be able to correct [them] in the House of Commons."³⁶ But beyond his apprehension of party misrepresentation and parliamentary ignorance, lay a fear that, through parliament, India might be subjected to exploitation by English interests. In 1853, he distinguished the industrialists of Manchester as a pressure group that sought Indian legislation from self-interested motives. "The Manchester people," he wrote, "want to pull down the

³³Ibid., cols. 1148-9.

³⁴Ibid., cols. 1104-5, 1121-2.

³⁵Wood to Dalhousie, 24 May and 21 August 1853, 24 September 1854, W.P.

³⁶Wood Papers, bundle 11, which Wood endorsed "Various papers referring to the India Bill of 1853". See paper marked "Two first nights debate upon the India Bill".

Directors because they don't grow cotton"³⁷ Against such hazards, the existence of the Company afforded good security.

His private notes contain this reflection on his Bill:

... the policy of preserving such a body independent of the Parties and uninfluenced by the politics of England is the main argument upon which the proposal is based.³⁸

Wood was not alone in finding the principle of the "double government" attractive. John Stuart Mill, with whom he professed to "agree generally",³⁹ had argued for it before the House of Lords' committee on Indian affairs in 1852.⁴⁰ Mill was later to express it succinctly in his Representative Government.⁴¹ There he insisted that "government of one people by another ... cannot exist." Direct rule of a dependency would pervert every rightful purpose of government; the "utmost" a people could do was "to give some of their best men a commission to look after it."⁴² Mill was, in 1853, an Assistant in the Examiner's Department at the East India House.⁴³ Like him, Sir James Melvill, the Company's Secretary, was a staunch advocate of the principle of "double government". He argued the case in a memorandum which

³⁷ Wood to Dalhousie, 24 March 1853. Manchester's Indian policy is discussed at length in ch. 7, below.

³⁸ Paper endorsed "Stanley's Motion", W.P.11. See also Wood to Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the E.I. Coy., 1 June 1853, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, lxix.

³⁹ Hansard, cxxvii, 3 June 1853, col. 1153. Wood quoted Mill's expression of the principle on this occasion (cols. 1148-50).

⁴⁰ Parl. Pap., 1852-3, xxx, paras 2972-4.

⁴¹ J.S. Mill, Representative Government, [1861], London 1944 (Everyman ed'n.).

⁴² Ibid., p. 384.

⁴³ The East India Register and Army List for 1854, London 1854, p. xix.

appears in the papers of Lord Granville, who introduced Wood's Bill to the House of Lords.⁴⁴ A paper on "double government" was also sent to Granville by Sir Charles Trevelyan,⁴⁵ a central figure in the liberal tradition in India,⁴⁶ and one whom Wood consulted about his Bill.⁴⁷ He urged vigorously the unfitness of the English people as represented in parliament to wield power, unchecked, over India. He wrote:

... above all, India has to be protected from the selfishness & rapacity of human nature which find free scope under the elastic machinery of a representative government.

Mill, Melvill and Trevelyan all saw "single government" as sacrificing the sacrosanct constitutional principle of providing effective checks upon the exercise of power. Melville believed that "single government" would place despotic power in the hands

⁴⁴ Paper endorsed "Arguments for Double Govt.", n.d., unsigned, Granville Papers, P.R.O. 30/29/21. I have ascribed this to Melvill as it appears to have been written with the same hand as letters in Wood's Papers (bundle 2) which bear his signature.

⁴⁵ Paper headed "Thoughts upon the Double Government", signed "Treasury. June 1853". Though Trevelyan's name does not appear on it, this paper may be ascribed to him safely. He was Assistant Secretary to the Treasury at the time, and the handwriting is that of a copyist (probably C.E. Boothby) who transcribed many fair copies which bear his signature (e.g. Gladstone Papers, B.M. Add.MS. 44333).

⁴⁶ See, E. Stokes, The English Utilitarians and India, Oxford 1959, passim.

⁴⁷ Trevelyan to Wood, 31 March 1853 (copy), Trevelyan's Letter Books, Bodleian Library. Wood quoted Trevelyan's views in his speech of 3 June, op. cit., col. 1151.

of the Indian minister and he expressed alarm at "what would be likely to result from the enormous population of India being subject to the will of one man." Mill affirmed that it would introduce "the most complete despotism that could possibly exist". "Despotism", wrote Trevelyan, "has to be reconciled with the forms & spirit of freedom." He likened the "forms" of "double government" to those of the "composite" government of England, and valued its "comprehending in its constitution every practical check against maladministration as all good governments do." For Mill, "double government" supplied the "forms" by subjecting "all Indian proceedings" to review by "two separate bodies independent of one another." Melvill felt that for an Englishman there was something abhorrent about a unitary system of government:

That perfect simplicity which is called for is not consistent with our National habits. The British Constitution is a most complicated machine but we should not do so well with one of simple construction.

"Double government", through its appeal to constitutionalism, had a considerable purchase on the conscience of mid-Victorian liberalism. Its attraction for a Whig who revered the "mixed" form of ^{the} British constitution is abundantly clear.

In the controversy over the retention of the Company, Wood was puzzled by the radicals' assumption that single government would make the Indian minister more "responsible".⁴⁸ Ministerial responsibility for India must exist under either double or single

⁴⁸ Speech of 3 June, op. cit., cols. 1137-8.

government. The radicals appealed to the parlous condition of India in support of their case. Wood recognised that the progress of administrative reform under the Charter Act of 1833 had been disappointing, but he believed that improvements might be made without sacrificing the advantages of double government. In 1833, provision had been made for the appointment in India of a commission to reform the law and legal procedure. Although the commission had sent home recommendations for improvements, neither the Court nor the Board had been able to decide upon a course of action.⁴⁹ Under the 1853 Act, Wood took power to establish a commission in England for the purpose of framing draft codes and procedures for enactment in India. Again, in 1833, Macaulay had introduced the principle of competitive examination for appointments to Haileybury, the Company's training college for civil servants, but the Court had sabotaged his arrangements.⁵⁰ Wood now provided positively for competitive entrance examinations to Haileybury, and soon appointed a committee of educationalists, under Macaulay's chairmanship, to report upon the best means of applying the competitive principle. By using his position as the minister charged with proposing Indian legislation, Wood was able to provide for improving the laws of India and for recruiting civil servants of the highest available calibre. But even in matters which required no legislation, he found plenty of scope for discharging his

⁴⁹ See ch. 4, below.

⁵⁰ See ch. 5, below.

ministerial responsibility within the framework of the double government. The procedure for preparing despatches enabled him to exercise a decisive influence upon administrative policies.

The process usually began when, under instructions from the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman of the Company, a clerk prepared an unofficial draft despatch. In a form approved by the Chairman, this document was sent to the President of the Board, in "previous communication", for perusal, amendment and return.⁵¹ Thereupon, it became a "draft" despatch and was placed before one of three committees of the Court, and later before the full Court. The draft was sent to the President of the Board for final approval. Though this system made the minister more of a check on policy than an originator, he might initiate despatches by requiring the Court to have a draft prepared. Wood exercised this power with great effect, inaugurating large reforms in Indian policy. He set in motion the drafting of the famous education despatch of 1854. When the Court's first "communication" on the question fell short of his expectations, he planned the despatch himself, and, together with his private secretary, wrote it in its final form.⁵² He followed a similar

⁵¹The procedure for preparing despatches was described by J.C. Melvill in his evidence before the Lords' committee (Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, xxx, paras 187-91, 246-57).

⁵²See ch. 6, below, and the writer's "The Composition of 'Wood's Education Despatch'", subsidiary paper No. 2, below.

procedure with a despatch which authorized the construction of large public works from surplus cash balances in the Indian treasuries.⁵³ Public works was the department of administration at which radical critics of the double government most frequently pointed the finger of scorn. Education was most frequently regarded by Christian missionaries as the key to the improvement of India. Over both matters, and within the framework of the double government, Wood was able to exercise a decisive authority.

The double government did not, in itself, detract from the responsibility of the Indian minister. It might be contended that if the minister could run his own course in spite of the Court, then the appearance of a check upon him was illusory. There is some truth in the contention, not so much with regard to the formation of administrative policy as in matters which required parliamentary enactments. As despatches were sent to India in the Court's name, Directors could always oppose ministerial policy by withholding their signatures. If, as he might, the minister insisted upon the despatch, they could threaten to resign their places, thereby bringing publicity to bear upon the question. The same facilities for registering their disapproval were not as readily available with legislation. The minister was free to frame bills without referring to the Court. Indeed, where, as in 1853, the very existence of the

⁵³See ch. 7, below.

Company and the disposal of its patronage were involved, it would have been surprising if the minister had consulted the Court. Nevertheless, the Court might still resign, or have recourse to writing letters of protest, which could be called for in parliament, or to sending petitions direct to Westminster.⁵⁴ Though the minister held an overriding authority, there was strong reason for him to consult the Court except where a question of high imperial policy, or of the Company's own interests, was involved. He would seldom choose to have it said that he had not asked the opinion of the highest authority on Indian affairs in the land.

The Indian mutiny gave rise to a "disposition to have a victim".⁵⁵ Wood, whom Granville later described as "too fond of the old Company and its traditions",⁵⁶ deprecated press talk of "the effete body" and "mischievous speeches" against the Company in parliament.⁵⁷ However, he recognised that there was "a strong combination of parties against the Company," and that it had been seriously discredited by adverse publicity. He accepted that its replacement by the Crown as the sovereign authority would help to restore England's prestige in India.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ The Court in fact wrote letters of protest to Wood about his Bill on 2 June and 1 July 1853. Both were presented to parliament (Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, lxix).

⁵⁵ Wood to Ellice, 6 October 1857, Ellice Coll.

⁵⁶ Granville to Lord Canning, 10 August 1859, Granville Pap. P.R.O. 30/29/21.

⁵⁷ Wood to Ellice, *op. cit.*

⁵⁸ Wood to Grey, 10 October 1857, Howick Pap.; Hansard, cxlviii, 18 February, 1858, col. 1646.

Furthermore, he thought that the change need not disturb the existing disposition of the home authorities in essentials.

"A Sec. of State & a Council," he wrote, "would not ... differ very much from a President & Court of Directors."⁵⁹ In February 1858, he supported Lord Palmerston's Bill to abolish the Company and to establish a nominated council of eight members with experience of Indian affairs. He argued:

... there must be a responsible Minister for India ..., and ... it is equally indispensable that he should be aided, or guided and checked, if you will, by a Council composed mainly or exclusively of men of Indian experience the double Government, in the sense in which I use the phrase - that is, a mixed Government - has always existed, and must always exist The substantial change now proposed, then, is in reality much less than it appears⁶⁰

The Whigs went out of office before their Bill could be enacted, and it was a Tory Act which finally abolished the Company.

Wood supported Lord Stanley's measure in principle, though he expressed the view that the large council for which it provided would prove an inconvenient deliberative body.⁶¹

The Government of India Act of 1858⁶² provided for a council of fifteen members. Eight were to be appointed by the Crown. The other seven were to be elected by the Court of Directors, and future vacancies among the elected members were to be filled by persons co-opted by the Council of India itself. The majority of each class of members was to consist of men who

⁵⁹Wood to Ellice, op. cit.

⁶⁰Hansard, op. cit., 1640-2.

⁶¹Ibid., cl, 11 June 1858, col. 1978.

⁶²Act 21 & 22 Vic., c. 106.

had spent at least ten years in India and who had not left the country more than ten years prior to their appointment. Councillors could be removed only on petition of both houses of parliament. Despatches would go to India in the name of the Secretary of State in Council. However, whereas the Court had generally initiated the preparation of despatches, the Council had no power to act upon a question until the Secretary of State required it to do so. The minister might establish committees of the Council, and he was free to make his own arrangements for the discharge of business. Even when the Secretary of State placed a matter before a committee of the Council, he alone could raise it subsequently before the full Council. Once a matter was laid before the Council, every member had the right to register his opinion on it, and to submit a written dissent from the decision taken on it. All orders of the Secretary of State, except where they related to urgent or diplomatic matters, had to come under the eye of the Council before being issued. However, the minister had the power to overrule the Council's decision, except where expenditure was involved, in which case he required a majority vote.

The Act perpetuated the essential principle of the double government - the dual authorities of the minister and an independent council. However, it gave the minister the initiative where previously he had served more as a check, and placed the Council in the position of a check where, formerly, the Court

had initiated. The self-election of Councillors, their experience of India, their life tenure of office, their financial veto, the obligation of the minister to consult them before issuing orders, and their right to record dissents, constituted a considerable check upon the minister. At the same time, the responsibility was his alone, and with it went an overriding authority. He could decide the priority of business, organize the Council into committees, and so arrange the preparation of reports and despatches that he was constantly in touch with the process of policy-making. If he chose, he might refrain from consulting the Council upon matters for which no order needed to be issued. This meant, strictly speaking, that in aspects of policy that were subject to the determination of the Cabinet and parliament the minister might sidestep the Council altogether, until such time as a decision had taken the form of a legislative enactment and required the issue of directives. Wood was to take advantage of this loophole.

Before his departure from office, Stanley had some nine months in which to build and set working the machinery for which he had drawn the blueprints. His execution was not up to the standard of his design. By his treatment of the most contentious policy decision with which he was faced, he aroused the antagonism of the Queen and the Prince Consort towards the constitution of the governing authorities under his Act. The decision concerned

the organization of the Indian armies.⁶³ The Act had merely provided for placing the Company's European army under the authority of the Crown, without affecting its terms of service. The question of whether a local European force would be retained in India, or whether all European troops should eventually be supplied from the Line, was left open for later determination. Some members of the Council declared their decided preference for a force under the direct control of the Indian authorities. On the other hand, the Queen and the Prince were determined that the entire European army should be under the supervision of the Horse Guards, and be subject thereby to the direct control of the Crown. In this conflict of opinions, Stanley aligned himself with the views of his Councillors, and, as a result, fell into disfavour at Court. The Queen harboured, in Stanley's words, "an extreme jealousy of the power of the Council, however limited, as being a check interposed between the Sovereign and the absolute government of India."⁶⁴ During the formation of the liberal government in June 1859, Wood made the following entry in his journal:

June 18. Went down to Windsor and kissed hands. Had audience. The Queen complained of Lord Stanley not asserting stoutly enough the authority of the Crown, and suffering himself to be overborne by his Council, saying that it was worse than the old state of things under the Board of Control.⁶⁵

⁶³The question is discussed at length in ch. 10, below.

⁶⁴Stanley to Wood, 14 July 1859, W.P. 76.

⁶⁵Wood's journal, book D, Hickleton Papers.

Two weeks earlier, the Queen had, in fact, taken a strong line towards Stanley by sending him a "Minute on the Conduct of Business", which contained the following instruction:

The Secretary of State to obtain the Queen's consent to important measures, previously to his bringing them before the Council for discussion.⁶⁶

Stanley regarded this "plan" as "intended to debar the Council from having any deliberative voice whatever. For they would hardly, except in extreme cases, reject a scheme which came to them endorsed by the Govt. collectively." He "pointed this out" to the Queen, and the Prime Minister "concurred in [his] ... objection."⁶⁷ However, the Queen pressed her proposal upon Wood within days of his assuming office, and his private papers contain the following note upon it:

This seems to be putting Her Majesty in a false position. I conceive that before a measure or draft is submitted to Her Majesty, it ought to have been fully considered by the Secretary of State. This the Secretary of State does in Council. He may be induced to modify his own opinions from what he hears from members of the Council. After hearing their opinion he shd. submit his deliberate opinion to Her Majesty.⁶⁸

Wood presented this view to the Prince during an audience, and expressed it in writing, giving chapter and verse from the Act

⁶⁶ n.d. (copy), W.P. 60. The minute may be dated 4 June 1859 on the authority of a letter from the Queen to Wood, 3 July 1859 (W.P. 60). The Queen's very keen interest in Indian affairs is discussed in C.C. Davies, "India and Queen Victoria", Journal of the East India Association, 1937 (xxviii), esp. pp. 207-8.

⁶⁷ Stanley to Wood, op. cit.

⁶⁸ "Memorandum of Queen to Lord Stanley as to business with notes by Sir C.W.", W.P. 60.

of 1858. He pointed out that "except in secret or urgent cases the council is a necessary part of the machinery, & that the Secretary of State may act in spite [of] but not without them."⁶⁹

Although Wood endorsed Stanley's view of the need to consult the Council on "important measures" before placing them before the Queen, he at first made an exception of measures that were subject to determination by the Cabinet, and to parliamentary legislation. During July and August 1859, he corresponded with the Queen about a bill to increase the statutory maximum extent of the Local European army in India.⁷⁰ He did not place the question before the Council, but routed it through the Cabinet and parliament directly. The bill was purely formal and the Council would almost certainly not have been opposed to it. However, in the following year, Wood repeated the procedure to obtain parliamentary sanction for a principle to which the Council was strongly antagonistic - the discontinuance of the Local army. His failure to consult the Council formally on this question gave rise to what one of its members, Sir Erskine Perry, described as "a very pretty quarrel." Perry wrote to Sir George Clerk, the Governor of Bombay:

⁶⁹Wood to Prince Consort, 30 June 1859 (copy), endorsed "Impossibility of transacting business without Council", *ibid.*

⁷⁰Wood's relations with the Crown and the Council over the army questions are discussed fully in ch. 10, below.

He contends, & to a certain extent acts upon his opinion, that on all grand questions wherein the decision of the Cabinet or Parliament may be necessary it is not incumbent upon him to consult his Council; we say that if a Council is not to be consulted we are a useless & expensive incumbrance, & the sooner we are done away with the better.⁷¹

When Wood was questioned in parliament upon his proceedings, he appealed to the spirit of the 1858 Act, which left with the minister the initiative of placing matters before the Council. He claimed that the President of the Board of Control had been free to introduce bills "at his discretion", and that in 1858 the legislature had "never intended to impose new fetters on the Secretary of State."⁷² His argument from the spirit of the Act was sophistical. In June 1859, he had represented the Act fairly to the Prince Consort as intending that "except in secret or urgent cases the Council ... [was] a necessary part of the machinery, & that the Secretary of State ... [might] act in spite [of] but not without them." He was now taking advantage of the Act's failure to require specifically that draft legislation be placed before the Council. However, the force of the Council's objection to his proceeding on this occasion ensured that he did not repeat the performance. The attachment of the Councillors to the Local army arose largely from the fact that most of them had spent a life-time in the service of the Company.⁷³ They had a similar

⁷¹ Sir T.E. Perry to Clerk, 17 March 1860, Clerk Papers, I.O.L.

⁷² Hansard, clix, 12 June 1860, col. 333, and 2 July, col. 1304.

⁷³ S.N. Singh, The Secretary of State for India and His Council, Delhi 1962, Appendix.

regard for the exclusive right of covenanted civil servants to senior Indian appointments. In 1860, Wood contemplated legislation for opening the appointments to non-covenanted persons. It was notable that rather than sidestep the Council on this question he consulted them, and, when they opposed the issue of instructions for the drafting of a bill, overruled them.⁷⁴

Wood had been in office for only a few days when he began to find fault with the arrangements which Stanley had made for the discharge of business. He confided to the Prince that the form of procedure seemed "to resemble far too much the old proceeding with the Court of Directors and the Board of Control."⁷⁵ Early in July, he wrote to Trevelyan: "It is not the agreeable place it was when I was at the Board of Control ... [in] the mode of transacting the business."⁷⁶ At the Board, he had often taken the initiative. Now, in spite of the intention of the Act of 1858 to place the initiative with the minister, he found himself "very much in the old position of a check." He told Grey that he was "going to try to mend this."⁷⁷ Granville heard of this resolve and wrote to Canning: "He is going to have a fight with his Council to ... give more initiative to the Secretary of State."⁷⁸

⁷⁴The incident is discussed in ch. 5, below.

⁷⁵Wood to Prince Consort, 30 June 1859, op. cit.

⁷⁶Letter of 11 July 1859, W.P.

⁷⁷Letter of 2 September 1859, Howick Pap.

⁷⁸Letter of 10 September 1859, P.R.O. 30/29/21.

Wood was critical of the "cumbrous" system which Stanley had allowed to develop for the preparation of despatches.⁷⁹ He later described the steps that he took to change it, for the benefit of the Duke of Argyll when the latter went to the India Office.⁸⁰ Stanley, he wrote, had perpetuated the Court's division of the business among three committees and he had allowed them "to prepare drafts in the ordinary course of business." This seemed "bad" in that "the Committee were pledged to their draft in every case. In ordinary matters the S. of S. knew nothing about it till the draft approved by the Comtee. came to him." To change a draft he had, therefore, to override views to which the committee were "openly committed ... in detail." Wood considered it "much better that the heads [of] departments (the Executive) shd. prepare drafts" and he arranged for them to do so. "Their draft went to the U.[nder] S.[ecretary] & after revision by him to the S. of S. He might alter, or direct another dft. to be prepared." Then, "he sent it to comtee. in such shape as at any rate he did not object to." It was Wood's "practice to hear any objection raised in Comtee. from the Chairman, & sometimes to discuss matters with the Comtee." The draft "came back from

⁷⁹Wood to Ellice, 19 August 1859, Ellice Coll.

⁸⁰Copy of a memorandum by Wood, commenting upon a minute by the Duke of Argyll of 28 October 1869, n.d., W.P. For Stanley's own account of his procedure, see Stanley to Wood, 14 July 1859, op. cit. See also "Minute approved by the Queen on Conduct of Business", 27 November 1858, in Stanley's hand, signed by the Queen, W.P., 60.

the Commee. to the U.S. & then to the Sec. of State, who sent it forward to the Council - where after discussion it might be then & there amended, or sent back to the Commee. if the Sec. of State thought it advisable to have any of the views expressed in Council embodied in the dispatch." Wood found that these procedural changes, which took effect from November 1859, gave "the S. of State abundant power in one way or another of enforcing his views." They conduced, as West later observed, to his "assuming to himself the initiatory power and placing his office ... on the usual footing of that of a Secretary of State."⁸¹ Wood took other steps in the same direction at this time. He broke up the existing organization of the Council into three committees, thereby weakening the affiliations of his Councillors. He rearranged the business among six new committees, drafting each Councillor into two of them.⁸² In this context also, his working methods were important. West and Sir John Lawrence, who was then a member of Council, have both left accounts of his habit of frequent informal consultation with Councillors, individually, in pairs and in groups.⁸³ This practice must have mitigated any tendency for Councillors to combine against him, either as a body

⁸¹ A. West, Sir Charles Wood's Administration of Indian Affairs from 1859 to 1866, London 1867, p. 12. As West did not become Wood's secretary until June 1861, he was not writing as an eye-witness to the changes or to their effects.

⁸² Minutes of Council of India, 3 November 1859; West, op. cit. The six committees were: Finance, Public Works, Military, Political, Revenue and Public.

⁸³ Lawrence's evidence before Select Committee on Indian Finance, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1873, xii, para. 4559.

or in factions.

In his dotage, Wood recollected: "I think the hardest task I had on becoming Sec. of State was to break in the old Directors from being masters, into becoming advisers."⁸⁴ The task was not completed in an instant. In spite of his organizational reforms, it was some time before he won the Council's acceptance of his position as the ultimate and responsible authority.⁸⁵ Both he and T.G. Baring, the Under-secretary of State for India, were long critical of the Council as a deliberative body. In 1858, Wood had favoured a Council of no more than twelve members, fearing that fifteen would be a "hindrance" to the minister. His early experience as Secretary of State seemed to justify this fear.⁸⁶ The difficulty of achieving concert in so large a body was aggravated by differences of opinion among the Councillors over the wisdom of Canning's reversals of, or departures from, a number of pre-mutiny policies. Wood agreed with Canning's conciliatory line towards Indian chiefs and the "gentry", and carried approval of it in spite of some strong opposition in the Council. To win his point, without antagonising the Council, he gave way on a number of details in

⁸⁴ Halifax to Lord Ripon, 11 January 1883, Ripon Pap., B.M.Add. MS. 43530, fols. 145-7.

⁸⁵ In the latter half of 1860, Baring wrote to Clerk of the difficulty of disposing of issues, even after a decision had been taken on them (n.d. [July-August 1860], Clerk. Pap.).

⁸⁶ Wood to Grey, 2 September 1859; Wood to Canning, 25 May 1860 and 13 January 1861; Baring to Clerk, 18 July 1860.

the despatches.⁸⁷ On 9 June 1861, he explained to Canning the reason for the reservations towards his policies which the despatches expressed:

You will not expect me to defend the constitution of the Council of India. I think it the most cumbrous machine for the government of a country that ever was invented The wording of the despatches generally does arise from a compromise of opinions. Take your great measures. The majority of the Council (3/4ths) were against the Income Tax. The Political Committee (i.e. the best members for such matters) did not like the treatment of the Talookdars in Oude - that of the Sirdars in the Punjab, or the universality of the Adoption plan, or the new scheme of Police. The Political Committee consists of Sir J. Lawrence, Sir F. Currie, Mr Willoughby, Mr Prinsep, Capt. Eastwick. Can I, or any Secretary of State who has not been in India, pretend to set his opinion in detail against such men? Would it conduce to the transaction of business, if I was overruling them on expressions of opinion on details. I have insisted upon the practical result being an approval of the course taken in the main, and that you have had officially in every case. It may not have been as full, it may have been qualified by doubts and suggestions. I grant that it has, and such, I am afraid, always will be the case, as long as the present constitution of the Council exists.

The letter might seem to suggest that in mid-1861, Wood favoured a change in the constitution of the Council. This was not so. The letter was the product of concern for the position of the Viceroy and for the policies which he was pursuing, rather than of animosity towards the Council. The wish to assure the Viceroy of his own personal support for his policies frequently led Wood to write private letters which expressed criticisms of the views of the Council. In this respect it might be said that

⁸⁷ See below, ch. 9.

he was bringing the constitution into contempt. A fairer judgment would be that he was prepared to bend the constitution to his purposes. The alternative would have been to change it in order to discharge his responsibilities as he saw them, and to sacrifice the advantage of having a strong check upon the Indian minister. By mid-1861, Wood had mastered the art of managing the affairs of India under the existing constitution. Despatches had reflected, and did continue to reflect, the Council's views as well as his own. But the fact remained that he was always able to get his way in essentials. On 29 June, he wrote to Palmerston:

I have had no slight difficulty in bringing my Council into what I conceive to be its proper position. They assumed an independence which was a hindrance to public business. I have, I believe, put everything on a proper footing now. If it goes on a little longer it will have been established as it should be⁸⁸

Two years later, a motion calling for a commission to enquire into the constitution of the home government was tabled in the House of Commons.⁸⁹ Wood averred that "the constitution of the Home Government had worked very well", and he remarked that he had overruled a majority of his Council on only four occasions during his four years in office.⁹⁰ In the following December,

⁸⁸ Letter in Hickleton Papers (copy).

⁸⁹ Hansard, clxxii, 14 July 1863, col. 778.

⁹⁰ Ibid., cols. 782-5. For a summary of the four cases, see Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1873, xii, p. 615. For accounts of two of the cases, see Perry to Clerk, op. cit., and J.P. Willoughby to Clerk, 1 April 1861, Clerk Papers.

Stanley wrote of the Council: "I hear that they get on perfectly well with the Minister."⁹¹

Lord Salisbury, the first Tory Secretary of State to succeed Wood, did not share his regard for the constitution of the Council. Salisbury complained that the Council's power of veto over expenditure made it "an incubus on the minister."⁹² Stanley had found the Council's "financial control" useful, for it had enabled him to resist expenditure "when pressed by other departments."⁹³ "There will," he advised Wood, "probably be no year in which the Councillors will not save their salaries twice over in successfully controlling outlay of this kind, which for a Minister to do, unsupported, against his colleagues, would be difficult." Wood never found the Council's financial veto inconvenient, but, as he was a parsimonious administrator, this is perhaps not surprising. He wrote to Canning in August 1861:

My Council is supposed to be a check on my disposition to waste money. In truth I am far more economical than they are, in all personal questions. Naturally enough they sympathize with every Indian servant; & think me very hard-hearted, when I shew a disposition to apply to the India Office a little of the economy which I am used to in the public Departments of this country.⁹⁴

The burden of Salisbury's complaint was that the Council could

⁹¹ Stanley to Clerk, 9 December 1863, Clerk Papers.

⁹² Cited by Sir H. Verney Lovett, "The Home Government, 1858-1918", ch. XI, in C.H.I., VI, pp. 206-225, see p. 213.

⁹³ Stanley to Wood, op. cit.

⁹⁴ Letter of 3 August 1861, W.P.

resist other than financial measures on the grounds that they involved expenditure. In short, lacking Wood's experience of Indian affairs, his predilection for consultation, his flair for negotiation, and his readiness to compromise, he found the Council difficult to manage. In 1869, he succeeded in having a proposal for the nomination of all members of the Council carried into legislation.⁹⁵ At that time, Wood reflected that although at first "he did not entirely approve... the constitution of the Council subsequent experience entirely changed his opinion." He expressed his "firm conviction ... that any Secretary of State, who fairly and honestly discharged his duties, would never experience the slightest difficulty with regard to his Council."⁹⁶ He defended the status quo by appealing to the same principle that Macaulay had advanced in 1833 and to which he himself had referred in 1853: "... he deprecated any measure which would diminish the independence and self-respect of that body, for a strong Council might be of great service to a Secretary of State in giving him the support requisite to resist the pressure of parties in this country - a pressure not always applied in a way conducive to the benefit of the people of India."⁹⁷

Wood may be described as a defender of the double government,

⁹⁵ S.N. Singh, op. cit., pp. 25-6.

⁹⁶ Hansard, cxcv, 19 April 1869, cols. 1083-5.

⁹⁷ Ibid., cx cvi, 13 May 1869, col. 693.

the "mixed" constitution of the home authorities for India. It must be admitted that after the mutiny there were occasions on which he did not act like one. He side-stepped the Council over the Local army question, and the criticisms of it which he expressed in private letters to the Viceroys would hardly have contributed to its being respected in India. He was prepared to exercise as much authority and influence as he could appropriate under the existing constitution. He would not suffer the Council to prevent him from advancing any policy which he favoured. To have done so would have involved a dereliction of his ministerial responsibility. He brought into play his redoubtable talent for manoeuvre, especially in matters which affected the consolidation of British power, such as the reform of the army and Canning's conciliation of Indian princes and landlords. However, he never denied his Councillors that expression of their views which was essential if they were to advise and check him. Even on the army question, he gave members of the Military Committee of the Council the opportunity of preparing papers for submission to the Cabinet. And, the day after the Cabinet had taken its decision, he presented the full Council with an opening to register its disapproval of his proceedings. He summed up his point of view towards the end of his long life: "... with a strong chief the Indian Council is a most valuable body, but it may become dangerous if it is too strong for the Secretary of State."⁹⁸

⁹⁸Halifax to Ripon, 11 January 1883, B.M.Add.MS. 43530, fols. 145-7.

Chapter 3

Government in India

The Charter Act of 1833¹ introduced a large degree of centralization into the governing authorities in India. In executive government it stopped short of subordinating the minor presidencies to the authority of Calcutta. It left the governors of Madras and Bombay with Executive Councils of three members, and with the right to continue their separate correspondence with the home government. However, the provincial governments were stripped of their legislative powers. The Governor-General-in-Council was to be the lawmaking authority for the whole of India. The Supreme Council at Calcutta brought together the Governor-General, the Commander-in-Chief, a military officer, and two civil officers, who were, by custom, chosen from the Bengal presidency. When the Council met for legislative purposes, it would, in future, be joined by a "law member", appointed from England. Whether it met as an executive or as a legislature, the Governor-General might impose his will upon the Council, though Councillors had the right to record dissents. It was hoped that the addition of the law member would enable the Council to pass bills for the reform of laws and legal procedures throughout India.

In October 1852, as the term of the Charter Act approached

¹3 & 4 William IV, c. 85.

its expiry, Lord Dalhousie considered the forms of government in India in a long memorandum.² He recommended that "the principle upon which the general government of India was constructed in the [Charter] Act ... should be adhered to", but that the impending legislation should give "full effect to the principle ... by clearing away doubts, and by removing obstructions." In short, a new act should provide for "unity of authority and of purpose" in the government of India. In the first place, the "powers of the Governor-General ... must be supreme over all, his personal authority ... absolute and uncontrolled", except by his responsibility to the government at home. Secondly, the centralizing tendency of the Charter Act should be developed in both the executive and legislative branches of government. He favoured abolishing the provincial Councils, and reducing the governorships of Madras and Bombay to the status of lieutenant-governorships. Hitherto, the governors had been English statesmen appointed from home. In future, they should be men of local experience appointed by the Governor-General. Madras and Bombay should become explicitly responsible to the jurisdiction of an improved Supreme Council at Calcutta, which should contain an official with "local knowledge" of each presidency. This might be achieved by replacing one of the Bengal members and the military officer with officials from the minor presidencies.

²Paper headed "Government of India", dated 13 October 1852, and signed by Dalhousie, W.P. 11.

Dalhousie regarded "the provisions ... for legislation" as "the least satisfactory portion of the Indian Constitution." He observed that the addition of the law member had been insufficient to render the Council an adequate legislative body for the whole of India. It lacked experience of local conditions, and the law member arrived from England without any knowledge of India's legal problems. The first deficiency would be supplied by Dalhousie's proposed reform of the Supreme Council. In substitution for an English lawyer, Dalhousie recommended the recruitment of a number of further legislative councillors - the Chief Justice of Bengal or a Supreme (Queen's) Court Judge, one of the Judges of the Sadr (Company's) Court, a member of the Revenue Board and the Advocate-General. But he also contemplated a quite new departure in the form of the lawmaking authority. He remarked that "the legislative body ... [had] hitherto in India been made identical with the executive Government", and proposed "the introduction of a new principle" - the creation of a separate "Legislative Council", to which the Governor-General might, subject to approval from home, appoint non-official members. He thought that this "infusion of additional elements ... [was] required for giving to the legislative council the power and weight which it ought to command." The inclusion of non-official persons, first of Englishmen, but later of Indians also, would give the lawmaking body the benefit of the advice of outsiders with "experience of our government and ... extensive and minute

knowledge of Indian details."

Dalhousie's memorandum was a statesmanlike contribution to the theory of government in India. Its emphasis was upon the development at Calcutta of authorities which would be competent to govern all India. He would draw power away from the provinces and concentrate or centralize it at Calcutta, creating, at the same time, a structure of government so imposing that the home authorities would find it difficult to resist. For the moment, he regarded the absolute power of the Governor-General as a necessity. However, his plans for a Legislative Council marked a departure from the principle of despotic government. Though he did not, at this stage, enter into details concerning procedures for the new body, he did envisage that "it should be competent to any member to bring forward a draft Act", and that the Governor-General's power would be limited to a veto over drafts which had been passed.

Wood received Dalhousie's memorandum from his predecessor in January 1853.³ Baring summarized its recommendations for him and Wood placed them besides summaries of the opinions which had been expressed by witnesses called before the parliamentary committees on the 1833 Act.⁴ The weight of testimony was against abolishing the local Executive Councils and reducing the status

³J.C. Herries to Wood, 2 January 1853, W.P.

⁴The summaries appear in W.P. 11.

of the governorships.⁵ This was probably to be expected. Many of the witnesses had served in senior posts at the minor presidencies, whilst others were home officials of the East India Company. The former group might have been expected to prefer the system with which they had been associated, the latter to value the separate correspondence with local English governors. Wood had been strongly opposed to centralization of government in England and Ireland, and he had a high regard for the English gentleman statesman. He decided against centralizing executive authority at Calcutta, leaving the governorships and the Councils of Madras and Bombay intact. His only change in the executive was to provide for the law member to attend all meetings of the Supreme Council, an arrangement with which Dalhousie, revising his earlier opinion, expressed his concurrence.⁶ Wood preferred to improve the administration of the minor presidencies by sending out governors of a higher calibre. Among those to whom he offered governorships in 1853 were Sir George Cornwall Lewis,⁷ later to become Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Elgin,⁸ a future Viceroy. In the end, he appointed Lord Elphinstone to Bombay and Lord Harris to Madras.

As for the existing arrangements for making laws, it was

⁵ Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, xxx-xxxii, passim.

⁶ Dalhousie to Wood, 21 March 1853, W.P.

⁷ Wood to Lewis, 15 and 20 August 1853, Halifax Pap., B.M.Add. MS. 49531, fols. 207, 213-16.

⁸ Wood to Grey, 23 November 1853, Howick Pap.

generally conceded that they were defective. The hopes of 1833 had been disappointed.⁹ Wood accepted Dalhousie's recommendations for the recruitment of officials with knowledge of local conditions and with legal experience. In his Bill, he provided for the legislative body to consist of the Supreme Council, appointees from Bengal, Madras, Bombay and the North-West Provinces, the Chief Justice and a Supreme Court Judge.¹⁰ In addition, subject to the approval of the Court, the Governor-General might appoint two further members. However, Wood did not share Dalhousie's vision of a separate Legislative Council. The Act referred to the lawmaking body as "the Council of India for making laws and regulations". The "Council of India" connoted the Supreme Council, and the additional members for whom Wood provided were to be "distinguished as legislative councillors thereof." Wood regarded his Act as providing simply for the enlargement of the Supreme Council when it sat for legislative purposes. He conceived that the additional members would be "constantly employed as a Committee of Council in working at Calcutta in the revision of ... laws and regulations."¹¹ He did not realize that his scheme was far less grand than that which Dalhousie had proposed.¹² He could never

⁹Parl. Pap.(H.C.), 1852-3, xxx-xxxii, passim. See, e.g., the evidence of D. Hill (para. 3217) and J. McLeod (Para. 2822).

¹⁰16 & 17 Vic., c. 95.

¹¹Wood to Dalhousie, 8 July 1853, W.P.

¹²Wood to Dalhousie, 8 April 1853, W.P. The exchange of letters between Wood and Dalhousie suggested that they were in agreement as to the nature of the changes required (e.g. Wood to Dalhousie, 24 March 1853 and Dalhousie to Wood, 16 May 1853, W.P.).

have read carefully Dalhousie's recommendation for the enactment of a "new principle" in recasting the legislative body. For he became aware that he disagreed with it only when the Governor-General began to construct what he described as "our young Parliament."¹³ The first clash occurred in April 1854, when Dalhousie asked for "permission to nominate" the two extra members for whom Wood's Act had provided, and sought "instructions as to the rank and precedence" of the legislative councillors.¹⁴

Dalhousie explained that his object was "to obtain in the Legislative Council as large an aggregate as possible of the varied knowledge and experience which are to be gained in the Different Departments of the State."¹⁵ Wood set down his observations on the question in a memorandum.¹⁶ He had no intention of allowing the two councillors to be appointed "from the first". The power was taken to allow expert advisers to be called "to the assistance of the Legislative Council in dealing with any particular subject", or to facilitate the permanent addition of two members "if after experience a larger number should be found advantageous." "I have," he noted, "no intention of making a debating society out of the legislative Council. I want to form a practical working body, & one gentleman from each presidency,

¹³ Dalhousie to Sir G. Couper, 11 July 1854, in J.G.A. Baird (ed.), Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie, London 1910, p. 309.

¹⁴ Gov.-Gen. in Council to Court, 3 April 1854, Board's Collection No. 150.834, I.O.L.

¹⁵ Minute by Gov.-Gen., 27 March 1854, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Paper in Wood's handwriting, endorsed "1854 May 30. Memorandum Legislative Council", W.P. 35.

or Lt. Governorship with two judges appear to me to be quite sufficient for this purpose." He could "see no kind of difficulty arising from want of members" if the business were "done or prepared at least in committees", as he had intended. As for rank and precedence, he would give them none "as members of the Legislative Council." "I do not," he continued, "wish to make a body in India to set itself up as independent of the Govt. - I wish to have a body working at its duty of legislation!" On 8 June, he wrote a letter in this vein to Dalhousie. At the end of June, he sent a paper on the Legislative Council to the Deputy Chairman of the East India Company.¹⁷ A despatch was in preparation¹⁸ and he wished to emphasize that power to appoint the extra members, or to renew any appointments made, must not be abandoned to the Governor-General, but retained by the Court of Directors. However, he had still to amend extensively the Company's "draft" on the subject when it came before him. "The Board [of Control]", wrote Robert Lowe, then the parliamentary Under-secretary, to the Court, "... do not consider it expedient to sanction the appointment by the Governor-General in India, of additional members to the Legislative Council of India, without having given their approbation in each case, after being convinced of the necessity for such appointments."¹⁹ Wood opened the

¹⁷ Paper initialled "C.W." and endorsed "Memorandum Legislative Council. Copy sent to Major Oliphant. June 30 1854", *ibid.*

¹⁸ Draft No. 612 ("East India House date", 6 June), Register of Drafts, Vol. 8, I.O.L.

¹⁹ R. Lowe to J. Melvill, 17 July 1854, Letters from Board to Court, Vol. 17, I.O.L.

passage which he inserted in the draft with the words:

The attention of the Members of the Legislative Council will be exclusively directed to making Laws and will not be diverted from this object by any of those forms of discussion which occupy so much of the time of popular Assemblies, and it is our belief that for such merely Legislative Business under ordinary circumstances the Legislative Council will be sufficiently numerous without these Members²⁰

Whilst Wood was framing this reply to Dalhousie's request, Dalhousie constituted the Legislative Council, apart from the members in question, took the chair, and set the Council to the task of drafting standing orders and procedures.²¹ The Council adopted a parliamentary form of procedure, and Dalhousie allowed the public to attend its meetings.²² Wood professed never to have approved of these proceedings.²³ "Your bill of fare for the Legislative Council's work," he wrote to Dalhousie, "is as bad as that for the House of Commons."²⁴ The parallel did not end there. Dalhousie also put into effect his recommendation of October 1852, that the Governor-General's power over the Council should be limited to a veto upon its enactments. As its first piece of legislation, he requested the Council to prepare a bill

²⁰ Legislative Despatch to Gov.-Gen. in Council, 26 July (No.20) 1854, paras. 3-5 (Court's copy), Despatches to India and Bengal, Vol. 87.

²¹ Dalhousie to Wood, 30 May and 13 June 1854, W.P.

²² Dalhousie's diary entry of 12 October 1854, cited in W. Lee-Warner, The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie, 2 vols., London 1904, II, 234-5; Sir C. Ilbert, The Government of India ..., Oxford 1898, pp. 103, 522 ff.

²³ Wood to C. Beadon, 24 April 1855, W.P.

²⁴ Wood to Dalhousie, 9 December 1854.

to enact a Code of Civil Procedure.²⁵ Wood asked that the Code be sent home for review before being enacted.²⁶ On 18 September 1854, Dalhousie replied that the request would be "impracticable to enforce", for his own, and the Indian minister's, "power over the Legislative Council ... [was] limited exclusively to the right of disallowing any act wh. they may pass & of requiring its repeal." "The Legislative Council," he continued, "is a separate body constituted by law and, with the exception I have just named, wholly independent of all authority." Wood might expect to "find them asserting their legislative independence just as strongly as the 658 English gentlemen at Westminster", and he could "rest assured that if any demand ... [were] made upon them to submit, either generally or specifically their legislation for previous consideration in England, they ... [would] most decidedly refuse." Wood was taken aback. In December, he tried to clarify the Council's constitutional position. "I never intended," he wrote, "to raise up a great independent body in India. I look to the Governor-General. India must be ruled very despotically, and I see no other safety for our empire there or security for our native subjects I do not wish to make it a body likely to take upon itself more weight or authority than is necessary for the purpose of elaborating laws, and I do not look upon it as ... the nucleus and beginning of a constitutional parliament in

²⁵ Dalhousie to Wood, 30 May and 13 June 1854.

²⁶ Wood to Dalhousie, 10 and 24 July 1854.

India."²⁷ In essence, Wood was opposed to the emergence in India of any governing authority which was not subject to control and direction from home at all times. He was in fundamental disagreement with Dalhousie's plans for the centralization and concentration of authority at Calcutta. In executive government he would not surrender his power to appoint and to correspond with the local governors. Neither would he countenance the alienation of his right to interfere with the process of legislation at all stages.

Wood went out of office before he could impose his policy for the Legislative Council. Towards the end of 1855, Lord Canning set sail to take up the governor-generalship. Before his departure, Wood apprised him of Dalhousie's perversion of his intentions.²⁸ He followed up the conversation with the note:

I am annoyed a little at the vapouring about the independence of the Legislative Council in India. The ... House of Commons will unmake them as readily as it made them so that you may hold as high a tone with them as you please.²⁹

From Calcutta, Canning replied that the Councillors were "convinced of their right", and that "nothing short of a Declaratory Act ... [would] remove that conviction." However, such an Act would be "offensive ... and ... [was] not ... absolutely necessary", for "with a little management any serious differences between the Government and the Council might be avoided, and ... the Govt.

²⁷Wood to Dalhousie, 23 December 1854, W.P.

²⁸Wood to Canning, 7 November 1859, W.P.

²⁹Wood to Canning, 9 February 1856, W.P.

might carry any important point that it desired."³⁰ Though Canning wished not to "deter" the home government from proposing a "Declaratory Act", Wood seems to have taken comfort from his remarks and dropped the matter. It was not until he went to the India Office that he became convinced of the need to reconstitute the lawmaking body. However, by that time, cracks had appeared in the structure of the executive, and it was to these that Canning directed his attention most urgently.

The task of reconstruction after the mutiny placed a burden upon every department of government. The collective handling of business by a corporate Executive Council meant that the Governor-General was involved in a great deal of group discussion of important administrative details. Delays in administration resulted. Early in 1859, Canning sought relief from the cumbersome process of consultation by assigning departmental responsibilities to some of the Councillors.³¹ Towards the middle of the year, he wrote to Lord Stanley to suggest a thorough application of the departmental principle of organization.³² Executive decisions might be taken by departmental heads after discussion with the Viceroy, and for major decisions all of the departmental heads might be brought together. Stanley favoured the change, and he referred the recommendation to a committee of the Council of India,

³⁰ Canning to Wood, 29 March 1856, Halifax Papers, B.M.Add.MS. 49558, fols. 109-13.

³¹ M. Maclagan, 'Clemency' Canning, London 1962, p. 267.

³² Ibid.

which approved the principle of organizing not only the Executive Council at Calcutta, but also those at Bombay and Madras, on a departmental basis.³³ Canning distinguished two means of effecting the reform.³⁴ First, Councillors might simply take responsibility for departments whilst remaining members of a corporate Executive Council. The alternative was to abolish the Supreme Council and replace its corporate responsibility with the individual authority of the Viceroy.³⁵ Business would then be discharged by secretaries of a higher status than the existing heads of departments. The Viceroy might, if he chose, call the secretaries together to form a consultative or advisory council. Both Canning and Stanley expressed a preference for the latter scheme and valued the saving of the salaries of the old Supreme Councillors.³⁶ However, Canning pointed out that it would be necessary to make provision for discharging business in the absence of the Viceroy, and that abolishing the Supreme Council would remove the official bloc from the legislative body.³⁷

Wood received with favour the proposals for a departmental organization of the executive. He took up a suggestion of Stanley's

³³ Minutes of Council of India, Vol. 2 (January-June 1859), pp. 717, 795-7 (23 May 1859).

³⁴ Canning to Stanley, 13 June 1859, cited and discussed in M. MacLagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-8.

³⁵ The development of this scheme is the subject of H.L. Singh's "A Plan for the Abolition of the Supreme Council, 1859-1861", *Bengal Past and Present*, lxxx.ii (1962), pp. 86-92.

³⁶ Wood to Canning, 26 July 1859; Stanley to Wood, 22 June 1859; W.P.

³⁷ Canning to Stanley, 13 June 1859, *op. cit.*

to appoint a financier to the Supreme Council. When the place of law member fell vacant, he sent out the eminent economist, James Wilson, to take charge of finance.³⁸ He offered a second vacancy to Sir Bartle Frere, warning him that he may have to accept responsibility for a department.³⁹ He had "no faith in the validity of [the argument that the Supreme Council acted as] a check upon the Governor-General," and agreed with Canning and Stanley that it seemed desirable to abolish the Council as a corporate body.⁴⁰ However, he thought "the question of saving in ... salaries of very minor importance."⁴¹ He would choose "the very best men in India" as secretaries, and, after the manner of the President of the United States, bring them together in a non-corporate consultative council to discuss important policy decisions.⁴² In February 1860, he told the House of Commons that he intended to abolish the Supreme Council and to replace it with a council of departmental heads.⁴³ Like Stanley, he referred the question to a committee of the Council of India, which, in March, gave its blessing to the principle of establishing secretariat councils at Calcutta and at each of the local centres of government.⁴⁴

³⁸E. Barrington, The Servant of All, 2 vols., London 1927, II, pp. 170-8.

³⁹Wood to Frere, 3 August 1859, W.P.

⁴⁰Wood to Canning, 26 July 1859, W.P.

⁴¹Wood to Canning, 7 November 1859, W.P.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Hansard, clvi, 9 February 1860, cols. 746-7.

⁴⁴Wood to Canning, 3 and 19 March and 27 August 1860; Sir H. Verney Lovett's "The Indian Governments, 1858-1918", ch. XII in Cambridge History of India, VI, pp. 226-44, see p. 227.

However, in February and March, an incident occurred in India which brought out the force of the difficulty, which Canning had originally discerned, of providing for a strong government in the event of the Viceroy's absence from Calcutta and if the Supreme Council were abolished. For during those months, whilst Canning was at Simla, Sir Charles Trevelyan, the Governor of Madras, "rebelled".⁴⁵ He announced that he would refuse to collect in Madras an income tax which the Supreme Council had levied upon all India, and published minutes attacking Wilson's financial policy. The defiant Governor was opposed, in Wood's words, by "a corporate body [which] possessed a certain status as against him."⁴⁶ Wood imagined the position of a departmental head, belonging to a non-corporate consultative council, confronted with a recalcitrant Governor:

Do you think Secretary Wilson would have stood his ground as steadily and firmly as the Council? I am inclined to think that in the absence of the Gov. General the Secretary in Council would be at a disadvantage in a contest with a Governor.

It seemed that "for the sake of imposing authority" the Supreme Council was a superior body to a consultative council.⁴⁷

Further, whilst Wood was musing upon the implications of Trevelyan's "revolt", he received strongly worded letters from Wilson and Frere, urging the retention of the Supreme Council in

⁴⁵The documents concerning the incident appear in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, xlix.

⁴⁶Wood to Canning, 26 July 1860.

⁴⁷Wood to Canning, 27 August 1860, W.P.

its existing form.⁴⁸ Frere argued that to reduce the status of the Governor-General's advisers from that of Councillors to that of secretaries would appreciably weaken the position of the Governor-General. The counsel of the most senior men in the Indian service would be lost to the Viceroy, who would, in consequence, then need to refer with inconvenient frequency to the Secretary of State. Wood showed Frere's letter to Stanley, who did "not see much" in "his arguments," but as Frere's was "so good an opinion", thought that they "deserve[d] to be fully weighed."⁴⁹ Wood began to attach a new value to "the august name of the Council."⁵⁰ For some time, Canning continued to press Wood to introduce a bill to reform the executive during the 1860 session of parliament.⁵¹ But under pressure from Frere he too changed his mind,⁵² and, in January 1861, retracted his suggestion for abolishing the Council.⁵³ He advanced instead the second of his original proposals - the reorganization of the existing executive along departmental lines. Wood's Councils Act of 1861

⁴⁸ Frere to Wood, 15 May 1860, W.P.; Wood to Canning, 10 July and 27 August 1860.

⁴⁹ Stanley to Wood, 16 July 1860, W.P.

⁵⁰ Wood to Canning, 27 August 1860.

⁵¹ Canning to Wood, 25 May 1860. On 30 June, Canning asked Granville to press Wood to make "the change in my Council this session" (P.R.O. 30/29/21).

⁵² Canning to Frere, 24 October 1860, in J. Martineau, Life of Sir Bartle Frere, 2 vols., London 1895, I, p. 358, discussed in C.H.I., VI, p. 228.

⁵³ Despatch to S. of State, 26 January (Home Dept. No.3A) 1861, in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xliii, pp. 297-8; see also Canning to Wood, 4 February 1861, W.P.

gave the Viceroy power to make rules for the conduct of the executive business of the Council on the portfolio system.⁵⁴ Acts of individual Councillors pursuant to these rules would have the force of acts of the full Council. The Act also increased the Supreme Council by one member by making permanent provision for a financial Councillor in addition to the law member.

In his original expression of the alternative means of reforming the Executive, Canning had remarked that the abolition of the Supreme Council would create "difficulties" in the Legislative Council. Wood appreciated "that if the Executive Secretaries were made like Secretaries of the U.S., they would be unable to attend the Legislative Council."⁵⁵ However, for almost the whole of his first year at the India Office, he was thinking in terms of dismantling the latter body. Stanley regarded the 1833 experiment of concentrating legislative authority at Calcutta as a failure, and favoured restoring limited powers of legislation to the minor presidencies.⁵⁶ Non-official members, he thought, might well be added to the local Councils for legislative purposes. Trevelyan complained that the central government was overloaded with work.⁵⁷ He also recommended the extension of legislative powers over certain matters to the minor

⁵⁴ Act 24 & 25 Vic., c. 67.

⁵⁵ Wood to Trevelyan, 26 September 1859.

⁵⁶ Stanley to Wood, 22 June 1859, op. cit.

⁵⁷ Trevelyan to Wood, 28 July 1859, W.P.

presidencies, and the inclusion of non-official legislative members in the local Councils.⁵⁸ Wood asked Canning for his views on the question,⁵⁹ and the latter raised the possibility of abolishing the Legislative Council for India, and of having only local legislatures, in each presidency.⁶⁰ On 17 November 1859, he wrote that he leaned to "the abolition [of the Legislative Council] as a machine for Universal Indian Legislation, and the establishment of Local Councils."⁶¹ However, in a despatch of 9 December, he recommended the retention of a Legislative Council at Calcutta. It should consist of fifteen members. Smaller lawmaking bodies should be set up at Madras and Bombay.⁶²

Wood contemplated going further than this. "The question," he wrote to Canning in November, "is whether we could now give to the Governor-General and his cabinet ministers [i.e. the proposed secretariat or consultative council] power to legislate for India."⁶³ Each of the local centres of government, not only the minor presidencies but also the North-West Provinces, the

⁵⁸ Ibid. and Trevelyan to Wood, 25 October, 26 November 1859, W.P.

⁵⁹ Letter of 26 August 1859.

⁶⁰ Canning to Wood, 30 September 1859, W.P.

⁶¹ Letter to Wood, W.P.

⁶² To S. of S., Home No. 5, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xliii, pp. 280-7.

⁶³ Letter of 7 November, W.P.

Punjab and Bengal, would have legislative councils composed of officials and English and Indian non-official members. "What say you to this?" he asked Canning. In a letter of 20 December, the latter explained that he had completed his despatch on the question before receiving Wood's letter, and replied: "I confess it did not occur to me to propose so backward a step ... but as regards India I see no difficulty."⁶⁴ In mid-January 1860, Wood wrote to Lord Elphinstone that he was "inclined to ... give to each of the presidencies a legislative council for certain matters and [to] put an end to the legislative council of India."⁶⁵ A committee of the Council of India to which he had referred the question was "bent on reverting a good deal to the former state of things."⁶⁶ Thus fortified by opinion in India and at home, on 9 February 1860, Wood told the House of Commons "that the difficulties in the way of the formation of a good Legislative Council for India render [ed] it almost an impossibility, and that practically the legislation for the whole of our Indian territories must be left almost entirely and uncontrolledly in the hands of the Governor[-General]."⁶⁷ Without committing himself to creating local councils, he mentioned the possibility of forming a "Separate Council for each Presidency", to contain

⁶⁴W.P.

⁶⁵Letter of 17 January, W.P.

⁶⁶Wood to Trevelyan, 10 January 1860, W.P. See Minutes of Council of India, 19 October 1859, p. 524.

⁶⁷Hansard, clvi, 9 February 1860, col. 749.

official and non-official members. The announcement was "well-taken" by the House.⁶⁸

With the bold outlines of a scheme in his mind, Wood approached the question of the precise powers of the local bodies. "I am working," he wrote to Trevelyan in February, "in the direction of giving more power to the Local Governors every day, and if we go through the session I hope to have done something effectual. But, after all, unless you can raise local taxes for local purposes, you cannot go very far in [local] self-government."⁶⁹ Each presidency might, he thought, levy its own taxes, and contribute a portion of the proceeds towards the "Imperial Indian expenditure," retaining the remainder for its own purposes. The proportions of the revenues to be spent locally and contributed towards the "Imperial Indian revenues" would need "to be determined by the Central Government." Wood was on the brink of a large measure of decentralization. It is tantalizing to speculate upon what he might have done if Trevelyan had not "revolted" at that moment. The incident led him to shrink from proposing a bill for the Legislative Council during the 1860 parliamentary session. He wrote to Canning:

... I certainly think it would not be wise at this moment to set up presidential debating societies. What a much worse state of things it would have been, if Trevelyan had been making inflammatory speeches in the Legislative Council of Madras, with the concurrence of

⁶⁸ Wood to Canning, 18 February 1860, W.P.

⁶⁹ Letter of 10 February 1860, W.P.

all the members, official, non-official, and Native! Of course they would have asserted the pleasant doctrine that they need not be taxed I have not decided on what I shall do.⁷⁰

The affair ended abruptly Wood's musings upon the desirability of a measure of financial decentralization. Trevelyan was a long-standing and trusted friend of Wood's, and an experienced administrator. If such a man would refuse to levy taxes for essential central charges, it might be expected that financial decentralization would lead to perpetual quibbles between the local and the central authorities over the proportion of the revenues required for imperial purposes. He came to regard "the difficulty in giving taxing power ... to local legislatures" as "almost insuperable, without a risk to the credit, and indeed the cohesion and existence, of the Indian Empire."⁷¹ He was driven to the conclusion that, whilst many aspects of legislation might be left to local councils with a leaven of non-official members, "a supreme legislative taxing body" was indispensable.⁷²

The Trevelyan incident put an end to Wood's plan for abolishing the Legislative Council. The plan had rested upon placing general legislation in the hands of the Viceroy and a consultative council, and decentralizing the legislative authority for raising taxes. The problem now became one of remodelling the Legislative Council as "a supreme legislative taxing body".

⁷⁰Letter of 10 July 1860, W.P.

⁷¹Wood to Canning, 27 August 1860, W.P.

⁷²Ibid.

Wood had regarded the decentralization of the power to raise taxes as one of the major reasons for including non-official Englishmen and Indians in local legislatures. "One great object of putting in outsiders is to learn what the world says of taxation," he had written to Canning.⁷³ He doubted whether the same object could be achieved by adding non-official members to the Legislative Council.⁷⁴ It was, he conceived, "difficult to assemble anywhere [outsiders] other than the residents in the neighbourhood."⁷⁵ He could not see how to provide for "a general taxing body with any representation of other parts of India than the spot where the general taxing body ... [was] to meet." The committee of the Council of India suggested that the Viceroy should "summon a Council anywhere, to consist of not less than 6 members, 3 to be outsiders."⁷⁶ Wood dismissed this proposal. "It clearly would not do," he thought, "for the Governor-General at Simla, with 3 officials and 3 Hill Rajahs, to impose an Income Tax on all India." The existing Council contained officials who provided "a certain amount of local knowledge from different parts of India", and he did "not see how that ... [was] to be added to, except by other servants of the State." Whilst, therefore, he could "see ... [his] way to putting outsiders with advantage into local legislatures," where the

⁷³Letter of 7 November 1859.

⁷⁴Commons speech of 9 February 1860, *op. cit.*

⁷⁵Wood to Canning, 26 July 1860, W.P.

⁷⁶Wood to Canning, 27 August 1860, W.P.

areas to be represented were limited, he could "hardly see the possibility of it, to any extent worth mentioning, into a General or Indian legislature."⁷⁷

If Trevelyan's conduct frustrated Wood's scheme to destroy the Council entirely, the Council's demeanour during the latter half of 1860 made the clarification of its constitutional position imperative. In July, the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court Judge rose from their seats to propose that a disarming bill be modified so as to allow Europeans but not Indians to carry firearms.⁷⁸ Their proposal found support outside the Council, among the European population of Calcutta.⁷⁹ A certain "anti-native" feeling was already abroad as a result of the widespread refusal of the Indian tenants of English planters in Bengal to grow indigo in discharge of contracts into which they had entered.⁸⁰ A temporary act had been passed to provide for the enforcement of such contracts by penal proceedings. Wood was "uneasy" about the act and apprehensive at the spirit of racial discrimination which the speeches of the Judges had exemplified. "We may," he wrote to

⁷⁷ Ibid. Wood developed this point in his speech of 6 June 1861 on the Councils Bill. He then contended that the representation of Indian opinion in a small council at Calcutta was impossible, for Indians resident in or near Calcutta no more represented the general population than had a Londoner at Westminster a highland chieftain (Hansard, clxiii, cols. 638-9).

⁷⁸ Canning to Wood, 5 July 1860, W.P.; Martineau's Frere, I, pp. 228-30; Maclagan, op. cit., p. 270. Sir Barnes Peacock was the Chief Justice, Sir Mordaunt Wells the Judge.

⁷⁹ Wood to Canning, 24 November 1860, W.P.

⁸⁰ This question is discussed fully in ch. 4, below.

Canning, "have the West Indian case over again, where the government in England had to protect the negro against the planter interest in the Assemblies of the Colonies."⁸¹ He reiterated the folly of Dalhousie's creating "a public debating society" where he had intended the Council to be "a working Committee for legislation."⁸² He would, he averred, "do anything in ... [his] power to divest it of its spouting character."⁸³ At the same time, he realized that "closing the doors ... [would] be very unpopular" among the English residents at Calcutta, and that their objections would command sympathy at home.⁸⁴ In December, the Legislative Council, in Canning's words, "declared war".⁸⁵ It made a claim to be heard upon a matter which Wood himself had arranged - the pensions of the princes of Mysore who had been deposed in 1799.⁸⁶ "It is clear," he wrote in January 1861, "that the Legislative Council cannot go on , constituted as now ... ; we cannot stand half a dozen gentlemen apeing the H. of C. as an independent representative body."⁸⁷ The next month, he explained to Canning the proper constitutional standing of the body. It was "not a separate Body from the Governor-General's Council",

⁸¹Wood to Canning, 27 August 1860, W.P.

⁸²Wood to Frere, 2 September 1860, W.P.

⁸³Wood to Canning, 24 November 1860.

⁸⁴Wood to Canning, 18 October 1860, W.P.

⁸⁵Canning to Wood, 20 December 1860, W.P.

⁸⁶Proceedings of Legislative Council for India, 1860, pp. 1343 ff.; Martineau's Frere, I, pp. 333-4.

⁸⁷Wood to Frere, 26 January 1861, W.P.

but when the latter met "for legislative purposes, certain members ... [were] added to it."⁸⁸ Wood was determined to establish this point in the bill that he was preparing on Indian councils.

When Wood presented his Councils Bill to the House of Commons on 6 June 1861, he claimed to have "framed a measure which embodied the leading suggestions of Lord Canning."⁸⁹ Indeed, he had drawn heavily upon a despatch which Canning had written on 15 January.⁹⁰ The Viceroy had recommended a Legislative Council for India, consisting of the Supreme Councillors and no more than twelve members to be nominated by the Governor-General. One half of the nominees should be officials, the others non-officials, English or Indian. The nominees should hold their places for a specific short term of no more than two years. Canning had also proposed legislative bodies for the local governments, somewhat smaller, but composed on a similar principle to the Calcutta Council. He suggested the subjects, such as finance, which should be reserved for central legislation, unless referred to the provincial bodies by the Governor-General. Publicity of legislative proceedings should be permitted. Wood's Bill carried all of these recommendations into law. The provisions for local

⁸⁸ Letter of 18 February 1861, W.P.

⁸⁹ Op. cit., col. 642.

⁹⁰ Despatch to S. of S., 15 January (Home No. 2A) 1861, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xliii, pp. 293-7. See also Canning to Wood, 4 February 1861, W.P.

legislatures with limited powers were clearly in accordance with Wood's own views. So was the failure to include Judges, as ex-officio members of the Calcutta Council.⁹¹ However, he had never been an enthusiast for including non-official members in the latter body, or for publicity, and he accepted these suggestions with some reluctance.⁹² Canning's opinion, the strong views which Frere expressed on the matter,⁹³ and the events of the latter half of 1860, had convinced him that it was "impossible" to close the Council's doors or to deny non-official Englishmen a voice in legislation.⁹⁴ Canning had expressed his awareness that care would need to be taken to prevent the delivery and publication of anti-Indian speeches. The Bill introduced the safeguard of requiring the Governor-General's prior sanction for the introduction of bills on contentious subjects, and preserved his power of veto. Further, the Council might only discuss motions for leave to introduce a bill, or bills actually before it. Thus, finance could only be discussed when a shift in policy rendered a bill necessary, that is, in effect, when a new

⁹¹Wood to Canning, 7 November 1859 and 10 October 1860; Wood to Frere, 2 September 1860; W.P.

⁹²Wood to Canning, 26 April 1861; Wood to Sir W. Denison, 26 April 1861; Wood to Clerk, 18 June 1861; W.P.

⁹³Frere to Wood, 10 April 1861, W.P. Frere had developed the argument for non-official representation on the Council in a minute of 16 March 1860 (Home Proceedings of 31 January 1861, cited in R.S. Jain, The Growth and Development of Governor-General's Executive Council (1858-1919), Delhi 1962, pp. 130-1).

⁹⁴Speech of 6 June 1861, col. 640.

tax was proposed. Wood also believed that the introduction of Indian members would counteract the tendency towards discriminatory speeches or legislation. The Indians would "counterbalance" the votes of the non-official Englishmen,⁹⁵ and their very presence would tend to "prevent any oratorical display."⁹⁶ Certainly, the association of Indians with the legislative process would, in itself, strengthen the purchase of the government upon the affections of the people. In the Commons, he represented the provision for Indian Councillors as a further application of Canning's policy of conciliating the natural leaders of the people.⁹⁷

Whilst Wood adopted Canning's "leading suggestions", he gave an emphasis of his own to the constitutional position of the legislature at Calcutta. In the Commons, he dilated upon Dalhousie's perversion of his original plan for the addition of "legislative councillors" to the Supreme Council into a "petty parliament".⁹⁸ During April, he had told Canning that, whilst his Bill would "be very nearly indeed in accordance with ... [Canning's] suggestions", he meant to "make ... [the Legislative Council] more distinctly a sitting of the Governor-General's

⁹⁵Wood to Canning, 27 August 1860, W.P.

⁹⁶Wood to Beadon, 26 January 1862, W.P.

⁹⁷Speech of 6 June 1861, col. 643.

⁹⁸Ibid., cols. 637-9.

Council for making laws."⁹⁹ After the Bill had passed through the Lords, he wrote:

I have carefully avoided the words Legislative Council or any other expression which indicates a separate existence. The additional members are members of your Council when it sits for a particular purpose, to aid you and your executive Council in making laws, & I do not mean that it should be acknowledged as ... doing anything ... as an independent body. You have the passing of all the orders for its proceedings, & after the warning of Dalhousie's standing orders I need not warn you to be careful how you frame them. Once framed they cannot be altered without your consent.¹⁰⁰

He applauded the adoption of rules which provided for the Legislative Councillors to speak seated and in order.¹⁰¹ When Canning left India, Wood impressed the nature of the legislative body upon his successors frequently and with vigour.¹⁰²

The effect of denying the Legislative Council a separate existence was to give the Secretary of State the same complete power over Indian legislation that he unquestionably possessed over executive policy. In 1864, Lawrence denied that the "Indian Councils Act, 1861, ... contemplate[d] that the consideration of

⁹⁹Letter of 26 April 1861, W.P.

¹⁰⁰Wood to Canning, 10 August 1861, W.P. Wood's despatch on the Act reiterated that there was to be no legislative body "distinct from the Council of the Governor-General" (Legislative despatch of 9 August 1861). Wood reserved to himself the power to review the standing orders before they were adopted. "I may," he told Canning, "be able to make them more stringent than you can" (letter of 30 August 1861, W.P.).

¹⁰¹Wood to Beadon, 26 January 1862, W.P.

¹⁰²Wood to Lord Elgin, 18 and 19 May, and 9 June 1862; Wood to Lawrence, 11 April 1864; W.P.

any Bill ... should be stayed by orders from home."¹⁰³ Wood replied that "the introduction of a Bill by the Government [in India], or the course to be pursued by the Government in respect to a Bill introduced by an additional member, ... [was no] less an act of the Government as such than any other which they may perform."¹⁰⁴ In 1854, Wood had claimed that "India must be ruled very despotically" and that there was "no other safety for our empire there or for the security of our native subjects." In 1862, he wrote that "the only Govt. suitable for such a state of things as [existed] ... in India ... [was] a despotism controlled from home."¹⁰⁵ Any independence in legislation was incompatible with the home government's responsibility for the security of India and for the welfare of Indians. Wood's

¹⁰³ Gov.-Gen. in C. to S. of S., 15 December (Legislative No. 15) 1864, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1876, lvi, pp. 17-20.

¹⁰⁴ S. of S. to Gov.-Gen. in C., 31 March (Legislative No. 12) 1865, *ibid.*, pp. 20-1. Wood explained to Sir Henry Maine, the law member, that he might "address the members of the Executive Council, and desire them to take a course as to a bill which they as a government have introduced, and ... [that he] might desire them to oppose as a govt. a bill introduced by an outside member" (letter of 25 January 1865, W.P.). The bill in question concerned the revision of the Code of Civil Procedure (see ch. 4, below). In 1870, the Duke of Argyll expressed a similar view of the Indian minister's right to interfere with legislation (C.H.I., VI, p. 237). In 1883, Halifax advised Ripon of the procedure that he might adopt to secure the passing of the Ilbert Bill: "Override your Executive Council if necessary - if any members resign, well & good - if they do not they must support you, as a govt., in the meetings for legislative purposes as long as they are members of the govt." (letter of 12 April 1883, B.M.Add.MS. 43530, fols. 200-1).

¹⁰⁵ Wood to Elgin, 28 August, 1862.

view of the Indian minister's position vis à vis the government in India had not changed. Indeed, the appearance of racial prejudices in Bengal during 1860 and 1861 seemed to him to vindicate it. An independent legislature might, he believed, discriminate against Indians and provoke insurrection. Legislative independence could not be given to India until that distant day when Indians themselves might be adjudged able to conduct their own affairs.

Chapter 4

Law Reform and Civil Rights

At the time of the parliamentary debates upon the Charter Bill of 1833, the confusion of laws and legal proceedings in India had been recognized. There was a muddle of jurisdictions. The King's, or Supreme, Courts at the presidency towns, with English lawyers on their benches, exercised complete jurisdiction over the towns of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta, and, in addition, over Europeans throughout India. Elsewhere, in the mofussil, jurisdiction belonged to the Company's, or sadr, courts (chief of which were the courts of appeal or Sadr Adalats), for which the judges were drawn entirely from the servants of the Company. Furthermore, there was a chaos of codes and procedures. Broadly speaking, the Supreme Courts administered the Common and Statute law of England, the sadr courts codified versions of the existing Hindu and Muslim law. Partly as a result of Imperial enactments, partly through Indian Regulations - those of both the Governor-General-in-Council and the local authorities at the presidencies - "English" law had departed from legal practice at home, and had become divergent as between the Supreme Courts. The same causes, in addition to the existing diversities of local practice, had introduced a medley of codes and procedures into the sadr courts.¹

¹ For the condition of the laws and legal procedures of India prior to the introduction of the Anglo-Indian Codes of 1859-61, see G.C. Rankin, Background to Indian Law, Cambridge 1946, passim; W. Stokes (ed.), The Anglo-Indian Codes, 2 vols., Oxford 1887, II pp. 381-3; E. Stokes, *op. cit.*, pp. 168 ff.; F. Oldfield's Chapter XXI, "Law Reform", in Camb.Hist. of India, VI, pp. 379-94, esp. pp. 379-84.

Dr. Eric Stokes has traced the influence of Benthamite theory upon those who, in the 1830's, strove to reduce the law in India to coherence.² He described "the need for a uniform and codified law system" as one of "the two leading ideas of the Act of 1833".³ A law commission was set up in India, and Macaulay, the fourth or legal member of the Supreme Council, took direction of it.⁴ A Penal Code, and Codes of Criminal and Civil Procedure were projected for enactment before the end of the decade.⁵ The amalgamation of the Supreme and Sadr Adalat Courts, which James Mill, Macaulay and Sir Edward Ryan, the Chief Justice of Bengal, favoured, might confidently have been expected to follow.⁶ However, the tide of the Utilitarian impulse ebbed before any of these major reforms could be achieved, though one "durable monument" remained.⁷ Macaulay completed a draft Penal Code - a creation of the universal science of jurisprudence, of the "disinterested philosophic intelligence" - to which a "second age of Indian reform" was the legatee.⁸

²The Utilitarians, pp. 140-233.

³Ibid., p. 169.

⁴Ibid., p. 179.

⁵Ibid., p. 213.

⁶Ibid., pp. 168, 169 and n.1, 253.

⁷Ibid., pp. 224-5. However, the "so-called 'Black Act'" (Act XI of 1836) was passed. It subjected Europeans outside Calcutta to the jurisdiction of the Company's Courts in civil causes, and removed their right of appeal to the Supreme Court (ibid., p. 214).

⁸Ibid., p. 252. Stokes (pp. 258-63) and Rankin (op. cit., pp. 204-10) agree in drawing a distinction between the theoretical or philosophical basis of the "Macaulay Code", and the inspiration for the other Anglo-Indian Codes. The latter were, in essence, simplifications and adaptations to Indian conditions of the laws of England.

Before the parliamentary committees which, in 1852-3, enquired into the operation of the 1833 Act, a tale of frustrated hopes was unfolded.⁹ It was not just that the Benthamite spirit had found no embodiment in legislation. The lesser task of enacting codifications of existing practices had not even been accomplished. Though Codes of Criminal and Civil Procedure had been drafted, neither of them had passed into law.¹⁰ Before he had been three months at the India Board, Wood had become concerned about the "very unsatisfactory ... progress of reform in the law".¹¹ On 8 March 1853, he wrote to Dalhousie: "It is now 20 years since the Law Commission was appointed, and we have, I believe, no result from it as yet in practice".

Wood was briefed on the question of law reform by papers from the Company and his private secretary.¹² In February, he received from the former a "Note on the proposed Acts of the Indian Law Commissioners with the reasons of the Court for not sanctioning them".¹³ Baring prepared a summary, covering the institution, history, proposals and results of the Commission.¹⁴ The source of

⁹ Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, First Commons' Report (xxvii) and First Lords' Report (xxxi).

¹⁰ W. Stokes, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 1,383; E. Stokes, *op. cit.*, pp. 259 and n.1, 261.

¹¹ Wood to Dalhousie, 8 March 1853, W.P.

¹² It was characteristic of Wood's approach to administrative reforms for him to require an initial paper from the Company and a report from Baring (see ch. 6 and subsidiary paper 3, p.69 n.4, below).

¹³ Signed "Jud[icial] Dept. Feb. 1853", W.P., 14.

¹⁴ "Law Commission.Memorandum", n.d., *ibid.*

Baring's information is revealed by references in the margin of his paper to the evidence submitted to the parliamentary committees. Baring concluded that the Commission's failure could be attributed to the inherent difficulty of expressing legal terms in plain language, "coupled with a very evident disinclination on the part of the Government both in India and at home to meddle with so large a subject as Law Reform - and perhaps also to the want of persons in connection with the Government at home who are competent to express an opinion in questions of so complicated and technical a character." Baring elaborated upon this conclusion in a note which he entered upon a copy of the 1833 Act, against the clause authorising the appointment of the Commission.¹⁵ The "double government," he wrote, "prevented the chance of this commission working. Neither the Ct. of Directors nor the Bd. of Control ... [had] the necessary acquaintance with the subject to decide upon the adoption or rejection of complicated legal reforms transmitted to them...."

Though he was at first inclined to regard law reform as a problem to be solved in India,¹⁶ by the end of March 1853, Wood had accepted that much improvement might be achieved by a

¹⁵ Copy of the Act, op. cit., in W.P., 50 - see notation opposite s.53.

¹⁶ Wood to Dalhousie, 8 March 1853, W.P.

more vigorous and informed approach at home. A member of the Commission, C.H. Cameron, had, in the previous November, petitioned the Commons' committee to request that the "propositions and discussions of the Law Commission may be submitted to the consideration of competent jurists".¹⁷ Here was the means of breaking the deadlock which Baring had attributed to the form of the double government and the inadequacy of the legal knowledge of the Board and the Court. On 15 March, Sir Edward Ryan referred with approbation to the proposal before the Lords' committee.¹⁸ The next day, the Secretary of the Company knew that Wood intended to set up a law commission in England.¹⁹ A week later, Wood wrote to Dalhousie:

... we propose to make a Commission here to consider and digest all the proposals which were made by them [i.e. the Indian Law Commissioners]. Their reports when completed will be sent out to India to be considered and legislated on by your legislative council, but we think that we may do a good deal of the rough preparatory work here, - put the proposals in the shape of draft enactments.²⁰

¹⁷ Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, xxvii, App. 7, pp. 421-2. For Cameron's elaboration of his proposal, see his evidence before the Lords' committee on 14 April 1853 (*ibid.*, xxxi, paras. 2875-85).

¹⁸ "...these questions as to what the Law Commission has done, what is the value of their recommendations, and what other improvements may be made in the administration of justice, might be satisfactorily considered by a Commission in this country; a Commission constituted of retired Judges and civil servants...." (*Ibid.*, paras. 2454-8.) Ryan would then "submit the results of their enquiries for legislation in India" (*ibid.*, para. 2456).

¹⁹ J.C. Melvill to Wood, 16 March 1853, Hickleton Papers.

²⁰ Wood to Dalhousie, 24 March 1853, W.P.

Besides accepting the desirability of setting up a commission in England, Wood recognised, in March, that one aspect of law reform was unquestionably the proper function of the home government. As the Supreme Courts had been established by Imperial enactment, so any modification to them for the purpose of dovetailing their jurisdiction into that of the Sadr Adalat Courts must be the subject of parliamentary legislation. In his evidence before the Lords' committee, Ryan revived the proposal for amalgamating the Courts which he had first advanced in 1829.²¹ At this time, Wood was, through Sir Charles Trevelyan, in contact with Macaulay, who had also favoured the amalgamation in the 'thirties, about various points which had been raised before the parliamentary committees.²² On 24 March, Wood told Dalhousie that he was "thinking of improving the Sudder Adawlut by combining it with the Supreme Court, putting in an English Chief Justice and Judges, and perhaps a native Judge if you could find a good man; and having a court for the administration of English law in the Presidency towns not of so exalted a character. The improved Sudder Adawlut to be a Supreme Court of Appeal." A few days later, Ryan sent Wood a paper elaborating a scheme for the establishment of the new amalgamated courts as

²¹Op. cit., para. 2431.

²²Trevelyan to Wood, 31 March 1853, Trevelyan Letter Books, Bodleian Library.

High Courts of Judicature at the presidency towns.²³

In the outlines which Wood drew up for his Government of India Bill, he incorporated the proposals for a law commission and for an amalgamation of the courts.²⁴ He contemplated legislating for a "High Court in each Presidency to consist of Chief Justice & - judges to be named by the crown. - Judges to be appointed from the judicial officers of the Company, European or Native." The existing Supreme Courts would be abolished. Part of their original jurisdiction, together with the appellate jurisdiction which the Sadr Adalats then exercised, would pass to the new courts. The residue of the Supreme Courts' original jurisdiction would pass to lower courts at the presidency towns.²⁵ This scheme was also sketched in a "Heads of the proposed plan for the Future Government of India" which Wood sent to the Court of Directors on 1 June.²⁶ However, it formed no part of the Bill which he introduced to the Commons two days later. Several years afterwards, he explained that he had dropped the proposal in response to the arguments of the Indian Law Commissioners. It

²³ Ryan to Wood, 28 March 1853 and enclosure, W.P.

²⁴ The two outlines, one on quarto and endorsed "I", the other on foolscap, appear in W.P., 11.

²⁵ See the "foolscap plan", *ibid.*

²⁶ Enclosure to Wood to Chairs, 1 June 1853, Parl.Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, 1xix.

would, they contended, remain a dead letter "till certain forms of procedure were established which would enable the amalgamated Court to do what the two Courts had been accustomed to do."²⁷

Wood contented himself, therefore, with taking power to set up the Law Commission, announcing that the new courts would be the subject of separate legislation once the way had been prepared for them by the codification of procedures.²⁸

It cannot be denied that the goadings and promptings of the leading law reformers of the 'thirties influenced the steps which Wood took during his first six months in office. But he imbibed nothing of their Utilitarianism. To the "durable monument" of Benthamism, Macaulay's draft Penal Code, he was indifferent. Sir Barnes Peacock, the law member of the Supreme Council in 1853, had two draft measures from which to choose - Macaulay's and another, drawn up by Drinkwater Bethune, who had been "uncompromisingly hostile" to Macaulay's draft.²⁹ In March, Wood explained to Dalhousie that the Commission would "not interfere with your dealing with the Penal Code if you can manage [it]."³⁰ In June, he told the Commons that the Government of India was authorised to pass whichever of the two drafts it chose.³¹ In August,

²⁷ Hansard, clxiii, 6 June 1861, col. 648.

²⁸ Ibid., cxxvii, 3 June 1853, cols. 1165-6.

²⁹ Bethune had been Peacock's predecessor as law member of the Supreme Council. See Rankin, *op. cit.*, p. 202; E. Stokes, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

³⁰ Wood to Dalhousie, 24 March 1853, W.P.

³¹ Hansard, cxxvii, 3 June 1853, col. 1104.

Dalhousie regretted Peacock's illness for he would have liked to have pressed forward with "the amended Penal Code at once, with the deliberate intention of avoiding the infliction of the Illustrations of Macaulay's Code which I foresee will early be reimposed upon us."³² Perhaps the old reformers at home heard murmurings of Dalhousie's attitude, for that very month Trevelyan was pressing his brother-in-law's views upon Wood:

Both he [Macaulay] and Ryan are strongly of opinion that all further proceedings at Calcutta in regard to the Criminal Code should be suspended, and that Macaulay's & Bethune's Codes ... should be sent home to be dealt with by this commission.³³

But Wood was more concerned with making some progress than with securing the enactment of Macaulay's Code. In September, he reiterated that the Government of India was "authorised to pass" a penal code "in any state that ... [it] may think proper."³⁴ He would not interfere with Indian legislation on the question. However, he urged Dalhousie to send the codes home if he was not "in a condition" to legislate. He saw the "benefit" of Macaulay's "seeing what was done" as merely an "additional" advantage of sending home an unprepared measure, not as a consideration which should override the immediate enactment of a

³² Dalhousie to Wood, 19 August 1853, W.P.

³³ Trevelyan to Wood, 23 August 1853, Hickleton Papers.

³⁴ Wood to Dalhousie, 5 September 1853, W.P.

code if that were possible. In October, he was still writing that he would be "quite content" if Dalhousie passed either one of the codes. He had "not seen" Macaulay's and did "not profess to give or to have an opinion of it."³⁵ The following June, Dalhousie wrote that a select committee of the Legislative Council was considering the codes, that it seemed to prefer Macaulay's, but that some six months would be required to render it fit for enactment.³⁶ In July, he sent home the committee's recommendations,³⁷ and Wood placed them before the Commission for scrutiny. But it seems unlikely that Wood would ever have deprecated the enactment of Bethune's draft.

In his approach to the question of law reform Wood lacked the universality of the Benthamites. Like a good Whig he sought the basis of sound laws in customary practice. Hence, he was critical of England's having carried to India laws and procedures which were "foreign to the habits and manners of the people."³⁸ He did not despair of Englishmen improving the laws of India. But the problem became, for him, one of adapting to Indian conditions the reforms which had recently been introduced in England, rather than of framing laws for universal application by

³⁵ Wood to Dalhousie, 6 October 1853.

³⁶ Dalhousie to Wood, 29 June 1854.

³⁷ Dalhousie to Wood, 13 July 1854. The Code was not enacted until 1860 (see below).

³⁸ Hansard, cxxvii, 3 June 1853, cols. 1104-5.

the "disinterested philosophical intelligence." When he announced his intention of amalgamating the Supreme and Sadr Courts, he laid stress upon the blend of experience which would be achieved.³⁹ On the bench of the new courts civil servants acquainted with local manners and laws would join with judges learned in English law. Since the courts were to have final appellate jurisdiction the advantage of the fusion of experience would be extended throughout India.

From the first, Wood's arrangements for the Law Commission reflected a similar concern to blend current English thought with knowledge of Indian conditions. In July 1853, he told Dalhousie that he intended to bring together "Macaulay, Cameron, Millett, etc., who were on the law commission in India,... with one or two English lawyers"⁴⁰ On 26 September, he wrote to the Lord Chancellor,⁴¹ pressing for the presence of the Master of the Rolls, Sir J. Romilly, at the head of the Commission, to ensure "sound and liberal principles pervading the work." English lawyers, he told Dalhousie, would "temper" the men of Indian experience and "keep them in the right track."⁴² He

³⁹ Ibid., col. 1166. Ryan made this point, in terms similar to those which Wood used, in his evidence of 15 March (op. cit., para. 2431).

⁴⁰ Wood to Dalhousie, 8 July 1853.

⁴¹ Lord Cranworth.

⁴² Wood to Dalhousie, 6 October, 1853, W.P.

claimed to have it in mind to give India the benefit of the experience which prominent legists had gained from the recent spate of reforms in England.⁴³ Certainly, as it was finally constituted, on 29 November, 1853, the Commission represented Anglo-Indian and recent English experience.⁴⁴ On the one hand, it contained, besides Romilly, Sir J. Jervis, Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, T.F. Ellis, "law reporter", attorney-general of the Duchy of Lancaster and an intimate of Macaulay's, and Robert Lowe, Secretary of the Board of Control. On the other, it included C.H. Cameron and J. McP. Macleod, both of whom had been members of the Indian Law Commission, Sir Edward Ryan and J.A.F. Hawkins, a retired Sadr judge. Its secretary was F. Millett, who had served the Indian Commission in the same capacity.

The instructions which Wood sent to the Commissioners reveal his concern to prepare the way for amalgamating the courts.⁴⁵ The diversity of procedures as between them was a major impediment to the step, and the range of existing practices throughout the country an obstacle to the effectiveness of a new court of appeal. He wrote to the Commissioners:

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Parl.Pap. (H.C.), 1856, xxv, First Report of the Law Commission.

⁴⁵ Wood to Law Commisioners, 30 November, 1853, ibid., App. A.

It is obviously most desirable that a simple system of pleading and practice, uniform as far as possible throughout the whole jurisdiction, should be adopted, and one which is also capable of being applied to the administration of the inferior courts of India. The embarrassment will thus be avoided which a diversity of procedure throws in the way of an appellate jurisdiction; and the proceedings in the new Court will be a pattern and guide to the inferior tribunals in the mofussil.

Your first duty therefore should be to address yourselves to the preparation of such a code of simple and uniform procedure.

In the following months, Wood clearly conceived of the task of forming the Civil and Criminal Codes of Procedure as one of simplification. On the one hand, simplification would render the procedures consistent with Indian custom. He told Dalhousie that the Commission's "object" was "to adopt as far as possible the simple form of proceedings used now in the Mofussil Courts and get rid of nearly all the technical forms of our Law Courts." Then there would be "a similarity of proceeding from the highest to the lowest Court."⁴⁶ Wood was here elaborating the argument, which he had adumbrated in introducing his Government of India Bill, that England had erred in carrying the "technicalities" of her laws to India.⁴⁷ However, he was doing more than that. Whilst custom suggested the need for simplification so did modern English thought. He wrote to Dalhousie on 10 July 1854:

⁴⁶Wood to Dalhousie, 8 March 1854, W.P.

⁴⁷Op. cit., cols. 1104-5.

The Law Commission has made considerable progress, and has I hope devised forms of proceeding simpler than hitherto contemplated. The opinions even of lawyers have made great progress of late years in this direction; and the leading lawyers now are very much in favour of getting rid of technicalities which of old encumbered our proceedings

During 1854, the procedural rapprochement which Wood sought between Indian custom and modern English innovation was threatened by Dalhousie's intransigence. From the very first, Dalhousie had been suspicious of the Supreme Government being "made to appear as the mere mouthpiece of some Commission in England."⁴⁸ On 18 August 1853, he told Wood frankly: "... I don't like your 'Lords of the Articles' at all." He anticipated "great discontent in the governing body here with the dictations (for such they will be) of this new authority at a distance." He remained unconvinced by Wood's assurances that the work of legislating would remain with the Council at Calcutta.⁴⁹ On 18 October, he told Wood that he was "pushing ... on with all practicable speed so as to introduce ... [the Codes] before I retire." He was disturbed at Wood's setting the Commission to

⁴⁸ Dalhousie to Wood, 16 May 1853, W.P. On 5 July 1853, Trevelyan wrote presciently to Wood: "There is one and only one real difficulty The risk of the Commission coming into embarrassing and conflicting relation with the Government of India" (Trev. Lett. Bks.).

⁴⁹ Wood to Dalhousie, 8 July, 6 October, 1853, 8 March 1854. Wood wrote to Cranworth on 26 September 1853: "We must take good care ... that what we do does not encroach upon the proper legislative function of the Legislative Council at Calcutta."

preparing Codes of Procedure and announced, early in 1854:
 "... we have appointed a Commission to do the same here [so]
 there are at this moment two legal Commissions both occupied
 on the same object."⁵⁰ On 30 May, he told Wood that he would
 have a Code of Civil Procedure "ready in six weeks [and] ...
 the sooner your Commission at home sends out theirs the better."
 Wood took shock at this and asked him not to enact the Code
 until the English Commission had seen it.⁵¹ Their Code would
 be "in advance of anything which your people are likely to do
 as Peacock is understood to be rather of the old school."
 Dalhousie took umbrage. He had formed the opinion that "Mr
 Peacock's views are very far in advance indeed."⁵² He recalled
 that "from the first" he had "expressed freely" to Wood his
 opinion of the Commission's "inexpediency". In India it was
 "regarded as an unmerited reproach on the former Council of
 India; as though that body had neglected its duties
 Further, its institution was regarded as an anomaly in itself":

Men naturally were not able to see how such a body
 whose only portion having Indian experience was
 composed of ... retired [persons] ... who had all
 left this country years ago, should be more capable
 of preparing Indian legislation than ... the Council
 ... having the advantage of living on the scene

⁵⁰ Dalhousie to Wood, 9 February 1854.

⁵¹ Wood to Dalhousie, 10 July 1854.

⁵² Dalhousie to Wood, 18 September 1854.

Dalhousie appealed to a despatch of March 1853⁵³ in which the Court had instructed him to deal directly with the revision of "the rules of procedure in the various Courts ... with the view of simplifying the administration of justice." And he claimed that, in any event, the Legislative Council possessed the independent authority to deal with the question without acquainting the home government of its proposed enactments.

In the end, Dalhousie deferred to Wood's wishes and sent home the draft Code which his Sadr judges had prepared.⁵⁴

Wood related the Commission's opinion of it to Dalhousie:

It seems an able resumé or consolidation of what exists, but I understand that it does not contain ... the simpler forms we have arrived at in this country, and still less the simpler forms which the Law Commission here are prepared to recommend.⁵⁵

He understood the Commission to have their Code "nearly ready" and hoped soon to send it out for submission to the Legislative Council. Early in 1855, the Commission was working on the project for amalgamating the Supreme and Sadr Courts.⁵⁶

However, before either the Codes or the amalgamation were ready for embodiment in legislation Wood passed out of office.

⁵³Court to Gov.-Genl.-in-Council, 16 March 1853.

⁵⁴Wood to Dalhousie, 9 December 1854. The draft was the work of A.J.M. Mills and H.B. Harington (W. Stokes, op. cit., pp. 383 and n.4, 384).

⁵⁵Wood to Dalhousie, 9 December 1854; see also Wood to Sir J. Colvile, 9 December 1854.

⁵⁶Wood to Dalhousie, 25 January 1855.

Though the Law Commission brought forth its first report in December 1855,⁵⁷ the three draft Codes which it recommended were not enacted in India until after the mutiny.⁵⁸ In 1859, the Commission's Code of Civil Procedure, rather than that of Dalhousie's Sadr judges, was, after amendment by Peacock, and a select committee of the Legislative Council, introduced.⁵⁹ Within two years, Wood reported upon its "most remarkable effect in expediting and improving the administration of justice."⁶⁰ In 1860, Macaulay's draft Penal Code, for which the Legislative Council had declared in 1854, was enacted substantially intact.⁶¹ In the same year, the Commission's draft Code of Criminal Procedure was before the Legislative Council. Wood seemed to have some apprehension that the Commission's "recommendations ... for simplifying procedure far beyond practice here" might be opposed by the English lawyers in India, who did "not keep pace with the improvements made at home."⁶² He impressed upon Frere that "the proposals are not mere schemes of ... holiday lawyers."⁶³ He also wrote to Peacock, stressing that the eminent English

⁵⁷ Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1856, xxv.

⁵⁸ The question of whether the mutiny retarded or accelerated the enactment of the Codes is discussed by Rankin, op. cit., p. 69 and n.2.

⁵⁹ W. Stokes, op. cit., II, pp. 383-4.

⁶⁰ Hansard, clxiii, 6 June, 1861, col. 649.

⁶¹ Rankin, op. cit., p. 202; E. Stokes, op. cit., pp. 261-2.

⁶² Wood to Frere, 10 December 1860, W.P.

⁶³ Ibid.

lawyers on the Commission "thought ... the simple forms ... applicable to the trial of Englishmen ... or natives," and urging that "their recommendations on the subject may be adopted by the legislative council."⁶⁴ When, early in 1861, he received word of the Council's approbation of the Code,⁶⁵ the way was at last clear for him to introduce the measure which he had held back for so long - a bill for the amalgamation of the Sadr and Supreme Courts.

In June 1861, Wood explained his High Courts of Judicature Bill to the House of Commons. He reiterated the advantage which the amalgamation would have in uniting "the English knowledge of the English lawyers with the intimate knowledge of the customs, habits, and laws of the Natives possessed by the Judges in the country."⁶⁶ The establishment of the new courts was, he considered, "the crowning point of the whole of the recommendations of the [Law] Commission."⁶⁷ Their constitution, with benches of English judges, civil servants and Indian judges, as the supreme courts of appeal would "improve the administration

⁶⁴Wood to Peacock, 18 December 1860, W.P.

⁶⁵Wood to Frere, 26 February 1861, W.P. The Code was enacted in 1861, and became law on 1 January 1862 (W. Stokes, op. cit., II, p. 2).

⁶⁶Hansard, clxiii, 6 June 1861, col. 647.

⁶⁷Ibid.

of justice generally throughout India."⁶⁸ Wood's Bill was passed and the courts were set up in the following year.

The enactment of the trilogy of Codes and the amalgamation of the courts marked the belated completion of the process of legal reform which was begun some thirty years earlier and revived in 1853. Ambitiously, Wood reconstituted the Law Commission in December 1861 "to do something towards a heavier task, namely a Civil Code."⁶⁹ The Commissioners had, in their second report, of 13 December 1855, recommended the preparation of a body of substantive civil law for India.⁷⁰ The "task" proved exceedingly heavy. In mid-1862, the Commission was "not making much progress."⁷¹ A year later, Wood doubted the value of their continuing.⁷² In Wood's time at the India Office, their only achievement was

⁶⁸ Ibid., col. 651. It is interesting to note that Wood attributed to Canning the suggestion to instal "Native Judges ... by the side of English Judges in the High Court." This looks like a case of Wood's appealing to Canning's authority to support a proposal for which he was himself enthusiastic. Provision for "Native" judges on the High Court bench was made in his outlines for the 1853 Bill. And, after the passing of the High Courts Bill, he urged the authorities in India, with impressive vigour, to seek out Indians for the appointments (e.g. letters to Morehead, 26 November 1861; to Denison, 26 November 1861; to Clerk, 7 February 1862; to Elgin, 10 September 1862; to Maine, 9 October 1862; W.P.). See also ch. 5 below.

⁶⁹ Wood to Sir W. Erle (Chief Justice of Common Pleas), 7 May 1861. The formal appointment of the Commission occurred on 2 December 1861 (Parl.Pap.(H.C.), 1864, xvi).

⁷⁰ Parl.Pap. (H.C.), 1856, xxv.

⁷¹ Wood to Denison, 26 May 1862, W.P.

⁷² Wood to Maine, 10 July, 1863. The occasion of his despondency was Erle's resignation from the Commission.

to have a succession act passed by the Supreme Council.⁷³

Indeed, the characteristic feature of Wood's term as Secretary of State was not so much fresh accomplishment as vigorous defence of the progress which had already been made.⁷⁴

After the mutiny, the animosity between the races remained. It came to the surface in Bengal to give a racial gloss to a controversy over the legal standing of Indian peasants in their contractual relations with their English landlords. The English planter in Bengal sought legal conditions which would safeguard his contracts with the Indian peasant for the growth and delivery of indigo.⁷⁵ Between 1860 and his departure from office, Wood was confronted with proposals to change the law

⁷³ See Rankin, op. cit., pp. 46-51.

⁷⁴ E. Stokes and Rankin have raised the question of the effect of the mutiny on the spirit in which law reform was carried forward. Both explicitly approved the following opinion of Fitzjames Stephen's: "... the mutiny ... in its essence was the breakdown of an old system; the renunciation of an attempt to effect an impossible compromise between the Asiatic and the European view of things, legal, military and administrative." (See Stokes, p. 209; Rankin p. 202.) Yet Stokes and Rankin asserted that the Codes of Procedure were clearly distinguishable in spirit from Macaulay's Code in that they took English law as their basis. These Codes were, in substance, contained in the Commission's 1855 Report. Again, in that Report, the preparation of a Civil Code, on the basis of English law, was proposed. Stokes and Rankin are on firm ground in distinguishing the tone of Macaulay's Code from that of the others. But the spirit which inspired the former had given way to an Anglicist approach before the mutiny. In the years before, as well as in the period immediately after the mutiny, the task of reform was, in England, recognised as one of simplifying English law and adapting it to Indian conditions and customs.

⁷⁵ The struggle over contract law is paralleled by the struggle over the land laws (see ch. 9, below).

relating to breaches of contract, first by amending the Penal Code, later by revising the Code of Civil Procedure. He refused to accept the proposals on the grounds that they violated the principle of legal equality which the Codes embodied, thereby infringing the civil rights of the ryot, and that they offended against the principle of simplification.

In March 1860, the Government of India passed legislation (Act XI) to enforce the performance of contracts for the growth of indigo in Bengal during the current season.⁷⁶ The contracting parties were English settlers, who had acquired zemindari rights to the land, and Indian ryots. The former made cash advances to the latter, who, in return, undertook to grow indigo. During 1860, the ryots claimed that under the terms of their contracts indigo was no longer an economic crop for them, and that they were the victims of extortionate practices. Act XI made "temporary provision for enforcing by summary process the execution of agreements entered into for the cultivation of indigo", and provided for the appointment of a commission to enquire into the "system and practice of indigo planting in Bengal" and to the existing relationship between the planter and the ryot.

⁷⁶ Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xliv, Papers Relating to Indigo Cultivation in Bengal, pp. 206-8. Maclagan ('Clemency' Canning, p. 275) erroneously refers to this measure as Act X. The Act had a tenure of six months.

From the outset, Wood was "uneasy" about the Act.⁷⁷ He deprecated its giving "criminal jurisdiction to Magistrates, in civil cases of breach of contract."⁷⁸ On 4 May, he told the House of Commons of the evils of the system by which the planter, exercising "the powers of zemindar, landlord and creditor, kept ...[the ryot] in a state of complete dependence."⁷⁹ A few days later, he told James Wilson that he "could not have allowed a permanent act" to uphold the system.⁸⁰ He condoned the temporary act to give the planters time to arrange their dealings with the ryots on a more equitable basis. "The planters must," he told the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, "pay the market price of the year for indigo If it is worth the while of the Ryot to grow indigo, he will do so; if not, he ought not to be compelled to grow anything that is less profitable than other crops."⁸¹ Wood's official despatch on the question expressed "serious objection" to the "provisions of the Act by which a violation by a ryot of a civil contract ... is made the ground of a criminal prosecution by the planter."⁸² Indigo planting must, he told Canning, be subject to the normal processes of the civil law, and "the

⁷⁷Wood to Canning, 3 May 1860, W.P.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Hansard, lviii, 4 May 1860, cols. 700-1.

⁸⁰Wood to Wilson, 16 May 1860, W.P.

⁸¹Wood to J.P. Grant, 25 May 1860, W.P.

⁸²Sec. of State to Gov.-Genl.-in-Council, 24 July (Judicial No. 84) 1860.

doctrine of equality before the law, and no exceptional legislation of any kind" be maintained inviolate.⁸³

The evidence presented to the Indigo Commission, between May and August 1860, justified the ryots' claims that the crop had become unprofitable for them, and indicated that, on occasion, planters had pressed them into sowing it by subterfuge, forgery and even force.⁸⁴ In December 1860, Canning recognised that the Government was open to the "reproach ... of having left the ryot too long in ignorance of the protection which he might claim against the proceedings of any planter who had bound him by unreal obligations, and who had enforced these by unlawful means."⁸⁵ "The ... administration of the law has not," he continued, "been impartial." However, he stressed the importance of the indigo trade and raised the possibility of encouraging it without introducing "legislation which would confer upon indigo planters greater power and facility than are accorded to other classes in the making or enforcing of contracts, or in the punishment of breach of contract." This assistance might be afforded by extending to "contracts for the delivery of any agricultural

⁸³Wood to Canning, 19 November 1860, W.P.

⁸⁴Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xliv, Report of Indigo Commission.

⁸⁵Gov.-Genl. to Sec. of State, 29 December (Home Dept. No. 3) 1860.

produce (not of indigo alone) where breach of contract was fraudulent" an existing law which provided for punishing "fraudulent breach of contracts for service" by fine or imprisonment.⁸⁶ Before receiving Wood's reply to this suggestion, Canning arranged for a Bill to this effect to be read for the first time in the Legislative Council.⁸⁷

Wood opposed Canning's proposal with the utmost vigour. Early in April 1861, knowing of Canning's thoughts but not, as yet, of the introduction of the Contracts Bill, he advised:

The true remedy ... is not to be found in a resort to legislative measures ..., by making the ryot criminally punishable for breach of civil contract It is rather to be found in dealing fairly by him, and in making him feel that a violation ... of his contract will involve the loss of what is advantageous to himself.⁸⁸

The temporary Act XI had led to "not a little injustice," showing thereby "the danger of transferring to criminal functionaries, matters which more properly belong to the jurisdiction of the civil courts." When, later in the month, he heard of the introduction of the Bill, he elaborated upon the need for careful judicial investigation "as to the formation of the contract, and ... as to the circumstances which have induced the ryot to

⁸⁶ Canning was alluding to Act XIII of 1859. See W. Stokes (ed.), Sir Henry Maine Speeches and Minutes, London 1892, pp. 85-91.

⁸⁷ Gov.-Genl. to Sec. of State, 28 February (Home Dept. No. 21) 1861. The despatch and the Bill appear in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xlv, pp. 186-7, 190-1.

⁸⁸ Sec. of State to Gov.-Genl.-in-Council, 8 April (Judicial No. 63), 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 127-30.

break it."⁸⁹ This pointed to the "necessity for a lengthened and patient enquiry ... which can only be conducted in a civil court, and for which the course of business and necessity for immediate dispatch in a magisterial court are wholly inappropriate." He drew attention to the Bill's violation of one of the illustrations in the Penal Code, which expressly stated that offenders were "liable only to a civil action for breach of contract." He wrote explicitly that he was "not prepared ... to ... sanction ... the law," and requested that "the Bill ... be withdrawn."

Wood was genuinely surprised at Canning's proposed Bill. He rendered the proposal intelligible to himself by reference to what he had earlier described as "an antagonistic feeling between the English settlers and the natives."⁹⁰ He had been loth, in 1860, to explain Act XI in terms of the "too English and planter-like a view" which many "supposed" the Government of India to have taken of the question.⁹¹ But his first reaction to the 1861 Bill was to conclude that "the Bengal element" had been "too strong".⁹² He explained the wording of his despatch to Canning thus:

⁸⁹ Sec. of State to Gov.-Genl.-in-Council, 18 April (Judicial No. 71) 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 199-201. See also Wood's private letter to Canning, 18 April (No. 2) 1861, and his statement to the Commons on 19 April (Hansard, clxii, cols. 819-21).

⁹⁰ Wood to Wilson, 16 May, 1860, W.P.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Wood to Canning, 9 April, 1861, W.P.

... I thought that I was saving you, by writing it so strongly. That you were beset by English opinion in Calcutta was clear I thought that you would be relieved from annoyance by having it in your power to refer to the despatches from home.⁹³

Later, he reflected that Canning had been "anxious", on this occasion, "to conciliate the English party which had been very violent against him during the mutiny."⁹⁴ Here was an instance of the Indian Government being overborne by local pressure from English interests. "The [home] Government," he told the Commons, "... had done their duty ... by holding the scales as impartially as possible between the ryots and the planters."⁹⁵

Wood turned from disposing of the Contracts Bill only to be faced with "A Bill relating to Breaches of Contract committed in bad faith."⁹⁶ This measure, which the law member, W. Ritchie, introduced to the Legislative Council in 1862, subjected breaches of contract to civil process. However, if the court decided that a breach was made in "bad faith", it might order the payment of damages at penalty rates, in default of which the defendant

⁹³ Wood to Canning, 3 July 1861, W.P.

⁹⁴ Wood to Maine, 7 January 1865, W.P.

⁹⁵ Hansard, clxiv, 25 July 1861, col. 1517. Maclagan, in his recent biography of Canning (op. cit., p. 277), failed to enquire into the motive behind the Bill. Instead, he drew attention to Wood's "tart letter ... announcing that he would veto it", and introduced an aside on Canning's opinion of Wood as "hasty", "snappish" and "thick-skinned".

⁹⁶ Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xl.; Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State, 3 March (Home Dept. No. 9), 1862.

might be sentenced to imprisonment. Again Wood objected. In April, he asked Elgin to "keep back" the Bill.⁹⁷ Though it did not subject breaches of contract to criminal jurisdiction, he believed that "fine & imprisonment under criminal proceedings would have as mild or milder effect than this bill."⁹⁸ In effect, "it did convert a civil into a criminal proceeding without the safeguards to a defendant which justice demands."⁹⁹ The despatch in which he requested the Bill's withdrawal concluded with a concise statement of his position:

... I entertain the most serious doubt whether any legislative interference in commercial transactions, with the view of coercing one of the parties to a contract, can be productive of good. I believe that the buyer or manufacturer on the one hand, and the seller and producer on the other, should be left to consult their respective interests, under the protection of equal laws, administered by competent tribunals, with the aid of a simple, rapid, and efficient procedure, such as that which now prevails throughout the British possessions in India¹⁰⁰

Impartial and uniform justice, and simple procedures were the principles upon which he insisted.

The object of contract law should, Wood believed, be to provide a basis for agreements. It was especially difficult to realize in India. He reflected, early in 1863: "The sympathy between different classes in the same country is often safeguard

⁹⁷Wood to Elgin, 9 April 1862, W.P.

⁹⁸Wood to Laing, 10 April 1862, W.P.

⁹⁹Wood to Maine, 26 January 1863, W.P.

¹⁰⁰Sec. of State to Gov.-Genl.-in-Council, 9 June (Legislative No. 16) 1862.

little enough for equal laws; but when the question is between different races, the safeguard is often very minute."¹⁰¹

Ritchie's Bill "would not be tolerated in England," he told Elgin, but it was even "more objectionable in India", for there "the purpose" of it was "to imprisombblack men at the suits of whites."¹⁰²

Wood's request that the Government of India withdraw Ritchie's Bill was referred to a select committee of the Legislative Council. There, Sir Henry Maine, Ritchie's successor, opposed the Bill because it confused criminal and civil law, and it was withdrawn.¹⁰³ However, Maine sympathised with his predecessor's assumption that ordinary damages were an inadequate remedy in many cases, and he turned his attention to the means of enforcing "the exact performance of contracts."¹⁰⁴ Provision for decrees of specific performance of contracts ought, he believed, to be made in the Code of Civil Procedure. The Code had already been modified by acts of 1860, 1861 and 1863,¹⁰⁵ and, during 1863-4, H.B. Harington was preparing a consolidating bill.¹⁰⁶ Maine drafted four "specific performance" clauses for inclusion in the revised Code. During the period 1863-5, the

¹⁰¹Wood to Maine, 9 January 1863, W.P.

¹⁰²Wood to Elgin, 9 April 1862, W.P.

¹⁰³W. Stokes, Maine, pp. 86-91; Maine to Wood, 13 February, 1863, W.P.

¹⁰⁴W. Stokes, Maine, p. 89; Rankin, op. cit., p. 78.

¹⁰⁵W. Stokes, Anglo-Indian Codes, II, p. 385.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

clauses passed through a number of stages in response to the various objections which Wood expressed to them. It was not that he was opposed to specific performance "on principle".¹⁰⁷ He admitted that damages were an "imperfect remedy",¹⁰⁸ that "there are many cases in which no damages recovered some time afterwards, are the equivalent of non performance of something at another time."¹⁰⁹ But, from the first, he was "not altogether comfortable about Maine's bill,"¹¹⁰ and he formed a prejudice which it seemed that no amount of careful redrafting could overcome. "I cannot", he wrote to Maine, "help having before my eyes ... the old indigo contracts, and the system of fraud & force which characterised the system. I am a little bit afraid of an enactment which would put such a weapon in the hands of the European Planter wherewith to coerce the ryot."¹¹¹

At first, Wood looked to the character of the bench as a necessary safeguard if the specific performance clauses were to be admitted to the Code of Civil Procedure. "If the judges are educated & practised barristers," he wrote in December 1863, "I have no fear of them not doing justice."¹¹² The change

¹⁰⁷ Wood to Trevelyan, 25 February 1864, W.P.

¹⁰⁸ Wood to Maine, 2 January 1865, W.P.

¹⁰⁹ Wood to Lawrence, 16 September 1865, W.P.

¹¹⁰ Wood to Trevelyan, 10 November 1863, W.P.

¹¹¹ Wood to Maine, 3 December 1863, W.P.

¹¹² Wood to Maine, 9 December 1863, W.P.

required, as "an essential sine qua non",¹¹³ that the judge be "a gentleman & lawyer of high class."¹¹⁴ Wood could not be sanguine of sending such men to India in the short term,¹¹⁵ but during 1864 he wrote to Maine of other safeguards which he might introduce into his clauses. He objected to Maine's provision for decrees on a plaintiff's "ex parte statement without even requiring proof of notice to the defendant."¹¹⁶ As drafted, the clauses would "afford a ready means" to "bully the ryot."¹¹⁷ An ex parte order ought only to issue after the defendant's default of appearance before the court in response to a summons.¹¹⁸ Further, provision should be made for the court to satisfy itself of "the fairness of the contract or the circumstances under which it was made."¹¹⁹ Wood seemed to be prepared to sanction the clauses provided they insisted upon the need to show "1. That the ryot actually made & understood the contract. 2nd. That he had no good ground for non-performance."¹²⁰ Maine, therefore, redrafted his clauses, and they were included in a bill to

¹¹³ Wood to Maine, 25 February 1864.

¹¹⁴ Wood to Maine, 9 December 1864.

¹¹⁵ See ch. 5, below.

¹¹⁶ Wood to Maine, 15 February 1864.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Wood to Maine, 25 February 1864.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Wood to Maine, 24 November 1864.

consolidate and revise the Code of Civil Procedure which was introduced to the Legislative Council in November 1864.¹²¹

However, by that time, Wood had on its way to India a despatch requesting that the whole bill be postponed.¹²²

In his despatch of 31 October 1864, Wood took the view that the bill to revise and consolidate the Code of Civil Procedure was premature. It was, he argued, preferable to add to the Code from time to time as experience exposed its omissions and weaknesses. In private letters he maintained that the Code had "hardly had a trial long enough to show the weak places,"¹²³ and that "all competent authorities [should be] consulted before a revision."¹²⁴ "We only wish," he explained, "to ensure adherence to the principle of simplifying the mode of procedure & to prevent any recurrence to the old-fashioned & cumbersome processes."¹²⁵ His position now was just what it had been ten years earlier. Determined to uphold the principle of simplification in Indian legal proceedings, he had then insisted that Dalhousie send his draft Code home for the Law Commission to see. Now, arguing in the same terms, and again coming into conflict with the Governor-General over the respective powers of the home and Indian

¹²¹ Gov.-Genl. to Sec. of State, 15 December (Legislative No. 15) 1864; W. Stokes, Maine, pp. 164-70.

¹²² Sec. of State to Gov.-Genl.-in-Council, 31 October (Legislative No. 34) 1864; W. Stokes, Maine, op. cit., pp. 164-70.

¹²³ Wood to Harington, 7 January 1865.

¹²⁴ Wood to Maine, 7 January, 1865.

¹²⁵ Wood to Maine, 9 January 1865.

governments, he required Lawrence to suspend his bill and send it home for consideration.¹²⁶ The Law Commissioners, he remarked to Maine, "were working merely for love of what they were doing, & for the improvement of the law in India without fee or reward, ... & they did not like the notion of their work being repealed, and something else being substituted without their opinion being asked."¹²⁷

Early in 1865, it became clear that Wood objected not only to the proposal to re-enact the Code, but also to the redrafted specific performance clauses in themselves. On 7 January, he wrote to Lawrence:

I cannot disagree in theory from Maine's doctrine on specific performance of contracts but I look with great suspicion on all this kind of legislation. This legislation in India is tainted at its source.

He expressed the need for a new precaution - "to prevent the ryots from falling into the state of dependence which prevailed 3 or 4 years ago, by means of the contracts perpetually running on." He reminded Maine that "the only case for any law in India arose out of the fraudulent & disgraceful system of Indigo contracts" which had rendered the ryot "no longer a free man".¹²⁸ And he recalled his earlier objection to the inadequacy of the

¹²⁶ The conflict is reflected in Lawrence's despatch of 15 December, op. cit., Wood's despatch of 31 March (Legislative No. 12) of 1865, and Wood's private letters to Lawrence (3 March 1865) and Maine (25 January 1865).

¹²⁷ Wood to Maine, 25 January 1865, W.P.

¹²⁸ Wood to Maine, 7 January 1865, W.P.

existing judges to administer decrees of specific performance." "The only laws adapted for India," he averred, "are such as may be fairly administered by persons of very ordinary legal or judicial powers." His "conclusion" on the question was that he did "not much like the specific performance clauses"; that they required "very careful provisions"; and that if "you cannot manage all the details, I shall not grieve if the clauses turn out to be a dead letter."¹²⁹ He explained that his doubts on the matter had been revived by his disagreement with the sample judgements of fictitious cases which had been sent home to illustrate the operation of the clauses.¹³⁰

During 1865, a select committee of the Legislative Council revised the specific performance and other clauses of the proposed bill for the re-enactment of the Code. When Wood received the draft, together with a report from the select committee, he referred it to the Law Commission. When he went out of office, in February 1866, it was still before the Commission.¹³¹ His last major act was, therefore, to prevent the revision of the Code by the Government of India. The grounds upon which he put his action were indicative of two of the principles to which he had most commonly appealed - the need for the uniform incidence

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Wood to Maine, 9 January 1865, W.P.

¹³¹ W. Stokes, Anglo-Indian Codes, II, p. 385; Rankin, op. cit., pp. 81 ff.

of the law, and for simplicity in its administration.¹³²

¹³²Wood's departure from office coincides roughly with the period which E. Stokes characterised by the advent of "a spate of legislation ... under Maine's expert hand and ... a tendency to introduce the more technical refinements of English law..." (op. cit., p. 269). It would, perhaps, be more reasonable to look to the mid 'sixties, rather than to the mutiny, as marking the end of England's attempt to blend innovation with custom (see above, note 74).

Chapter 5

The Civil Administration¹

In his Government of India Bill of 1853,² Wood set out to achieve what two earlier generations of Whig statesmen had failed to accomplish - the abolition of the East India Company's civil patronage and its replacement by the principle of competitive examination. In 1813, Lord Grenville had advocated in vain the appointment of "writers" "by free competition and public examination from our great schools and universities."³ Twenty years later, Macaulay, after an address which it was said "would console the young people [in the House of Commons] for never having heard Mr. Burke,"⁴ did actually carry into legislation a plan for selecting the students for Haileybury, the Company's training college for civil servants, by competitive examinations. Under it, the Company were to nominate four candidates for each place at Haileybury and the selection of students from among them was to be made on the results of examinations.⁵ However, as Macaulay's biographer observed, "backstairs influence in Leadenhall

¹A fuller version of the earlier part of this chapter appears in the writer's "The Abolition of Patronage in the Indian Civil Service and the Closure of Haileybury College", subsidiary paper 1, enclosed.

²"Government of India Bill ... 9 June 1853", in I.O.L. Parl.Coll'n, 120.

³Quoted in H.H. Dodwell's Ch. I, "Imperial Legislation and the Superior Governments, 1818-1857", C.H.I., VI, p. 2.

⁴Quoted in E. Stokes, The Utilitarians, p. 45. See Hansard, 3rd series, xix, 10 July 1833, esp. cols. 524-6.

⁵3 & 4 William IV, c. 85, ss. cii-cvii.

Street" contrived to postpone the operation of the scheme until "backstairs influence in Parliament" eventually secured its repeal.⁶ In June 1853, though "broken down in health, uncontrollably nervous and unable to control the pitch of his voice," Macaulay came to deliver his last major Commons' speech, before a "respectfully eager House", in warm support of Wood's Bill.⁷ Besides the backing of the legendary liberal hero, Wood's proposal had the advantage of being advanced at a time when men of all parties anticipated the abolition of the Company itself. Since few members could contemplate with satisfaction the disposal of appointments under ministerial patronage, the competitive principle won an easy victory in the House of Commons in July 1853.

In essence, Wood's Bill provided that the selection of students for Haileybury, which had hitherto been made by the Company, should be based upon the results of competitive examinations organised by the Board of Control. Wood expressed the plan succinctly in an enclosure to a letter to the Court, two days before he introduced his Bill: "The appointment of students to Haileybury to be open to competition under regulations to be framed

⁶G.O. Trevelyan, The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, 2 vols., London 1876, II, p. 339. See also "Correspondence between Board ... and Court ... upon ... the Act of 1837, relating to Appointments at Haileybury College", Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, lxix; and 1 Vic. c.70.

⁷[E.M. Whitty], History of the Session 1852-3 ..., p. 175; cf. G.O. Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 340 ff. For Macaulay's speech see Hansard, cxxviii, 24 June 1853, esp. cols. 746-758.

by the Board of Control from time to time, and laid before Parliament."⁸ The Bill gave the Board authority to determine the qualifications and age of candidates for examination and to prescribe the course of training at Haileybury. It also empowered the Board to organise the examination of Haileybury students at the end of their training and prior to their appointment to the covenanted service.⁹ The direction of Wood's thoughts on the questions left open to later determination is revealed by one of his private notes on the subject:

Age of admission 18. Three (two) years course of instruction principally in history law and jurisprudence. Board of examiners for appointments to India to be named by B. of Control, & Certificates of conduct from Masters at Haileybury [sic].¹⁰

Clearly, Haileybury College was central to the scheme which Wood embodied in his Bill. Whilst the Bill was in committee, he remarked that "the only place where an education could be acquired that would fit a person for employment in India was at Haileybury."¹¹ In this view he was supported by Sir Charles Trevelyan, who had himself passed through the College to a distinguished career in India. At the time, he was Assistant Secretary to the Treasury and one of the principals in the movement to reform the English

⁸ "Heads of the Proposed Plan for the Future Government of India", enclosed with Wood to "Chairs", 1 June 1853, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, lxix.

⁹ Op cit., clauses 32-39.

¹⁰ Paper endorsed "Memorandum Indian Govt.", W.P., 11.

¹¹ Hansard, cxxix, 22 July 1853, col. 685.

Civil Service.¹² On 28 June 1853, after explaining the merits of competitive examinations before the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Indian affairs, he commended the College: "The real uses of Haileybury are, that it furnishes a satisfactory system of special instruction for the Indian Civil Service, and, if it is properly administered, a satisfactory test of conduct."¹³ It appeared to Wood and Trevelyan alike that competitive entry to Haileybury, followed by a period of training and probation, would enable the covenanted service to be staffed with men of proven intelligence, ability and good conduct. India would be served by an administrative body the like of which, in Wood's words, "the world has never seen."¹⁴

When Wood's plan came before the House of Lords, Lord Granville, who introduced the Bill, made significant amendments to it.¹⁵ The changes were such as to promise even greater improvement in the Civil Service than Macaulay, Trevelyan and Wood anticipated from the Bill which the Commons had passed. For Granville's amendments reserved to the Board of Control the power to admit outsiders to the final examination of Haileybury students

¹² See Jenifer Hart, "Sir Charles Trevelyan at the Treasury", *E.H.R.*, 1960, lxxv, pp. 92-110; E. Hughes, "Civil Service Reform, 1853-5", *History*, 1942, xxvii, pp. 51-83.

¹³ *Parl. Pap. (H.C.)*, 1852-3, xxxii, paras. 6897-6921.

¹⁴ *Hansard*, cxxvii, 3 June 1853, col. 1158.

¹⁵ *Hansard* (cxxix, 8 August 1853, cols. 1148-9) failed to report the amendments fully, but they may be appreciated by comparing the Bill "Brought from the Commons, 1st August 1853" with the Bill "Ordered to be printed on the 8th August 1853", and by studying a list of "Lords' Amendments" (*I.O.L. Parl. Coll'n*, 120).

before their appointment to India. Besides providing for competitive entry to Haileybury, the Bill as passed by the Lords envisaged the competitive recruitment to the civil service of Haileybury students and other candidates.¹⁶ The examination which Wood had seen as a final test of fitness before Haileybury students were appointed to India, might become an open competition for which university graduates would be eligible as candidates.

Granville's amendments resulted from an extra-parliamentary campaign launched by an advocate of university reform. In July 1853, during a visit, in another connection, to Benjamin Jowett, then a Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, and the Rev. Dr Charles Vaughan, headmaster of Harrow, Trevelyan chanced to mention the current plans for the future of Haileybury.¹⁷ Jowett readily perceived that if the opportunity to compete for the Indian appointments were extended to university graduates a new and attractive field of employment would be opened to them, and a stimulus would be given to university education. He wrote of this to Gladstone, the member for Oxford, arguing that the "advantages ... to the University [were] almost incalculable", and pleading: "... you love Oxford too well not to do what you can for it." "I cannot," he wrote, "conceive a greater boon which could be

¹⁶ Cf. Bill of 1 August, op. cit., clauses XL and XLIII, with Bill of 8 August, op. cit., clauses XLI and XLIII.

¹⁷ Trevelyan to Jowett, 19 July 1853, Trevelyan Letter Books; Jowett to Gladstone, 23 July 1853, W.P., 51.

conferred on the University than a share in the Indian appointments."¹⁸

However, though Jowett was himself inspired to seek the amendment of Wood's Bill by his devotion to the cause of university reform, he attracted support for his objective by arguing his case on wider grounds. In the first place, Vaughan was prepared, as an educationalist, to express "strong objection ... to the proposed constitution of Haileybury."¹⁹ A "close" college, whose students were exposed to no competition from outside, could not maintain high standards and would not, therefore, provide adequately for the training of the young men to be appointed to the covenanted service. Vaughan wrote of this to Trevelyan: "It is nearly as if my own sixth form ... were sure, or almost so, of succeeding to valuable Fellowships immediately on their leaving school. I could not expect them to work hard; I should find great difficulty in keeping up the discipline of the school."²⁰ Jowett sent this letter to Gladstone. The latter raised the question with Lord Aberdeen, who was impressed by Vaughan's opinion and urged it upon Wood. "It would," he wrote, "be a great misfortune if our liberal intentions with respect to education should practically be defeated."²¹

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Vaughan to Trevelyan, 26 July 1853, *ibid.*

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Aberdeen to Wood, 27 July 1853, Aberdeen Papers, B.M. Add. MS. 43198, fol. 145.

Meanwhile, Jowett had himself sent one copy of Vaughan's letter direct to Wood,²² and another to Dr H. Liddell, Headmaster of Westminster.²³ Liddell agreed with Vaughan's views and sent his copy to Granville, covering it with a letter expressing his own opinion.²⁴ At Trevelyan's suggestion, Jowett sought an interview with Granville.²⁵ The amendment of Wood's Bill was floated by an Oxford reformer into the broad stream of educational reform. Trevelyan gave his support to the educationalists partly, no doubt, because he realized that they could give him strength in the difficult struggle, which he was then waging, to open the English Civil Service to competition.²⁶

But Jowett did not neglect to appeal to the advantage to India in the amendment which he advocated. In his first letter to Gladstone, which soon passed into Wood's hands, he wrote:

In reference to the effect on the Indian Service it may be remarked that by the proposed change abler men would be appointed, because selected from a larger field, in general the picked men of the Universities, (not merely the clever boys of the public schools) selected too at an age when it was far more possible to judge of real capacity with the further advantage of having been subjected to the social & other influences of a University life.

²²Jowett to Wood, [26 July 1853], and copy of Vaughan to Trevelyan, 26 July 1853, W.P., 51.

²³Liddell to Granville, 27 July 1853, and copy of Vaughan to Trevelyan, 26 July 1853, Granville Papers, P.R.O. 30/29/21.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Jowett to Granville, 27 July 1853, *ibid.*

²⁶J. Hart, *op. cit.*, and E. Hughes, *op. cit.*

Jowett expanded this case in a memorandum which appears in Wood's private papers.²⁷ Jowett's arguments were well calculated to appeal to one who aimed to send to India such a service "as the world has never seen." Wood could not dismiss the misgivings which eminent educationalists expressed as to the fitness of a "close" college to develop, of itself, the required level of professional skill in its students or to test their conduct. And, as he had himself gone down from Oriel with a double first, he was unlikely to question the advantage to India of recruiting civil servants from the ranks of graduate gentlemen. Notwithstanding the range of motives which lay behind the pressure to amend his Bill, Wood could, as the minister for India, yield to it with the utmost good faith.

Early in 1854, Wood set up a committee to advise him on the questions which the Act left open for determination by the Board of Control. The age and qualifications of the candidates for Haileybury, together with the subjects of the competitive entrance examinations, had to be determined. Further, the training of Haileybury students, and the question of whether the Board should use the power it had taken to admit outside candidates to the final examinations for the Indian appointments, had to be settled. Between the passing of the Act and the assembling of

²⁷N.d., W.P. 51.

this committee, Jowett and Trevelyan had worked in concert, and the former had presented Wood with a partial answer to the complex of questions.²⁸ Assuming the advantage of sending university men to India, he had argued for civil service examinations which would be open to graduates as well as to Haileybury students, and which would be designed to test the candidates' mastery of the component subjects of a liberal education.

Wood, through Trevelyan's agency, attracted Macaulay to the chair of his advisory committee.²⁹ At the suggestion of Vaughan and Trevelyan, he asked Jowett to join it.³⁰ The other members were J.S. Lefevre, Lord Ashburton and the Principal of Haileybury, the Rev. H. Melvill. The committee's report,³¹ which Macaulay wrote himself,³² and with which "Trevelyan was much pleased",³³ subtly developed Jowett's partial answer to the questions posed by the Act, into a complete scheme. The age limits of candidates seeking entry to Haileybury should be 18-23 years and the examinations should be, principally, in the subjects of a liberal education. Macaulay expected that "among the

²⁸Trevelyan to Jowett, 3 October 1853, T.L.B.; Memorandum endorsed "Examinations. Mr Jowett & Sir C. Trevelyan, 27 November 1853", and bearing Jowett's name, W.P., 3.

²⁹Trevelyan to Wood, 11 November 1853, T.L.B.

³⁰Trevelyan to Wood, 25 November, 1853, T.L.B.

³¹Report, dated November 1854, from the committee...[on] the Examination of Candidates for the Civil Service...", Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1854-5, xl.

³²Trevelyan to Jowett, 13 June 1854; G.O. Trevelyan, op. cit., II, p. 372.

³³Ibid.

successful competitors will frequently be young men who have obtained the highest honours of Oxford and Cambridge." The successful candidates, (the "civil servants elect" as he called them) should remain on probation for two years and undergo training, especially in law, before their appointment to India. "Some at least of the probationers ought," wrote Macaulay, "... not merely to attend lectures, and to read well chosen books on jurisprudence, but to see the actual working of the machinery by which justice is administered. Such a training as this would ... be an excellent preparation for official life in India..." However, Macaulay doubted whether his recommendations were consistent with the continued existence of Haileybury, and he left it "to the Board of Control to consider whether any plan can be devised by which such a training can be made compatible with residence at Haileybury."

In November 1854, Wood decided to close the College.³⁴ He had, by accepting the amendments to his Bill in July 1853, acknowledged the desirability of sending university men to India. At the same time, he had always recognised the importance of providing a sound legal training for "civil servants elect." Macaulay's persuasive report confirmed his views on both points. Wood now saw the difficulty in accommodating Haileybury,

³⁴Wood to "Chairs", 30 November 1854, Parl. Pap.(H.C.), 1854-5, xl.

"constituted [as it was] for the education of youths from the age of 17," to the needs of graduate gentlemen for legal training.³⁵ The College was "altogether unsuited for the instruction of gentlemen, many of whom may have passed through the full course of education at one or other of the Universities." "No qualification," he wrote to "the Chairs", "is so necessary to them, whether they be employed in the judicial branch of the service or in the combined duties of collector and magistrate in India, as a thorough knowledge of the principles of law, combined with a practical acquaintance with the mode of conducting civil and criminal suits." He could not see how "any change in the constitution of Haileybury would render it possible that gentlemen residing there would have the opportunity of acquiring [such] ... knowledge."

An Act to close the College was carried through by Wood's successor.³⁶ In 1855, when the first competitive examination of men from 18 to 23 years of age took place, some seventy per cent of the successful candidates were graduates of either Oxford or Cambridge.³⁷ Until the end of the decade, graduates of these

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ 18 & 19 Vict., c. 53. The Act prohibited the admission of students to Haileybury after 25 January 1856, and required the closure of the College by 31 January 1858.

³⁷ Fourth Report of Civil Service Commissioners, London 1859, App. IV, p. 317.

universities continued to win more than one half of the annual appointments to India.³⁸ But though this part of the Jowett-Macaulay-Wood scheme worked admirably at first, the successful candidates were never given the projected two years of primarily legal professional training. The Civil Service Commissioners, who became responsible for examining candidates after 1858, later recalled that in the years 1855-7 "the exigencies of the service" had been too pressing to permit the recruits a training sojourn at home.³⁹ In 1858, with "circumstances somewhat altered ... it was thought desirable to revive the plan which had been temporarily abandoned."⁴⁰ However, the revival was not achieved without mutilating "the plan". Lord Ellenborough provided for probationers to spend some months in training at home and promised that in 1859 this period would be extended.⁴¹ From 1859 until 1864, the young "civil servants elect" spent one year at home. A second year of training was spent at the presidency towns in India, primarily in learning vernacular languages. Furthermore, in

³⁸ Hansard, clxxix, A. Mills' speech of 16 May 1865, col. 394. Mills' statements may be verified by reference to the C.S. Comm'rs' Reports for 1858 (4th Report, pp. 317, 320, 322, 326) and 1859 (5th Report, pp. 203-4). See table at end of chapter.

³⁹ Civil Service Commissioners to Wood, 3 August 1864, 10th Report of C.S. Comm'rs, London 1865, Appendix III, p. 180.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ellenborough to "Chairs", 5 May 1858, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1858, xliii.

1858 Lord Stanley made the provision for a year's training in India the reason for a further departure from the plan of 1854. So that civil servants might be sent to India no older than 23, Stanley reduced the maximum age of candidates for the competitive examination to 22.⁴²

When Wood became Secretary of State, he could scarcely overturn the arrangements which his Tory predecessors had so recently made for the training of probationers, or reverse the decision to reduce the age of candidates. Both departures from the 1854 plan had arguments in their favour, and neither necessarily vitiated the intention of appointing professionally qualified gentlemen to the I.C.S. Stanley is said to have kept this objective steadily in sight.⁴³ There was much to be said for linguistic study being undertaken in India, as indeed there was for sending men out as early as possible. Macaulay had been undogmatic about proposing two years' probation in England, suggesting to Wood on one occasion that a single year might be sufficient.⁴⁴ Jowett had originally proposed an upper age limit of 22 years.⁴⁵ And in 1860, the first year in which the new age limit was operative, forty-one per cent of the appointments went

⁴² Melvill to Maitland, 30 September, 1858, 4th C.S. Comm'rs' Report, pp. 232-3.

⁴³ C.S. Comm'rs. to Wood, op. cit., p. 181. See also, 4th C.S. Comm'rs' Report, op. cit. Stanley "presumed" 21½ years to be "the average age at which B.A. degrees are taken at the universities."

⁴⁴ Macaulay to Wood, 19 January 1855, Hickleton Papers.

⁴⁵ Jowett to Gladstone, 23 July 1853, op. cit.; Jowett to Wood, 27 November, 1853, op. cit.

to Oxford and Cambridge, inspite of a twofold increase in the Civil Service intake.⁴⁶ In 1861, with a similar intake, the two universities carried off forty-four per cent of the places.⁴⁷ However, Macaulay would have contested the age reduction violently. In 1855, when he mistakenly believed Wood to be contemplating a change identical to that which Stanley eventually made, he wrote:

It is a change of great moment. By reducing the age from 23 to 22, you will ... exclude a very large number of the best men. The alteration ... will tell greatly against Oxford and Cambridge, which, much as they need reform, are still the first schools in the empire, and in favour of the London University, the Scotch⁴⁸ Universities, and the Queen's College in Ireland.

He would have attached great significance to the fact that between 1855 and 1858, eighty-one per cent of the successful Oxford and Cambridge candidates were in their twenty-third year.⁴⁹ But Wood inherited a fait accompli in 1859, and he gave it almost five years' trial before appraising the extent to which the I.C.S. was receiving professionally qualified gentlemen.

Wood also inherited from Stanley a proposal to open to non-covenanted persons the posts which had been scheduled as

⁴⁶ 6th Report of C.S. Comm'rs, London 1861, App. IV, p. 513.

⁴⁷ 7th Report of C.S. Comm'rs, London 1862, App. III, p. 304.

⁴⁸ Macaulay to Wood, op. cit., and a later letter of the same date.

⁴⁹ See table at end of chapter.

the exclusive preserve of covenanted servants by an Act of 1793.⁵⁰ Senior posts had originally been reserved to members of the covenanted service as a check against jobbery or, as Wood put it, "to prevent the possibility of a Governor-General, or of a Presidency, providing for hungry dependents."⁵¹ He considered that the improved morality of the mid-nineteenth century and the "check of public opinion"⁵² rendered the persistence of "a caste of Civil Servants"⁵³ an anachronism. And he argued that the appointments of one third of the incumbents of reserved posts had been made in breach of the 1793 Act.⁵⁴ However, the existing law was no mere harmless archaism. It did operate as "a positive bar against the admission of uncovenanted servants to office"⁵⁵ in the older, or "regulation", provinces. Wood thought it "a positive evil that, however good a man may be, however fitted for the place, he must be passed over in favour of a Covenanted man of inferior qualifications."⁵⁶

⁵⁰ 33 Geo. III, c. 52, §.57. An account of Stanley's proposal, and of its treatment by committees of the Council of India which Stanley and Wood appointed to consider it, is given by S. N. Singh, The Secretary of State for India and His Council, pp. 71-6. Singh appears to have made no use of a sizeable volume of documents bearing binder's title: "India Office. Notes on the Opening of the Civil Service. 1859". The volume was originally part of the Wood Papers, but is now catalogued separately in the I.O.L. The word "Opening" refers to the removal of legal restraints upon the appointment of uncovenanted servants to certain positions. The papers reflect the views of Stanley and his Councillors.

⁵¹ Wood to Canning, 27 August 1860 (No. 3), W.P.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Wood to Canning, 8 September 1860, W.P.

⁵⁴ Hansard, clxiii, 6 June 1861, col. 653.

⁵⁵ Ibid., col. 657; see also Wood to Sir G. Clerk, 18 March 1861, W.P.

⁵⁶ Wood to Canning, 27 August 1860 (No. 3).

Wood saw the question of opening the reserved places as integral to the problem of providing administrators who combined professional skill with "character". The scanty legal training which the candidates selected for the I.C.S. since 1855 had received, gave rise to a dearth of men in the judicial branch of the service at a time when large reforms in law codes and legal proceedings were being introduced. Wood wrote of the position in February 1861:

I have a strong impression that Uncovenanted men should not be excluded from judicial functions of a higher degree, ... and, with the inexperience of your present civilians it seems to me the more necessary to do something.⁵⁷

He stressed that he had "no intention to lower the covenanted service",⁵⁸ but thought "there should be, in exceptional cases a power of appointing Uncovenanted Servants to such places [as were then proscribed], chiefly in the Judicial line."⁵⁹ He had in mind only the sort of "Englishman who has long resided in the country, and proved his qualifications for dealing with Natives and exercising high powers in the administration of the country."⁶⁰ Nevertheless, he encountered strong opposition from members of the Council of India, many of whom had themselves been covenanted servants.⁶¹ A majority of them voted against infringing the exclusive rights of the I.C.S. to the appointments in the manner

⁵⁷Wood to Canning, 18 February 1861.

⁵⁸Hansard, op. cit., col. 657.

⁵⁹Wood to Canning, 27 August 1860 (No. 3).

⁶⁰Wood to Canning, 8 September 1860.

⁶¹S.N. Singh, op. cit., Appendix, pp. 161 ff.

which Wood proposed. In March 1860, Wood quarrelled with the Council on the question,⁶² and in July he overruled its vote against issuing instructions for the drafting of a bill to relax the law governing the reserved posts.⁶³ The following year, he carried the bill into law.⁶⁴ Thereafter, non-covenanted persons possessing qualifications similar to those normally required of covenanted servants might be appointed to virtually any post in India, subject to the approval of the Council of India.

If Wood had thought of the 1861 Act as more than a partial solution to the problem of obtaining the much-needed legal training in senior judicial officials, he must soon have been disabused. Pursuant to a Government of India Act of 1860, small cause courts were, in the early 'sixties, being established in the provinces. Proceedings in them were conducted according to the reformed Civil Code of 1859 and the decisions of their judges were final. Wood became troubled by the difficulty of installing judges of the calibre required in these courts. Early in 1864, when Maine urged that the courts should be authorised to issue decrees for the specific performance of contracts, Wood replied: "I cannot get over my objection to the probable inadequacy of the

⁶² Sir T.E. Perry to Sir G. Clerk, 17 March 1860, Clerk Papers I.O.L.

⁶³ S.N. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 75; Minutes of Council of India, 13 July 1860; Stanley to Wood, 16 July 1860, W.P.; Hansard, clix, 20 July 1860, col. 2237; Wood to Canning, 27 August 1860.

⁶⁴ 24 & 25 Vict., c.54, ss. II-VI.

judges to administer such a law."⁶⁵ He was puzzled as to how he could find good men for the judicial service, and on 10 March wrote to Maine: "We are now trying to see how we can improve the education of all Civil Servants so as to give them more law at starting for they will be no worse magistrates or revenue officers for having some knowledge of law." At the very time that he was pondering the professional incompetence of the service, he also became concerned at the character of the young men who were being recruited to it under the existing system of examinations.

In January 1864, George Trevelyan, who had accompanied his father, Sir Charles Trevelyan, to India, when Wood appointed him finance member of the Supreme Council, returned to England. On 2 February, Wood wrote that he had spoken with "young Trevelyan, whose account of the conduct of Englishmen towards Natives is anything but satisfactory, indeed, I may say, to me, very painful & discouraging."⁶⁶ Soon afterwards, George Trevelyan's famous little book, The Competition Wallah, was to appear in print. The book described the young civilian's "want of savoir faire" or "aplomb", his "pedantic, unpractical turn of mind, or ... sedentary effeminate habit of body."⁶⁷ Some eighteen months

⁶⁵Wood to Maine, 10 February 1864.

⁶⁶Wood to Lawrence, 2 February 1864, W.P.

⁶⁷G.O. Trevelyan, The Competition Wallah [1864], London 1907 ed'n, pp. 6-14.

earlier, Wood had heard that the "new competitives may be better men at the desk" but were "not such active men out of doors," that civil servants were "sinking in the estimation of the Natives as a superior race as gentlemen & with the qualities of English gentlemen."⁶⁸ At that stage he had brushed such reports aside. After all, even "great noblemen" in England were "no longer the grands seigneurs that they were." However, it now seemed that the "competition wallah" united a lack of professional ability with deficiencies of character. Such men seemed scarcely equal to the task of administering a country whose affairs were becoming complicated by the antagonism between the ruling and the subject races.

On 10 March, Wood confided to Maine his "impression of the time," which, however, "subsequent circumstances may lead us to modify":

I incline to taking our men a year younger, giving them two years in a College in London, sending them straight out to the Mofussil, & if in a certain time, say 5 years, they show a preference & an aptitude for the judicial line ... they should be allowed to come home for a year or two in order to learn more of our course of proceeding here⁶⁹

A few days later, Lawrence, under advice from the authorities in the presidency towns, recommended to Wood the abolition of the

⁶⁸Wood to Elgin, 21 June 1862, W.P.

⁶⁹Trevelyan favoured taking students of 17-19 years and sending them to a college in London (op. cit., p. 12).

system of sending civil servants to India for the second year of their training.⁷⁰ The despatch argued that the training might be conducted more efficiently in England, but urged that the extension of the probationers' stay at home ought not to involve their proceeding to India at a later age. Wood and the Government of India were, therefore, in agreement that the upper age limit of examinees should be reduced from 22 to 21 years, and that the successful candidates should undergo some two years of training before being appointed to India. The plan would involve a further drift from the age limits established in 1854, but a return to the original scheme for two years' training.

During the 1862-4 period, Wood was prepared for a radical departure from his original intention of sending Oxford and Cambridge graduates to India by the unwillingness of the best of them to compete for the I.C.S., and by the failure of the others to win many places at the examinations. In 1862, only thirty per cent of the appointments went to Oxford and Cambridge graduates, in 1863 twenty-five per cent, and in 1864 a mere ten per cent.⁷¹ Lord Stanley later explained the trend in terms with which Wood professed agreement.⁷² England and other parts of the empire had become relatively more attractive than India as

⁷⁰Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc. to Sec. of State, 21 March 1864 (Home Dept. No. 20).

⁷¹See table, below.

⁷²Hansard, clxxix, 16 May 1865, cols. 403-15.

fields of employment. More tutorships and fellowships were becoming available at home, and new professions and new enterprises were offering career opportunities in England and in the colonies. The Civil Service Commissioners reported in 1864:

It is said that the age at which the best men of Oxford and Cambridge proceed to their degrees shows a tendency to increase beyond any limits that could reasonably be fixed for an entrance examination; and it seems probable that the numerous and valuable prizes now thrown open to competition at those seats of learning combined with the hope of distinction at home, may continue, under present circumstances, to prove more attractive than the prospect even of an Indian career.⁷³

Wood had, therefore, to look beyond the two great universities for the intelligence and character which he sought.

In June 1864, Wood asked the Commissioners for recommendations as to the age of candidates for the examinations and the training of the probationers.⁷⁴ They saw no objection to reducing the maximum age to 21, but suggested lowering the minimum to 17 to attract "from the principal public schools many distinguished youths who have not yet taken the first step towards a university or professional career at home."⁷⁵ The probationers should remain in or near London for two years and attend the principal

⁷³C.S. Comm'rs. to Wood, 3 August 1864, 10th Report, pp. 180-5.

⁷⁴Wodehouse to Walrond, 20 June 1864, *ibid.*, pp. 176-7.

⁷⁵C.S. Comm'rs. to Wood, *op. cit.* The Commissioners dissuaded Wood from proceeding with his notion of establishing a college to receive the probationers (Wood to Denison, 10 May 1865).

law courts regularly. Wood accepted these recommendations, but thought that "coincidentally with the extension of the period of special training ... a revision of the subjects of the open competitive examination should take place, with the object of making that examination still more distinctly what it has always been wished to make it, viz., a test of general scholarship and intelligence."⁷⁶ Though they thought it "very undesirable to alter the subjects of the ... examination," the Commissioners believed that Wood's "object ... may be obtained ... by a careful system of marking."⁷⁷ In the face of this "strong opinion against ... any alteration of subjects," Wood did not press the change upon the Commissioners, indicating instead that he was "willing ... to leave them to test the scholarship and intelligence of the candidates ... by a more 'careful system of marking'."⁷⁸ In their 1864 annual report, the Commissioners remarked upon the intended "alteration of some importance with reference to the mode of marking." They explained that their "careful system of marking" would enhance the chances of candidates who revealed high scholarship in a limited number of subjects

⁷⁶ Merivale to Walrond, 29 November 1864, *ibid.*, p. 186. This point had been made by a committee of the Council of India to which Wood had referred the Commissioners' recommendations (Report of Public, Educational and Ecclesiastical Committee, 8 November 1864, Public Home Correspondence, 19/3/75, I.O.L.).

⁷⁷ Walrond to U.-Sec. of State, 10 December 1864, 10th Report, p. 187.

⁷⁸ Merivale to Walrond, 20 December 1864, *ibid.*, pp. 187-8.

and prejudice those of competitors who displayed "knowledge of wide surface but small depth."⁷⁹ What Wood hoped to achieve from this change was an improved "character" in the successful candidates. It was the candidates from the public schools, where a limited range of subjects was studied in depth, whose chances were being enhanced. In 1864, besides reviving the original intention of providing two years of primarily legal training, Wood was, notwithstanding his reduction of the age of candidates, reaffirming the aim of recruiting men of high intellect and deep scholarship.

Wood's letters of late 1864 reveal clearly the connection which he drew between the scholar and the gentleman, high intelligence and good character. On 16 October, he wrote to Trevelyan:

You know the complaints of some if not many of the Bengal Civilians. From Madras we have universally a good character. The explanation is curious. The candidates choose their presidency according to their position on the [competitive examination] list.⁸⁰ The clever well-crammed youths from the Irish Universities or Commercial schools obtain the highest marks and go to Bengal. The University men, who are gentlemen go to Madras It is difficult to say this in public,

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. xi-xii. "We propose," the Commissioners reported, " ... that from the marks of all candidates alike a number answering to ... slight knowledge shall be deducted; but that it shall be possible, nevertheless, for any candidate who may show remarkable proficiency in any subject to obtain the full number of marks allotted to that subject."

⁸⁰ See 4th C.S. Comm'rs' Report, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii, concerning the candidates' choice of their presidency.

for I should have half a dozen wild Irishmen on my shoulders⁸¹ as many middle class examination students....

After he had requested the Commissioners to revise the examination subjects, he wrote to the Governor of Madras:

I believe that upon the whole you get the most gentlemanlike lot of the candidates. We are doing all that is in our power in conducting the examinations so as to give a turn in favour of the gentlemen, but nothing can keep out a very clever fellow, though he⁸² may not be up to the mark in manners & conversation.

The corrective to the shortcomings which the author of The Competition Wallah described was to so examine the candidates as to give the gentleman every chance of selection. The gentleman graduate, whom Wood and Trevelyan, Jowett and Macaulay had tried to attract to the I.C.S., had, in the early 'sixties, been largely replaced in the lists of successful candidates by those "clever fellows", the "well-crammed youths from the Irish Universities or Commercial schools." Reducing the age limits, and weighting the marking system so as to favour Greek, Latin and Mathematics, would give the young gentlemen from the public schools "a turn".

Wood regarded "the covenanted service as the means of

⁸¹Wood remarked in this letter: "We have added more marks for Greek & Latin by way of giving them [the "gentlemen"] a turn" In fact the marks allotted to these subjects had never been changed. However, in 1863 the Commissioners had declared their intention "to raise the standard of 'competency knowledge' below which no credit is allowed" (9th Report, p. xvi).

⁸²Wood to Denison, 9 December 1864, W.P.

maintaining the European Indian Servants on a high footing ^{of} and
 acquirement ^{and} of character."⁸³ It was a device for ensuring the
 efficiency of an alien bureaucracy imposed upon a subject
 society. He consistently discouraged the admission of Indians
 to it. Whilst he "arranged... matters" so that they might go
 to England and enter the competitive examinations, he did not
 "either expect or wish ... them to do this to any extent."
 As Englishmen would "always govern ... [India] as aliens, not
 settling in the country or having much in common with the masses
 of the people," he did "not see that any reduction of consequence
 ... [could] be made in the number of Europeans employed in
 governing India." "Somewhere between 700 and 800 in activity," he
 wrote to Dalhousie, "is a very small body to rule such an empire
 and I do not see how we can to any extent substitute native
 agency for these men, even if we could get men as good."⁸⁴ In
 1853, and again in 1860, he rejected suggestions for holding
 entrance examinations simultaneously in India and in England.⁸⁵
 The mutiny sharpened the antithesis between the alien government
 and the Indian people. Anglo-Indians would have found subordi-
 nation to an Indian official galling. In 1860, Wood wrote to
 Canning that he was "against opening the Covenanted Service to ...

⁸³Wood to Dalhousie, 24 November 1853, W.P.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Wood to Elphinstone, 3 April 1860; S.N. Singh, op. cit.,
 pp. 73-4.

[Indians] more than at present, because they would acquire rights which might be inconvenient."⁸⁶ In 1863, an Indian for the first time competed successfully at the I.C.S. examinations in London. Satyendra Nath Tagore owed his success largely to securing a total of 728 marks out of the possible thousand for the two learned Oriental languages.⁸⁷ One of the Civil Service Commissioners, Sir Edward Ryan, was disturbed by the result and spoke of it to the Permanent Under-secretary of State, who reported the conversation to Wood.⁸⁸ The allocation of five hundred marks to each of Arabic and Sanskrit, he wrote, "favours native candidates," one of whom had succeeded "with moderate proficiency in other things, by his superiority in these languages." "And," he continued, "from intelligence Sir E. Ryan has picked up, he fancies that a set is likely to be made by natives (who are quite ready enough to see and serve their advantage) in the same direction. He is inclined to reduce these marks therefore to 375 for each language."⁸⁹ Ryan was "anxious" for Wood's "opinion". Wood approved the suggested change, and the Commissioners announced that for subsequent examinations the marks allotted for each of Sanskrit and Arabic would be reduced to 375.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Letter of 27 August 1860 (No. 3).

⁸⁷ Table of marks for 1863, 9th Report of C.S. Comm'rs; S.N. Singh, op. cit., p. 90.

⁸⁸ Merivale to Wood, 20 October 1863, Hickleton Pap.

⁸⁹ Merivale himself doubted "its being worthwhile arousing among natives a suspicion of unfairness by altering in their disfavour a condition on which they rely." (ibid).

⁹⁰ 9th Report, pp. 194-5.

However, Wood was very much in favour of employing Indians in the civil administration. Whilst he wished to reserve the I.C.S. for Englishmen, he pressed Dalhousie for "the employment of natives in high places ... by adding such places to those already existing."⁹¹ This was "advisable, not only for the purpose of providing a career for the improved and educated native, but also for improving our administration in almost all departments." He was a strong advocate of education,⁹² and he recognised that "if you educate and elevate the natives you must open a career for the intelligent and higher class whom you thus create." He would "endeavour to enlist in the service of the Government those who might otherwise employ their talents and energies against us, and attach to us by their interest those who might be our most formidable enemies." It was desirable to create such openings for the employment of Indians as would prevent their feeling "the practical exclusion from the covenanted service."⁹³ Wood's papers contain drafts of a despatch which would

⁹¹Letter of 24 November 1853.

⁹²See ch. 6, below.

⁹³Wood's expression of these views was strongly influenced by three letters which Trevelyan wrote to him on the employment of Indians (28, 31 October and 5 November 1853, Trev. Lett. Bks.). Trevelyan contended that India was "rather held and governed than administered." (5 November). It was necessary to show Indians that they were eligible for senior positions, and as they acquired education, that public employments would be opened to them."... there is," he wrote, "the great field of practical administrative Reform in which they are both able & willing to cooperate with us, & which would absorb their energies for a century to come without any friction on the side of political action." (28 October).

have required Dalhousie to employ Indians more widely and in more senior positions than had been customary.⁹⁴ However, the Chairman of the Company considered that the "proposed draft ... [was] somewhat claptrap" and went "further than [was] necessary or expedient."⁹⁵ He warned Wood that it would "meet with great objections and difficulties in our Court," and argued that his purpose could best be accomplished by "a private intimation to Lord Dalhousie." Wood contented himself with making his suggestions to the Governor-General privately.⁹⁶ He also favoured the attachment of the natural leaders of Indian society to the government. When Nagpur was annexed in 1853, he hoped that Dalhousie would be "able to find employment of a higher description for natives" in its administration.⁹⁷ He would "be very glad to see that in taking into our hands a country hitherto administered by natives, we had been able to ... preserve the native machinery." Such a course would "go a long way to reconcile ... the higher classes in India ... to the gradual absorption into our territory," whereas reducing their status would make them "a ready body of agitators." Dalhousie rebuffed the proposal, believing that "native gentlemen"

⁹⁴W.P., 39, endorsed "Employment of Natives - proposed dispatch to India".

⁹⁵R. Ellice to Wood, 2 December 1853, Hickleton Pap.

⁹⁶Letter of 24 February 1854, W.P.

⁹⁷Wood to Dalhousie, 24 April 1854.

were "false, oppressive & corrupt" and would "ill-use our subjects and do discredit to ourselves."⁹⁸

The mutiny influenced British policy towards the association of Indians with the civil administration. After 1857, Canning reversed Dalhousie's policy of levelling Indian society, and extended revenue and magisterial powers to the talugdars of Oudh and the sirdars of the Punjab.⁹⁹ Wood gave Canning his warm approval. He was "in favour of employing natives of station and character,"¹⁰⁰ of "taking people from the better classes in such a way as to attach those classes to us."¹⁰¹ The mutiny also confirmed Wood's view of the need to provide openings for the employment of those who acquired education. "I do think," he noted in 1863, "that it is an evil that there are few places to which well educated Natives can aspire"¹⁰² "I do feel strongly," he wrote to Maine, "the political advantage of employing Natives as largely as we can in the administration of India."¹⁰³ Their exclusion from fields "for the exertion of their energies" would exacerbate the unpopularity of British rule among "the active and stirring spirits in the country."

⁹⁸ Dalhousie to Wood, 13 July 1854, W.P.

⁹⁹ This question is discussed fully in ch. 9, below.

¹⁰⁰ Wood to Canning, 27 August 1860 (3), W.P.

¹⁰¹ Wood to Trevelyan, 9 April 1860.

¹⁰² Wood to Denison, 16 March 1863.

¹⁰³ Wood to Maine, 30 October 1863.

However, the breach of faith which the mutiny was held to imply made it even more "difficult to employ them in high executive office." As a result, he was anxious to provide them with careers in the "judicial line",¹⁰⁴ where "Native[s] ... could not possibly betray us, or do us any harm."¹⁰⁵ He resisted suggestions, which Maine and Sir Erskine Perry advanced, for improving judicial administration by replacing Indian judges and pleaders with English barristers.¹⁰⁶ He was also keen to instal Indian judges on the benches of the High Courts of Judicature.¹⁰⁷ Canning had favoured their elevation to this level, and Wood saw it as another aspect of the conciliatory policy towards Indians.¹⁰⁸ His liberalism towards employing Indians in the "judicial line" was not limited by any consideration of the seniority of the status they might achieve, but by a concern that they should not exercise sole jurisdiction over cases involving Englishmen. He wrote to Maine: "Acting as one of a bench, with English sterling morality alongside of them, I believe their knowledge will be most useful, and I should not hesitate to place a Native in the High Court, whom I might not feel confident of placing as sole

¹⁰⁴Wood to Maine, 27 July 1863, W.P.

¹⁰⁵Wood to Denison, 16 March 1863, W.P.

¹⁰⁶J. Willoughby to Clerk, 3 January 1862, Clerk Pap.; Maine to Wood, 30 August 1863; Wood to Maine, 30 October 1863; W.P.

¹⁰⁷See ch. 4, n. 68.

¹⁰⁸Hansard, clxiii, 6 June 1861, cols. 656-7.

judge in a country district."¹⁰⁹ He had "no faith in the moral courage of the Hindoo, & ... [he had] no doubt of the English settlers despising and bullying the Hindoo judge."¹¹⁰

Wood's object was to establish an efficient bureaucracy of professionally qualified English gentlemen, secured by the co-operation of the prominent and educated members of Indian society. He did much to give the I.C.S. the character of a disinterested and aloof ruling class. The links between the I.C.S. and the public schools and universities remained strong until the end of the British raj. His attachment of Indians to government service was largely inspired by the political design of delaying that end. However, he did recognise that the end must come eventually, and he accepted as an obligation the training of Indians to administer their own affairs. Asking Dalhousie to employ Indians in administering Nagpur, he wrote: "... preserve the native machinery - but introduce the order and honesty of the English service."¹¹¹ In 1863, he wrote to the Governor of Madras: "... we cannot, & ought not to govern the country, without employing, as far as we can the Natives of the Country, & we are bound ... by our duty & our interest to enlist

¹⁰⁹Letter of 9 October 1862, W.P.

¹¹⁰Wood to Maine, 30 October 1863.

¹¹¹Letter of 24 April 1854.

as many as we can into the service & interests of the Government."¹¹² He would supply the Indian's want of the "moral courage" required of a district judge, and develop in him "the acknowledged independence of the English character."¹¹³ That could be done by "his going through the inferior [judicial] positions, & acquiring there ... the necessary character for firmness." He did not expect to "live to see" the emergence of Indians with "moral courage".¹¹⁴ Though in his eighties he applauded the liberal policies of Lord Ripon,¹¹⁵ his initial reaction to the Ilbert Bill was unfavourable. He entertained "grave doubts" about allowing Indians to try suits in which Englishmen were involved.¹¹⁶ He admitted to Ripon that he had elevated Indians to the High Court, but explained that "they sat with Englishmen ... & [that] it was the Court, not they, which dealt with Englishmen." There was "a wide difference" between that and making an Indian "the single administrator of the law in a country district." Furthermore, the change involved "lowering the prestige of the ruling race" and it would lead "natives to consider very seriously why if they ... [could] rule Europeans,

¹¹²Wood to Denison, 9 September 1863.

¹¹³Wood to Maine, 30 October 1863.

¹¹⁴Wood to Denison, 9 September 1863.

¹¹⁵Halifax to Ripon, 23 October 1883, B.M.Add. MS. 43531, fol. 188.

¹¹⁶Halifax to Ripon, 8 February 1883, *ibid.* 43530, fols. 161-4.

they should not rule themselves." Wood was "uncomfortable" about taking a step which would weaken the raj for the sake of extending responsibility to Indians. However, after discussing the matter with the younger Whigs, Northbrook and Kimberley,¹¹⁷ both of whom had served him as parliamentary Under-secretaries at the India Office,¹¹⁸ he was prepared to accept the desirability of the step. "I feel," he wrote to Ripon, "... that things go at such a pace ... that an old-world body like me may easily be behind hand in his views of what is now required."¹¹⁹ He always accepted the premises of the need for a good administration and the obligation to train Indians to undertake it. The right of Indians to administer their own affairs was the undeniable conclusion.

¹¹⁷ Halifax to Ripon, 2 and 29 March 1883, *ibid.* fols. 179, 189.

¹¹⁸ Northbrook, as T.G. Baring, from June 1859 to January 1861, and from July 1861 until April 1864; Kimberley as Lord Wodehouse, from April until November 1864. Ripon had been Under-secretary from January until July 1861.

¹¹⁹ Halifax to Ripon, 23 August 1883, *ibid.* 43531, fols. 38-9.

Table Showing Number of Oxford and Cambridge Successes at I.C.S. Examinations, 1855-64 (compiled from Reports of C.S. Comm'rs).

Year	Candidates Selected		
	Total	Oxford and Cambridge	Oxford and Cambridge Candidates of 22 yrs. and over.
1855	20	14	13
1856	21	11	8
1857	12	6	5
1858	20	12	9
1859	40	21	9
1860	80	33	
1861	82	39	
1862	82	25	
1863	62	16	
1864	40	4	

Chapter 6The Charter for Education¹

On 19 July 1854, the Directors of the East India Company signed a document which became known to three generations of Anglo-Indians as "the Magna Charta of English Education in India", "the intellectual Charter of India" or, simply, as "Wood's Education Despatch".² Some eighty years later it was described authoritatively as "one of the most statesmanlike and most democratic documents in the history of educational administration."³ It proposed a comprehensive scheme for the diffusion of practical knowledge, through the English and vernacular languages and under the control and financial aid of the state. In 1858, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta said that "it contained, if ever an Indian Despatch did contain, an exposition of the views of the then Minister of the Crown and imposed those views and a consequent course of action ... upon the Court of Directors and upon the Government of India."⁴ Recently, an historian asserted boldly that "the document has never been regarded as the creation of the President of the Board of Control", and he ascribed it tentatively to the active pen of one of the Company's

¹ A fuller version of the earlier section of this chapter appears in the writer's "The Composition of 'Wood's Education Despatch'", subsidiary paper 2, below.

² Despatch No. 49 of 1854.

³ Sir P. Hartog, Some Aspects of Indian Education, Oxford 1939, p. 18.

⁴ Sir J.W. Colville, 11 December 1858, in Convocation Addresses to University of Calcutta, vol. I, 1914.

most illustrious servants - John Stuart Mill.⁵ An admiring biographer claimed that India owed Lord Dalhousie "a debt of gratitude for the great educational despatch of 1854."⁶ When Wood presented the document to an enthusiastic House of Commons, he listed the names of several men who had contributed to, or whom he had consulted about, its contents.⁷ Those of Mill and Dalhousie were not mentioned. Indeed, the story of the despatch's development may be told without referring to either of them. Wood looked back to the sittings of the Lords' Committee in June and July 1853, for the beginnings of his awareness "that a great deal still remained to be done" in the field of education.⁸

The principal witnesses on education were Dr Alexander Duff, the famous missionary, James Marshman, the editor of the Friend of India, Sir Charles Trevelyan and C.H. Cameron.⁹ Their testimony revealed the disparateness of the type of education offered in the various provinces of India. Since the victory of the "Anglicists", championed by Macaulay, in the mid 'thirties, Bengal had concentrated upon imparting higher education through the English language.

⁵B.T. McCully, English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism, New York 1940, pp. 135-8.

⁶Sir W. Lee-Warner, The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie, 2 vols., London 1904, II, p. 206.

⁷Hansard, cxxxv, 8 August 1854, cols. 1458-76.

⁸Ibid., col. 1458.

⁹Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, xxxii, contains the second report of the House of Lords' Committee, which comprises the oral evidence and written papers tendered.

It had been expected that western education would filter downwards from a class of interpreters to the masses of the people. In 1853, the results of this scheme were seen to be disappointing. In Madras, though the government had done little to promote mass education, Christian missionaries had achieved significant success at the elementary level by teaching through the vernaculars. In parts of the North-West Provinces, Lieutenant-Governor Thomason had encouraged the use of the vernaculars for imparting practical education in indigenous schools. The witnesses called before the Lords' Committee pointed, therefore, to the existence of private agencies, both missionary and Indian, which might be used to extend education under a system of grants-in-aid similar to that which was already operating in England.

Wood maintained contact with Marshman and Duff during the latter half of 1853.¹⁰ However, at first he looked to the Court to frame "something on the subject of education." He probably envisaged a general despatch, requesting the Governor-General to produce a "detailed Scheme".¹¹ In November, when Marshman sent him some "Notes on Education in India",¹² he forwarded them to East India House.¹³ The Chairman had set E.D. Bourdillon, a Clerk in

¹⁰ Wood to Marshman, 22 November 1853, W.P.; Duff to Wood, 25 August and 2 November 1853, Hickleton Pap. Duff's first letter referred to Wood's "favour of June 22nd".

¹¹ Wood to Marshman, op. cit.

¹² Dated 12 November 1853, W.P., 25.

¹³ Wood to Marshman, op. cit.

the Correspondence Department, to work preparing a preliminary paper.¹⁴ Bourdillon's paper did not become a "previous communication" and it is not mentioned in the Company's records.¹⁵ It went up to the Board endorsed "proposed P[revious] C[ommunication]",¹⁶ and it reflected, to some extent, the ideas that Marshman had expressed in his "Notes". Both Bourdillon and Marshman reiterated the major findings of the Lords' Committee. Grants-in-aid should be made to missionary and indigenous schools where they imparted, through the vernacular or English languages, secular knowledge of an approved standard. Government colleges for higher learning through English should be further extended. In addition, Marshman took up the case for universities at the presidency towns. He followed the lines of a plan which C.H. Cameron had explained to the Committee, for the adoption of London as the model for Indian universities. Government and non-government colleges would become affiliated institutions. On the other hand, Bourdillon regarded the proposal for universities as premature. Neither of them faced squarely the question of the government's role in education. Marshman wrote weakly that the government should merely "announce ... that vernacular education is recognised as part of the educational machinery of the State ...;

¹⁴R. Ellice to Wood, 19 October 1853, Hickleton Pap.

¹⁵Register of Drafts and Previous Communications, vol. 8, draft no. 585.

¹⁶W.P., 12.

and also that the principle of "Grants in Aid ... has the fullest sanction of the Board of Control and the Court of Directors." Bourdillon concluded by abandoning to the Governor-General-in-Council the task of framing "a general scheme applicable to the whole of India."

Duff also wrote to Wood in November 1853. He proffered the advice that instead of despatching "voluminous written instructions" to India, "a special government Educational Commissioner" should be sent out.¹⁷ Wood brushed the suggestion aside. At that time, or soon afterwards, he probably asked Duff for a written account of his views on educational reform, for, on 25 January 1854, the latter sent him a "Brief Memorandum on the subject of Government Education [in] India".¹⁸ Late in 1853, as was his habit, Wood asked Baring to make an independent study of the question. Baring analysed the evidence placed before the Lords' Committee and wrote the following report:

The general result of the information showed that in the North Western Provinces alone was there anything approaching to a systematic scheme for educating ... the people That wherever practical education had been attempted it had been most successful, - and that a very considerable private agency might be taken advantage of, if Grants in aid were sanctioned. There was ample information from which to draw up a general scheme and to make Native Education an integral part of the ordinary administration in India.¹⁹

¹⁷Letter of 2 November, op. cit.

¹⁸W.P., 25.

¹⁹N.d., W.P., 12.

By the end of January 1854, Wood was in possession of papers by Marshman, Bourdillon, Duff and Baring. He could then see his way to preparing a complete despatch at the Board. He had, earlier in the month, confessed that he was "very anxious to see" a "scheme of education" which Dalhousie had promised to send.²⁰ But it is clear that during the period when the despatch was being composed, its authors had no recourse to any such "scheme" of Dalhousie's.²¹

The evolution of the despatch is evidenced by a bundle of documents upon which Wood entered the note: "these papers contain the various stages through which the Education dft. of 1854 passed."²² The bundle contains two plans or outlines of a draft, and two manuscript and five printed drafts which were annotated to show the progress of the despatch through its successive phases. Wood wrote the outlines for the guidance of Baring, who prepared and annotated the drafts. Whilst they found Bourdillon's paper disappointing, they regarded Duff's memorandum as a fruitful source from which a "general scheme" of "practical education" might be developed.

Duff's memorandum consists of eight parts, the last two of

²⁰Wood to Elphinstone, 24 January 1854, W.P.

²¹For a discussion of the claims that have been advanced for Dalhousie's influence upon the despatch, see subsidiary paper 2, below.

²²W.P., 12.

which Wood disregarded. He summarised his points in marginal headings, the first of which reads: "The grand fundamental principle - the promotion of improved European knowledge only." His first sentence begins: "In India, there are endless erroneous systems ... which ... embody much of what is notoriously false" He developed these remarks in part I of his paper. Wood's second plan, after providing for introductory comments, proceeded: "Object. Imparting the improved science and philosophy of Europe. Oriental science not worthy in these days." The thoughts are developed and expressed "emphatically" in paragraphs 7-10 of the despatch.

In his part II, Duff argued the need to use "the media of the vernacular or English languages" for instruction. "The basis of all natural Education must be vernacular", which, though little used at present, was essential for teaching "the great mass of the people." In his second plan Wood followed his notes on "Object" with the words: "Medium. English language hitherto for none other sufficient ... to mass however must be in vernacular ... English and Vernacular main objects to be done together. otherwise no chance of having the means of imparting generally European knowledge." In the despatch these points are expanded into several paragraphs and Duff's very expressions occur.²³

Duff sideheaded his part III: "Duty of Government. What?"

²³Paras. 11-14.

Beyond putting the case for grants-in-aid "to any schools" imparting "improved European knowledge", he argued that "Government should uphold no permanently exclusive schools of its own." Rather, it should "establish schools in destitute districts - & when matured, withdraw [its] ... exclusive countenance and support ... - handing them over to the grants in aid system" and to "the management of the natives themselves." He observed: "This process of partial withdrawal from some of the existing institutions, might even now be begun." In this way "the natives ... would be initiated into habits of self-reliance and self-action." A section of Wood's first plan reads:

Govt. colleges ... withdraw exclusive support where able to contribute & grant it where not given now At the same time establish similar institutions where they do not now exist - support altogether at first, gradually withdraw as they become more self-supporting.

The role of government is enunciated at several points in the despatch. On this matter Duff's views were highly congenial to Wood, for the notions of "self-help" and "local effort" were central to his political and social philosophy. Paragraph 52 commends the grants-in-aid system as "fostering a spirit of reliance upon local exertions", whilst paragraph 61 remarks that government would "supply the wants of particular parts of India by the establishment, temporary support, and management of places of education of every class" And the next paragraph reads:

We look forward to the time when any general system of education entirely provided by Government may be discontinued ... and when many of the existing Government institutions ... may be safely closed, or transferred to the management of local bodies

Parts IV, V and VI of Duff's paper treated of "Requirements needed for working out the system", "A University for conferring degrees", and "Policy of government, with reference to Christianity." Questions of organization and machinery required much more searching analysis than Duff supplied in his part IV, which mentioned summarily the need for teacher training, inspection, school-books, and an increased education grant. As for universities, Duff was preaching to the converted. Before he received the memorandum, Wood had accepted the need for a scheme identical to Duff's, with one exception.²⁴ The missionary proposed professorships in Oriental languages, and the suggestion should be credited to him since Wood took it up as a query in his first plan and it became a provision in the despatch.²⁵ The cultivation of the learned languages would enrich the vernaculars as media of instruction. Part VI advocated voluntary Bible classes in government schools. Though he had previously inclined to rejecting this proposal,²⁶ Wood admitted it to his first plan and to the drafts, only to expunge it later. On the one hand, he recognized that Christianity was an important "civilizing" influence in India. On the other, he feared "offending

²⁴ Wood to Elphinstone, 24 January 1854.

²⁵ Para.. 32.

²⁶ Wood to Elphinstone, 24 January 1854.

the religious feelings of the natives". Any "national religious movement" in India would be a "danger ... to our rule."²⁷ The despatch permitted only such explanations of the Bible as "pupils may, of their own free will, ask from the masters ... [and] provided that such information be given out of school hours."²⁸

The substantial influence of Duff's memorandum upon "Wood's Education Despatch" is undeniable. However, Wood and Baring did far more than merely embody Duff's ideas in an official paper.²⁹ When Wood presented the despatch to the Commons, he stressed that "by far the greatest defect of the education given in India ... [was] its want of a practical character."³⁰ Duff had advocated "useful" learning for the "mass". However, he neither emphasised its significance in the context of existing educational policy, nor considered the implications of such an emphasis for Indian policy generally. Wood stressed his intention to depart from the policy of only encouraging higher education among the upper classes of society.³¹ The despatch promised "opportunities for the acquisition of such an improved education as ... [would] make those who possess[ed] it more useful members of society in every

²⁷Wood to Dalhousie, 8 February 1854, W.P.

²⁸Para. 84.

²⁹Cf. the claim of George Smith, that "Dr Duff and Mr Marshman worked out the educational portion of their statements before the [Lords'] Committee, in a form which Lord Northbrook ... embodied in ... the memorable despatch" (The Life of Alexander Duff ..., 2 vols., London 1879, II, pp. 241, 245).

³⁰Op. cit., col. 1459.

³¹Wood's outlines, W.P. 12.

condition of life."³² The new policy would be to convey "useful and practical knowledge, suited to every station in life ... to the great mass of the people."³³ This involved not only imparting useful elementary knowledge to the masses, but also adapting higher education to the needs of society.

In Bengal, where higher education was most advanced, the policy had been to direct students' ambitions to higher distinctions in European literature and philosophy. This reflected the "Anglicist" policy of providing a "class of interpreters" between the English governors and the millions of Indians whom they governed. Wood believed the policy unwise unless suitable careers could be provided by the government for those who distinguished themselves.³⁴ Though he pressed Dalhousie to instal a certain number of them in elevated posts, he affirmed that high public places could not be found for all.³⁵ On the other hand, India lacked "good clerks, good judges, perhaps, good railroad servants, good civil engineers for ordinary works, good policemen and village accountants and measurers."³⁶ Hence, in the despatch Wood provided channels through which Indians might be given practical education and their energies poured into tasks of regenerating the backward economy. Encouragement to pursue training in engineering, teaching and medicine, by offering prospects of government employment in these fields, was mentioned

³² Para. 42.

³³ Para. 41.

³⁴ Wood to Dalhousie, 8 June 1854, W.P.

³⁵ Wood to Dalhousie, 24 November 1853, W.P.

³⁶ Wood to Dalhousie, 8 June 1854.

specifically.³⁷ Wood summed up thus the integration of the new stress in higher education within Indian policy generally:

You want Surgeons and Engineers, & Superintendents of railroad works & of irrigation works, & so forth. Train up men for practical purposes. Give the means of conferring distinction on people who choose to educate themselves highly, but educate yourself for practical employment. These are my principles, & I have endeavoured to carry them out as far & fast as I can in the despatch³⁸

Wood underlined this shift in higher educational policy by a fresh approach to the question of scholarships. He deprecated the existing system of offering senior scholarships, which were invariably taken by those who could well pay their way, and which served only to swell that class of "highly educated gentlemen", learned in literature and philosophy, "whom you cannot employ." He favoured the use of scholarships to provide a path from the lowest school to the highest, and ultimately into technical and professional careers.³⁹ He was dissatisfied with the expression of these principles in the earlier drafts and continued to work over the question assiduously until the phrasing of paragraphs 63-4 of the despatch was achieved. Scholarships would give to "superior talent in every class ... that encouragement and development which it deserves,"⁴⁰ thereby associating the improvement of the individual with the forward thrust of society. For this to

³⁷Paras. 65, 66, 68, 79, 80.

³⁸Wood to F. Halliday (Lieut.-Gov. of Bengal), 24 July 1854, W.P.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Para. 63.

occur, of course, the language barrier between lower and higher schools had to be surmountable. Here again Wood went beyond Duff. For where Duff continued to speak of "two sets of schools", the lower teaching "the great mass" through the vernaculars, the higher instructing the "middle and higher classes" through English, Wood refused from the outset to grade schools on a linguistic basis. The pressure of declared policy would be applied at once to make the vernaculars an adequate medium for a "superior education".⁴¹

The charter for education is probably the most eloquent expression of Britain's hopes for regenerating the society and economy of India to appear during the false dawn of an age of reform which preceded the mutiny. Baring had reported to his chief that "wherever practical education had been attempted it had been most successful", and that "a general scheme ... to make Native Education an integral part of the ordinary administration of India" might be constructed. Wood aimed to develop a "general scheme" of "practical education" as part of a larger policy for regenerating the country. He built upon Duff's expression of principles to produce a despatch that was in harmony with the reforming note which had already been sounded in the changes projected for the Indian legislature, the law and the civil administration. It was also consonant with extensive plans which he had in hand for the

⁴¹Paras. 8, 14, 32, 44.

construction of railways and public works.⁴² England, in the words of paragraph 4 of the despatch, would "teach the natives of India the marvellous results of the employment of labour and capital, rouse them... in the development of the vast resources of their country ... [and] confer upon them all the advantages ... of wealth and commerce" This was the keynote of the despatch, and Baring and Wood were responsible for it.⁴³ The Court of Directors signed the document after making some trifling amendments to the draft,⁴⁴ and Dalhousie, moved by a similar impulse to improve India as the reformers at home, acclaimed the scheme "a very great one". He assured Wood of his "cordial exertions" in carrying it into effect.⁴⁵

In a long despatch of April 1859, Stanley made the first major review of the extent to which Wood's despatch had been put into effect.⁴⁶ At the same time, he requested a comprehensive report on the matter from India.⁴⁷ Canning asked the local

⁴² See ch. 7, below.

⁴³ Cf. G. Smith's claim that "it was Dr Duff who succeeded in placing the keystone in the arch of his aggressive educational system by the famous Despatch of 1854" (op. cit., p. 231).

⁴⁴ See subsidiary paper 2, below, where minor contributions to the draft from other sources are also discussed.

⁴⁵ Dalhousie to Wood, 18 September and 7 November 1854, W.P.

⁴⁶ Educational despatch to G.G. in C., 7 April (No. 4) 1859.

⁴⁷ Paras. 66-7.

authorities to provide the details required to prepare a consolidated statement. However, the reports which he received were too dissimilar in presentation to be amalgamated. It was not until 1862, when A.M. Monteath produced a "Note on the State of Education in India", that an intelligent general account was compiled.⁴⁸ Taken together, Stanley's observations and Monteath's "Note" revealed what had been achieved. Significant advances had been made towards encouraging higher education of a practical order. Scholarships had been introduced to link the lower with the higher schools.⁴⁹ Universities had been established in each of the presidency towns, with power to grant degrees in arts, law, medicine and engineering.⁵⁰ Opportunities had been opened to the employment in the public service of Indians with a certain minimum standard of general education,⁵¹ and of those who acquired professional qualifications at the universities.⁵² Rules had been drawn up in each presidency for extending grants-in-aid to private schools.⁵³ But, whilst schools which taught either entirely or partially through the English language were availing themselves of

⁴⁸ Dated 27 October 1862, in Selections from the Educational Records of the Government of India, vol. I, Delhi 1960, pp. 1-298.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 90-7.

⁵⁰ Stanley's despatch, paras. 6-7; Monteath, pp. 5-14.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 97-105; Stanley, para. 63.

⁵² Monteath, pp. 26-38; Stanley, para. 62.

⁵³ Monteath, pp. 78-85; Stanley, paras. 32-8, 49-57.

grants-in-aid, there appeared to have been little progress in providing education for the lower classes in "vernacular schools" organized on the grant-in-aid principle.⁵⁴ Little had been achieved by way of carrying useful education to the masses.

Upon turning to Indian affairs in 1859, Wood was immediately confronted by pressure to authorize the formation of Bible classes in government schools. In his despatch, Stanley had discussed at some length the proposal to permit voluntary classes in Scripture during school hours, only to negative it unequivocally.⁵⁵ Wood thought that Stanley's approach "needlessly provoked the saints" in England,⁵⁶ and he feared that the missionary interests would create "difficulty ... in parliament."⁵⁷ On 11 July, he wrote to Canning:

They are getting up a great agitation here for a bible class in school hours, the attendance to be quite voluntary. I am sorry for it for I believe my dispatch lays down the true ground on which education in India should be based. They are very angry with Stanley's dispatch which asks for information on every other point and lays down the principle on this alone.

The mutiny had made him all the more concerned about the "danger ... of a national religious movement." Bible classes in government schools may, he wrote to Canning, "be considered as an attempt at

⁵⁴See below. B.T. McCully has discussed the development of higher and secondary education during the third quarter of the nineteenth century at some length (op. cit., pp. 143-66).

⁵⁵Paras. 59-61.

⁵⁶Wood to Elphinstone, 2 September 1859, W.P.

⁵⁷Wood to Trevelyan, 11 July 1859, W.P.

proselytizing & ... produce a feeling against us in a political sense."⁵⁸ On 1 August, he told the House of Commons of the need to "be very careful not to give the Natives of India any reason" to suspect the government of wishing "to attack the religious feelings and prejudices which they ... [held] so dear." If the country was to be retained "in peace and tranquillity" it was necessary to "take care so to govern it as ... to consult ... the feelings of the Native population."⁵⁹ But even if forming Bible classes did not create a political problem, it might still impede the extension of education. It "might convert the indifference now shown as to missionary labours into hostility."⁶⁰ As the missionaries comprised the major English agency for establishing schools on the grants-in-aid principle, this was a serious matter. Further, forming Bible classes would give "any fanatical Native a right to say that the Govt. school ... [was] made an engine of proselytism." "He would withdraw his children," Wood reflected later, "& the real good which they get, & the real learning ... would be lost so far as the children are concerned."⁶¹

During August, Wood faced a powerful array of agitators, "encouraged by Sir J. Lawrence's authority",⁶² for the discreet

⁵⁸ Letter of 26 July 1859, W.P.

⁵⁹ Hansard, clv, col. 781.

⁶⁰ Wood to Trevelyan, 26 July 1859, W.P.

⁶¹ Wood to Denison, 27 February 1865, W.P.

⁶² Wood to Canning, 26 July 1859; see also Baring to Clerk, 23 September 1860, Clerk Papers; R. Bosworth Smith, Life of Lord Lawrence, 2 vols., London 1883, II, p. 377.

introduction of Bible classes. He wrote to Canning: "Palmerston and I had a deputation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, D. of Marlborough, Lord Shaftesbury etc about the Bible in schools."⁶³ Wood made a small concession to the deputation, allowing that "instruction in the Bible might be given out of school hours to voluntary applicants; ... and [that] if the applicants formed themselves into a class there ... [would be] no objection."⁶⁴ It would be permitted "to schoolmasters to assemble, for ½ an hour before or after school hours, any pupils who attended voluntarily, & to teach them Christianity - of course a Mahomedan or Hindoo teacher might in like manner teach Islamism or Hindooism."⁶⁵ The concession averted the "difficulty" which Wood had expected in parliament during the 1859 session. And when, a year later, the Duke of Marlborough brought a motion before the Lords for the removal of "the authoritative exclusion of the Word of God from the course of education afforded in the Government colleges and schools," discussion of the question was unceremoniously gagged.⁶⁶ Even Shaftesbury pleaded with Marlborough not to bring in his motion.⁶⁷

⁶³ 26 August 1859, W.P.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Wood to Elgin, 4 May 1863, W.P.

⁶⁶ Hansard, clix, 2 July 1860, cols. 1237-53. See also the Lords' peremptory dismissal of a petition, drawn on similar lines, which the Bishop of Oxford laid before them on 6 July 1860 (ibid., cols. 1514-7).

⁶⁷ Ibid., col. 1237.

Wood avoided conflict with the missionaries by steering the course of impartiality. About the time of Marlborough's motion, he feared that Canning was giving them "a handle to make attacks on the irreligious and un-Christian character" of the government in India.⁶⁸ In October 1859, Wood had proscribed the appointment of missionaries as "inspectors".⁶⁹ Canning had declared "that a person engaged ... as a Missionary shall not be employed in the Education Department."⁷⁰ Wood complained that this was an unnecessary extension of his instruction.⁷¹ Missionaries could "not be supposed to be impartial in the inspection of schools" but they might still be employed "in certain places connected with education". He stressed that during the 1859 elections in England, "everybody ... was attacked" over the government's allegedly "placing a ban on the Bible."⁷² He did "not wish in any way to give an opportunity to the fanatical people to make an attack." Throughout his term at the India Office, he kept to the letter of his 1859 arrangement with the missionaries concerning Bible classes. During 1864 and 1865, he censured the

⁶⁸Wood to Canning, 27 June 1860, W.P.

⁶⁹S. of S. to G.G. in C., 14 October (Educational No. 15) 1859.

⁷⁰Government of India Notification of 30 March (No. 86) 1860, in Coll. to Educ. Desps., vol. 6; Canning to Wood, 6 August 1860, W.P.

⁷¹Wood to Canning, 27 June 1860; S. of S. to G.G. in C., 9 August (Educ. No. 86) 1860.

⁷²Wood to Canning, 14 September 1860, W.P.

Governor of Madras for going beyond it by allowing schoolmasters "to form Bible classes in connection with Government schools."⁷³

He drew a distinction between combining voluntary applicants into a class, and forming a class and inviting pupils to attend it, even though in each case the class assembled out of school hours. Nothing must be done by the schoolmaster which had "the appearance of Govt. influence, or the influence derived from his situation under Govt., being brought to bear upon the pupils."⁷⁴

On the other hand, Wood censured the Director of Public Instruction at Bombay for being "disposed to refuse sanction to schoolmasters giving information on the Bible or Christian religion, at times other than school hours, if sought for by the pupils."⁷⁵

In 1863, Wood's attention was recalled to the problem of extending education to the masses. On 11 June, a letter by Duff, critical of the grants-in-aid rules in Bengal, was published in the Friend of India.⁷⁶ Duff claimed that the Bengal rules offered insufficient encouragement to the foundation of new schools. Private agencies had actually to establish a school before a grant could be obtained for it. Arthur Kinnaird, a leading member of the

⁷³Wood to Denison, 27 February 1865, W.P.; see also Wood to Denison, 11 July 1864, W.P., and S. of S. to Govt. of Madras, 9 and 25 March (Educ. Nos. 1 and 2) 1865.

⁷⁴Wood to Denison, 11 July 1864.

⁷⁵Wood to Frere, 1 September 1864, W.P.; see also, Wood to Frere, 3 August and 2 November 1864.

⁷⁶Letter signed "D".

Church Missionary Society, sent the letter to Wood.⁷⁷ Later in the year, Wood received a deputation from the Society, and he agreed to bring the question before the Viceroy.⁷⁸ In a despatch of January 1864,⁷⁹ he recalled that "the backwardness of the native community to establish schools under the grant-in-aid system was dwelt on at considerable length in Lord Stanley's despatch." "But," he continued, "as far as a judgment could be formed from the information then available such backwardness did not seem to be attributable to the particular terms of the grant-in-aid rules." In point of fact, Stanley had written that he entertained "little doubt that the grant-in-aid system, as hitherto in force, ... [was] unsuited to the supply of vernacular education to the masses of the population."⁸⁰ He had quoted the opinion of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal that the grant-in-aid system "apparently assumed greater general interest in the advancement of their inferiors than really exists among the wealthy classes of natives, and larger contributions to the schools than can be afforded by the masses themselves, or are likely to be given by their more competent countrymen."⁸¹ The grants-in-aid principle was fundamental to the education charter, and Wood shared nothing

⁷⁷Wood to Trevelyan, 17 August 1863, W.P.

⁷⁸Wood to Trevelyan, 9 December 1863; Wood to Frere, 17 June, 1864; W.P.

⁷⁹S. of S. to G.G. in Counc., 23 January (Educational No. 1) 1864.

⁸⁰Op. cit., para. 50.

⁸¹Op. cit., para. 38.

of Stanley's disposition to abandon it after so short a trial. He had, in 1864, to admit that the grants-in-aid system of extending mass education had "certainly not made the progress which might reasonably have been expected."⁸² He accepted at face value reports of the "considerable difficulty ... experienced by voluntary and independent bodies and others in establishing schools on the grant in aid principle, in consequence of the rules prescribed by the local governments." And he issued the following instruction:

... the administration of grants in aid should receive your careful consideration, in view to the removal of any impediments in the way of the extension of the system, and to the adoption of such rules as, consistent with the principles laid down in the Dispatch of July 1854, ... shall interfere as little as possible with the free action of those who may seek, under their operation, to promote the spread of education among the masses of the people.

The despatch of January 1864, indicates the limit to which Wood was prepared to go in providing for mass education. All impediments to the application of the grant-in-aid principle must be removed, but the principle itself must be retained. He was aware that the amendment of the rules would not be sufficient in itself to extend elementary education widely. He could observe that in Madras the rules favoured higher education and led to neglect at the elementary level by granting aid according to the qualifications of the teacher. But he was quite at a loss to

⁸² Despatch of 23 January.

suggest how the Bengal or Bombay rules could be held responsible for the continuing reluctance to establish private primary schools.⁸³ Later in the year, he did express misgivings about the principle. "It is the one fault of the grant-in-aid system," he wrote to Frere, "that it is available to those who have some means, & does nothing for those who have none."⁸⁴ Momentarily, in June 1865, it seemed that he might do something to remedy the fault. For he accepted that it was "the business of the Govt. ... to give a decent education to ... those ... who can afford to pay little or nothing for themselves."⁸⁵ However, the very next month, he made his position clear to Cecil Beadon, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal:

I think that Govt. aid is best bestowed on the poor & those who cannot provide it for themselves; & if no private contributions can be had, it may be necessary to have schools supported exclusively by government: but I wish this to be the last resource, & that whenever you can act by means of a grant in aid you should do so I would say to the Hindoos 'Find some funds & we'll aid you as we aid ... [the missionaries]' you really must aid in so desirable an object & make your people under you do the same.⁸⁶

A much longer term of failure would have been required before Wood could have accepted the inadequacy of entreaty and the grants-in-aid system to accomplish his object.

Wood's strength was that he saw the problem of education as

⁸³ See also, Wood to Trevelyan, 9 December 1863.

⁸⁴ Letter of 17 October 1864.

⁸⁵ Wood to C. Beadon, 9 June 1865, W.P.

⁸⁶ Letter to Beadon, 24 July 1865, W.P.

integral to the regeneration of Indian society. Education and regeneration might proceed together. He viewed as a heresy the "doctrine that education can only go downwards from the higher classes to begin with."⁸⁷ The spread of education did not depend upon a process of filtration from a class of westernised "interpreters". The emphasis which he gave to useful and practical knowledge in elementary and higher education, and his conviction that progress might be made without jettisoning the existing institutions of language and religion, gave promise of substantial achievement in the short term. Significant progress was made in higher education. But it was Wood's weakness that he insisted upon the existence of "some private body or person to be aided"⁸⁸ before the government was brought into play as a financial contributor. If Indians were to "improve", they must do something to help themselves. Wood was insisting upon the applicability of the mid-Victorian social doctrine of "self-help" to Indian conditions. But it was impossible for the masses of Indian society to help themselves. Government enterprise on the scale required to carry education to all levels of society was beyond Wood's ken. As a good product of an age of careful husbandry, and faced with the financial difficulties that the mutiny left behind, he would have claimed that it was also well beyond his purse.

⁸⁷Wood to Trevelyan, 26 November 1863.

⁸⁸Ibid.

Chapter 7

Railways and Public Works¹

In 1854, when he was emphasising the importance of education for modernising India, Wood was also providing for railways and public works. For the generation which witnessed the stimulus that railways had given to England's economic development, "the ringing grooves of change" seemed essential to India's conveyance into the modern world. Trevelyan told the Lords' Committee that through the railway "the whole machinery of society ... [would] be stimulated," and "increased intensity" given "to every other improvement whatever, both physical and moral."² And to a landed gentleman with experience of the effects of large improvements in transport and agriculture at home, it was apparent that the extension of India's roads, canals and irrigation works could transform rural poverty into prosperity. In his despatches, Wood stressed the contribution that a vigorous public works policy could make "to the improvement of the country ... [and] to the more important object of bettering the condition of the inhabitants."³ Well chosen public works were, he wrote in the draft of a despatch which went to India in the same month as the

¹ A fuller version of the earlier section of this chapter appears in the writer's "Imperialism and 'Free Trade' Policy in India, 1853-4", subsidiary paper 3, below.

² Cited in E. Stokes, The Utilitarians, p. 253.

³ Paper endorsed "Materials for Public Works Draft", in Wood's hand, n.d., W.P., 36.

education charter, "calculated in the greatest degree to develop the resources of the country and to stimulate most strongly the industry and enterprise of the community."⁴ His concern for works of improvement did not, however, arise entirely from his liberalism. The exertions of a powerful parliamentary pressure group gave an urgency to the question.

It had been Wood's hope that a fusion of the Whigs and the Peelites would render a liberal government largely independent of radical support. However, Lord Aberdeen's coalition government was an uneasy one and Indian affairs were of interest to only a few members of the House of Commons.⁵ Among them were the Manchester radicals. In a thin House, there was always the danger that Manchester's opposition would inflict an embarrassing defeat upon the government. On 11 March 1853, Bright announced that he would oppose any permanent legislation to renew the Company's Charter.⁶ As the member for Manchester, the "constituency which ... [was] probably the most deeply interested in the question," he deplored the Company's neglect of "material improvements". In 1848, he had "obtained and presided over a

⁴Paper endorsed "Paragraph proposed to be added to Indian Financial Draft (P.C. 8773)", *ibid*; and Court to Gov.-Gen.-in Counc., 5 July (Public Works No. 43) 1854, *India Despatches*, Vol. 87.

⁵[E.M. Whitty], History of the Session, described the low attendance of members during the debates on Wood's Government of India Bill in 1853 (pp. 150-187).

⁶Hansard, cxxv, cols. 37-47.

Committee to enquire into the obstacles which existed to the cultivation and growth of cotton in India." These, he was convinced, were the deficiencies in the internal transport and the failure to carry out public works. There were "virtually no roads in the country," and railroad construction was "proceeding with a dilatoriness ... and inefficiency of management and hopelessness of results." There was a want of irrigation, and canals and reservoirs were in disrepair. The Company, he claimed, had made a "scandalous sacrifice of the interests" of Manchester. Bright was supported by speeches from Cobden, J.G. Phillimore, J.F. Blakett and Danby Seymour.⁷ When Russell announced the government's intention to propose permanent legislation, the group hastened to form the "Indian Reform Society".⁸

From March until June, Bright and the Indian Reform Society campaigned against the East India Company. The "subject [of India] was," wrote the editor of Bright's diaries, "hardly a day out of his thoughts and his reading was almost confined to it." Bright addressed meetings on the government of India in Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol. He spoke of the matter, in private, with Russell, with Robert Lowe; then Secretary of the Board of Control,

⁷ Ibid., cols. 55, 57-8, 63.

⁸ R.P. Masani, Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India, London 1939, p. 59; The Times, 10 May 1853. The Society was formed on 13 March.

with Sir William Molesworth, a member of the Cabinet, and with Wood himself.⁹ Wood was apprehensive of the possibility of the Tories and the radicals combining to oppose his India Bill.¹⁰ He urged Dalhousie ahead with plans for railways and public works. In March, he looked to Dalhousie, "with some anxiety," for a report on the best means of providing India with a system of railways. "Our Manchester people," he commented, "... look, and naturally, with great interest to opening the cotton growing districts."¹¹ He wrote at length on this, and associated questions:

... I hope that you will have reported on railroads before I have to bring in my Bill. I am very anxious to push the railroad from Bombay into the Cotton Districts if I knew which is really the best line. The other points are to do in the Madras and other districts what has been done in the North West Provinces; improve the irrigation, and open roads for conveying the cotton down.
 ... This is in truth the only thing that the Manchester people care for, and if I can satisfy them that these points will not be neglected, I hope to keep them all in good humour. They are however a powerful body in the House of Commons, and besides this I think they are right in their object; it would be a great point to render ourselves somewhat independent of United States cotton.¹²

In April, he wrote that an increased import of Indian cotton "would be a great national object, besides satisfying a large and powerful party in this country."¹³ On 8 May, he was, like

⁹R.A.J. Walling (ed.), The Diaries of John Bright, London 1930, pp. 138-41, 145 n.1.

¹⁰Wood to Dalhousie, 24 March 1853, W.P.

¹¹Wood to Dalhousie, 8 March 1853, W.P.

¹²Wood to Dalhousie, 24 March 1853.

¹³Wood to Dalhousie, 8 April 1853, W.P.

Manchester, "very anxious to see a period of peace and internal improvement," and favoured "spending any surplus [revenue] in Public Works."¹⁴ Towards the end of May, he had a large hand in shaping an important public works despatch.¹⁵ It provided for "a considerable portion of the revenue" to be spent annually on public works, and asked Dalhousie to introduce a system of estimating costs which would give the Government of India and the authorities at home a tighter control over the prosecution of the works.

On 3 June, when he introduced his Bill, Wood knew that the members of the Indian Reform Society, some of whom "clustered ... below the gangway of the House,"¹⁶ would oppose it.¹⁷ He tried to disarm their opposition with references to the recent despatch on public works and with promises that "no time ... [would] be lost in carrying the railroads through" and that "no expense ... [would] be spared to effect that object."¹⁸ Bright followed his speech with a long and virulent reply. The next day, the Indian Reform Society met.¹⁹ During the subsequent debates,

¹⁴Letter to Dalhousie, W.P.

¹⁵Despatch of 24 May (No.32) 1853. The Court's copy of the document shows Wood's alterations in red ink (India Despatches, Vol. 81). They are also acknowledged in Stark to Melvill, 20 May 1853, in Letters from the Board to the Court, Vol. 17.

¹⁶Hansard, cxxviii, cols. 776, 1010; see also [E.M. Whitty], op. cit., p. 176.

¹⁷Ibid., cxxvii, cols. 1097-8.

¹⁸Ibid., cols. 1111-18.

¹⁹Bright's Diaries, p. 146.

a number of its members, who were referred to as "Young India",²⁰ or, simply, as "the Manchester school",²¹ spoke at length. In his second reading speech,²² Bright reiterated his views of 11 March, confident that "he was ... speaking almost the unanimous sentiments of the merchants and manufacturers of Manchester." This was no glib boast. Wood had alluded to representations which the cotton interest had "earnestly pressed" upon him.²³ And Milner Gibson presented a petition from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures which they had drawn up on 22 June, after Bright had impressed upon them the connexion between the "Government of India question" and "the permanence and stability of the supply of cotton."²⁴ Bright attacked the Company's failure to build roads for "agricultural, commercial and economic purposes," and contrasted such niggardliness with the liberality of "the people of Manchester [who] had expended more for their internal improvement than the East India Company with their vast empire." Cobden drew an anti-thesis between the "double" system of government as productive of wars, and reformed government as the basis of commercial development.²⁵

²⁰ E.g., Hansard, cxxviii, cols. 776, 990, 1010.

²¹ Ibid., cols. 656, 990.

²² Ibid., see esp. cols. 877-80.

²³ Ibid., cxxvii, col. 1111.

²⁴ The Times, 22 and 24 June 1853. For this and similar Manchester petitions, see Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, xxviii, Fourth Commons Report, App. 2, pp. 241-2, 252. On 9 August, after the Commons had passed the Bill, Wood received a memorial from the Manchester Commercial Association, expressing their concern over the "extension and improvement of cotton cultivation" in India (W.P.).

²⁵ Hansard, cxxviii, cols. 822-3, 831.

Phillimore described the current public works policy as "disastrous".²⁶ Danhy Seymour, the president of the Reform Society, called for such a government as would encourage the investment of English capital in India; in consequence of which "the aspect of Hindoostan would be changed enormously before ten years had passed."²⁷ Digby Seymour, who acknowledged his attachment to the "Young India" group, revealed that India's consumption of British goods was low compared with South America's, and that whilst England's imports of American cotton had climbed steadily, the quantities drawn from India had remained constant.²⁸ "How," he asked, "was that to be accounted for? America had 11,000 miles of railway; but in India ... the expenditure for railways had not been more than sufficient to place 100 miles in course of construction." He condemned the existing form of government because he believed that it inhibited internal development:

What were the tests they ought to take in order to try the merits of the system? He would ask whether by the present system peace was encouraged - whether the works of peace, such as canals and roads, the means of transit and internal traffic flourished instead of peace, the system had been the instigation and the cause of war

The first outcome of Wood's promise to hasten works of improvement was his ready approval of Dalhousie's proposals for

²⁶ Ibid., cxxvii, col. 1238.

²⁷ Ibid., cols. 1339-40.

²⁸ Ibid., cxxviii, cols. 1009-1016.

India's great trunk railroads.²⁹ He had, in January, noted his inclination to have the main lines constructed by "private Companies under Government control."³⁰ Now, in July, with Dalhousie's scheme before him, he recorded that the Government's guarantee of interest on the private capital invested in "the construction of the main trunk lines may properly be given."³¹ He wrote of the "objects" of railways policy as "the general & public advantages of the government & people of India generally, and also the commercial advantage of carrying produce to & from the coast." He expressed his concern to open "the great cotton districts of Berar to the Western Coast". For these purposes, he agreed to the Government's guarantee of 5 per cent per annum interest for 99 years, on the capital invested by shareholders in the companies engaged upon constructing the authorised lines. In so doing he was employing the method of financing and constructing Indian railways upon which Manchester had, four years earlier, placed its imprimatur. For in 1849, Bright and Cobden, together with other members of parliament for the Midlands and representatives of Manchester commercial interests, had attended at the Board of Control to press for the adoption of the guarantee system.³² By mid-August 1853, having sanctioned the construction

²⁹ Wood to Dalhousie, 19 August 1853.

³⁰ Wood to Dalhousie, 22 January 1853.

³¹ "Memorandum on Indian Railroads", 30 July 1853, W.P., 27.

³² D. Thorner, Investment in Empire, British Railways and Steam Shipping Enterprise in India 1825-1849, Philadelphia 1950, pp. 158-9.

of a system of trunk railways, Wood could reflect upon that question: "I have done ... to the utmost ... what depends on me"³³

With regard to public works, Wood remained uneasy over the possibility of radical opposition in parliament. On 8 October, he cautioned Dalhousie that Danby Seymour was on his way to India. On 24 November, he wrote to him:

... I hope to have a year or two of peace and quiet ... which will ... tranquillise our Indian Reformers. I wish to hear of nothing but railroads and annicuts and roads etc.

And on 24 January 1854, he noted:

... Parliament is well disposed to interfere in Indian matters, it is bent now on internal improvement ... and I wish to shew some good steps in that direction One cannot nowadays disregard the public opinion of the House of Commons³⁴

Soon afterwards, he began to think about a plan for accelerating the construction of large public works. For some time, he had been urging Dalhousie to reduce the cash balances in the Indian treasuries, which he considered excessive to the extent of some £5,000,000, by paying off part of the public debt.³⁵ On 24 March, he confessed to have "somewhat modified" his earlier opinion and that he would now prefer to see the "investment of [the surplus] money in public works." His change of view was to a large extent

³³Letter to Dalhousie, 19 August 1853.

³⁴Letter to Dalhousie.

³⁵Letters of 25 April, 19 August, 6 October, 8 November and 24 December 1853.

the result of the influence of Lieutenant-Colonel A. Cotton, Chief Engineer at Madras, whose ideas were publicised early in 1854.³⁶ Cotton contended that investment in public works would yield high returns in the form of increased land revenues. Wood was impressed by Cotton's arguments, and he estimated that the return on the investment of surplus cash balances in public works should exceed the saving to be achieved in interest charges by paying off debt.³⁷

In May, Wood wrote a rough paper, estimating Dalhousie's probable surplus cash balances at the end of the 1853-4 financial year, and discussing the desirability of applying a large portion of them to the execution of new, substantial public works.³⁸ After being redrafted, the sections of the paper concerning the balances were included in a "Financial Despatch" which the Directors sent to the Governor-General on 7 June.³⁹ Wood ensured that the despatch prepared Dalhousie to receive further instructions about large works, and he required the Court of Directors to frame a separate despatch to give expression to his requirements.⁴⁰ Wood received an early draft on the subject direct from the Court,⁴¹

³⁶ A. Cotton, Public Works in India, London 1854. The Times of 29 December 1853 and 3 January 1854 published selections from the book.

³⁷ Wood to Dalhousie, 8 February, 24 March, 8 April, 10 July 1854. Memoranda by Col. D. Sim and J. Chapman, authorities on public works in India, appear in W.P., 42. Both are dated February 1854.

³⁸ "Materials for Public Works Draft", n.d., W.P., 36.

³⁹ Despatch of 7 June (No.22) 1854. The Court's copy shows Wood's alterations in red ink (India Despatches, Vol. 87). Paras. 6-11 followed Wood's paper closely.

⁴⁰ Redington to Melvill, 22 May 1854, in Letters from Board to Court, Vol. 17.

⁴¹ Register of Drafts, Vol. 8, Dft. 546.

and worked over it until the final form of the "Despatch on ... the Execution of Important Public Works", dated 5 July, was achieved.⁴² The despatch required Dalhousie to decide, upon the basis of estimates supplied by each presidency, the works which might, with advantage, be financed out of the surplus balances. The selected works should be those which would "promote in the largest degree the development of the resources of the country and the improvement of the condition of the people." The despatch distinguished between "important" works, which Dalhousie might nominate, and normal repairs and maintenance and small works, which ought to be defrayed out of the annual revenues. The former would be authorised to the extent that their execution could be superintended. When the surplus balances were exhausted, public works loans would be raised to carry them forward. A subsequent official statement confirmed that the despatch "recognised the principle" of public works loans.⁴³

Wood had good reason to make haste with public works during 1854. Manchester were persistently attentive to Indian questions. In April, Bright jogged him on the need for recent Indian accounts to be placed before the House.⁴⁴ Wood lived in fears of an

⁴² Despatch of 5 July (No.43) 1854, India Despatches, loc. cit.; Redington to Melvill, 20 June 1854, in Letters from the Board to Court, loc. cit.

⁴³ Court to Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc., 20 December (Public Works 96) 1854, India Despatches, Vol. 89.

⁴⁴ Hansard, cxxxii, 10 April, col. 785.

adverse vote. The government was so torn by internal dissension over Russell's Reform Bill, and over policy in the Crimea,⁴⁵ that on 4 May he told Greville despondently:

Parties were at an end, and the House of Commons was no longer divided into and governed by them; ... and business could no longer be conducted in Parliament in the way it used to be.⁴⁶

He became anxious about the reorganization of the public works departments in India, which Dalhousie had undertaken but with which he seemed to be making little progress. On 9 May, he wrote to Dalhousie:

I hope that you have made some progress in arranging for a more systematic arrangement of public works. We are all very anxious about it here, and I am in expectation every day of having something said about it in the House of Commons. You must remember that we have a public to satisfy

Wood alluded to the question with mounting impatience in subsequent letters.⁴⁷ He authorised the issue of a summary command to the Governor-General, in a terse despatch of 14 June:

We need scarcely repeat the great anxiety we feel to be put in possession, with as little delay as possible, of the conclusions at which you may arrive on the whole subject of the execution of Public Works in India⁴⁸

When Dalhousie reacted violently against such treatment,⁴⁹ Wood explained what had "led to my urging you":

⁴⁵ See Wood to Russell, 9, 25 December 1853, 28 February, 26, 28 March, 4 June 1854, in Russell Papers, P.R.O., 30/22/11; Wood to Grey, 7, 9 June 1854, Howick Coll'n.

⁴⁶ H. Reeve (ed.), The Greville Memoirs, VII, p. 159.

⁴⁷ Letters of 24 May, 8 June, 10 July.

⁴⁸ Court to Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc., Public Works No. 39 of 1854, India Despatches, loc.cit.

⁴⁹ Dalhousie to Wood, 29 June, W.P.

I was anxious to be able to state to the House of Commons that you had made progress in what they have taken up as the great desideratum in India.⁵⁰

In July, Manchester turned its attention for a moment to the system of landholding in Madras, which it regarded as prejudicial to the growth of cotton. Blakett, supported by Bright, Phillimore and Danby Seymour, pressed for a parliamentary enquiry.⁵¹ Wood defeated the motion by only five votes, promising "large expenditure on public works" in Madras.⁵² In August, when he finally presented the Indian accounts for which Bright had pressed some four months earlier, he was able to placate the radicals with a supporting statement of the progress which was being achieved in works of improvement. He could then report that Dalhousie had, in fact, the reorganization of the public works departments well in hand. Further, large sums were being released for roads and for irrigation, and the construction of the trunk railway lines was advancing rapidly.⁵³ He sat down amid the plaudits of the Mancunians.⁵⁴

⁵⁰Letter of 24 September 1854.

⁵¹Hansard, cxxxv, see esp. cols. 43, 59, 62, 75, 86.

⁵²Ibid., col. 86. There were 64 Noes and 59 Ayes. The influence which the Indian Reformers exercised during the 1854 session was reflected, in the following February, in Palmerston's proposal to make Danby Seymour Secretary to the Board of Control in his first administration. Charles Villiers sounded Bright on the appointment (Bright's Diaries, p. 186).

⁵³Hansard, 8 August 1854, cxxxv, see esp. cols. 1450, 1452-7.

⁵⁴Danby Seymour "admitted great improvement ... had been made, ... which in great measure was due to the influence and exertions of [Wood]" (ibid., col. 474). Phillimore "fully concurred in the panegyrics which had been pronounced on the speech" (ibid., col. 1475). Phillimore was alluding to the speech of Sir T. E. Perry (cols. 1464-6), who was a strong supporter of Bright on Indian matters (Bright's Diaries, op. cit., p. 191).

It was during Wood's term at the Board of Control that the British government, under strong pressure from Manchester, began to become heavily involved in capital investment in India. Wood sanctioned the expenditure of borrowed surpluses on works of improvement and authorised the guarantee of interest upon investment in trunk railways. In 1853-4, £2½ m. was spent on public works, in 1854-5 £3 m.⁵⁵ Within a month of his leaving office, a "public works loan" for 2¼ m., bearing a guaranteed interest of five per cent for fifteen years, was floated by the Government of India.⁵⁶ In February 1854, the capital of the East Indian Railway Company was increased from £1 m. to £10 m. to provide for the linking of Delhi with Calcutta.⁵⁷ In November 1854, the Court approved the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company's proposed lines. One line would run from Bombay to Jabalpur, whence a junction might be made with the Delhi-Calcutta line. A branch would extend into the cotton districts of Nagpur. Another line would be commenced from Bombay in the direction of Madras, where a third company was already in operation. The estimated cost of the G.I.P. Company's works totalled some £8 m.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Dalhousie to Court, 28 February 1856, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1856, xlv.

⁵⁶ Govt. of India to Court, 12 March (No.30) 1855, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1854-5, xl.

⁵⁷ E. Davidson, The Railways of India, London 1868; [Anon.], Railways in India ..., London 1855; unsigned memorandum, "East Indian Railway Company" [late 1854], W.P., 27.

⁵⁸ J. Danvers, Report on Railways in India to the end of 1859, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, lii, p. 646; Report from Select Committee on East India Railways, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1857-8, xiv, paras. 3020-4.

In September 1853, the Madras Railway Company undertook a line from Madras to the west coast. An estimated £4 m. would be required for the works.⁵⁹ In April 1855, the Bombay and Baroda Railway Company's project to connect the cotton districts of Surat and Gujarat with Ahmadabad was approved.⁶⁰ In January 1855, the Scinde Railway Company was authorised to proceed with a line from Karachi to the Indus.⁶¹ These two works would each cost an estimated £1 m. to complete. By the end of 1855, the Court were virtually committed to guarantee five per cent interest for ninety-nine years on funds raised from time to time, in execution of railway projects which, it was estimated, would cost some £24 m. to complete.

Within the following two years, extensions to these schemes were planned. In November 1856, the E.I.R. Company agreed to the Court's suggestion that they build the branch line to link the G.I.P. line at Jabalpur. The branch would cost £2 m.⁶² In September 1856, the Madras Railway Company undertook the construction of the line from Madras to join the G.I.P. line from Bombay. A further £1 m. would be required.⁶³ The same year, the Scinde Railway Company applied to the Court for sanction to build railways in the Punjab and to run a flotilla on the Indus.

⁵⁹ Ibid., paras. 75, 2627-85; Danvers' report, op. cit., pp. 648-9.

⁶⁰ S.C. on Railways, op. cit., 1773-4.

⁶¹ Ibid., 3160-3; Danvers' report, p. 651-2.

⁶² S.C. on Railways, 838, 922.

⁶³ Ibid., 2628-32.

Early in 1857, a guarantee was sought for the £1½ m. which these works would cost.⁶⁴ An act of August 1857 reconstituted the Company to enable it to extend its original scheme.⁶⁵ The same month, the East Bengal Railway Company was incorporated, for the purpose of building a line, to cost £1 m., from Calcutta to the Ganges.⁶⁶ And, in that year, the Bombay and Baroda Company's extension from Bombay to Surat, which the Company had been pressing for three years, was at last approved.⁶⁷ When, in 1858, a Select Committee investigated delays in construction, it was thought that about £35 m. would be required to complete the approved lines.⁶⁸ During Wood's term at the India Office, the extent of the guaranteed lines underwent no net increase, though some modifications to projected routes were approved.⁶⁹ However, to complete the lines, interest on more than twice the sum contemplated in 1858 was actually guaranteed.⁷⁰

L.H. Jenks, by his failure to recognise the extent of the railways and public works projects which had been commenced or approved prior to the mutiny, ascribed to the events of 1857

⁶⁴ Ibid., 3198-3264.

⁶⁵ Danvers' report, pp. 651-2.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 655.

⁶⁷ S.C. on Railways, paras. 1773-4.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 65-75 (evidence of J. Danvers, Asst. to the Sec. of the E.I.Co. with responsibility for railway matters).

⁶⁹ J. Danvers' annual reports on railways, 1859-66, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, lii; 1860-1, xliii; 1862, xl; 1863, xliii; 1864, xliii, 1865, xl; 1866, lii; 1867, l.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

an unjustified significance for British investment policy in India. He claimed:

It is India which has made the empire. And the rebellion of 1857 marks the turning point in imperial history. Its stirring episodes focussed the attention of both businessmen and statesmen upon the dependency It would not only mean profit, it was a duty to carry the torch of civilization and progress ... to [the] land.... From 1857 to 1865 the major movement of British capital was towards India, to transform the land with public works⁷¹

Jenks disregarded the range of railway undertakings that were already in hand, remarking that "it was not difficult to perceive that the projects already begun were not enough":

The cotton of the Gujerat must be brought to port at Bombay. Bombay must be joined to Calcutta by way of Jubbulpore, and to Madras There must also be a railway from Calcutta into eastern Bengal. And to give solidity to the strategical fabric of India the entire Indus valley ... must undergo intensive development. So there appeared a Scinde railway to carry where the Indus was not navigable, an Indus Steam Navigation Company to carry where it was, a Punjaub railway to join the valley to Amritsar and Lahore, and a Delhi railway to complete the circuit of upper India.⁷²

All of these projects were, in fact, well underway before the mutiny, though some of the final contracts had not been signed. As the witnesses who appeared before the Select Committee on construction delays related, a long period of time frequently elapsed before agreements with the East India Company were

⁷¹L.H. Jenks, The Migration of British Capital to 1875, London [1938], pp. 206-7.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 215-16.

reduced to formal contracts.⁷³

When he turned to Indian affairs in 1859, Wood drew a sorry contrast between the "melancholy" work of reconstruction before him and the congenial task of reform during his years at the Board of Control. Then, he told the Commons, "the only object we had was to develop the internal resources of the country, to devise an improved system of education, to promote a better administration of justice, the more rapid progress of railways and electric telegraphs, to improve the navigation of the rivers and the means of bringing irrigation, and, in fine, to bring out those resources which India so abundantly possesses."⁷⁴ Now he faced the financial crisis which the mutiny had left in its wake.⁷⁵ However, even in 1859, it seemed clear to him that the wisest policy was to accelerate the construction of the guaranteed railways and to maintain the expenditure on public works at a high level.

The completion of the trunk railways had been delayed by the mutiny. It was in the government's interest to finish them quickly, so that the fixed charges payable on the capital invested in them might be offset by operating profits.⁷⁶ The terms of the guarantees provided that when profits exceeded five per cent, one

⁷³E.g., S.C. on Railways, paras. 838, 922, 2628-85, 3223-64.

⁷⁴Hansard, clv, 1 August 1859, col. 770.

⁷⁵See below, ch. 11.

⁷⁶Hansard, clii, 18 February 1859, col. 540; clxiii, 3 June 1861, cols. 492-3.

half of the excess was payable to the government until such time as the sum of the interest payments made to the company was recouped.⁷⁷ Wood's determination to complete the railway construction that was in progress and to restore financial equipoise, made him a resolute opponent of the extension of guarantees for any further undertakings. In any case, he had always regarded guarantees as appropriate only to the trunk lines. Smaller projects were a fair field for unassisted private enterprise.⁷⁸ In February 1859, he launched a strong attack upon Stanley when the latter extended guarantees for two new railway lines.⁷⁹ While the guarantees were "necessary in the first instance" for the "great trunk railways", they were "exceedingly objectionable" if granted to "minor railways". Government action, though defensible to stimulate capital investment initially, could not be allowed to prop up railway enterprises permanently.⁸⁰ Throughout his term at the India Office, Wood adamantly refused to "abandon the hope of getting capital into India without Government aid and Government partnership."⁸¹ Whilst he urged the trunk lines forward, he rebuffed all approaches for guarantees

⁷⁷ For an account of the conditions in the contracts for the guaranteed lines, see S.C. on Railways, paras. 29-44.

⁷⁸ Wood to Dalhousie, 22 January 1853.

⁷⁹ The lines were: (1) The Great Southern of India, from Negapatam to Trinchinopoly; (2) the Calcutta and South Eastern, from Calcutta to the Matla.

⁸⁰ Hansard, cliii, 18 February 1859, col. 551.

⁸¹ Wood to Elgin, 15 October 1862.

for further railways.⁸²

As for public works, he remarked in August 1859: "... there is no expenditure which I should be so sorry to reduce as that."⁸³ The government's undertaking of works which individuals, associated or single, might have carried out themselves did violate the doctrine of laissez-faire. However, in India the government was held to be the universal landowner. By improving the yield of the soil through public works, it was thought that the government was enhancing the country's capacity to bear taxes. The cost of public works would be recouped in the form of a higher land revenue.⁸⁴ The argument still held good after 1862, when the principle of extending the permanent settlement throughout India was accepted. For Wood did not intend that any appreciable enhancement of the assessments which public works might render reasonable should be sacrificed. Further, he expected that the fixing of the assessments would conduce to agricultural prosperity, thereby increasing the landholder's capacity to bear other forms of taxation.⁸⁵ He confidently expected the prosperity which public works would bring to be reflected in increased revenue,

⁸² E.C.S. Williams, "The Indian Guaranteed Railways System...", 16 July, 1867, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1868-9, xlvii. See also Wood's letters to Canning (10 April 1860), Denison (8 November 1861), Laing (16 May 1861), Frere (29 August 1862), Trevelyan (10 July and 2 September 1863) and Elgin (18 July 1863), W.P.

⁸³ Hansard, clv, 1 August 1859, col. 779.

⁸⁴ Wood to Canning, 17 November 1859; to Wilson, 10 November 1859; to Elphinstone, 2 November 1859; W.P.

⁸⁵ See below, ch. 9.

either directly from the land, or in the form of higher consumption of taxable articles. He was, in consequence, loth to curb expenditure on public works. He responded quickly to complaints of the tardiness of the overburdened central authority's approval of public works estimates, by allowing the minor presidencies to spend one sixth of their annual allotments however they chose.⁸⁶

At the India Office, just as at the Board of Control, Wood found Manchester at his elbow, ever urging measures to stimulate the growth of cotton. In 1857, a Cotton Supply Association had been formed at Manchester.⁸⁷ Wood was critical of its being "much fonder of finding fault than of doing anything."⁸⁸ The Chamber of Commerce also concentrated "its energies ... on the development of cotton growing in India."⁸⁹ "This," as the Chamber's historian has observed, "was a matter ... of radical reform in the economic structure of India that could only be effected with the help of the British and Indian Governments...."⁹⁰ Although they had two representatives in Palmerston's second ministry,⁹¹ the Manchester radicals were not in the commanding

⁸⁶ Wood to Trevelyan, 25 August and 8 November 1859; Wood to Canning, 2 November 1859; S. of S. to Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc., 8 November (Public Works 49) 1859.

⁸⁷ A. Redford, Manchester Merchants and Foreign Trade..., 2 vols., Manchester 1934 and 1956, II, p. 12.

⁸⁸ Wood to Elphinstone, 17 January 1860.

⁸⁹ Redford, op. cit.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ The two were Charles Villiers and Milner Gibson.

position that they had enjoyed during the Aberdeen coalition. The bonds holding together the Whigs and the Peelites, Palmerston and Russell, were now tighter, and Wood had, as a result, less cause for anxiety about his majorities in the Commons. However, first the expectation, then the actuality, of a crisis in the cotton supply, which the dispute between the northern and southern states of America brought,⁹² gave a new urgency to the need for railways and public works. Disruption of England's largest manufacturing industry, and distress among its workmen, validated, in the eyes of parliament, Manchester's claims for the energetic prosecution of communications and irrigation in India.

At a meeting of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce on 21 January 1861, the President expressed alarm at the apparently inevitable clash in the U.S.A. "Our main hope," he said, "if American fails to any great extent depends upon India for cotton."⁹³ Within days, Manchester delegates to a meeting of Chambers of Commerce interested in the question argued that "there exists from want of public works little power of improvement and the country remains undeveloped."⁹⁴ The main obstacle to an increased export of cotton lay "in the defective and

⁹² See A.A. Arnold, The History of the Cotton Famine, London 1864.

⁹³ Cited in Redford, *op. cit.*, p.12.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

expensive mode of transport."⁹⁵ In February, Wood received a "huge deputation of the Chambers of Commerce ... who urged ... borrowing 20 to 30 millions for Railways and Public Works."⁹⁶ Wood pointed out that works of an even larger order were in progress. However, the deputation sharpened his consciousness of the cotton supply problem.

In the year 1860-1, £8 m. was spent on railways.⁹⁷ In all, £30 m. had been raised, and Wood expected that a further like sum would be required.⁹⁸ During 1860, he had determined to advance capital to the Bombay and Baroda Railway Company, which was unable to raise funds to carry forward its works, and he contemplated having to do the same for some of the other companies.⁹⁹ In these circumstances, he stressed that those parts

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Wood to Canning, 26 February 1861.

⁹⁷ Hansard, clxiii, 3 June 1861, col. 489.

⁹⁸ Ibid., col. 492.

⁹⁹ Wood's letters to Wilson (26 June 1860); Clerk (18 July and 18 October 1860, 18 January 1861); Canning (9 and 23 January (3) 1861); Laing (9 January and 9 April (2) 1861). Wood at first favoured exercising the government's contractual right of acquiring the defaulting lines, only to change his mind upon investigating the proceedings pre-requisite to the step. Wood wrote to Clerk, on 18 January 1861, of his decision not to acquire the Bombay and Baroda works: "... we found the legal and practical difficulties very great.... According to the lawyers the works must actually come to a dead stop; then notice must be given at Bombay; and, at the end of three months, we might take possession But three months actual suspension of the works would cause serious injury to them" It might be added that Manchester would not have taken kindly to any suspension of work on this line.

of the lines on which work had already begun should be continued, but that work on new sections should be postponed.¹⁰⁰ However, in the month after his interview with the cotton deputation, his comments began to reflect a different emphasis - a growing concern for the lines which passed through the cotton-producing areas of Berar, Surat and Gujarat. "In the present anxiety about cotton," he told Canning in March, "I would not delay anything which opens a cotton field."¹⁰¹ Early in May, he parried a thrust of Danby Seymour's with the assurance that work on the lines linking the cotton areas with the coast would not be interrupted.¹⁰² The following month, he announced:

Those [railways] which we have determined on pushing forward with the utmost despatch ... are lines which in the present crisis in America must be looked to with the greatest interest. One pierces the cotton district [the G.I.P. line] and the other skirts its very edge [the Bombay and Baroda]. The only delay which will arise will be occasioned by the natural obstacles that present themselves.¹⁰³

In July, he sought power to borrow £5 m. in case the companies failed in their attempts to float further shares to carry their lines forward, arguing that it was "the duty of the Government ... to improve the communications from the coast to those portions

¹⁰⁰ Wood to Canning, 9 January 1861 (No.3); Wood to Laing, 9 January 1861.

¹⁰¹ Wood to Canning, 26 March 1861 (No.2).

¹⁰² Hansard, clxii, 7 May 1861, col. 1651.

¹⁰³ Ibid., clxiii, 9 June 1861, col. 493.

of the interior where cotton was grown."¹⁰⁴ Seymour accorded liberal praise to his speech.¹⁰⁵

In June 1862, as their time of real suffering approached, the workingmen of Lancashire sent a deputation to Wood.¹⁰⁶ The next day, he took advantage of a Manchester M.P.'s request for documents on the supply of Indian cotton to review the progress which was being made with the railways.¹⁰⁷ The East Indian line would "probably be opened by the end of the year," thus providing a link with districts bordering on the Ganges which were suitable for cotton-growing. The Bombay and Baroda line "may", he reported, "be opened by the end of the present year," and he hoped that "a considerable part of the Great Indian Peninsula," which would "penetrate the whole of the ... [Berar] cotton districts," would be "finished by the end of the year." The railway from Madras to the west coast, passing "close to ... the chief places of the [Madras] cotton fields," was completed. Twelve months later, in the course of his financial statement for 1862-3, he boasted that 750 miles had been opened in each of the years 1861 and 1862, and that the total length of open permanent way had reached 2500 miles,¹⁰⁸ or more than a half of the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., clxiv, 25 July 1861, cols. 1509-18.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., col. 1522.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., clxvii, 19 June 1862, col. 776.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., cols. 782-4.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., clxxii, 23 July 1863, col. 1301.

sanctioned mileage of the guaranteed railways.¹⁰⁹

One project to which Manchester looked with growing impatience during the early 'sixties was the removal of the obstacles to the navigation of the Godavery river up to the cotton fields of Berar. The cheapness of water transport could render the purchase of Berar cotton more attractive than that from America.¹¹⁰ Surveys and estimates of the engineering costs had been made,¹¹¹ but the practicability of the scheme had not been soundly appraised. Further, the river passed through the Nizam's territories. In January 1860, Wood issued instructions for the necessary arrangements concerning territory and tolls to be made with the Nizam.¹¹² In February, the member for Stockport questioned him about the progress of the project.¹¹³ Two months later, Wood was "anxious to make a beginning",¹¹⁴ and in May he urged the Government of India to bring the negotiations with the Nizam to an early conclusion.¹¹⁵ In November, Canning

¹⁰⁹ E.C.S. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹¹⁰ Hansard, cxxxv, 8 August 1854, col. 1475 (J.G. Phillimore).

¹¹¹ Capt. E. Haig (of Madras Engineers) to Wood, 20 September 1859, in Papers relating to the Godavery, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, lii.

¹¹² S. of S. to Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc., 26 January (Public Works No.8) 1860, in Godavery Papers, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xl, pp. 119-20; Wood to Trevelyan, 10 December 1859 and 26 January 1860; Wood to Canning, 18 January 1860.

¹¹³ Hansard, clvi, 3 February 1860, cols. 526-7 (J.B. Smith).

¹¹⁴ Wood to Wilson, 26 April 1860.

¹¹⁵ S. of S. to G.G.in C., 25 May (No.40) 1860, Godavery Papers, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-1.

confirmed that negotiations had been completed.¹¹⁶ During the next six months, Wood was in hopes of "some of the leading cotton-workers" forming a company, without guarantee, to carry out the project.¹¹⁷ In January 1861, he expected that "the question about the supply of American cotton ... [would] accelerate the cotton people in their proceedings."¹¹⁸ However, the very factor which had made him eager for a company to undertake the work rendered a "Godavery Company ... impossible." The "great cotton people ... were not disposed to do anything" in the stringent monetary conditions then prevailing, even though "Bright ... urged them."¹¹⁹ Wood resolved, therefore, to issue instructions to start removing the first barrier. His despatch stated that "the indirect effect which ... [the works] cannot fail to have in contributing ... to the supply of the English cotton market would render it incumbent on Government, especially with the present prospects of the supply of cotton from the United States, to undertake them at the earliest possible period."¹²⁰ He announced in the Commons that "the navigation... was to be

¹¹⁶ G.G. in C. to S. of S., 19 November (Public No.82) 1860, Godavery Papers, p. 121.

¹¹⁷ Wood to Morehead, 25 December 1860; see also S. of S. to G.G. in C., 6 July (Public Works No.50) 1860 and enclosures.

¹¹⁸ Wood to Canning, 23 January 1861.

¹¹⁹ Wood to Canning, 16 (No.2) and 18 February 1861. The bank rate stood at 8 per cent.

¹²⁰ S. of S. to G.G. in C., 2 August (Public Works No.39) 1861, Godavery Papers, p. 123.

opened with the least possible delay No means would be spared and no time lost"¹²¹

Wood hectored Sir William Denison, the Governor of Madras, over the clearing of the Godavery.¹²² However, from the first, Denison saw large difficulties in the project. His initial proposal was to skirt the barriers by constructing temporary tramways as "portages" around them.¹²³ Wood was not impressed with the economics of this proposal,¹²⁴ and felt that Denison did not realize the importance of complete navigability. "... we should," he urged, "be in a great scrape with our cotton people if we did not exert ourselves now, & it seems to me that we can at the same time content them, & ... promote the permanent interests of India."¹²⁵ In mid-1862, despite a complete lack of achievement, Wood assured the Commons that "the Godavery will and shall be opened."¹²⁶ However, willing could not make it so. In April 1863, he reproached Denison: "The only thing settled that I ever heard of was Railways round the Barriers, which never seem to have been completed."¹²⁷ Two and a half years

¹²¹Hansard, clxiv, 25 July 1861, col. 1519.

¹²²Wood to Denison, 10, 18 and 25 August, 25 October 1861; S. of S. to Gov. of Madras, 30 August (No.41) 1861, Godavery Papers, p. 136.

¹²³G.G. in C. to S. of S., 5 July (Public No.44) 1861, *ibid.*, p. 122-3; Gov. of Madras to S. of S., 21 June (P.W. No. 57) 1861, *ibid.*, p. 136.

¹²⁴Wood to Canning, 17 August 1861; Wood to Denison, 18 August 1861.

¹²⁵Wood to Denison, 8 November 1861; S. of S. to Gov. of Madras, 8 February (P.W.No.2) 1862, Godavery Papers, p. 138.

¹²⁶Hansard, clxvii, 19 June 1862, cols. 783-4.

¹²⁷Wood to Denison, 8 April 1863. By December 1862, tramways around the first two of three major barriers had been completed (G.G.in C. to S. of S., 9 December (Public No.79), 1863, Godavery Papers, *Parl. Pap. (H.C.)*, 1864, xlii, pp. 484-5).

later, after discussions with some of the engineers who had studied the works, he told Lawrence: "I am inclined to think ... that we have over-estimated the advantage of them."¹²⁸

When Wood left office, not even the first of the barriers to navigation had been removed.¹²⁹

During the cotton famine, Manchester looked with growing interest towards the ~~state~~^{district} of Dharwar.¹³⁰ There, Wood remarked, "American cotton has succeeded better than in other districts."¹³¹ However, to develop the Dharwar cotton fields a means of access to the coast and the construction of berthing facilities at a convenient harbour were required. In January 1861, Wood wrote to Canning that "the best harbour on the west coast, below Bombay, "was Sedashegar,¹³² some five miles south of the Goa border, and about eighty miles to the south-west of Dharwar by a direct route. The previous month, the Manchester Cotton Company had been formed for the purpose of buying Dharwar cotton and shipping it to England from Sedashegar. Wood had told

¹²⁸ Wood to Lawrence, 18 October 1865.

¹²⁹ S. of S. to G.G. in C., 8 February (No.11) 1866, Godavery Papers, Parl. Pap.(H.C.), 1867-8, 1, pp. 415-16. In his memoirs, Denison wrote that he had always regarded the profitability of the project as "improbable" (Varieties of Vice Regal Life, 2 vols., London 1870, II, p. 97).

¹³⁰ Wood to Clerk, 18 March 1861.

¹³¹ Hansard, clxvii, 19 June 1862, col. 782.

¹³² Wood to Canning, 23 January 1861.

Manchester that the Government of Madras would view favourably any proposals to buy sites at Sedashegar.¹³³ "I should," he now advised Canning, "concentrate all my efforts on improving Sedashegar, making a good road to it ... and connecting the growing districts with this main road."¹³⁴ One difficulty which Manchester urged upon Wood was that whilst Dharwar fell under the jurisdiction of the Bombay presidency, Sedashegar was the responsibility of the Government of Madras. Early in 1861, Wood was "not without hopes that a Cotton company might take up this harbour," and, believing that "it probably would make a difference in the disposition of these monied men in coming forward to form a Company," he authorised Canning to cede the area enclosing Sedashegar and the proposed roads (Northern Canara) to Bombay.¹³⁵ When no company emerged to undertake the harbour works, the Governments of Bombay and Madras continued for some months with divided responsibility for the Dharwar-Sedashegar project. Wood again had recourse to homily in his letters to Denison.¹³⁶ Early

¹³³ S. of S. to Gov. of Madras, 31 August (No.53) 1860, and 15 December (No.63) 1860, in Sedashegar Papers, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1863, xliii, pp. 135-6.

¹³⁴ Ibid., Hansard, clxv, 25 July 1861, col. 1519.

¹³⁵ Wood to Canning, 23 January 1861; S. of S. to Gov. of Madras, 28 February (No.10) 1861, Sedashegar Papers, p. 136.

¹³⁶ Wood to Denison, 26 November 1861; S. of S. to Gov. of Madras, 16 April (No.16), 2 August (No.35), 8 August (No.36) 1862, Sedashegar Pap., pp. 147-50; also 7 March (No.4) 1862 and enclosed complaint, of 18 February 1862, from Manchester Cotton Coy., ibid., p. 159.

in 1862, he tried to develop a spirit of friendly rivalry between Clerk and Denison over their respective sections of the work.¹³⁷ Soon afterwards, consistently with his avowed intention of guaranteeing no further private undertakings, he refused a subvention to a Manchester group which proposed to build a tramway from Dharwar to Sedashegar. He wrote to Frere, who had now replaced Clerk as Governor of Bombay, that it was "a case in which private enterprise has the strongest interest & if they cannot manage this I really do not see what they can do."¹³⁸ In the event, no company was formed for the project and the efforts to open the Dharwar-Sedashegar road for the 1862 season were unavailing. Under strong Manchester pressure,¹³⁹ Wood elicited from Frere an account of the reasons for delays in the works.¹⁴⁰ The labour employed on them had been attacked by fever. Wood gave Frere's letter to Lord Stanley, who read extracts from it to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, where it "produced equal surprise and satisfaction."¹⁴¹ Stanley gave Wood the opportunity to place the correspondence on the question on the table of the

¹³⁷ Wood to Clerk, 17 January 1862; S. of S. to Gov. of Bombay, 8 February (No.2) 1861, Sed. Pap. p. 157.

¹³⁸ Wood to Frere, 19 May, 18 July, 1 and 29 August 1862.

¹³⁹ Wood to Frere, 30 October 1862; S. of S. to Gov. of Bombay, 13 November (No.19) 1862, Sed. Pap., pp. 204-7.

¹⁴⁰ Gov. of Bombay to S. of S., 13 January (No.2) 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 208-11.

¹⁴¹ Stanley to Wood, 16 April 1863, Hickleton Pap.; Wood to Frere, 17 February and 18 April 1863, W.P. See also Martineau's Life of Frere, I, pp. 405-410.

House of Commons.¹⁴² The roads and wharves were in usable condition by late 1863.¹⁴³

Although in the five years preceding 1862 some £4 m. was expended annually upon public works,¹⁴⁴ a number of important projects that had been sanctioned was suspended for want of funds.¹⁴⁵ This was particularly the case with irrigation works. Stanley had thought it might be feasible to surmount the difficulty by extending to irrigation companies the type of guarantee which had been given for the trunk railways. In 1859, he guaranteed £1 m. of the capital of the Madras Irrigation Company as "an experiment".¹⁴⁶ At the time, Wood attacked the terms of the scheme virulently.¹⁴⁷ Early in 1860, he refused adamantly to extend the guaranteed sum,¹⁴⁸ and wrote to the Cotton Supply Association to tell them of this decision.¹⁴⁹ Apart from objecting

¹⁴² Wood to Elgin, 10 February 1853. The Sedashegar Papers were printed pursuant to Stanley's request.

¹⁴³ Gov. of Bombay to S. of S., 12 January (No.1) 1864, Sed. Pap., in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1864, xliii, p. 419.

¹⁴⁴ Hansard, clxvii, 19 June 1862, col. 778.

¹⁴⁵ Wood to Wilson, 26 April 1862; Wood to Elgin, 24 July 1862.

¹⁴⁶ S. of S. to G.G. in C., 24 March (No.12) 1859, Papers relating to financing of Public Works in India, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xliii, pp. 323-4,

¹⁴⁷ Hansard, clii, 18 February 1859, cols. 551-2.

¹⁴⁸ Wood to Wilson, 26 April 1860; Wood to Sir H. Ward, 27 August 1860 (No.2); W.P.

¹⁴⁹ Hansard, clviii, 11 May 1860, col. 1086.

to applying the guarantee principle beyond the main railroads, he disliked the entry of private enterprise into a field which was related to the productivity of the soil, and, therefore, to land revenue policy.¹⁵⁰ Stanley had also considered the possibility of raising public works loans to provide Indian landowners with the means of borrowing funds to improve their estates.¹⁵¹ Wood rejected this approach, deeming it unwise to borrow for public works at a time when direct borrowing for railways seemed necessary.¹⁵² His dilemma was to finance irrigation works without resorting to private enterprise. In 1861, he did, against his better judgment, sanction an unguaranteed extension to the Madras Irrigation Company's operations, and he allowed Canning to conclude an arrangement for works on the Mahanuddy with another company.¹⁵³ In July 1862, commenting upon Wood's financial statement, Danby Seymour regretted that "he

¹⁵⁰ "I think it was a mistake ever allowing a private company to undertake works which mix themselves up to a certain extent with the collection and questions of revenue" (Wood to Denison, 10 December 1860). "I don't think that irrigation can well be entrusted to a Private Company from the very intimate connexion between the revenue & the payment for water" (Wood to Frere, 30 December 1863).

¹⁵¹ S. of S. to G.G. in C., 24 March (No.12), 1859, op. cit.

¹⁵² S. of S. to G.G. in C., 30 November (No. 194) 1860, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xliii, pp. 389-90.

¹⁵³ Wood to Ward, 27 August 1860 (No.2); Wood to Elgin, 3 August 1863. The company in question was the East India Irrigation Company.

appeared to be rather diffident in encouraging the investment of British capital in India." Seymour would have been "glad to see [him] ... give greater encouragement than he had hitherto done to British enterprise in India in connexion with government aid. For example, he thought that irrigation works should have received greater encouragement...."¹⁵⁴

Within a few days of Seymour's voicing this criticism, Wood was writing to Elgin that he proposed to sanction the execution of "reproductive works" out of capital.¹⁵⁵ In 1861, he had borrowed £3 m. in expectation of having to advance capital to guaranteed railways in order to avert construction delays. In the event, the companies found their own funds, and the Indian treasuries contained, therefore, a cash surplus which might be devoted to "works of real improvement likely to pay well."¹⁵⁶ In September 1862, he gave Elgin notice of a despatch to authorize the expenditure of the £3 m. He should "devote as much of it as possible to completing the irrigation works," but roads "to act ... as feeders to railway stations, or places of embarkation," especially from the cotton districts, should also be advanced.¹⁵⁷ Early in 1863, he was aghast at receiving a

¹⁵⁴ Hansard, clxviii, 17 July 1862, col. 463.

¹⁵⁵ Wood to Elgin, 24 July 1862.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Wood to Elgin, 9 September 1862.

Government of India proposal to spend part of the money on barracks. He wrote to Trevelyan that the £3 m. must be devoted to "facilitating the production & conveyance of cotton." There would be an "insurrection of the Cotton people ... if ... the money for irrigation etc etc [was sent] into the gulf of barracks." He could not "leave ... [himself] open to the charge of dawdling & trifling with so vital a matter" as the cotton supply.¹⁵⁸ "I stand on velvet," he remarked to Elgin, "now that I have sanctioned a larger sum than you can spend, & I cannot afford to lose my vantage ground."¹⁵⁹ He was, therefore, "a good deal put out" when Trevelyan failed to provide generously for public works in his budget for 1863-4, and when he received a "remonstrance" from Frere about restrictions which Calcutta was imposing upon such expenditure.¹⁶⁰ "All the world," he warned Trevelyan, "... is bent ... on works ... in the Cotton districts If you do otherwise it will be downright disobedience of orders."¹⁶¹ "You must," he urged Elgin, "have forgotten cotton altogether & the state of matters here about it."¹⁶² He looked for a revenue

¹⁵⁸ Wood to Trevelyan, 17 February 1863.

¹⁵⁹ Wood to Elgin, 3 March 1863.

¹⁶⁰ Wood to Trevelyan, 3 March 1863. For accounts of the Calcutta-Bombay conflict over central interference with provincial works, see Martineau's Life of Frere, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 417-24, 429-42; and P.J. Thomas, The Growth of Federal Finance in India, Oxford 1939, pp. 142-7.

¹⁶¹ Wood to Trevelyan, 3 March 1863.

¹⁶² Wood to Elgin, 16 March 1863.

appropriation of between £4 m. and £5 m. for public works in 1864-5, and, in addition, the expenditure on capital account of as much as might be allotted to well-executed projects.¹⁶³

In his financial statement for 1863, Wood smoothed matters over with the assurance: "... for some time past there has been no check whatsoever as far as money goes."¹⁶⁴ He quoted the following passage from Trevelyan's financial statement for 1863-4:

... any funds that can be expended with advantage on cotton roads, on works of irrigation or navigation, or on any other useful works, will be granted There will be no difficulty as far as money is concerned.¹⁶⁵

During the 1863-4 year, expenditure on public works rose £1 m. above the level of the previous year.¹⁶⁶

There can be no doubt that Manchester influenced the direction and vigour of Wood's policies towards railways and public works during the early 'sixties. They could not, however, overcome his resistance to the extension of further guarantees to private enterprises.¹⁶⁷ Additional railways must be constructed

¹⁶³ Wood to Elgin, 4 May 1863.

¹⁶⁴ Hansard, clxxii, 23 July 1863, col. 1301. Jenks (op. cit., p.218) quotes these words out of context, leaving the erroneous impression that they related to official favours for private projects. It is clear that Wood was using the word "check" to mean "stoppage", not "control". He meant that there had been no stoppage of public works for want of money, not that there had been no control over the advance of public funds to private companies.

¹⁶⁵ Hansard, op. cit.

¹⁶⁶ Hansard, clxxvi, 21 July 1864, col. 1813.

¹⁶⁷ In 1863, Bright told the Commons that Wood was a most unpopular figure in Manchester (Hansard, clxxii, 3 July 1863, col.230). During that year, he, Cobden and Seymour mounted protracted and violent attacks upon him (ibid., and clxx, 12 May). Wood taunted them with their willingness to violate their strongest principles by advocating government concessions to buyers and prospective planters of cotton (ibid., clxxii, 3 July, col. 211).

by private agency virtually unassisted by the government.

Irrigation works must be state undertakings. Only one new railway company commenced operations under his auspices. The Branch Railway Company was authorised to lay an experimental line between Nalhati and Murshidabad, with an assurance that if it were successful £500,000 might be spent on like works in Oudh.¹⁶⁸

The terms of the Company's contract were, Wood told the Commons, "much more favourable to the Government than anything we have hitherto been able to obtain."¹⁶⁹ No guarantee was given, though the Company did receive a subvention. Wood regarded the subvention as justified only by the need "to break through" the guarantee system.¹⁷⁰ It was not to be regarded as a precedent for future contracts. Despite the subvention, the Company's shares were soon selling at a discount.¹⁷¹ The Company faltered for want of funds during the English monetary crisis of 1865-6,¹⁷² and it would have foundered had Salisbury not propped it up with a guarantee soon afterwards.¹⁷³ The only irrigation companies

¹⁶⁸ J.A. Turner to Wood, 17 October 1862, Hickleton Pap.; Wood's letters to Elgin (25 October 1862), Frere (16 October 1862), W. Dent (23 October 1862), J.A. Turner (23 October 1862), W.P.

¹⁶⁹ Hansard, clxxvi, 21 July 1864, col. 1818. The documents relating to the enterprise appear in E.C.S. Williams, op. cit.

¹⁷⁰ Wood to Lawrence, 4 July 1864.

¹⁷¹ Wood to Frere, 15 October 1862.

¹⁷² E. Macnaghten to Wood, 5 December 1865, Hickleton Pap.; Wood to Lawrence, 25 December 1865.

¹⁷³ Hansard, cxcviii, 23 July 1869, col. 541.

with which Wood had any truck had fallen into an equally parlous condition before his departure from office.¹⁷⁴ As a caption to his account of British policy towards Indian railways and public works in the decade which followed the mutiny, Jenks chose:

"The Crown Encourages Private Enterprise".¹⁷⁵ He contended that "for any favours showed by English officials to enterprise in India they could plead the generous approval of the Home Government."¹⁷⁶ The caption is inappropriate, the judgment inaccurate.

With the end of the cotton famine, Wood was, for the first time, able to plan his public works policy without being goaded by Manchester. The results were disappointing. By then, he had come to question a belief which had been fundamental to his readiness to spend heavily. Public works did not seem to be remunerative. "I am haunted," he wrote to Trevelyan in March 1864, "by the difficulty of getting any revenue out of our expenditure We go on spending & spending & anticipating great returns some day or another, but they are never brought to book that I can see ...; one has to look for some return for the

¹⁷⁴ Wood to Lawrence, 25 December 1865. Neither the Madras Irrigation Company, nor the East India Irrigation Company could raise funds. By 1867, the government was advancing £20,000 per month to the latter (Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc. to S. of S., 16 July (No.14) 1867, in East India Irrig. Co. Pap., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1867-8, 1, pp. 693-7).

¹⁷⁵ Op. cit., p. 214.

¹⁷⁶ Op. cit., p. 218.

expenditure of money upon improvements. Whence and when it is to come I don't see."¹⁷⁷ In the following year, he wrote to Massey, who succeeded Trevelyan as the finance member of the Supreme Council: "I confess that hitherto I have not had much reason to believe in the estimates of reproductive works. None of the recent ones seem to me to pay."¹⁷⁸ "Railways and roads," he noted a month before he resigned, "improve the country but do very little for the revenue."¹⁷⁹ During his last two years at the India Office, he was reluctant to incur any large expenditure for public works unless its profitability could be demonstrated. A despatch of 1864 did affirm that "the state should undertake directly all the irrigation works it ... [could] practically manage in preference to entrusting them to private companies, and ... [that] when the surplus revenues and available balances prove[d] insufficient to supply the requirements of the country, funds by means of loans should be raised."¹⁸⁰ However, "the requirements of the country" were to be subordinated

¹⁷⁷ Letter of 9 March 1864.

¹⁷⁸ Letter of 15 May 1865. In August 1864, the Government of India had drawn attention to the failure of irrigation works in the North West Provinces to become remunerative. By April 1863, £2½ m. had been spent there, yet in the 1862-3 year a net loss of £6000 was recorded on the works (Canals in the N.W.P., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1865, xxxix).

¹⁷⁹ Wood to Frere, 1 January 1866.

¹⁸⁰ S. of S. to Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc., 8 August (No.39) 1864, Irrigation Papers, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1867, 1, p. 503.

to the concept of return on investment. In March 1865, the Government of India proposed public borrowing as the basis of a long-term plan for extending irrigation throughout India.¹⁸¹

Wood flatly refused to pledge himself to providing any continuing flow of loan funds for the future.¹⁸² Particular projects must, he insisted, be "earmarked", and they must offer assurance of returns sufficient to meet the interest on borrowed capital, and to provide contributions to a sinking fund for the repayment of the loans upon their maturity.¹⁸³ Wood was not, as he stressed later,¹⁸⁴ opposed to borrowing for irrigation. But he certainly elevated profitability to the government above benefit to India as the criterion which should determine whether loans might be sanctioned.

To the end of his administration and beyond, Wood asserted the advantage of public works and railways to India. "There was nothing," he averred in 1869, "which had effected so great an improvement in India, or which would cause so great a [social and

¹⁸¹ Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc. to S. of S., 9 March (No.29) 1865.

¹⁸² S. of S. to Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc., 30 November (No.266), 1865, Irrig. Pap., pp. 50-2.

¹⁸³ Wood to Massey, 15 May, 12 August and 16 September 1865; Wood to Lawrence, 16 September, 1 November, 16 and 25 December 1865; Hansard, clxxx, 29 June 1865, col. 936.

¹⁸⁴ Halifax to Ripon, 5 April 1883, B.M. Add. MS. 43530, fols. 195-6. Wood was moved to write about the matter by the appearance of R.B. Smith's Life of Lawrence in 1883. Smith contended that Wood was "strongly opposed to a loan" (1st ed., II, p. 494). Wood entered into correspondence with Smith, who agreed to alter subsequent editions of the text (Smith to Halifax, 15, 16, 17 March 1883, Hickleton Pap.; Wood's notes on the book, in W.P., 103).

economic] revolution there, as the introduction of railways."¹⁸⁵
 Yet, in spite of the failure of unassisted private capital to invest in Indian railways, he was not prepared to involve the government in constructing them itself. That step was taken by the Duke of Argyll in 1869. And though he did not doubt the need for irrigation, he would neither encourage private companies to undertake the works, nor pledge public funds to them. He looked, unreasonably, for quick returns upon government expenditure. In his defence he pleaded, with some justice, the indigence of the Indian exchequer.¹⁸⁶ But, of course, it was his responsibility to introduce a degree of resilience into the revenues.¹⁸⁷ In the end, his public works and railway policies came to the same conclusion as his education policy. Improvements would doubtless regenerate India, but only at a public cost, and through a state organization, on a scale that he was not prepared to countenance.

¹⁸⁵ Hansard, cxcviii, 23 July 1869, col. 541.

¹⁸⁶ S. of S. to Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc., 30 November (No.266), 1865.

¹⁸⁷ See ch.11, below.

Chapter 8

Imperial Diplomacy

In his letters to Dalhousie, Wood invariably wrote of peace on India's frontiers as requisite for the improvement of the country. This was partly, but not entirely, the result of the influence of the Manchester school's pacifism. The reforming policies of the 'thirties foundered partly because the treasuries were drained, and the government distracted, by wars in Afghanistan, Sind and the Punjab. Wood once wrote of the costly and fruitless expedition to Afghanistan in 1838 as "the greatest disaster which ever befell us in India."¹ His experience as the Chancellor of the Exchequer who had to foot the bill for the Kaffir war led him to embrace Wellington's dictum that "a great country cannot have a little war".² At the India Board, he regarded peace as necessary if administrative reforms were to be effected and the economy developed. At the India Office, it seemed to him vital to financial stability. In 1860, he did "not see how Indian resources could bear the charge of any heavy expenditure for future wars or disturbance."³ He valued the safeguard against aggression which the 1858 Act imposed by

¹Halifax to Lord Cranbrook, 19 September 1878, Halifax Pap., B.M. Add. MS. 49561, fols. 108-12.

²Wood to Lawrence, 17 January 1866, W.P.

³Wood to Canning, 2 September 1860, W.P. See also Wood to Lawrence, 23 December 1863, W.P.

prohibiting expeditions or wars beyond the frontiers without the sanction of parliament.⁴ Military men would, he thought, always favour the extension of campaigns as a source of honours and promotion.⁵ A "check on the military spirit; ... [was] indispensable, & ... it must be applied from home."⁶ Only by a pacific frontier policy could the military costs of empire be curbed.

To mid-Victorian statesmen India seemed most vulnerable strategically on the North-West frontier. The annexations of Sind and the Punjab in the 'forties had carried the empire to the banks of the Indus, and exposed its outposts to the marauding expeditions of the trans-Indus tribes. Beyond the Indus lay Kalat (Baluchistan), on the Sind frontier, the state of Herat, and the Afghan principalities of Kandahar and Kabul. In the early 'fifties, the stability of Kalat was disrupted by the depredations of Marri tribesmen, with whom the Khan's chief minister was collaborating. Kabul was in the secure hands of Dost Muhammad, Kandahar under the less certain sway of a member of his family. Herat, ruled by a member of the Sadozai dynasty, was

⁴"You must remember the clause [of the Government of India Act of 1858] prohibiting expedition or war beyond our frontier without sanction from home" (Wood to Lawrence, 2 June 1864, W.P.). See clause 55.

⁵Wood to Lawrence, 10 January 1864.

⁶Halifax to Cranbrook, 19 September 1878, op. cit.

unhappily wedged between the immediate neighbours of two great powers, between Persia, which eyed Russia's eastern ambitions suspiciously, and Afghanistan, which had, between 1838 and 1842, tasted British aggression.

Herat was a bone of contention between the Persians and the Afghans,⁷ and a source of concern to Britain. If Persia ever seized Herat and collaborated with Russia, an invading Russian army would find it a useful base of operations for a thrust into India. Six weeks after he went to the Board of Control, Wood received word of an agreement which had been reached with Persia as to Herat. Persia pledged herself to abstain from interfering in the affairs of Herat unless Dost Muhammad moved against it, whilst England undertook to discourage him from making any such advance.⁸ Wood commended the agreement. "This was," he noted later, "pacific policy & answered our ends."⁹ However, in January 1853, Britain's ability "to discourage" the ruler of Kabul from moving against Herat must have been doubtful. The wrongs of the

⁷B. Prasad, The Foundations of India's Foreign Policy, 1860-1882, Calcutta 1955, pp. 8-10.

⁸The agreement with Persia, which was negotiated by Col. Justin Sheil, was an "engagement" rather than a formal treaty (Wood to Aberdeen, 26 October 1856, Aberdeen Pap., B.M.Add.MS. 43198, fols. 232-3). Professor A.P. Thornton described it as a "convention" ("British Policy in Persia, 1858-90", E.H.R., 1954 (LXIX), p. 556 n.1).

⁹Wood to Lord Grey, 27 December 1856, Howick Pap. Wood was here countering the extreme non-interventionist, non-engagement policy which Grey advocated (e.g. Grey to Russell, 23 December 1856, P.R.O., 30/22/13).

transgressor in the first Afghan war had been repaid by the Dost's support of the Sikhs during Dalhousie's campaigns in the Punjab. Towards the end of 1853, the "Eastern Question" claimed the attention of British statesmen and a war with Russia became probable. Wood felt that the time had come to secure the amity of Afghanistan.¹⁰ A second diplomatic objective should, he thought, be to prevent Persia from aligning herself with Russia.¹¹ A friendly Afghanistan, a neutral Persia, and the preservation of the agreement over Herat, would insulate India safely against the effects of any Russian advances in Central Asia.

In November 1853, Wood requested Dalhousie to improve relations with Afghanistan. "With the Afghans friendly we might defy a crusade of all Europe united," he wrote.¹² At first, he was inclined to think that trade and assurances of Britain's friendliness would accomplish his object better than a treaty or the installation of a resident at Kabul. "I am afraid," he confided, "of anything ... [which] would lead to jealousies and squabbles and interference, but I do want it to be impressed on the minds of these Afghans that they have nothing to fear from us if they are friendly to us, and that they may be benefited by commercial

¹⁰ Wood to Dalhousie, 24 November 1853, W.P.

¹¹ Wood to Russell, 13 December 1853, P.R.O. 30/22/11.

¹² Letter of 24 November.

intercourse."¹³ He did agree later, however, to negotiations for a purely defensive treaty, though he emphasised that Britain must, on no account, commit herself to support the Dost's "aggressive designs"¹⁴ upon Herat or Kandahar. Any agreement must be so phrased as to avoid giving Persia reason to take umbrage.¹⁵ For the treaty along these lines, which John Lawrence signed in March 1855, Wood expressed enthusiasm.¹⁶

During the last week of 1853, rumours reached London which suggested that Wood's hopes of a neutral Persia had been frustrated. Upon receiving an affront from the Persian Government, the British envoy at Teheran had broken off relations, and it was thought that the Persians, "under Russian influence", had declared war against Turkey.¹⁷ In consequence of the treatment of the envoy, the Cabinet decided immediately to occupy the small island of Kharak, in the Persian Gulf, with a view to blockading Persia's ports.¹⁸ At the same time, swayed by the opinions of Frere, then Commissioner in Sind, and Major John Jacob, "Political Superintendent" on the

¹³Wood to Dalhousie, 8 March 1854, W.P.

¹⁴Sir W. Lee-Warner has described the negotiations with Afghanistan, of 1854-5, in some detail (Life of Dalhousie, ~~op.~~ ~~cit.~~, II, pp. 82-102).

¹⁵Wood to Dalhousie, 10 July 1854 and 26 March 1855; Court of Directors to Gov.-Gen.-in-Council, 9 August 1854, Political Dept.

¹⁶Wood to Dalhousie, 25 May 1855. The East India Company undertook not to interfere in the territories of the Amir of Kabul, who agreed to be "the friend of the friends, and the enemy of the enemies" of the Company (C.V. Aitchison, A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads ..., 13 vols., Calcutta 1909, XI, pp.340-1).

¹⁷Wood to Dalhousie, 24 December 1853 and 4 January 1854.

¹⁸Aberdeen to Wood, 7 January 1854, B.M.Add.MS. 43198, fol. 179.

Upper Sind Frontier,¹⁹ Wood encouraged Dalhousie to establish closer relations with the Khan of Kalat and to help him suppress the Marri insurgents.²⁰ Before the despatch embodying the Cabinet's decision to occupy Kharak had been sent, a report of the redress of the envoy's grievance, and of the resumption of diplomatic relations, was received.²¹ The stories of Persia's declaration of war had not been confirmed, and, pending the arrival of more definite information, the occupation of Kharak was suspended.²² In the event, Persia remained neutral. However, in furtherance of Wood's object of consolidating the authority of "a strong & friendly Government ... over the territories from the sea to the Afghan hills,"²³ a treaty was signed with the Khan of Kalat in May 1854.²⁴ The Khan was to receive £5000 a year to help him keep the fractious tribesmen in order, and in return he recognized British paramountcy over his foreign relations. The treaty opened Kalat to British commercial penetration and

¹⁹Wood to Dalhousie, 8 June, 10 July 1854. Jacob had, for some time, been pressing Frere to meet the Khan (Jacob's Political Report, 4 January 1854, Sind Papers, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1854, xlix, pp. 835-7). See also Martineau's Frere, I, pp. 155-7; H.T. Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad, London 1960, pp. 257-60.

²⁰Wood to Dalhousie, 4 January 1854.

²¹Aberdeen to Wood, op. cit.

²²Wood to Aberdeen, 8 January 1854, B.M.Add.MS. 43198, fols. 181-4; Court to Govt. of Bombay, 9 January 1854, Political Dept.

²³Wood to Dalhousie, 4 January 1854; Wood to Elphinstone, 24 May 1854, W.P.

²⁴Treaty between British Government and Khan of Kalat, concluded by Major Jacob, 14 May 1854, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1856, xlv, pp. 280-1; Hansard, cxxxv, 8 August, 1854, cols. 1450-1.

military infiltration.²⁵

With the Dost friendly, Persia neutral, Herat under independent control, and Kalat an ally, Wood regarded India as secure. Only by a friendship pact with Kandahar might Britain's hand be strengthened. Wood urged Dalhousie to explore this question. In May 1855, some months after leaving the Board of Control, he wrote: "I should now like to see what can be done with the Candahar sirdars ... to get them in the same relative position towards us, as their right & left hand neighbours [i.e. Kabul and Kalat]."²⁶ The following year, he pressed Canning to "complete this work ..., which Dalhousie carried out as to $\frac{2}{3}$ rds of the object," of establishing friendly relations along the whole of the North-West frontier.²⁷ However, Canning pointed out that the time was "not opportune for completing our fence of Frontier Treaties," for Dost Muhammad had just expelled the rulers of Kandahar and set himself up as chief.²⁸

Provided that Herat was kept out of Persian hands, Wood was little concerned whether it was held by Afghanistan or by an

²⁵Wood had envisaged one payment of £5000 only, and disliked (though he approved) Dalhousie's provision for an annual subsidy. It was, he argued, in the Khan's own interest to suppress the marauders, and he was "against paying people to induce them to look after their own concerns." (letters to Dalhousie and Elphinstone, 8 June 1854).

²⁶Wood to Dalhousie, 25 May 1855, W.P.

²⁷Wood to Canning, 9 February, 1856, W.P.

²⁸Canning to Wood, 29 March 1856, Halifax Pap., B.M.Add.MS. 49558, fols. 109-13.

independent party. If he could have relied upon Persia's neutrality and passivity, he would have preferred to have seen Herat, Kandahar and Kabul as three independent principalities rather than as parts of a united Afghanistan.²⁹ However, early in 1854, when Persia was under suspicion, he favoured Afghan rule over Herat.³⁰ In 1856, when Persia invaded Herat, Britain encouraged Afghanistan to retaliate, and herself engaged in a war with the aggressor to restore Herat's independence.³¹ The Treaty of Paris, which ended the war, required the Shah "to abstain from all interference with the internal affairs of Afghanistan," and Britain "to recognize the independence of Herat and the whole of Afghanistan, and never to interfere with the independence of those states."³² In 1862, Sultan Jan, the ruler of Herat, encroached upon the territory of the Dost, who replied by attacking Herat.³³ Wood declined to intervene, believing the Persians to have indulged in "intrigue" to encourage Sultan Jan's expansive designs.³⁴ He was confident that upon the aged Dost's death the unity of Afghanistan would disintegrate.³⁵ The prophecy was

²⁹ Wood to Dalhousie, 10 July 1854.

³⁰ Wood to Dalhousie, 4 January 1854.

³¹ Wood to Ellice, 12 January 1857, Ellice Pap.; A.P. Thornton, op. cit., pp. 555-6; M. Maclagan, op. cit., pp. 50-5; Camb. Hist. of India, VI, p. 405.

³² Quoted in A.P. Thornton, op. cit., p. 556, n.1.

³³ Wood to Elgin, 25 May 1862; Wood to Russell, 15 July 1862, P.R.O. 30/22/25.

³⁴ Wood to Elgin, 9 and 25 August 1862; Wood to Frere, 1 October 1862, 18 April and 13 July 1863; W.P.

³⁵ Wood to Elgin, 25 August 1862 and 17 August 1863, W.P.

wise. Dost Muhammad died in capturing Herat in 1863, and for many years afterwards Afghanistan was rent by disputes among his sons over the succession.³⁶

Wood's diplomacy on the North-West frontier is brought into sharp focus by what he refused to do. During the Crimean war, he declined to adopt the suggestion, which Sir Henry Rawlinson advanced, of inciting the Persians against Russia.³⁷ He felt sure that Britain's influence in Persia could never match Russia's. Through her proximity, Russia was naturally capable of helping or harming Persia to an extent which must defeat any British exertions. An active policy in Persia would only provoke Russia, and create an inconveniently distant and expensive battleground of diplomacy, and, eventually, of arms.³⁸ In 1859, when Russia despatched a mission to Herat, Wood even opposed sending Rawlinson there as a countervailing move. "I am," he told Russell, the Foreign Secretary, "for keeping out of envoys, & residents, & missions. I believe they do more harm

³⁶ Camb. Hist. of India, VI, p. 405 ff.; R.B. Smith's Lawrence, II, pp. 576-8.

³⁷ Wood to Clarendon (Foreign Secretary), 14 May 1854; Wood to Dalhousie, 24 May 1854; W.P. Rawlinson had been political agent at Kandahar and was an authority on Central Asia. Like Jacob, who, in 1856, advocated the occupation of Quetta, he was one of the "forward" school of frontier theorists (see D.K. Ghose, England and Afghanistan, Calcutta 1960, pp. 6-7; Lambrick's Jacob, pp. 304 ff.).

³⁸ Wood to Elphinstone, 8 June 1854; Wood to Dalhousie, 23 December 1854.

than good."³⁹ In the same year, he indicated his belief in India's unconcern with Persian affairs by consenting readily to the transfer of their management from the India Office to the Foreign Office.⁴⁰ At this time, Russia began to move down the valley of the Syr Daria.⁴¹ The period which followed Dost Muhammad's death was characterised not only by internal wars in Afghanistan but also by Russian advances in Central Asia. In 1864, she approached the Khanates of Khokand, Bokhara and Khiva, and in June 1865 she occupied Tashkent.⁴² Wood at once refused to meddle in Afghan affairs to secure an alliance with any of the pretenders to the succession, or to contemplate a move forward towards the advancing Russians.⁴³ In a crisis, he would bribe the de facto ruler of Afghanistan to help Britain. In September 1865, he summed up his policy in a letter to Lawrence:

The Russians clearly are making progress in Central Asia. I don't see that we can stop them or that we can do any good. Rawlinson has a scheme for occupying Herat & Candahar as a countervailing move. I cannot see the wisdom of his proposal which seems to me the most unwise that we could adopt, extending ourselves further from our base & exciting the jealousy

³⁹ Letter of 9 August 1859, P.R.O. 30/22/25; see also Wood to Canning, 26 August 1859; Wood to Rawlinson, 3 December 1859; W.P.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Russell to Wood, 3 October 1859, cited in A.P. Thornton, op. cit., p. 554.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 556.

⁴² Camb. Hist. of India, VI, p. 408.

⁴³ Wood to Lawrence, 28 August 1865, W.P.; Wood to Russell, 28 September 1865, P.R.O. 30/22/26.

of the very people, the Afghans, on whose resistance to the invaders in the first instance we must rely. I adhere to our old doctrine that we can always buy the Afghan alliance when we want it, if we keep on good terms with them meanwhile.⁴⁴

Of unimpressive dimension compared with the Russian menace, but of more immediate nuisance, were the plundering expeditions of the trans-Indus tribes, and the indignities which the British suffered occasionally from their northern neighbours, further to the east. Wood, in fact, frequently claimed to be less concerned about the possibility of a Russian advance upon India than about the unsettling effect which the appearance of a great power in Central Asia would have upon the tribes. "I am not," he told Dalhousie in 1854, "one of those who anticipate a Russian invasion of India[But] any discontented parties, any tribes disposed to give us trouble, any chiefs who may be disposed to disturb the peace of our territories, will become more likely to do

⁴⁴Letter of 16 September 1865, W.P. A.P. Thornton has discussed the British reaction to Russia's occupation of Tashkent. Russell proposed that England and Russia should exchange despatches denying any intention of advancing their existing frontiers. Russell's draft was "disembowelled" at the India Office, its references to freezing frontiers by agreement being expurgated. Thornton established that Wood enjoined caution on Russell in binding Britain to a commitment which future conditions may render inconvenient. However, his claim that the "opinions" of Rawlinson, "now an important member of the Indian council", "were certainly in Wood's mind as he urged caution on Russell," is open to question. First, Rawlinson was not a member of the Council in 1865, though he had been one earlier (1858-9), and was to become one again later (1868). Second, Wood explicitly repudiated Rawlinson's "opinions" in letters to Lawrence (op. cit.) and Russell (28 September 1865, op. cit.). Wood and the Council were probably impressed, more significantly, with the practical difficulties of Britain's maintaining its existing disturbed and uncertain frontier in the North-West. ("The Reopening of the 'Central Asian Question', 1864-9", History, 1956 (41), pp. 122-36, esp. pp. 131-3.)

so if he hears of a great power behind him"⁴⁵ He reiterated the view eleven years later, lamenting that Russia's advances could "disquiet the countries on our Northern border."⁴⁶ The objective of establishing amicable buffer states, between India and Russia, was, therefore, dictated by the vicissitudes of relations with the tribes, as well as by the more remote danger of Russian aggression.

To pacify the plundering propensities of the trans-Indus tribes Wood favoured conciliation - "milder" rather than "forcible means".⁴⁷ He suggested the development of a common interest in trade, the employment of tribesmen as border police, and the provision of "debateable land" between the frontier and the hills, as preferable to "repression".⁴⁸ Only when such tactics failed to secure order should punitive expeditions be mounted. Retaliatory raids should be few, swiftly executed and certain in effect.⁴⁹ In 1863-4, Wood was severely critical of a campaign against some bands of Muhammadan fanatics who, from bases in the North-West frontier district of Sittana, had become troublesome.⁵⁰ Extensive preparations were made, and the Swat

⁴⁵Wood to Dalhousie, 4 January 1854; also, Wood to Russell, 13 December 1853, P.R.O. 30/22/11.

⁴⁶Wood to Lawrence, 27 February 1865.

⁴⁷Wood to Dalhousie, 24 November 1853.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Wood to Sir R. Napier, 25 December 1863, W.P.

⁵⁰G.G. in Council to S. of S., 4 October 1863 (Foreign 61), in N.W. Frontier Pap., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1864, xliii, pp. 7-9; Wood to Lawrence, 23 December 1863; Hansard, clxxiii, 11 February 1864, cols. 463-4. The campaign is described in J.W. Fortescue, A History of the British Army, 13 vols., London 1934, Vol. XIII, pp. 421-45.

and Bunerwal people were antagonised by the intimidating march of a large force past their territory to take possession of the Ambela pass.⁵¹ Wood regarded it as a tactical error to give the hill tribes any cause for suspicion or reason to unite, and considered it foolish to engage in battle beyond the plains.⁵² An "aggressive policy" was "wholly opposed to ... [our] true interests," and the Indian authorities should, therefore, "conciliate" the tribes by making them "understand that our policy ... [was] peace, and that we ... [did] not seek to extend our frontier, nor ... to interfere with our neighbours."⁵³

As in the North-West, so along India's northern frontier, Wood advocated a policy of non-advancement and non-interference with the neighbouring states. In 1860, the kidnapping of British subjects by the Raja of Sikkim provoked reprisals.⁵⁴ The incident elicited from Wood a statement of the "only case" in which he would be "disposed to annex even a strip of country," namely, "to take away facilities, if such were offered by the existing frontier,

⁵¹Wood to Sir H. Durand, 25 December 1863; Wood to Col. Norman, 10 January 1864; W.P.; Wood to Grey, 14 January 1864, Howick Pap.

⁵²Wood to Lawrence, 10 January 1864.

⁵³S. of S. to G.G. in C., 16 January (Political 2), 1864, N.W. Frontier Pap., pp. 120-3.

⁵⁴S. of S. to G.G. in C., 23 March (Political 43), 1861, Sikkim Despatches, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xl, pp. 521-2; M. Maclagan, op. cit., pp. 278-9.

for further incursions."⁵⁵ In 1864, a similar affair occurred with Bhutan. A mission, despatched to seek the restoration of British subjects who had been carried into captivity, and to negotiate for more peaceful relations than were then prevailing, was subjected to "indignities".⁵⁶ Wood declined to approve a large campaign, either to annex Bhutan, or to reduce it, impose terms and withdraw. Either course would inveigle Britain into the affairs of a disordered state to no purpose.⁵⁷ "We shall," Wood noted, "gain nothing but trouble and expense."⁵⁸ The best policy was to give the de facto rulers a motive for maintaining friendly relations with Britain. This was accomplished by extending British occupation over the Doars, the fertile plains below Bhutan, and by agreeing to pay portion of the annual revenue from them to the chiefs of Bhutan. As a further deterrent to Bhutanese incursions, the passes above the Doars were placed

⁵⁵Wood to Canning, 23 January and 8 April 1861. Wood welcomed the conclusion of a treaty with the Maharaja of Sikkim, which afforded security against further outrages, and praised Canning's "moderation" in not annexing any territory (S. of S. to G.G. in C., 16 July (Political 74) 1861, Sikkim Despatches, op. cit., p. 573).

⁵⁶C.U. Aitchison wrote a précis of the history of Britain's relations with Bhutan (d. 19 May 1864, Bhutan Pap., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1865, xxxix, pp. 161-71). See also Hansard, clxxviii, 6 April 1865, cols. 781-2, and 7 April 1865, cols. 941-3.

⁵⁷Wood to Lawrence, 15 June and 18 July 1864; S. of S. to G.G. in C., 18 July (Political 39) 1864, Bhutan Pap., op. cit., pp. 380-1.

⁵⁸Wood to Lawrence, 15 June 1865.

under British control.⁵⁹ Consolidation of the frontier was the only acceptable motive for an advance, and, even then, Wood was "against annexing a foot more than ... necessary."⁶⁰

Wood's attitude towards extensions of British control within India resembled his approach to frontier policy. Within a month of going to the Board, he rebuffed Dalhousie's recommendation that the ancient Rajput state of Karauli should be annexed in consequence of a lapse of heirs.⁶¹ The "other Rajput states ... [would] probably look upon the step with great jealousy" and he was "averse to destroying the really old native states without very strong grounds." "I am not impatient to annex all India," he wrote to Dalhousie. "It may come, but it should come if at all, very slowly and gradually"⁶² The next year, he stressed the need for Britain to have "a larger body of attached adherents through the country" before she became "the only sovereign".⁶³ Here, as on the frontier, he argued his objection to annexation on tactical

⁵⁹This strategy was detailed in a memorandum which Lawrence sent home. Wood discussed it with some members of his Council and sent the memorandum back "with marginal observations" (W.P. 108, and Wood to Lawrence, 18 July 1864). The occupation of the Doars and the passes was accomplished by a treaty, which Wood approved in S. of S. to G.G. in Council, 1 February (Political 4) 1866, Bhutan Papers, Parl. Pap. (H.C.) 1866, lii, pp. 279-81.

⁶⁰Wood to Lawrence, 15 June 1865.

⁶¹G.G. in C. to Court, 7 September (Foreign 56) 1852, and Dalhousie's minute of 30 August 1852, Karauli Papers, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1854-5, xl, pp. 87, 91-4. Lee-Warner describes "the ... case ... of Karauli ... as the least justifiable of the measures taken by Lord Dalhousie in connection with the Native states" (op. cit., pp. 171-3).

⁶²Wood to Dalhousie, 22 January 1853; see also Court to G.G. in C., 26 January (Political 1) 1853, Karauli Pap., pp. 87-8.

⁶³Wood to Dalhousie, 24 April 1854.

grounds. But, besides being concerned that Britain should not over-reach herself in grasping at fresh territory, he was restrained by the direct pressure of the Manchester school. Professor MacDonagh has recently drawn attention to the anti-annexationist and pacifist ethics of the leading free traders.⁶⁴ In 1853, on the occasion of Dalhousie's war in Pegu, Cobden wrote the pamphlet, How Wars are Got Up in India, a bitter condemnation of imperialist exercises. In May and June, Cobden, Bright and Milner Gibson pressed Wood for documents on, and details of, the annexation of Pegu.⁶⁵ During the debates on the Charter Bill, members of the school attacked Dalhousie's annexations of the Punjab, Satara and Jaitpur. "Young India" questioned the ability of the newly acquired provinces to defray the costs incurred in annexing and administering them.⁶⁶ The funds that were being spent on imperial aggrandisement should, they contended, be devoted to works of improvement.⁶⁷ Wood's approach to the states was influenced by the pressure of the group to no lesser degree than were his public works and railway policies. Wood urged Dalhousie to bring the

⁶⁴ O. MacDonagh, "The Anti-Imperialism of Free Trade", Econ.Hist. Rev., 1961-2, (Ser. 2, xiv), pp. 489-501.

⁶⁵ Hansard, cxxvii, 20 May, cols. 431-6; cxxviii, 17 June, cols. 377-80.

⁶⁶ Hansard, cxxvii, 9 June, col. 1306 (Blackett); cxxviii, 27 June, cols. 822-3 (Cobden); 30 June, cols. 1011-13 (Digby Seymour).

⁶⁷ See above, pp.204-5.

Pegu war to an early conclusion.⁶⁸ He made frequent mention of the need for tranquillity in India,⁶⁹ and he insisted upon avoiding any appearance of grasping at new territory.⁷⁰

Wood's policy towards particular states was based upon considerations of cost and imperial strategy, and upon his own position in parliament. He did correspond with Dalhousie about the principles governing the recognition or disallowance of adoption of heirs by ruling sovereigns.⁷¹ He did seek rules and consistency in deciding these cases.⁷² However, Dalhousie regarded his views on the question of adoption as "novel and arbitrary."⁷³ Wood was, in fact, less interested in what was legally just and morally right than in what was justifiable in parliament. It was more difficult to justify the annexation of a fully independent state than to consolidate Britain's control over states which owed their separate existence to her grant, or which were administered by an Indian ruler under treaty. Thus, whilst he

⁶⁸ Wood to Dalhousie, 24 February 1853.

⁶⁹ E.g., Wood to Dalhousie, 8 May and 24 November 1853.

⁷⁰ "... Parliament is well disposed to interfere ... and I wish ... not to excite their hostility again by the appearance of grasping at more territory" (Wood to Dalhousie, 24 January 1854). "You know how sensitive a large party in this country is on the subject of ... successions to Rajahships" (Wood to Dalhousie, 7 May 1854).

⁷¹ Dalhousie to Wood, 13 June 1854, and Wood to Dalhousie, 21 August 1854, W.P. (partly printed in Lee-Warner, op. cit., pp. 155-6).

⁷² Ibid., and Wood to Dalhousie, 25 November 1854.

⁷³ Dalhousie to Wood, 4 October 1854.

declined to acquire states of the former type, depending upon the mood at home, and the advantage in India, he was quite prepared to annex those belonging to the other categories. In 1853, Dalhousie proposed to assume the government of Oudh.⁷⁴ The condition of the state was a "disgrace" to the East India Company, to which the King was responsible under treaty. Wood replied:

... I am not prepared to annex Oude unless you can make out a case beyond question. If you had not ...[annexed] Pegu I should have had no scruple as to Oude, which we ought to have That we must take Oude sooner or later I have no doubt; the only question in my mind is the time & opportunity and pretext, and as it is very desirable not to shew a grasping disposition at present I am unwilling to occupy our principality.⁷⁵

He was prepared to annex Oudh only if the King assigned it by treaty,⁷⁶ and he regretted the Cabinet's ultimate decision, of 1856, to allow Dalhousie to take it by force.⁷⁷

However, Wood greeted Dalhousie's annexation of the cotton-growing states of Nagpur and Berar with enthusiasm. Both cases are particularly interesting in view of the twin stresses in Manchester's policy - upon the encouragement of India's cotton

⁷⁴ Lee-Warner, op. cit., p. 316; Dalhousie to Wood, 18 October 1853.

⁷⁵ Wood to Dalhousie, 21 October 1853.

⁷⁶ "Take Oude by voluntary surrender and you will have done a very good deed for India and for the people of the country. I am not at all averse to the operation, and only am anxious that it should be skilfully performed ... in regard to public opinion here" (Wood to Dalhousie, 24 January 1854).

⁷⁷ Wood to Ellice, 13 September 1856, Ellice Pap.

production, and upon the non-enlargement of Britain's Indian empire. In 1853, Berar was ceded by the Nizam of Hyderabad in settlement of his debts to the Company, and in full discharge of the annual payments due for the maintenance of a contingent, partly officered by Europeans, in his territories.⁷⁸ Wood's only complaint with the treaty was that it required the Company to pay any surplus of revenue over expenditure to the Nizam.⁷⁹ In December 1853, the Raja of Nagpur, "the finest cotton district in all India,"⁸⁰ died without leaving an heir.⁸¹ Wood told the Prime Minister that there was "nobody ... who on the most exaggerated view of the case ... [could] set a pretence of a claim" to the succession.⁸² In February 1854, he wrote:

I would omit no fair opportunity of getting rid of these territories which separate our districts. I would shew no anxiety to do so, but I cannot recognize the unlimited power of adoption which is claimed. It did not seem to me to be expedient to annex Kerowlee which is one of a bundle of states of no great value to us and not inconveniently situated for us. Nagpore and the frontiers of the Nizam's territories which we occupy give us I think pretty nearly an uninterrupted line from Calcutta to Bombay.⁸³

⁷⁸Treaty between the E.I. Company and the Nizam, 21 May 1853, in Papers concerning the Nizam's cession of territories, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1854, xlvii, pp. 410-12 and map facing p. 150; G.G. in C. to Court, 3 June (Foreign 41) 1853, and 2 July (Foreign 51) 1853; Court to G.G. in C., 2 November (Political 45) 1853, *ibid.*, pp. 271-5; Lee-Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-32.

⁷⁹Wood to Dalhousie, 8 March 1854. The provision to which Wood objected was embodied in Art. VIII of the Treaty.

⁸⁰Dalhousie to Wood, 18 January 1854.

⁸¹G.G. in C. to Court, 4 January (Foreign 4) 1854, Papers Relating to Berar (i.e. Nagpur), Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1854, xlvi, p. 324.

⁸²Wood to Aberdeen, 28 March 1854, Add.MS. 43198, fol. 187. Dalhousie argued this point convincingly in a minute of 28 January 1854, Nagpur Pap., pp. 337-53.

⁸³Wood to J. Dorin, 8 February 1854, W.P. (my italics).

Dalhousie urged "the bearing which the occupation of Nagpore & previously of Berar have [sic] upon your great manufacturing difficulty, the supply of cotton."⁸⁴ Wood made the same observation in the House of Commons and had no difficulty with the Manchester school.⁸⁵ "I encouraged your annexation of Nagpore," he told Dalhousie, "to which I have heard no objection"⁸⁶

After the mutiny, Dalhousie's "doctrine of lapse" was deemed heretical. Canning proclaimed the new orthodoxy in his "adoption despatch" of 30 April 1860.⁸⁷ He proposed that "an assurance [be given] to every Chief, above the rank of Jagheerदार, who now governs his own territory ..., that on failure of natural heirs, his adoption of a successor ... will be recognised." Such a policy would, he asserted, "strengthen ... [Britain's direct rule] within its present limits, and ... secure for our general supremacy the contented acquiescence and respect of all who are subjected to it." Wood was somewhat reluctant to tie his hands by "promising for ever" the right of adoption. He regretted Canning's "not leaving more opening for appropriating some of the localities

⁸⁴ Dalhousie to Wood, 4 March 1854.

⁸⁵ Hansard, cxxxv, 8 August 1854, cols. 1449-51.

⁸⁶ Wood to Dalhousie, 8 March 1854. The annexation was approved by the Court in its Political despatch (No.23) to G.G. in C., 14 June 1854, Nagpur Pap., p. 325. On similar grounds, Wood approved the annexation of the small state of Jhansi (Court to G.G. in C., 2 August (Political 34) 1854, Jhansi Pap., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1854-5, xl, pp. 49-50). A return of annexations between the Punjab war and 1856 appears in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1856, xlv, p. 102.

⁸⁷ Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc. to S. of S., No. 43A (Foreign Dept.) of 1860.

favourable to European settlement in the hills."⁸⁸ He confessed to being "in rather a desponding mood as to our future hold of India," and thought that such a settlement "would be a great element of strength." However, for the purpose of stabilizing British rule, he was "quite ready to back ... [Canning's] views."⁸⁹ He agreed that "to attach the chiefs permanently to us ... [was] of far more importance than any possession of small districts suited for European colonization." "We must," he wrote, "attach to us the influential classes," and, thereby deprive "the active and stirring elements" in India of "any possible leaders."⁹⁰ The Council of India agreed, and Wood gave the adoption despatch his hearty official approval. "It is," he wrote, "not by the extension of our Empire that its permanence is to be secured, but by the character of British rule in the territories already committed to our care, and by practically demonstrating that we are as willing to respect the rights of others as we are capable of maintaining our own."⁹¹ Wood's approval, like Canning's proposal, of the adoption policy was the outcome of a calculation of the political advantages of securing the co-operation of the rulers of the Indian states.⁹²

⁸⁸ Wood to Canning, 26 June 1860, W.P.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Wood to Canning, 26 July 1860, W.P.

⁹¹ S. of S. to Gov.-Gen. in Council, 26 July (Political No. 59) 1860.

⁹² See also Wood to Canning, 10 August 1860, and Wood to Frere, 10 August 1860, W.P.

The issue of sanads of adoption has often been represented as indicative of a determination to put an end to Britain's career of annexation in India.⁹³ The treatment of the claims of the Raja of Mysore revealed that both in India and at home the authorities were prepared to set the policy of allowing adoptions aside when, by so doing, the Indian empire might be the more effectively consolidated.

The Maharaja of Mysore received his title as a five year old child, by treaty, in 1799.⁹⁴ He assumed the direct administration of the state in 1810, until which time a Brahmin minister had, with the aid of a British resident, carried on the

⁹³ Lee-Warner described the contrast between the Dalhousie and Canning dispensations thus: "... to the King of Oudh, who had broken his solemn treaties, Lord Dalhousie offered the alternative of war or virtual annexation. Then the mutiny occurred and after its suppression ... a change took place in the relations of the Native States with the paramount power The main object in view was to preserve the Native principalities from annexation...." (The Native States of India, London 1910, pp. 44-5). Maclagan wrote: "The free concession of the right of adoption marked an end of Dalhousie's policy of annexation where possible" (op. cit., p. 316). A. West claimed: "Throughout his administration, Sir Charles Wood scrupulously abstained from aggression or annexation; what is known as the adoption policy of Lord Canning was cordially accepted by him" (Wood's Administration, p. 135).

⁹⁴ Partition Treaty of Mysore, 22 June 1799, in Mysore Pap., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xlv, pp. 97-100. The Raja's claims were discussed sympathetically and at length by Evans Bell, in The Mysore Reversion, [1865], London 1866 (2nd ed.), where also appear a number of documents relative to them. The treaty rights and obligations of the Raja were set out in the "Subsidiary Treaty" of 8 July 1799, *ibid.*, pp. 270-5.

government. In consequence of the Raja's maladministration, Lord Bentinck resumed the government in 1831 and placed it under a commissioner until order and system were established.⁹⁵ In 1834, Bentinck proposed to restore three quarters of the territories of Mysore to the Raja,⁹⁶ but the Court deemed it wiser to defer restoration until sound government was established more securely.⁹⁷ In 1861, the Raja, aged and childless, appealed to Canning for the restoration of Mysore.⁹⁸ Three years later, he requested permission to adopt an heir to the raj.⁹⁹ As he was not governing Mysore in 1860, Canning had not issued a sanad of adoption to him. Over the years 1861-67, three Governors-General and as many Secretaries of State wrestled with the questions of restoration and adoption.

Wood confessed, in 1861, to having "a covetous eye on Mysore."¹⁰⁰ He was anxious for the Raja to die without adopting, whereupon he proposed to graft the state onto the territories administered by the Government of Madras.¹⁰¹ However, from a

⁹⁵ These events and the justification for Bentinck's action are considered fully by M.H. Gopal, in The Finances of the Mysore State, 1799-1831, Mysore 1960.

⁹⁶ Bentinck to Secret Committee of Court, 14 April 1834, cited in E. Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁹⁷ Court to Gov.-Gen.-in-Counc., 25 September (No.45) 1835, cited in *ibid.*, p. 28.

⁹⁸ Raja to Canning, 23 February 1861, Mysore Papers, Parl. Pap.(H.C.), 1866, lii, pp. 487-9.

⁹⁹ Raja to L. Bowring (Commissioner of Mysore) 11 February 1864, summarized in Bowring to For.Sec. to Govt. of India, 18 February 1864, *ibid.*, pp. 522-5.

¹⁰⁰ Wood to Canning, 24 April 1861.

¹⁰¹ Wood to Canning, 25 May 1860.

reading of the declarations which Bentinck and the Court of Directors had made about the temporary character of the resumption of Mysore, he could see "no pretence to withhold it from him."¹⁰² He hoped that Canning would placate the Raja by increasing his share of the administration, and somehow prevent an adoption.¹⁰³ On 10 January 1862, he wrote to Canning that "anything ... [was] worth while of present sacrifice to ensure against adoption." A "good resident might govern as well as a commissioner for the remainder of the Rajah's life," but Canning should seek "some security against his adopting." However, Canning denied utterly the Raja's right to claim the administration. He argued that the Raja had received Mysore as a revocable grant from Britain, which held it by "right of conquest". The treaty of 1799 had given him the administration on condition that he managed it well. Britain had resumed the state in 1831 because of the continued breach of this condition, and was under no obligation to restore it. Bentinck's proposals for restoration "fell to the ground" when the Court disallowed them, and the Court gave no undertaking to return the state to the Raja.¹⁰⁴ For Canning, the question of adoption to the raj did not arise. He contended that the Raja's

¹⁰²Wood to Canning, 18 August 1861.

¹⁰³Wood to Canning, 25 December 1861.

¹⁰⁴Canning to Raja, 11 March 1862, Mysore Pap., pp. 490-3.

treaty rights were "personal" to him, and that he had, therefore, never held "any patrimony in the soil." However, he hinted that "the Government might, of its own grace, be disposed to deal" "liberally" with a claim by the Raja for an adoption to the private estate which a "Subsidiary Treaty" of 1799 had secured to him. This reply to the Raja's request was somewhat at variance with Canning's earlier expression of views upon the question. In March 1860, whilst expressing the hope that the Raja would not adopt an heir and that he would bequeath the state to Britain, Canning referred to "the claims which he and his heirs have for the restoration of the Government of his country."¹⁰⁵

The Raja appealed to Elgin, complaining of Canning's "extraordinary asperity", and requesting that his protest be referred to the Secretary of State.¹⁰⁶ In reply, Elgin expressed "confidence ... in the propriety" of his predecessor's decision, but assured him that the protest would be sent home.¹⁰⁷ Upon receiving the Raja's protest, Wood feared that the Governors-General's blunt treatment of the case would alienate the cooperation of the Raja. He wrote to Elgin:

I cannot think that Canning was right We ought if possible to get hold of Mysore with the consent of the Prince. I do not much wish to take it as Dalhousie took Oude, but I should like to have it. Canning's line rendered that consummation almost impossible, & I see

¹⁰⁵ Gov. Gen.-in-C., to S. of S., 30 March (Foreign Dept. No. 35) 1860.

¹⁰⁶ Raja to Elgin, 20 April 1862, Mysore Pap., pp. 494-8.

¹⁰⁷ Elgin to Raja, 4 June 1862, *ibid.*, p. 499.

that you are disposed to back up Canning's course, that is, ... to let him adopt a successor to his present dependent state. That would perpetuate the present state of things.¹⁰⁸

He was at a loss to understand Canning's denial of the Raja's right to administer Mysore, for it was "contrary to his general view of the conduct to be pursued towards Native princes."¹⁰⁹

At the same time that Wood received the Raja's protest, he became aware of "a very curious proposal from himself direct, through an indirect channel."¹¹⁰ In his official letter, the Raja claimed the administration of Mysore for the remainder of his life. In a private letter, which was carried to England by a Dr Campbell, his "Medical Attendant and confidential adviser",¹¹¹ he declared his intention of bequeathing the administration to the Prince of Wales.¹¹² For some months, Wood knew of the existence of the letter and of its substance, without actually having seen it, and without being sure of Campbell's authority for delivering it.¹¹³ Bargaining the present administration of the state for its total and voluntary surrender upon the Raja's death appealed to him.

¹⁰⁸ Wood to Elgin, 10 July 1862.

¹⁰⁹ Wood to Elgin, 16 August 1862. Wood concluded that Canning could not himself have studied the background to the case sufficiently (Wood to Elgin, 24 September 1862 (1)). Canning's decision as to Mysore shows, in fact, the same lack of his customary liberalism as his treatment of a number of other issues during his last months in India, e.g. the "contract law", the disposal of waste lands (see ch.9, below).

¹¹⁰ Wood to Elgin, 10 July 1862.

¹¹¹ Wood to Elgin, 18 July 1862. The Raja later referred to Campbell as "my recognized agent and representative" (Raja to Lawrence, 1 February 1865, Mysore Pap., pp. 554-5).

¹¹² An undated copy of the letter appears in W.P., 108.

¹¹³ Wood to Elgin, 10 July, 1 August and 9 October (2) 1862.

But, though tantalizing, the prospect was perilous. To restore Mysore would quiet the promptings of his conscience. To provide for its later resumption to British rule would meet the objective of imperial consolidation. The bargain would resolve his conflict "between what ... [seemed] to be our honest course, and my wish to secure Mysore."¹¹⁴ "If," he wrote, "we ought not to retain [it] & can make any arrangement for getting it into our hands at his death, it would be a good arrangement."¹¹⁵ Unfortunately, there were difficulties in converting the Raja's statement of intention into a document with enforceable provisions.

In August 1862, Wood sketched the following outline for a treaty with the Raja:

1. [That Britain]... give him the govt. of Mysore, providing for
 - a. a resident's sanction to chief appointments.
 - b. the maintenance of the present system of administering justice & revenue.
2. That at his death, Mysore, with the exception of a certain district, should come to the British Crown.
3. That a certain district should go as a jagheer to some connection of his for whom he wishes to make provision.¹¹⁶

However, the members of the Council of India who were best informed upon the question argued that, to keep faith with the Raja, in accordance with the stated intentions of Bentinck and the Court to resume Mysore only temporarily, it was necessary to

¹¹⁴ Wood to Elgin, 24 September 1862 (1).

¹¹⁵ Wood to Elgin, 1 August 1862.

¹¹⁶ Wood to Elgin, 16 August 1862.

restore it unconditionally - except for provisions to secure "the welfare of the people".¹¹⁷ On 17 October, Wood wrote to Elgin that he might, upon receiving the Raja's statement of his intended bequest, ask the Raja to "put [it] into the shape of a binding treaty," enforceable regardless of any subsequent adoption. But, whatever the outcome of this approach might be, he seemed to have settled his course, for he went on:

If we cannot make any binding arrangement, we shall, I am afraid, have to restore the administration, and trust to chance for the disposition of the Rajah. It is by no means agreeable; but I cannot honestly sanction Canning's view. If I could do so it would no doubt cut the Gordian knot.

At this stage, Wood raised the subject with Lord Stanley, who was regarded as the Tory expert on Indian affairs in the House of Commons. He returned the documents on the case with this cryptic note:

Dear Sir Charles,
Many thanks for the papers. Right or wrong,
we must keep Mysore.¹¹⁸

Wood later claimed that this opinion was decisive in its influence upon his handling of the case. Stanley's unequivocal "'we must have Mysore'" overcame his inclination to accept the advice of his most experienced Councillors. In a letter of 1864, Wood wrote to Stanley:

¹¹⁷Wood to Elgin, 24 September 1862 (1). Sir F. Currie, Sir J. Lawrence, Sir J.P. Willoughby, Sir H. Montgomery and W.J. Eastwick thought Mysore must be restored.

¹¹⁸30 November 1862, W.P., 76.

I knew your general leaning to Native Princes, but you had seen the country with the impartial eye of an English statesman, & your opinion was entitled to weight beyond that of any man I knew. It very much determined my conduct.¹¹⁹

Assured of the support of the opposition in the House of Commons, Wood felt strong enough to place expediency above right. He wrote to Elgin on 18 March 1863:

It is a very nasty case for there is an awkward amount of despatches & avowed intentions to get over: & sooner or later we shall have to take the strong step of annexing Mysore, & disallowing any adoption to the Raj.

He "declined to receive" the private letter which Campbell was bearing.¹²⁰ The despatch which answered the Raja's appeal upheld Canning's decision that the Raja could "not, as of right ... claim ... the restoration."¹²¹ The Gordian knot was cut, in defiance of strong opposition from the Council of India. Wood

¹¹⁹Wood to Stanley, 19 June 1864, W.P. Later still, Wood told Sir Stafford Northcote of Stanley's influence upon him in the Mysore case (19 April 1867, Iddesleigh Pap., B.M.Add.MS. 50036, fols. 245-8). Stanley's influence was also decisive in determining Wood's insistence upon restoring the state of Dhar, which had been confiscated because of its durbar's behaviour during the mutiny, to its young Raja. Stanley pressed the question upon Wood several times in the House of Commons (13 March 1860, Hansard, clvii, col. 445; Dhar Pap., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xlvi; 22 April 1864, Hansard, clxxiv, col. 1499; 17 June 1864, clxxv, col. 1948). On 16 June 1864, Wood told Lawrence that Stanley attached "a good deal of importance to this Dhar business", and that he would like to "meet his wishes". He wrote again of Stanley's "particular interest in Dhar" on 2 August, and, on 15 September, told Lawrence that Stanley was "anxious" about the question. "He has," Wood confided, "behaved so well on all Indian matters, that I should be very sorry if I thought that everything was not done honestly to carry out his wishes and instructions."

¹²⁰Wood to Elgin, 18 July 1863.

¹²¹S. of S. to G.G. in C., 17 July (Political 48), 1863, Mysore Pap., pp. 499-504.

"kept them down ... by confining the orders to withholding from the Rajah the administration, & ... [saying] nothing as to what should be done at his death."¹²²

Wood feared that the despatch would provoke the Raja into adopting an heir.¹²³ To avert this outcome he was prepared to ply him with honours and treasure.¹²⁴ However, in February 1864, when the Commissioner acquainted the Raja formally of the home government's decision, he was met with a request that the Raja "be permitted to adopt a son and heir to inherit ... [the] country."¹²⁵ Lawrence replied that "the Rajah ... [had] a full right to adopt so far as his private property ... [was] concerned, but [that] ... no authority to adopt a successor to the Raj of Mysore ... [had] ever been given him, and ... no such power ... [could then] be conceded to him."¹²⁶ In approving Lawrence's reply Wood encountered "some difficulty with the Council."¹²⁷ Only through Sir George Clerk's careful phrasing of the despatch, which supported Lawrence but left open the question of whether

¹²²Wood to Lawrence, 2 August 1864. Currie, Willoughby, Montgomery, Arbuthnot and Eastwick favoured the restoration to the Raja (Wood to Elgin, 18 July 1863). The first three recorded dissents against the despatch (Mysore Pap., pp. 504-20).

¹²³Wood to Elgin, 18 July 1863.

¹²⁴Wood to Lawrence, 18 April and 2 May 1864. Despatch of 17 July 1863.

¹²⁵Sir L. Bowring to For. Sec. to Govt. of India, 18 February 1864, Mysore Pap., pp. 522-5.

¹²⁶For. Sec. to Govt. of India to Bowring, 29 March 1864, *ibid.*, pp. 525-7.

¹²⁷Wood to Lawrence, 2 August 1864.

an adoption would be recognised upon the Raja's death,¹²⁸ could it be passed without a "strong minority" of dissentients. Wood explained the form of the despatch to Lawrence:

I think it desirable not to say 'we mean to annex at all events' I had rather avoid deciding before the time [of the Raja's death] arrives (or perhaps I should rather say avowing the decision). I think that in fact it puts an end to any notion of adopting to the raj though it does not actually say so.¹²⁹

In February 1865, the Raja despatched Dr Campbell to England to press his claim upon the Queen and in parliament.¹³⁰ At the same time, he protested to Lawrence again, and entreated him to support a plea to reconsider his case.¹³¹ Lawrence replied that he agreed with Canning's view that the Raja had no patrimony in Mysore to which he might adopt, and intimated that an "adopted son ... [would] have no claim to be recognized by the British Government as heir to the state."¹³² In England, Campbell received

¹²⁸ S. of S. to G.G. in C., 30 July (Political 45) 1864, Mysore Pap., pp. 530-1. The paragraph concerning adoption reads: "With regard to adoption, I will only observe that you could not recognize more than the Maharajah's right to adopt, so far as his private property was concerned."

¹²⁹ Wood to Lawrence, 2 August 1864. Clerk was, Wood explained, "against annexing but ... put the despatch in ... shape ... and we carried it 9 to 2, Currie & Willoughby being the dissentients Three of the Council if not more were not prepared to vote non-adoption: & I thought it more prudent to ensure a large majority for what was proposed." Currie and Willoughby recorded dissents (Mysore Pap., pp. 531-3).

¹³⁰ Raja to Lawrence, 1 February 1865, pp. 554-5.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Lawrence to Raja, 5 May 1865, *ibid.*, pp. 555-6, and G.G. in C., to S. of S., 5 May (Political 46) 1865, *ibid.*, pp. 540-7.

no official encouragement, and found that it would be difficult to bring the case before parliament during the current session.¹³³ On 16 June, the Raja received a cable from him¹³⁴ and determined, at last, to throw down the gauntlet. Two days later, he adopted a two and a half years old child.¹³⁵ On 17 July, the home government approved Lawrence's intimation of May that no adopted son would have a claim to the raj, five members of the Council of India dissenting.¹³⁶ In August, Wood wrote to Lawrence: "I take it for granted that we shall have it in Parliament next year, but as Lord Stanley entirely concurs there can be no question of the result."¹³⁷ He was prepared "to fight the battle out, disallowing any effect of the adoption except as to private property."¹³⁸

It was not upon Wood, or even Stanley, but upon Lord Cranborne that the task of resolving the Mysore adoption question to the satisfaction of parliament devolved.¹³⁹ Consistent with

¹³³Wood to Lawrence, 3 April 1865.

¹³⁴Bowring to Wood, 19 June 1865, W.P. 94.

¹³⁵Raja to Lawrence, 18 June 1865, Mysore Pap., p. 577.

¹³⁶S. of S. to G.G. in C., 17 July (Political 57) 1865, *ibid.*, pp. 556-7. The five dissentients were Currie, Willoughby, Clerk, Montgomery and Eastwick (Wood to Lawrence, 12 August 1865). The first three recorded dissents (Mysore Pap., pp. 557-69).

¹³⁷Wood to Lawrence, 12 August 1865.

¹³⁸Wood to Lawrence, 16 September 1865.

¹³⁹Hansard, clxxxv, 22 February 1867, cols. 835-41. In a letter to Lawrence, of 4 July 1866, the Raja had again requested his reinstatement, and had raised the question of the right of his adopted son to inherit the administration of Mysore (Further Mysore Pap., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1867, 1, pp. 559-66).

previous policy, Cranboyrne denied that the Raja had any patrimony in Mysore and deemed the question of adoption irrelevant. However, where Wood had looked to the Raja's death as the time for deciding what should be done with Mysore, Cranboyrne announced that he would postpone any such decision until the adopted son attained his majority. Wood was not dissatisfied with this approach. He had explained to Cranboyrne, after mature reflection, that he would have proposed a compromise solution. He would have partitioned Mysore, annexing the greater portion, but leaving a small state, "as a matter of favour", for the adopted son to administer when he came of age.¹⁴⁰ He noted his discussion of this point with Cranboyrne: "In a conversation I had with him I understood him to incline to the notion"¹⁴¹ In fact, Cranboyrne came close to declaring himself on this point in the House of Commons. "... it may well be hoped," he said, "that a practical share of the whole or a portion of the country - probably that would be the best - might be given to this young man."¹⁴² However, he left the India Office before a decision was placed in the form of a despatch. In April 1867, his successor, Sir Stafford Northcote, went beyond his intentions and, overruling

¹⁴⁰ Halifax to Northcote, 24 April 1867, Iddesleigh Pap., B.M.Add. MS. 50036, fols. 274ff. (copy in W.P.94). This compromise was originally suggested by Bowring in a letter to Wood, of 4 June 1865 (W.P. 94). Wood told Northcote that Lawrence "thought it a good scheme."

¹⁴¹ Halifax to Northcote, op. cit.

¹⁴² Hansard, clxxxv, 22 February 1867, col. 840.

a majority of his Council, declared that Britain wished to "maintain ... [the Raja's] family on the throne in the person of his Highness's adopted son."¹⁴³ Wood wrote a succession of letters to Northcote, objecting to this course,¹⁴⁴ and he tried to enlist Stanley's support.¹⁴⁵ But Stanley's "hands ... [were] too full" at the Foreign Office "to make a discussion with Lord Halifax possible."¹⁴⁶ In any case, Northcote was not prepared to recede from his position.¹⁴⁷ The direct and ultimate consequence of his determination was the rendition of Mysore in 1881.

Wood's conduct over the Mysore case revealed a decisive reluctance to let pass a good opportunity for consolidating British rule. Given the compliance of Her Majesty's Opposition in parliament, he was prepared, for this purpose, to override the dictates of conscience. "Awkward ... despatches" and "avowed intentions" to restore Mysore could be "got over". The legitimacy of adoption to the raj, which rested upon the interpretation of

¹⁴³ S. of S. to G.G. in C., 16 April (Political 69) 1867, Further Mysore Pap., pp. 566-7. Dissents were recorded by H.T. Prinsep, R.D. Mangles, C. Mills, J.W. Hogg, E. Macnaghten, R.J. Vivian, W.E. Baker, W. Arbuthnot and P.J. Cautley (ibid., pp. 574-84). Northcote wrote a minute to justify his proceeding (ibid. pp. 571-4).

¹⁴⁴ Letters dated 19, 22, 24, 26 April 1867, B.M.Add.MS. 50036, fols. 245-8 and 274ff.

¹⁴⁵ Stanley to Halifax, 16 April 1867, Hickleton Pap.

¹⁴⁶ Stanley to Northcote, 1 May 1867, B.M.Add.MS. 50022, fol. 72.

¹⁴⁷ Northcote to Halifax, 20 and 25 April 1867, W.P. 94.

the treaty of 1799, need never be referred for judicial decision.¹⁴⁸

The objections of members of the Council of India could be surmounted by the careful choice of expressions to an extent which bordered on subterfuge. The justification for his policy he saw in the welfare of the people of Mysore. Protesting against Northcote's despatch, he claimed that it was "a hard thing upon a people used to the just & fair rule of English officers to be turned over to the rule of natives."¹⁴⁹ He did "not believe in the possibility of making a treaty which would ensure good

¹⁴⁸ Though the question of referring the Mysore case to a judicial body was not raised in parliament, a number of similar questions was. Wood always resisted attempts to establish judicial or parliamentary bodies to settle disputes between the British Government and Indian dignitaries (e.g. Hansard, cxxix, 26 and 29 July 1853, cols. 808-10, 1012-13, 1016; cxxxv, 8 August 1854, cols. 1409-11). In 1860, he kept out of parliament the claims of the members of the royal family of Mysore, which Britain had deposed in 1799, by making a liberal settlement upon them (S. of S. to G.G. in C., 11 June (Political 50); 1860, in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xlvi, pp. 204-6). "I am disposed," he commented, "to settle these matters ... without having an appeal to Parliament" (to Canning, 10 October 1860(2)). Between 1861 and 1865, he fought successfully a number of attempts to have the claims of Azim Jah, pretender to the Nawabship of the Carnatic, discussed in parliament, or referred to the Privy Council, or to a select committee of the Commons (25 July 1861, Hansard, clxiv, col. 1508; 26 February 1863, clxix, cols. 802ff.; 13 June 1864, clxxv, cols. 1641-69; 14 March 1865, clxxvii, cols. 1664ff.). In June 1864, he answered Stanley's plea for the judicial determination of the case thus: "The claim of the Rajah of Mysore, & that of Azeem Jah rest upon treaties which are nearly identical in their wording and arrangement. The circumstances of the two cases are singularly parallel as you will see by the enclosed paper. I do not see how you can ... refer the interpretation in one case to the Privy Council, & not the other.... If I admit the claim of Azeem Jah founded on the Carnatic Treaty, I must admit that of the Rajah of Mysore founded on the Mysore Treaty" (letter of 19 June 1864; see W.P. 96 for a copy of "the enclosed paper"). On 10 May 1865, Wood gave Denison details of a scheme "to get... [Azim Jah] out of the way." He was prepared to pay highly. "It has," he explained, "a nasty look when we are judge, jury & executioner, & besides that take all the goods" (to Denison, 25 May 1865). The

government." "All experience," he continued, "is against it & if it is possible it is only possible with small states."¹⁵⁰

Yet Northcote's despatch envisaged such an arrangement for Mysore: "You had," Wood insisted, "such treaties with Mysore and Oude and you were compelled to administer one and annex the other by the grossly tyrannical conduct of the native rulers." The "worst governed districts" of British India were "infinitely better governed than any native states."¹⁵¹ Wood was not merely trying to rationalize his Mysore policy by this appeal. He was giving sincere expression to the same conceit that underlay his attitude towards the employment of Indians. It was fundamental to his

¹⁴⁸ (contd)

first condition of the "arrangement" was to be Azim Jah's renunciation of all claims to the Nawabship. Wood was always prepared to deal generously with deposed dignitaries whom he wished to dissolve in the general society of India, but, as it were, "out of court".

¹⁴⁹ Halifax to Northcote, 19 April 1867.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Halifax to Northcote, 24 April 1867. Wood gave as an ancillary reason for opposing Northcote's reversal of earlier rulings on the case his "strong opinion against ... yielding to the pressure or influence of the agency which the Rajah has put in motion." He was referring to a petition of some 7000 signatories, pressing for permitting the Raja to adopt to the raj (Mysore Pap., pp. 536-7). Wood claimed to be disturbed at this manoeuvre because of the finding of a select committee of the Commons that Azim Jah had employed agents in London who paid a penny per signature to petitions for the revival of the Nawabship of the Carnatic (Report of S.C. on Azeem Jah Signatures, 28 April 1865, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1865, viii, pp. 289-90). The success of the Raja of Mysore would, in Wood's view, encourage "the fashion ... for Englishmen to put themselves at the disposition of Indian princes etc at high pay to bring pressure on the Home Government."

view of Britain's obligations in India.¹⁵²

The treatment of the claims of the Raja of Mysore, between 1861 and 1866, throws into relief the expedient nature of the policy of adoption after the mutiny. Canning, Elgin and Lawrence all denied, peremptorily, the right to adopt to the raj, and Wood, relieved, by the concurrence of Stanley, from anxiety about parliamentary opposition, supported them. The persistence of the independent Indian states rested upon Britain's need for allies in India. The same necessity was an important element in determining British land policy after the mutiny, when large and influential landholders were, like the ruling sovereigns, treated with greater consideration than previously.¹⁵³ Imperial diplomacy within India was influenced by no such doctrine as the right of the states to determine their internal policies. The benefit of British rule was assumed. As with the decision not to intercede in Afghanistan or Bhutan, so within India policy towards independent principalities was based upon a calculation of strategic advantages. Britain needed friends on the frontier and supporters in the states. The Mysore case shows that, given a favourable political climate, the statesmen responsible for

¹⁵² Cf. Canning, who wrote in the adoption despatch of "the greater purity and enlightenment of our administration, its higher tone, and its surer promise of future benefit to the people [of India], as compared with any Native Government."

¹⁵³ See below, ch. 9.

India were prepared to enlarge the Indian empire.

A study of Wood's diplomacy shows how the Indian empire begat annexation. It may be said, with justice, that Wood was not eager to enlarge the empire. Yet the Mysore case reveals that the temptation towards consolidation, once British military and civil authority had been established in a state, did not fade after the mutiny. As time passed, the circumstances for extending Britain's direct rule within India became unfavourable. Other great powers developed imperial aspirations and Britain's attention became increasingly absorbed with protecting the purchase of India which she had already acquired. Whilst the "forward" school of frontier theorists believed that this pointed to advances in Afghanistan, Wood, Lawrence, and the Whig/Liberal party clung to the "friends on the frontier" theory.¹⁵⁴ In the mid 'seventies, Wood drew the old antithesis between peace and improvement on the one hand and war and stagnation on the other, contrasting the creation of an Empress of India and the "Imperial policy" of Disraeli, Lytton and Salisbury, with "looking after the 'moral & material progress' of India, as we benighted subjects of a Queen used to do."¹⁵⁵ With the coming of the second Afghan war, he deplored the government's "jingo" tendencies and was

¹⁵⁴ Halifax Pap., B.M.Add.MS. 49561, passim.

¹⁵⁵ Halifax to Gladstone, 24 November 1874, Gladstone Pap., B.M.Add.MS. 44186, fols. 80-3.

"beginning to be ashamed of being an Englishman."¹⁵⁶ However, he had no qualms about annexation if it would demonstrably secure Britain's approaches to India. In 1875, he commended Disraeli's purchase of Suez Canal shares. "I can hardly doubt," he wrote to Gladstone, "... that if from the state of Egypt or from other political grounds, there was a danger of ... [the canal] being closed, we should be prepared in the ultimate necessity to go to war & even to annex Egypt in order to ensure that the Canal should be open to us at all times and for all purposes."¹⁵⁷ "We cannot," he averred, "be subject to having it closed ... in the event of a second mutiny."¹⁵⁸ The next year, he pointed out to Gladstone the advantages of occupying Crete:

It would be a counterblast to Russian occupation of Constantinople, &, if there is a decent harbour, afford effectual protection to our communication with India through Egypt. It would be a serious matter to have Russian cruisers issuing from the Dardanelles & interrupting our troop ships, in the event of war in India.¹⁵⁹

And two years later, he advocated the annexation of Cyprus to secure the sea route to India.¹⁶⁰ The logic of an imperial diplomacy, which aimed at consolidation, defence and peace, could lead Britain to participate in the scramble for new territory which took place during the Victorian twilight.

¹⁵⁶ Halifax to Gladstone, 27 November 1878, *ibid.*, fol. 135.

¹⁵⁷ Halifax to Gladstone, 11 December 1875, *ibid.*, fols. 91-2.

¹⁵⁸ Halifax to Gladstone, 14 December 1875, *ibid.*, fols. 95-8.

¹⁵⁹ Halifax to Gladstone, 21 October 1876, *ibid.*, fols. 105-9.

¹⁶⁰ Halifax to Gladstone, 11 July 1878, *ibid.*, fol. 117.

Chapter 9

Land Tenures and Revenue Settlement

After the mutiny, land policy was reappraised in the light of Britain's apparent need for Indian friends who could strengthen her raj. Like the ruling prince, the landlord was now recognized more clearly as possessing an influence in Indian society which might be turned to England's advantage. He was treated with a consideration which he had seldom enjoyed since the days of Cornwallis. This is not to suggest that the political motive displaced the objects of social and economic reform as determinants of land policy. Neither does it imply that the political motive operated uniformly to the benefit of the landlord and to the exclusion of peasants' rights which had previously been guarded with care. These disclaimers merit some emphasis, if only because Dr T.R. Metcalf has recently drawn two over-sharp antitheses - the one, between the influence of the reforming impulse upon land policy before the mutiny and that of political expediency after it; the other, between the tendency of the political motive to favour the landlord and that of the reforming impulse to operate to the peasant's benefit.¹

¹"The Influence of the Mutiny of 1857 on Land Policy in India", Historical Journal, IV, 2 (1961), pp. 152-63; "The Struggle Over Land Tenure in India, 1860-1868", Journal of Asian Studies, XXI (May 1962), pp. 295-307.

For more than a generation before the mutiny, Indian officials refused to accept as a precedent the arrangements which Lord Cornwallis had made in Bengal for the tenure of the land and the settlement of the land revenues.² Cornwallis had approached land settlement with the preconceptions of a Whig gentleman. In 1793, he secured the land titles of the zemindari, thereby establishing a class of landlords, with whom he proceeded to make a permanent settlement of the land revenues. By assuring the landlord of a transferable and heritable right to land, and by fixing the extent of the revenue which the state would demand in respect of it, Cornwallis hoped to stimulate agricultural enterprise. He failed, however, to secure the customary rights of underpropriators and occupying cultivators. The actual occupiers of the soil lost their security of tenure, and with it their incentive to improve their holdings. Their position was aggravated when, as often happened, the zemindar sold his title to an investor with no knowledge of agriculture. The land often fell under the control of rack-renting middlemen. Cornwallis's omission to secure any rights apart from the zemindar's meant that his settlement gave rise to a rentier class oppressing an

²Cornwallis's settlement has been discussed recently by E. Stokes (op. cit., pp. 5-8) and B.B. Misra (The Indian Middle Classes, Oxford 1961, pp. 128-35).

impoverished tenantry, rather than to improving landlords supervising a programme of agricultural development.³

In Madras, Bombay, the North West Provinces and the Punjab, settlements were neither made permanent nor arranged with the zemindars. Where Cornwallis had been careless with peasants' rights his successors preserved them carefully, making their settlements, for varying periods, direct with the ryot or the village community. The determinants of policy became numerous. Ricardian rent theory, reinforced by the experience of the Bengal settlement, played a part in convincing officials that the landlord was a parasite, living off the "unearned increment" in the value of the land.⁴ Romanticism, seeing justification for a peasant proprietorship in Indian tradition, influenced the development of an official paternalism, though it could, and did for a time, enter into an alliance with the spirit of Burke to prop up the aristocracy.⁵ Utilitarianism, which had many adherents within the Indian administration, regarded the direct levy of low taxes upon the peasantry as the course most conducive to economic regeneration. From the eighteen-twenties, there grew, with the passing of time, a tendency to disregard the rights of the landlord.

Occasionally, before the mutiny, a voice was heard to dissent

³B.B. Misra, op. cit.; H.V. Lovett, "District Administration in Bengal, 1818-1858", ch. II in C.H.I., VI, pp. 29-31.

⁴Stokes, op. cit., pp. 75-93.

⁵Ibid., pp. xvi, 15-18.

from the prevailing policy. Henry Lawrence stood against the paternalism of his brother John to assert that the argument from tradition led logically to a policy of preserving the Indian "aristocracy".⁶ The Manchester school, observing a high level of rural poverty in Madras, which, they believed, inhibited the growth of cotton, were critical of the ryotwari settlement.⁷ Wood agreed that the ryot in Madras was overburdened with taxes, and favoured the appointment of a commission to review settlement policy in the presidency.⁸ Further, his Whiggish conviction of the importance of the landlord class in society led him to question the wisdom of dispossessing it of its property and depriving it of its status. He wrote to Dalhousie that he could "not wish to see the reduction of the whole population to one uniform condition and that a low one."⁹ It was "impossible not to feel that the class which ... [saw] itself annihilated by our superiority should not be discontented." He disliked, therefore, "the levelling process which ... [left] nothing between the Government and the cultivator."¹⁰ He wanted "to maintain the [existing] order of society" whilst

⁶ Ibid., pp. 17-18, 248, 268.

⁷ Wood to Lord Falkland (Governor of Bombay), 24 June 1853, W.P.; Hansard, cxxxv, 11 July 1854, cols. 43-86; see also E. Stokes, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 128.

⁸ Wood to Dalhousie, 24 December 1853, W.P.

⁹ Letter of 24 April 1854, W.P. Wood was writing about the form of government to be adopted in the newly-annexed state of Nagpur.

¹⁰ Letter of 24 May 1854, W.P.

"introducing the order and honesty of the English service."¹¹
 The "native machinery" should be reformed and the landlord associated not only with the settlement of the revenues but also with the administration of justice. As he esteemed local self-government in England, so in India he thought "the old fashioned quasi-patriarchal govt., where the chief administered the law," was preferable to a thorough-going bureaucracy.¹² However, Wood's ideas did not impress Dalhousie.¹³ In Oudh, the last province to be settled before the mutiny, the talugdars were swept aside, and a village settlement of the type that Lieutenant-Governor Thomason had established in the North West Provinces was introduced.¹⁴

In 1858, Canning issued a proclamation confiscating the property rights of the talugdars of Oudh.¹⁵ Contrary to the general expectation, the step was made the preliminary to a new settlement with the old aristocracy.¹⁶ The original settlement with the village proprietors was overridden. Canning regarded it as a failure. During the mutiny, the peasants of Oudh "had shown

¹¹Letter of 24 April.

¹²Wood to Sir G.C. Lewis, 20 August 1853, Halifax Pap., B.M.Add.MS. 49531, fols. 213-16.

¹³Dalhousie to Wood, 13 July 1854, W.P.

¹⁴B.R. Misra, Land Revenue Policy in the United Provinces..., Benares 1942, pp. 98-101.

¹⁵Printed in Maclagan, 'Clemency' Canning, pp. 183-5.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 183, 187.

neither gratitude nor a wish to preserve their position."¹⁷ Wood received word of the new settlement when it had been virtually accomplished. He had originally defended the Oudh proclamation on the assumption that Canning intended to reimpose the village settlement.¹⁸ During his term at the Board of Control, he had, notwithstanding his misgivings, accepted the authority of Indian officials as to the suitability of the village system for Indian conditions.¹⁹ Now his predilection for administering through the landlord gained strength from Canning's exposure of the failure of the village system. From the experience of Oudh, he drew the "conclusion ... that we ought to adopt and improve what we find in existence & avail ourselves as far as possible of the existing institutions of the country." "We must," he wrote, "try to carry the natives with us and use them."²⁰ He did "not doubt the policy of ... [Canning's talugdari] settlement in Oude" and gave it his official approval.²¹

In approving the talugdari settlement in Oudh, Wood was unquestionably concerned with the political advantage of making friends among the powerful classes in Indian society. "It seems

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 207.

¹⁸ Hansard, cl, 17 May 1858, col. 773.

¹⁹ He appointed Thomason Governor of Madras in "recognition of his services in the N.W., just before he died" (Wood to Lawrence, 31 December 1864, W.P.).

²⁰ Wood to Canning, 10 October 1859, W.P.

²¹ Sec. of State to Gov.-Gen.-in Counc., 24 April (Political No. 33) 1860.

to me," he wrote to Canning early in 1860, "that one of the great desiderata in India is to enlist on our side ... those Natives who have, from their birth or their position, a natural influence in the country."²² England should enlist the support of "those men who have some sort of influence which they can use for or against us."²³ The tendency of her government in the past had been to "reduce the natural gentry and persons of hereditary and family influence."²⁴ "We must," he argued, "be stronger with the natural chiefs and leaders of the people attached to us, than leaving the people open to the persuasion and seduction of upstart leaders."²⁵ With his concern for the expediency of preserving the landlord class went a conviction of its necessity for the improvement of Indian society. The past policy of "levelling" society was "unnatural" and involved resting British rule upon force rather than upon consent. He contrasted the "Knock-me-down-school" of Thomason and John Lawrence with Canning's "conciliatory" policy.²⁶ The approach of the former required "an iron man like...[Lawrence] to make it work."²⁷ "We become," he reflected, "only a small ruling class, maintained in our

²²Letter of 3 January 1860, W.P.

²³Wood to Canning, 26 July 1860.

²⁴Wood to Canning, 18 April 1860.

²⁵Wood to Frere, 1 August 1862, W.P.

²⁶Wood to Canning, 31 August 1861.

²⁷Wood to Elgin, 26 June 1862, W.P.

position by an European garrison; and we do nothing to improve the people or attach them to us."²⁸ "The dead level between our officers & the people is," he claimed, "an unnatural state of society, and surely it must be better in any country ... to endeavour to work with, improve as far as you can, but conciliate to our rule the existing state of society."²⁹ His approach to the talugdari settlement was governed not only by his calculation of Britain's political advantage, but also by his traditionalist's conviction that social reform must be achieved by inducing the improvement of the existing social order.

Though Wood himself favoured the new policy in Oudh, a number of the members of the Council of India were opposed to it. Lawrence and Sir Frederick Currie believed that the talugdars had, in recent times, acquired land by usurpation.³⁰ By restoring such lands to them, without regard to the claims of the original proprietors, Canning had, they argued, sanctioned injustices. Further, Canning not only settled the revenues with the talugdars but also gave to some of them magisterial powers and revenue

²⁸Wood to Trevelyan, 9 April 1860, W.P.

²⁹Wood to Frere, 1 August 1862, W.P. Wood appealed to the traditionalism of Mountstuart Elphinstone and Henry Lawrence in defence of the new policy of improving "upon the existing basis" rather than producing "a tabulam rasam" (Wood to Ellice, 26 July 1862, Ellice Papers).

³⁰Wood to Canning, 18 April 1860, W.P.

jurisdiction over their estates.³¹ He had, in fact, maintained the "native machinery" of administration as Wood had, in 1854, suggested that Dalhousie might. As a Whig gentleman, with a refined appreciation of the institution of local self-government, Wood was not disposed to view this delegation of administrative powers to local magnates other than with favour. But it ran against the grain of paternalism, which was admired by many of his Councillors. Lawrence and Currie objected to Canning's "having given to the talookdars revenue jurisdiction which, they affirm[ed], ... [enabled] them to decide in cases, with hardly any power of appeal or opportunity of revision, where they ... [had] themselves a clear pecuniary interest."³² They were even more disturbed when Canning extended limited revenue and magisterial jurisdiction to some of the sirdars in the Punjab,³³ the stronghold of paternalism. Lawrence contended that "very few [of the sirdars were] fit to be trusted."³⁴

The despatch which approved the talugdari settlement reflected

³¹Sec. to Govt. of India to Chief Commr. of Oudh, 2 November 1859, Oudh Pap., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xlvi, p. 432; Gov. Gen. in Counc. to Sec. of State, 3 July (Foreign No. 62) 1860, *ibid.*, p. 446 ff.; Maclagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-300.

³²Wood to Canning, 10 January 1862. Lawrence wrote to Currie in 1864: "You know how anxiously I worked when in Council at home - and in concurrence with yourself - to mitigate the evils of the Talukdari policy, whilst assenting to that policy as a fait accompli" (cited in R.B. Smith's Lawrence, II, p. 557).

³³G.G. in C. to S. of S., 9 May 1860, Coll. to Political Desp. to India, Vol. 30; Canning to Wood, 6 December 1859 and 27 February 1860.

³⁴Wood to Canning, 3 August 1860.

the influence of the paternalist school in the Council of India. It observed that "a measure might have been adopted which would not have given to the talooqdars the benefits of acts of spoliation and usurpation, which appear in many cases to have taken place."³⁵ The despatch which approved Canning's extension of administrative authority to the talugdars required that their revenue jurisdiction "ought not to extend to cases in which they are personally interested."³⁶ Further, Wood cautioned Canning "against transferring villages to sirdar jurisdiction without due regard to the rights and wishes of the inhabitants."³⁷ Wood was concerned at the number of reservations with which his official approval of Canning's land policy was conveyed to India. He was, as he remarked later, "unwilling to interfere materially with what Lord Canning had done & was doing."³⁸ It was "undeniable that the object of Lord Canning's policy was to set up a native gentry or aristocracy in the shape of the talookdars."³⁹ Wood was fully prepared to approve that policy "with the full knowledge & admission that the sanction

³⁵ Political Despatch of 24 April 1860. For alterations made to drafts of the despatch to accommodate the views of Lawrence and Currie, see Collections to Political Despatches to India, Vol. 16.

³⁶ Sec. of State to Gov.-Gen. in Council, 17 August (Political No. 105) 1861.

³⁷ Wood to Canning, 6 September (No. 2) 1860; see also Wood to Canning, 24 September 1860 (No. 2), and S. of S. to Gov.-Gen. in Council, 20, September (Political No. 75) 1860.

³⁸ Wood to Lawrence, 15 April 1865, W.P.

³⁹ Wood to Lawrence, 25 January 1865, W.P.

given did sanction acts of usurpation & spoliation."⁴⁰ However, because of the influence of the Political Committee his official approval was conveyed without warmth. He explained the reserved tone of the despatches to Canning. Four of the five "political councillors" were "a good deal of the old school of the strong hand against Native chiefs and gentlemen."⁴¹ One of them, Currie, drafted most of the Oudh despatches. Though Wood could "correct & keep straight the general policy, it ... [was] very difficult to keep the detailed parts of the despatches what they should be."⁴² Here was an instance of him using his official influence with the Viceroy in what was, strictly speaking, an unconstitutional manner, to advance a policy which he admired.

With regard to the Oudh settlement, Wood was concerned that the property rights which parties other than the talugdars might hold should not be sacrificed. Soon after assuming office, he told the Commons that the settlement would afford "protection to the village proprietors."⁴³ The despatch approving the settlement impressed upon Canning the need to "provide for the protection of the underproprietors," who held an "intermediate interest ...

⁴⁰ Wood to Lawrence, '18 January 1865, W.P.

⁴¹ Wood to Canning, 18 June 1861; see also Wood to Canning, 9 January 1861.

⁴² Wood to Canning, 18 June 1861. See also Wood's letter to Canning of 17 May 1861 (3), in which he expressed delight at Canning's "Talookdars and Sirdars administering justice ... satisfactorily."

⁴³ Hansard, cliv, 1 July 1859, col. 538.

between the talooqdar and the ryot." Again, it required "the maintenance of the rights of the village communities." A subsequent despatch sought information on the measures being taken to protect the "rights of underpropriators."⁴⁴ A third followed up the enquiry when no reply was received from India.⁴⁵ When Lawrence went out as Viceroy in 1864, he alleged that traditional rights of occupancy, or tenant rights, had been sacrificed in Oudh.⁴⁶ Certainly, no provision was made in the despatches from home for the protection of tenant rights. In 1865, Wood claimed that he was "not, in 1860, ... alive to the tenant question," and that "all ... [he] understood at that time was that the question lay between the talookdars & the underpropriators."⁴⁷ He believed that nobody in England, "except perhaps" Lawrence, was aware that occupancy rights might exist in Oudh, and contended that "certainly [the question] was never brought to ... [his] knowledge."⁴⁸ Even Currie, Wood wrote in 1865, admitted that when he was drafting the Oudh despatches he had only the rights of the underpropriators "in his head" and gave no thought to tenant rights.⁴⁹ Wood's

⁴⁴S. of S. to Gov.-Gen. in Counc., 17 August (Political, 105) 1861.

⁴⁵S. of S. to Gov.-Gen. in Counc., 9 June (Revenue, 12) 1863.

⁴⁶Sec. to Govt. of India to Ch. Commr. of Oudh, 17 February 1864, in Further Oudh Papers, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1865, xl, pp. 200-1; Lawrence to Wood, 28 June 1864.

⁴⁷Wood to Lawrence, 15 April 1865.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Wood to Lawrence, 3 February 1865, W.P.

attitude towards rights of occupation cannot be judged only by reference to the despatch of 1860, but must be appraised in the light of his reaction to the question when Lawrence raised it clearly in ^{the} 1864-66 period.

Lawrence believed, with some justice, that Canning, like Wood, misunderstood the question of tenant right, and that in carrying through the talugdari settlement he relied upon the experience and skill of the Chief Commissioner of Oudh, Sir Charles Wingfield.⁵⁰ Wingfield regarded "a title of permanent occupancy at any unvarying rent ... [as] an invasion of the rights of property and a clog on enterprise and improvement." He denied the existence of a basis for such a right in Indian custom. Further, he held that in view of the shortage of cultivators in Oudh, the creation of rights would "demonstrate a wanton spirit of meddling."⁵¹ Accordingly, he directed his settlement officers to make "no distinction in the records between cultivators at fixed rates and cultivators at will."⁵² In January 1861, Canning approved "generally" of this direction.⁵³ Lawrence saw his problem as one

⁵⁰Minute of 27 September 1864 (Further Oudh Pap., pp. 284-6); see also Lawrence to Wood, 17 November 1867, W.P. 110; Lawrence to Capt. W.J. Eastwick, 16 March 1865, cited in Smith's Lawrence, II, 557-9.

⁵¹Record of Rights circular, submitted by Wingfield to Canning in September 1860, and issued on 29 January 1861 (Further Oudh Pap., pp. 137-41); Wingfield to Wood, 17 July 1865, W.P. 95.

⁵²Record of Rights circular.

⁵³Sec. to Govt. of India to Ch. Commr. of Oudh, 8 January 1861, Further Oudh Pap., pp. 141-2.

of rescuing customary rights which, through the imperfect understanding of Wood and Canning, Wingfield had been able to consign to destruction. His first thought was to introduce legislation to protect any customary rights of occupation which might be established.⁵⁴ However, Maine pointed out that this would be to assume the existence of occupancy rights in Oudh. Surely the initial step should be to set up an enquiry to ascertain the facts of the case.⁵⁵ In September 1864, Lawrence acted on this advice by appointing R.H. Davies as Financial Commissioner of Oudh, charged with investigating the traditional rights of proprietors and tenants.⁵⁶

Wood was immediately uneasy about the effect upon the talugdars of Lawrence's criticisms of the settlement. "Pray be careful about the Oude settlement," he wrote on 1 September 1864. "Canning may have gone too far, & I daresay that Wingfield has exaggerated in practice what Canning intended, but it would have a very bad effect to reverse all that has been done do not do anything which will shake the confidence of the chiefs in the permanence of the general arrangements."⁵⁷ Though he was not opposed to the enquiry which Lawrence commissioned, he "did object to the mode

⁵⁴ Minute by Gov.-Gen., 20 June 1864, *ibid.*, pp. 260-6.

⁵⁵ Minute by Maine, 10 July 1864, *ibid.*, pp. 272-7.

⁵⁶ A copy of Lawrence's instructions to Davies, dated 15 September 1864, appears as an enclosure to Wood to Stanley, 10 April 1865, W.P. 76.

⁵⁷ Wood to Lawrence, 1 September 1864.

in which he set about it."⁵⁸ On 18 January 1865, he wrote to Lawrence that there could be "no question of considerable alarm having been created among the Talookdars, & an apprehension that the settlement sanctioned by Lord Canning is to be upset." Soon afterwards he reproved Lawrence. As he had "the reputation of being hostile to the Native Gentry, & opposed to Lord Canning's policy in respect to them it behoved ... [him] not to lay ... [himself] open to the imputation of setting to work to upset them."⁵⁹ He had needlessly "excited ... apprehension" by allowing Davies, who had been "Punjabee trained in the levelling school", to create the impression that he was not merely investigating occupancy rights but encouraging "claims" to them.⁶⁰ Wood's despatch on the question required that "every consideration should be shown to the talooqdars, so as not in any way to lower their position in the eyes

⁵⁸ Halifax to Ripon, 5 April 1883, B.M.Add.MS. 43530, fols. 195-6. Wood was here commenting upon R.B. Smith's account of the tenant right controversy in Oudh (Lawrence, op. cit., II, pp. 556-60). Smith, he complained, "made me an opponent of Lawrence's support of the ryots in Oude." In 1883, Wood rummaged through his letters of 1864-6 and redrafted Smith's account to give a more accurate version of his policy (W.P. 103). He sent the draft to Smith, who, Wood noted, "undertook to put me right in the third edition." Smith did incorporate some of Wood's wording in later editions of the biography (e.g. 1912 edn., pp. 522-5).

⁵⁹ Wood to Lawrence, 3 February 1865.

⁶⁰ See Davies to all commissioners in Oudh, 24 October 1864, Further Oudh Pap., pp. 346-7. In his despatch of 10 February (Political No. 3) 1865, Wood complained that Davies' procedure "appears to carry with it the assumption that this class of tenants, with permanent rights, does exist." (*ibid.*, pp. 347-51).

of the country."⁶¹ At the same time, he was prepared for Lawrence to "modify the [Oudh settlement] policy as much as ... [was] necessary to save the ryot from oppression."⁶² He granted that "the claim of the ryot founded on long continued custom ... [was] a valid one."⁶³ If customary rights of occupation existed they must be preserved.⁶⁴ Whilst Wood was anxious not to lose the political advantage of the talugdari settlement, he was genuinely concerned to safeguard the property rights of other parties. He was willing to support Lawrence in repairing any damage to the customary rights of tenants that Wingfield might have done.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Ibid. Wood had difficulty with the despatch in Council, where there was considerable apprehension that it would upset the talugdars. Three members voted against it and three abstained. "I had," he wrote, "to put it in shape myself, with a good deal of care in order to carry the nine with me" (Wood to Lawrence, 27 March 1865; see dissents and opinions of members of Council, Further Oudh Pap., pp. 351-67; see also S. N. Singh, op. cit., p. 112).

Wood smoothed matters over in the Commons by appealing to the loose wording of the sanads which, ironically, Wingfield had, with Canning's approval, issued to the talugdars (Hansard, clxxvii, 10 February 1865, col. 138; Canning-Wingfield correspondence and "Form of Sunnud" in Oudh Pap., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xlvi, pp. 427-9). The sanads had told the talugdars that "all holding under you should be secured in the possession of all the subordinate rights they formerly enjoyed." Wood was well aware that Wingfield had not intended these words to refer to the tenantry (Wood to Lawrence, 27 March 1865). However, he told Lawrence that he was "quite prepared to maintain that the sunnuds cover rights of occupancy & that it was your duty to see that everything which the sunnuds cover, was preserved" (3 February 1865).

⁶² Wood to Trevelyan, 18 September 1864, W.P.

⁶³ Wood to Maine, 2 January 1865, W.P.

⁶⁴ Wood to Maine, 7 January 1865; Wood to Lawrence, 10 February 1865.

⁶⁵ Wood to Lawrence, 10 March 1865; Wood to Wingfield, 10 May 1865, W.P.

In the event, Davies discovered that "previous to annexation no ... [tenant] right was or could be claimed by the cultivator."⁶⁶

Unlike Lawrence, Wood was not prepared to create rights of occupation. To do so would, he believed, wrongfully deprive the taluqdar of the means of exacting the costs of agricultural improvement from the tenant.⁶⁷

Wood's treatment of the Oudh land question was inspired by political expediency tempered with concern to safeguard traditional property rights and to provide the conditions in which agricultural improvement might take place. A similar complex of motives lay behind his acceptance, in July 1862, of the principle of extending the permanent settlement throughout India. In that instance, Britain's political advantage was recognized as extending beyond the creation of friends among the landlords to securing the attachment to the government of property holders generally. The weakening of paternalism and the reappraisal of the landlord's position in Indian society may have prepared the climate of opinion for a sympathetic reassessment of the settlement policy by which Cornwallis had hoped to stimulate agriculture. What precipitated the re-evaluation of the permanent settlement was Colonel R. Baird

⁶⁶ R.H. Davies to Ch. Commr. of Oudh, 19 June 1865, cited in T.R. Metcalf, J.A.S. article, p. 302, n.1; Hansard, clxxx, col. 447.

⁶⁷ Wood to Lawrence, 7 April 1866; see also letters to Lawrence of 10 February, 27 March and 3 April 1865. After Wood's departure from office, Lawrence did provide for the security of the tenures of a small class of "ancient proprietors" who still occupied their lands as cultivators (Lawrence to Wood, 1 September 1866, W.P., 110).

Smith's report on the famine which afflicted northern India during 1860.⁶⁸ Smith found that areas of the North West Provinces which had been subject to long term settlements were more prosperous than those subject to reassessment at short intervals. He recommended the permanent settlement of the land revenues as a means of increasing agricultural prosperity, thereby strengthening the country's resistance to famine. The government's surrender of its right to enhance the assessments would, he argued, be offset by the greater ability of the country to bear other forms of taxation. Canning was impressed by Smith's reasoning and was disposed to favour a permanent settlement.⁶⁹ Wood referred the question to a committee of his Council⁷⁰ and discussed it at great length with individual Councillors.⁷¹ Lawrence favoured the permanent settlement, and a despatch approving the principle was issued with only two dissentients.⁷²

The authors of the permanent settlement despatch expected that

⁶⁸ Further Report on the Famine of 1860-61 in the N.W. Provinces, 14 August 1861, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xl, pp. 351-415, see esp. pp. 376-8, 381-6.

⁶⁹ Canning to Wood, 8 October 1861; Wood to Elgin, 10 February 1862; W.P. Hansard, clxviii, 17 July 1862, cols. 454-5.

⁷⁰ Wood to Canning, 3 December 1861, W.P.; Minutes of Council of India, Vol. 9, 3 July 1862.

⁷¹ Lawrence's evidence before a Select Cttee. on East Indian Finance, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1873, xii, para. 4557; Hansard, clxvi, 23 May 1862, col. 2146.

⁷² Opinions and dissents of members of Council of India, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xl, pp. 855-68. R.C. Dutt has reproduced and discussed sections of the documents relative to the permanent settlement decision (The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age, London [1903] 4th ed., pp. 273-87).

fixing the state's demand for revenue would encourage the investment of capital in the land.⁷³ "A ready and popular mode of investment for the increasing wealth of the country ... [would] be provided by the creation of property in land..." The "feeling of ownership ... [would] call out ... energies for [agricultural] improvement." A more prosperous people would, as Smith had contended, "bear increased taxation without difficulty." The despatch referred to Cornwallis's settlement, claiming that "the general progress of ... [Bengal] in wealth and prosperity, notwithstanding the depressed condition of the peasantry caused by errors and omissions in making the settlement, ... [had] been most remarkable." "Such errors," it asserted, "in the existing state of our knowledge, regarding the rights and interests of the subordinate occupants of the soil, would not be permitted to recur." Indeed, the aim would be to encourage "the gradual growth of a middle class connected with the land, without dispossessing the peasant proprietors and occupiers." By limiting the demand for revenue, "the intelligent, the thrifty, and the enterprising" among the latter classes would be given "the means of improving their condition." They would acquire property and improve it. The despatch contemplated, therefore, the transfer of property

⁷³ Sec. of State to Gov.-Gen. in Council, 9 July (Revenue No. 14) 1862.

titles from the existing landholders to two groups of purchasers.⁷⁴ Investors would buy estates and become members of a landed middle class. The ranks of the latter would be swelled by the accession of industrious sub-proprietors and tenants.

The despatch was, as Dr B.B. Misra has observed, laissez-faire in spirit.⁷⁵ The secret of agricultural improvement lay in the government's abstention from interference with profits. Existing rights to land should be protected, for, by so doing, the self-improvement of the tenant and the occupier would be stimulated. It is clear, however, why Wood was not prepared to create rights of occupancy in Oudh. For that would have inhibited the free transfer of land. The despatch also claimed that the policy of extending the permanent settlement had large "political advantages."⁷⁶ Landholders would become attached "to the Government by whom so great a boon ... [had] been conceded." The new landed middle class would be "well affected towards the Government" to whom they owed their position. And the security which the despatch promised to the agricultural classes generally could not but ensure their loyalty.

⁷⁴Wood recognized that "the extrusion of the old landowners by the monied men ... [was] inevitable" if improvement was to occur. He was "not disposed to look on it otherwise than favourably" (Wood to Canning, 18 November 1861, W.P.).

⁷⁵B.B. Misra, op. cit., p. 263.

⁷⁶Wood alluded to the "great political advantages" of the policy in a letter to Elgin (19 May 1862, W.P.), and in the House of Commons (Hansard, clxviii, 17 July 1862, col. 455).

Further, the acceleration of "the development of the resources of India", which the policy was calculated to achieve, would contribute, "in the highest degree [to] the ... contentment of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects." In short, the despatch described a settlement policy which combined the objectives of protecting property rights, providing for agricultural improvement and attaching the landed classes to British rule.

The full flavour of Wood's policy was drawn out by his treatment of resolutions which Canning published for the sale of waste lands and the redemption of portion of the land revenues.⁷⁷ In this case, Wood used his overriding authority to disallow a policy on the grounds that it was careless of property rights, that it disregarded the discontent which would be aroused among Indians, and that it was quite inadequate as a measure of economic reform. Canning's resolutions were the outcome of an investigation, which Stanley had asked the Viceroy to make, into the feasibility of selling India's waste lands in fee simple, and of compounding the revenues payable on such lands into a single cash payment.⁷⁸ In 1858, a parliamentary committee had reported upon the suitability

⁷⁷ Resolutions of Gov.-Gen. in Council, of 17 October 1861, authorising the sale of waste lands in fee simple, and permitting the redemption of the existing land revenues in perpetuity, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xl, pp. 669-76.

⁷⁸ Stanley to Canning, 8 September 1858, cited in Maclagan, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

of India for European colonization,⁷⁹ and Stanley had received approaches from people interested in the growth of cotton and other exportable products."⁸⁰

Canning issued his resolutions in October 1861, without consulting the home government. An intending purchaser might apply for a title over unoccupied land at a uniform price of 5s. per acre for uncleared, or 10s. per acre for cleared areas. He might pay for the land by instalments spread over a ten year period, and, under certain conditions, might have adjoining lands reserved for his later purchase. A title would be issued after a lapse of thirty days, provided that no claim to ownership of the land was lodged. After the purchase, no claimant to ownership might have the land restored to him, though he might be awarded compensation if he proved ownership within a year. Future revenue demands on the lands might be commuted for a cash sum equivalent to twenty years' purchase of the annual assessment. Canning's redemption resolution was not specific to waste lands, but applied to lands in general, the only proviso being that no more than ten per cent of the revenues were to be commuted in any collectorate.

Wood regarded the arrangements as "improvident",⁸¹ and

⁷⁹Reports from Select Cttee. on Colonization and Settlement, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1857-8, vii (2 parts); see also reports of 1859, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), sess.1, iv, & sess 2, v.

⁸⁰Sec. of State to Gov.-Gen. in Council, 31 December 1858, in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xl, pp. 676-8.

⁸¹Wood to Canning, 10 February 1862.

far too favourable to intending English settlers.⁸² "The price for waste land must," he wrote to Canning, "vary exceedingly with the locality." It seemed foolish to sell land adjacent to the railway, for example, at the same price as land in remote districts. Again, redemption ought not to be allowed in areas where the assessment of the revenue had been carried out cursorily or hastily, but only "on settlements which may be assumed fairly to be final". And the number of years' purchase required for redemption ought to bear relation to the returns, in the form of interest, which the government could obtain from investing redemption payments.⁸³ The price of redemption "ought to be such as would purchase an annual sum in the Indian Securities equal to the ... land tax redeemed."⁸⁴ "If the funds are at 5 per cent, 20 years will do," he explained to Canning, "but if they come in a few years to 4 per cent, then obviously 25 years purchase should be paid."⁸⁵ Again, he was unable to see the redemption resolution as an intelligent approach to the problem of improving the land. He wrote to Elgin:

[It] would do either too much or too little. If it is only to introduce examples of British improvement it is too much; if it is to improve the general condition of the cultivator it is too little; nor do I see on what principles of justice you could refuse to the other

⁸²Wood to Canning, 3 December 1861.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Wood to Denison, 25 December 1861, W.P.

⁸⁵Wood to Canning, 3 December 1861.

9/10ths what is to be considered as a great boon to the 1/10th.⁸⁶

Further, he became conscious that Canning had failed to consider the implications of his measure for Indians' rights to lands which, though apparently unoccupied, were in fact used by villagers for pasturage, or were owned by absent cultivators. He told the Commons in May 1862:

The rights of the natives to these lands should be scrupulously observed and carefully guarded. My own opinion is, that the Resolutions do not take sufficient care to guard some of those rights.⁸⁷

Wood scolded Canning for being "rather too go ahead in publishing matters which require our sanction, before they have been sent home."⁸⁸ He warned Elgin that the home government would "have to desire very material alterations" to be made to the resolutions.⁸⁹ The despatch which approved the principle of the permanent settlement⁹⁰ indicated the changes that were required. Waste lands should be surveyed and put up for auction instead of being sold at a uniform price. It was observed that sales under the resolutions could not confer a valid and indefeasible title against the claims of parties who subsequently proved ownership. Under the existing statute of limitations a

⁸⁶ Wood to Elgin, 10 May 1862, W.P.

⁸⁷ Hansard, clxvi, 23 May 1862, col. 2146.

⁸⁸ Wood to Canning, 3 December 1861.

⁸⁹ Wood to Elgin, 18 February 1862.

⁹⁰ Op. cit.

claimant had twelve years in which to prove his rights.⁹¹ The despatch disallowed the redemption of the revenues, except in certain special cases. Wood was in fundamental disagreement with the policy for the sale of waste lands and the redemption of the land tax which Stanley had suggested and which Canning had attempted to introduce.⁹² He considered that the resolutions, like the penal law for breach of indigo contracts, had been "thrown out to propitiate the English community at Calcutta."⁹³ "The question upon both the Contract Law & the sale of Waste Lands," he told Elgin, "is between Englishmen & Natives. I consider it my duty to protect the native"⁹⁴ His attitude brought him into conflict with the Manchester Chamber of Commerce which,

⁹¹Wood wrote to Elgin that Canning "could not carry [the sale of waste lands resolution] into execution without legislative enactment" as "he could not shorten the prescriptive right by order of the Govt." (17 November 1862).

⁹²Two writers who have recently given accounts of the policy have failed to appreciate this fact. B.B. Misra, after writing of Stanley's espousal of the policy of redemption as a measure of reform, claimed that "Wood agreed with his predecessor" (op. cit., p. 260). M. Maclagan remarked that Canning's resolutions were "in the main accepted by Wood" (op. cit., pp. 280-81).

⁹³Wood to Elgin, 28 August 1862. On 30 October 1862, Wood told Elgin Canning that the waste lands resolution was "singularly defective in protecting native rights" and seemed "to have been framed on the representation or memorial of the Landowners' Association, who have no regard at all for such trifles." In a Memorial to the Government of India, dated 31 May 1861, the "Landowners and Commercial Association of British India" did press for the sale of waste lands for 5s. per acre in fee simple, the purchaser to obtain an indefeasible title after fifteen days (Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xl, pp. 844-7). See also the Association's letter to Wood, of 1 August 1862, expressing "regret and surprise" at his despatch (ibid., p. 863).

⁹⁴17 November 1862.

in November 1862, sent a deputation to Palmerston.⁹⁵ Manchester regarded "the refusal of the Indian Government to grant a secure and permanent tenure of land upon definite and equitable terms to any proposed purchaser" as one of the two main obstacles to the settlement of Europeans. The other was "the absence of any effective law for the enforcement of contracts." Canning, they complained, had attempted to remove both barriers, only to be overruled by Wood on each occasion.⁹⁶ In February 1863, Danby Seymour gave an "indefinite notice [of a motion] on the Sale of Waste Lands."⁹⁷ In March, the "Native Inhabitants of Calcutta" met to vote an address in appreciation of Wood's "enlightened statesmanship" in his handling of the waste lands and redemption resolutions and of the contract law question, and in providing for the permanent settlement to be extended throughout India.⁹⁸ Two months later, when Manchester launched its parliamentary attack on the alteration of Canning's resolutions, Wood defended his policy by asserting that it was in the interests of Englishmen, as well as of Indians, that existing rights to property be upheld. "If there was any single thing that would cause greater risk of insurrection than another," he claimed, "... it would be if a general feeling should be created ... that we were trifling with ...

⁹⁵ Manchester Examiner, 22 and 24 November 1862; Redford, op. cit., II, p. 15.

⁹⁶ Proceedings of Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 29 October 1862, cited in *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Wood to Elgin, 17 February 1863.

⁹⁸ Hindoo Patriot, 9 March 1863.

rights of property in Land."⁹⁹

While the controversy over Canning's resolutions was raging, the dispute between the indigo planters and their tenants took the form of a conflict over rights of occupancy. Frustrated by Wood's refusal to sanction a contract law, a number of English indigo planters issued court notices to increase the rents of tenants who refused to grow indigo during 1862. The rights of tenants holding land under the zemindars, in whose place the planters now stood, had been regulated by the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1859.¹⁰⁰ The Act, which set out to remedy the long standing abuses of the Cornwallis settlement, distinguished three classes of tenant. First, there were tenants who held land at fixed rents. Evidence of twenty years' occupancy at fixed rent was considered to be presumptive proof of the right. Next, there were tenants at will, who held their land at the landlord's pleasure, and only as long as they paid the rent which he demanded. Finally, there were those who possessed the right to occupy at favourable, but enhanceable rents, that is at rents somewhat below market levels. It was over this class of tenants that the Bengal rent

⁹⁹Hansard, clxx, 12 May 1863, col. 1656.

¹⁰⁰ Act X of the Gov.-Gen. in Council, 1859. A digest of the Act appears in C.D. Field, A Digest of the Law of Landlord and Tenant in ... Bengal, Calcutta 1879, see pp. xxviii-xxxv. For discussions on the Act, see B.R. Misra, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-10; and B.H. Baden-Powell, Land Systems of British India, 3 vols., Oxford 1892, I, pp. 641-8.

disputes raged in 1862. The Act had, by providing for twelve years' occupancy to be presumptive proof of a right to hold at a favourable rent, recognized that a large proportion of the tenants in Bengal possessed some equity in the lands which they occupied. The definition of this equity, that is of the extent to which rents should be favourable, was left to the courts. The planters' notices of rent increases in 1862 would, therefore, test the rights which the Act had conferred. A claim for a two-fold increase by one planter was soon rejected by a district judge, who ruled that the plaintiff must prove an increase in the value of the holding proportionate to the rent increase claimed. However, in September 1863, the planter (Hills) brought his suit against his tenant (Ghose) before the High Court at Calcutta.¹⁰¹

Sir Barnes Peacock, the Chief Justice, and two other Judges of the High Court recognised the tenant's right of occupancy at a "fair and equitable rent". However, they defined "fair and equitable" by reference only to existing market rates, thereby denying the tenant any proprietary interest in his holding. The judgment converted the tenant's right to occupy at an enhanceable but favourable rent into a preferential right of occupancy on

¹⁰¹Case of J. Hills v. Ishur Ghose, cited in A. West, Wood's Administration, pp. 58-9; and decisions of 24 September 1862 and 2 September 1863, in Decisions Under the Rent Laws of the High Court of Judicature from 1860 to 1863, Calcutta 1865, cited in T.R. Metcalf, J.A.S. article, p. 299 and n. 19.

the condition that he paid the prevailing market rent.¹⁰² Thus, in respect of rent, the tenant of twelve years' standing would be no better off than a tenant at will. Wood feared that "Peacock's decision ... [would] make a revolution in the tenure of land in India."¹⁰³ Though he described the decision as "monstrous",¹⁰⁴ he felt hamstrung by the fact that it was defensible at law. For Peacock had admitted that an hereditary right of occupancy at a "fair and equitable" rent belonged to tenants of twelve years' standing. And the Act, though it had made an increase in the value of the produce of a holding one of the conditions under which a rent increase might be granted, had omitted to make the extent of the latter proportionate to the

¹⁰²Peacock entered in his decision: "The present case is that of a ryot having a mere right of occupancy It is a mistake to suppose that such a ryot has any interest in the land, which gives him a right to a share of the rent. He has merely a right to occupy the land in preference to any other tenant so long as he pays a fair and equitable rent." Again: "His right of occupancy gives him a right to occupy at a fair and equitable rate; but, when an alteration in the rent is to be made in consequence of an increase in the value of the produce, he is not entitled ... to have it fixed at a lower rate than that which a tenant not having a right of occupancy would give for it." (Cited in C.D. Field, op. cit., pp. 233-4, n.2.) See Wood to Maine, 30 October 1863, W.P.

¹⁰³Wood to Trevelyan, 10 November 1863, W.P.

¹⁰⁴Wood to Trevelyan, 16 November 1863, W.P.

former. In Hills v. Ghose the judge had appealed to the principle of proportion, but Peacock had overthrown it and appealed to political economy.¹⁰⁵ Wood might well reflect that "dry law" was "not a good dose to be administered to Orientals" by English tribunals.¹⁰⁶ It seemed "a strange perversion of law that that Act, avowedly passed for the protection of the ryot, should be made the means of sweeping from the face of the country ... probably the largest class of occupiers" in Bengal.¹⁰⁷

Before Christmas 1863, Wood had determined not to allow Peacock's decision to stand.¹⁰⁸ He wished for legislation to amend the Act so that the principle of proportionate increase of enhanceable rents might be established.¹⁰⁹ However, he anticipated dissension over the question in the Legislative Council¹¹⁰; and he was himself inclined to the view that the twelve year period prescribed by the Act for conferring a right of occupancy was too short.¹¹¹ He looked, therefore, for a "compromise" solution.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ Peacock considered it "far better to leave parties to make their own terms than to drive them into a court of law to have done for them that which they are much better able to do for themselves" (cited in Metcalf, *op. cit.*, p. 300). See Wood to Trevelyan, 10 November 1863.

¹⁰⁶ Wood to Trevelyan, 10 November 1863, W.P.

¹⁰⁷ Wood to Maine, 17 November 1863, W.P.

¹⁰⁸ Wood to Maine, 25 December, 1863, W.P.

¹⁰⁹ Wood to Maine, 26 January 1864, W.P.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*; Wood to Maine, 10 February 1864, W.P.

¹¹¹ Wood to Trevelyan, 17 May 1864, W.P.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

When Peacock visited England in 1864, Wood discussed the question with him at length. He also sought the advice of Currie, who had drafted the Act, and of others with experience of Indian custom with regard to land tenures.¹¹³ Whilst Peacock insisted "that all ryots who could not establish hereditary rights from the time of the permanent settlement were tenants at will," Wood's advisers held that under Indian custom the "ryot may acquire, by common consent, rights of occupancy, similar to those of the ryot who held at the time of the permanent settlement."¹¹⁴ In December 1864, Wood wrote to Maine:

I think that the custom of the country constitutes a valid title & if a [legislative] substitute for provable custom, provable that is after long & uncertain litigation can be found, which is in the nature of a fair compromise, it would be the best solution.¹¹⁵

But just two days later he was beset with doubts. His imagination conjured up the spectre of masses of ryots in Bengal claiming to have their rents settled by the courts every year, and of "the administration of the law [grinding] to a standstill."¹¹⁶ He briefly courted the notion, which Trevelyan had advanced,¹¹⁷ of the government settling rents between landlords and tenants for a term of years, much as the land revenue was settled. In the event, he was relieved of the problem by a decision of the full High

¹¹³Wood to Maine, 8 December 1864, W.P.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Wood to Lawrence, 10 December 1864, W.P.

¹¹⁷Trevelyan to Wood, 8 September 1863, W.P.

Court at Calcutta. Fourteen of the fifteen judges, Peacock dissenting, endorsed the principle of proportion.¹¹⁸

Wood's attitude towards the rent disputes again revealed his concern to uphold the property rights of Indians. He alluded to the question in a letter to Maine during the month that he left the India Office. He called the letter his "parting legacy".¹¹⁹ He wrote that one of his "great causes of sorrow at leaving" was the fear that the "support of the natives may not be so strong in other hands & that the selfish policy of the planter may gain ground." He denied placing this view upon "any sentimental ground" and argued that England's "permanent hold of India would be fearfully loosened if the cultivating population felt that their customary rights were in danger." Nonetheless, he clearly assumed that his policy was in India's best interests. "In uncivilized countries," he contended, "custom protects the weak as law does in more civilized places," and "that man will

¹¹⁸Case of Thakurani Dasi v. Bisheshur Mukharji, March 1865. See "The Great Rent Case", Calcutta Review, 1865, pp. 398-418. The views of the various judges are cited and discussed in A. Phillips, Land Tenures of Lower Bengal, Calcutta, 1876, pp. 312-15, 378-9. Field (op. cit., pp. 239-42) discussed the bearing of this case upon the appeal decision in Hills v. Ghose. See also, Baden-Powell, op. cit., I, p. 645 and note; B.R. Misra, op. cit., p. 129 and n.3.; West, op. cit., p. 59; Wood to Beadon, 9 June 1865, W.P.; Wood to Peacock, 12 August 1865, W.P.

¹¹⁹Letter of 19 February 1866, W.P.

have conferred the greatest boon not only on the Indian ryot, but on the English nation, who shall have succeeded in placing the rights of the ryots on such a footing as to defy the encroachments of capitalists and settlers." As he warmed to his case, he reversed his appeal, placing obligation before expediency:

It is the duty no less than the interest of the Govt. to see that the succession of a few transitory masters do [sic] not violate the permanent millions.

His Whiggish respect for property rights and his shrewd calculation of Britain's political advantage suggested the same policy.

Dr T.R. Metcalf has written of the "new direction in British land policy" which resulted from "the events of 1857-8 in Oudh."¹²⁰ There was, he asserted, "a new appreciation of the value of the landlord class" as British policy became "dominated by one overriding concern: 'to enlist on our side ... those natives who have ... a natural influence in the country.'" He claimed that the change represented "a quite new departure in British policies and attitudes in India," with which "went a change in the goal which the British set for themselves in India." "Henceforth," he averred, "their aim was not so much to reform and regenerate Indian society as simply to rule it." His arguments seem exaggerated. Certainly, political expediency, in the form of

¹²⁰Op. cit.

a "wish to win powerful friends," was one of the motives behind Canning's talugdari settlement and his sirdar policy, and behind Wood's endorsement of them. But it may be remarked that the "events of 1857-8 in Oudh" could hardly be said to explain an aristocratic policy in the Punjab, where behaviour during the mutiny seemed to vindicate Lawrence's "peasant policy".¹²¹ Wood had the English pattern of local government in mind, and he looked upon the landlord as the "natural" instigator of agricultural reform. Again, the desire to make friends, of the humble as well as of the powerful, was mentioned as a motive for the acceptance of the principle of permanent settlement in 1862. And during the Bengal rent disputes and the waste lands sales controversies Wood was concerned to avert a hostile "agrarian movement"¹²² by placating the peasants. The desire to base British rule upon the consent of the government^{ed}, rather than to impose it by force, was undoubtedly a major determinant of land policy. It could, however, operate to the benefit of both peasants and landlords. Like the appeal to customary rights, which Metcalf overlooks in his treatment of the talugdari settlement, it could, and did, operate in both directions. But the most questionable feature

¹²¹"The immediate response to the Mutiny was to bring the paternalist system of the Punjab to the height of favour in popular British estimation" (Stokes, op. cit., p. 268).

¹²²The phrase appears in Wood to Elgin, 3 May 1862, W.P.

of Metcalf's argument is the assumption that the "aim ... to reform and regenerate Indian society" was the chief determinant of the policy of peasant proprietorship, but of little interest to those who pursued an aristocratic policy.¹²³ To a mid-Victorian liberal like Wood, paternalism implied ossification and laissez-faire was the policy of progress. Metcalf observes the attachment of Peacock, Wingfield and Wood to "laissez-faire political economy" but fails to do justice to its significance.¹²⁴ Though Wood regarded it as an imprudent dereliction of duty to strip the peasant of his traditional rights and send him naked into the modern world of economic competition, nonetheless he was convinced that the results of a thoroughgoing paternalism would be social and economic atrophy.¹²⁵

The aspect of post-mutiny land policy which is most open to criticism is the weakness with which the major reforming measure -

¹²³The attachment to laissez-faire political economy of those who favoured a "landlord policy" received greater emphasis in the later of Metcalf's articles, (J.A.S., 1962). However, he still contended that "at the heart of the landlord revival lay ... political necessity and the interests of the Empire", and relegated laissez-faire to the position of "a most effective theoretical bulwark," a "valuable asset in the struggle to gain acceptance of these ideas" (p. 297).

¹²⁴Ibid., pp. 300, 301-3.

¹²⁵Cf. Stokes, p. 282: "The paternalism of the Lawrences would have stopped the course of reform in its tracks, and attempted the impossible task of insulating the Indian village against further change."

the permanent settlement - was prosecuted. From the beginning, Wood stressed that districts should be settled permanently "after a careful revision of the assessment." A "careful adjustment of the assessment" would be "necessary in the first instance."¹²⁶

The permanent settlement despatch indicated that upon the recommendation of the Government of India sanction would be given from home for the permanent settlement of "all districts or parts of districts in which no considerable increase is to be expected in the land revenue."¹²⁷ The North Western Provinces and the Punjab appeared to Wood most likely to be ready for settlement at the existing rates, for there the soil was intensively cultivated and the assessments were being revised carefully. Newly acquired territory, like Oudh and Nagpur, would first require careful survey. In Madras and Bombay it seemed unlikely that the settlement could be made for some time. The existing assessments were too high in the former, too low in the latter.¹²⁸ Wood's caution was revealed when he received proposals for proceeding to settle the North Western Provinces which the Government of India sent home in June 1864.¹²⁹ Whilst he was "not disposed to recede from the orders as to permanent settlement," he told Lawrence "not [to] be in a hurry in very improvable districts."¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Wood to Elgin, 19 March 1862, W.P.

¹²⁷ Revenue despatch of 9 July 1862.

¹²⁸ See also Wood to Frere, 15 September 1862, W.P.

¹²⁹ Gov.-Gen. in Council, to S. of S., 8 June (Revenue No. 12) 1864, and enclosures, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1867, 1, p. 129 ff.

¹³⁰ Letter of 17 August 1864, W.P.

He did not wish to "precipitate a permanent settlement where there ... [was] any reasonable prospect of an increase of assessment." The government "ought not to give up any immediate increase of revenue" which might "fairly be expected."¹³¹ In March 1865, he did sanction the immediate permanent settlement of the North Western Provinces, but only of estates for which the rate was considered "fair", and of which eighty per cent of the area was under cultivation.¹³²

The despatch of 9 July 1862, had reiterated the confident expectation of Cornwallis and Baird Smith that the permanent settlement would improve the country's ability to bear taxation in other forms. Wood was always sceptical of the yield from other taxes being enhanced. As early as October 1861, in the context of his first letter to Canning on Baird Smith's report, he wrote:

... whence any additional income is to come I don't know. Unless the condition of the people is so much improved as to enable them to consume manufactured

¹³¹Wood to Lawrence, 15 October 1864, W.P.

¹³²S. of S. to Gov.-Gen. in Council, 24 March (Revenue 11) 1865, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1867, 1, pp. 178-9. See also Wood to Lawrence, 10 March 1865, W.P. Wood's attitude towards the permanent settlement has been somewhat misrepresented in the accounts of B.B. Misra and S.N. Singh. The former represented Wood as more positive and less cautious in his approach to the policy than in fact he was (op. cit., pp. 260-4). Singh also overlooked the caution which was characteristic of his attitude from the first, and, by quoting phrases from his letters without reference to their context, gave the misleading impression that he proceeded by fits and starts (op. cit., p. 108).

articles paying customs duties ... I do not see my way
 Perhaps the settlement may do a good deal to
 improve the condition of the people but it would be
 sanguine ... to anticipate much larger expenditure on
 their part for some time to come.¹³³

Wood's doubts about the elasticity of other forms of revenue explain the wary gradualness of his approach to fixing the land assessments in perpetuity. He could look to the effect of railways and irrigation upon the consumption of taxable articles for an indication of whether his doubts were well founded. The despatch of 9 July 1862 remarked that "the probable effect of the railroads would seem to be towards ... a general improvement in the wealth of all classes," and that "this general improvement ... [would] be accelerated by a permanent settlement." Before the end of his administration, Wood had come to the conclusion that "railways ... improve[d] the country but ... [did] little for the revenue."¹³⁴ During his last two years of office, his scepticism towards the possibility of deriving much increase of revenue from indirect taxes strengthened. "I apprehend that the population of India has gone ahead very fast," he wrote in June 1864, "but I don't see how they pay much more tax."¹³⁵ He did "not see how ... to get out of the people any amount worth considering of their improved means."¹³⁶ In 1865, the Indian

¹³³Wood to Canning, 18 November 1861.

¹³⁴Wood to Frere, 1 January 1866, W.P.

¹³⁵Wood to Trevelyan, 17 June 1864.

¹³⁶Wood to Trevelyan, 16 October 1864.

exchequer stood in need of "ways and means".¹³⁷ Wood advised Lawrence that "an increase in the land revenue ... [was] unobjectionable."¹³⁸ He became ever less likely to move towards the more rapid extension of the permanent settlement. He postponed the implementation of the policy beyond his term of office. In the month following his resignation, his successor, Lord De Grey and Ripon,¹³⁹ requested that no permanent settlement be made for estates of which the assets might, through canal irrigation, be enhanced by more than twenty per cent.¹⁴⁰ The rule was reaffirmed a year later¹⁴¹ and it was interpreted with the utmost caution in India until, in 1883, the permanent settlement policy was abandoned.¹⁴² The Indian economic historian, R.C. Dutt, lamented what he described as "the withdrawal of a boon."¹⁴³ The extension of the permanent settlement would, he believed, have made India "more resourceful and self-relying", and "famines would have been rarer." Notwithstanding the shortcomings of Cornwallis's settlement "the agriculturists of Bengal are," he asserted in 1903, "more resourceful ... and more secure against

¹³⁷ See ch. 11, below.

¹³⁸ Wood to Lawrence, 12 August 1865.

¹³⁹ Ripon was Secretary of State from February until July 1866.

¹⁴⁰ Revenue despatch to India, 17 March 1866, cited in B.B. Misra, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

¹⁴¹ S. of S. to Gov.-Gen. in Council, 23 March (Revenue 15) 1867.

¹⁴² Baden-Powell, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 343-9; B.B. Misra, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-5; S.N. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-11.

¹⁴³ R.C. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

the worst effects of famine than the agriculturists of any other Province in India."¹⁴⁴ The validity of the latter claim could be established only by painstaking enquiry. But it would certainly seem that, given the safeguards to the rights of sub-proprietors and occupiers which the 1862 despatch promised,¹⁴⁵ the extension of the permanent settlement would have been highly beneficial to India.

¹⁴⁴ Preface to 1st ed., *ibid.*, pp. x-xi.

¹⁴⁵ S.N. Singh, overlooking these safeguards, described the absence of them as the "cardinal flaw in the whole scheme" of the 1862 permanent settlement policy (*op. cit.*, p. 110).

Chapter 10

Military Reconstruction

The major lesson of the mutiny was a military one. Britain might hope to strengthen her raj by delegating administrative powers to local magnates, by courting the support of ruling princes, by placing a few prominent Indians in the legislative councils, and by offering civil appointments to those who acquired education. But the typical view of Englishmen was expressed by Wood soon after the rising at Meerut. "I do not see," he wrote, "how we can hold except by a strong European garrison a country where after so many years residence we could remain so long in ignorance of what was brewing."¹ A further inescapable conclusion was that the so-called "Native Armies" would need to be held under very tight rein. When the tumult and the fighting of 1857-8 ceased, the strength of Britain's European forces in India stood at almost 100,000 men, a more than two-fold increase in the pre-mutiny numbers. Whilst the East India Company's European army had remained constant at some 21,000 officers and men, the Queen's army of the Line had risen from about 24,000 to 77,000. The number of Indians in arms had, after the initial disbanding and disappearance of regiments, recovered to exceed, somewhat, the 1856 level of

¹Wood to Grey, 22 September 1857, Howick Pap.

256,000.² In a memorandum on the reorganization of the Indian armies which he wrote in August 1858, Lord Canning emphasised the need to provide for a much higher proportion of Europeans to Indian soldiers in the future. He suggested a ratio of 2 : 5.³ A Royal Commission which Lord Stanley appointed in July 1858 to consider military reconstruction, recommended ratios of 1 : 2 in Bengal and 1 : 3 in Bombay and Madras.⁴ Both Canning and the Commissioners estimated that some 80,000 Europeans would be required, although some reduction of this figure might be expected under favourable circumstances. Fewer than 200,000 Indians could, therefore, be left in arms. The need to reduce both the European and "Native" armies was clear enough. Reductions were essential to the restoration of financial stability, and Wood was persistently vigilant in attending to them.⁵

The problems of numbers and proportions were simple compared with those of reorganization. The Bengal regular cavalry and all but fifteen of the imposing seventy-four regiments of the Bengal "Native" infantry had vanished during the mutiny and been

²Return of military forces in India, 1852-7, app. to Report of Royal Comm. on the Organization of the Indian Army, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1859, sess. 1, v, p.377; Return of forces in India at the outbreak of the mutiny, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1857-8, xxxvii, pp. 249-65; Return of strength of armies in January 1859, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1859, sess. 2, xxiii, pp. 485-7; Adjutant-General to Sec. to Govt. of India, Military Dept., 16 March 1867 (paper comparing the armies of 1856 and 1867), W.P. 100.

³Memorandum, n.d. [August 1858], app. to R.C. Report, op. cit., pp. 413-16.

⁴Report of 7 March 1859, op. cit., pp. 9-15.

⁵See below, and ch. 11, below.

replaced, ad hoc, by irregular regiments, led by selected European officers.⁶ For some time, however, the principles for reorganizing the "Native" Army were left undetermined. The most pressing question was the constitution of the European forces. The officers and men of the Company's, or Local, armies had been recruited for service in India only, those of the Line for general service. The Government of India Act of 1858 simply provided for the transfer of the Company's armies to the Crown.⁷ Until July 1860, discussions on military reorganization centred primarily around the desirability of maintaining a Local European army as part of the permanent fabric of the Queen's forces in India. The alternative was to plan for a European force which would consist eventually of only regiments of the Line, recruited for general service, stationed in India temporarily, and relieved periodically.

In his memorandum of August 1858, Canning declared himself in favour of retaining a Local army, and indicated that he would draw upon it for two-thirds of the European infantry of Bengal.⁸ The members of the Royal Commission, which reported in March 1859, were unable to achieve unanimity on the question.⁹ They had included four officers of each of the Line and Local armies, the

⁶Returns, *op. cit.*; Hansard, clxiii, 21 June 1861, col. 1463.

⁷Act 21 & 22 Vict., c.106, cl. 56.

⁸*Op. cit.* Canning's attitudes towards military reconstruction are fully discussed in M. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, chap.10, "Army Reform", pp. 239-57.

⁹*Op. cit.*

Commander in Chief of the British Army - H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge - and the Secretaries of State for War and for India. The majority, comprising the Line officers and the Duke of Cambridge, supported by the opinions of Lord Elphinstone, Sir Charles Trevelyan and Sir George Clerk, proposed an exclusively Line formation. The minority, composed of the Local officers, appealing to the authority of Canning, Ellenborough, Harris, John Lawrence and Outram, favoured a Local army to the extent of three-quarters, or perhaps two-thirds, of the entire European force. Neither General Peel, who was the Secretary of State for War and the Chairman of the Commission, nor Stanley voted, though the former favoured the majority's viewpoint, the latter the minority's. The Council of India, composed as it was largely of former directors and civil and military servants of the Company, wished to retain the Local army.¹⁰

The arguments for a Local army were many. Canning, as one might expect of a Governor-General, made much of the need for assuring India of a force which would be at the unquestioned disposal of the Indian authorities. Local troops could never be withdrawn by an imperial government anxious about the state of its armies in other parts of the world. Line forces might be transferred precipitately. The minority of the Royal Commissioners emphasised that the Local army had always furnished India with

¹⁰ See below.

officers for a wide variety of "staff" appointments - political, diplomatic, administrative, engineering etc. They questioned the ability of the Line to provide officers who would devote themselves to careers in India. The Council of India contended that it could only perform its function as guardian of the Indian treasury if the army were substantially under its superintendence, rather than under that of the Horse Guards.¹¹ Stanley claimed that "the chief practical difficulty" in abolishing the Local army was "the pledge given in the Act of 1858."¹² That Act had guaranteed to the Company's officers "the like Pay Pensions Allowances and Privileges and like Advantages as regards Promotion and otherwise as if they had continued in the Service of the ... Company".¹³ Stanley and the Council questioned the possibility of discontinuing the Local army and still keeping faith with the officers.

The majority of the Royal Commissioners took the view which was espoused by the Queen and the Prince Consort. For the Royal Court it was primarily a question of protecting the sovereign's prerogative as titular head of the British army. In September 1858, the Queen wrote to Lord Derby, the Prime Minister, that "her

¹¹ Report from Political and Military Committee of Council of India, 30 June 1859, in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, 1, pp. 3-13.

¹² Stanley to Wood, 16 January 1860, W.P. 76.

¹³ Op. cit. The Company's officers were entitled to rise to the rank of colonel by seniority, and to retire at an earlier age and on higher pensions than Line officers.

constitutional position as Head of the Army ... [required] that the Commander in Chief should be put in communication with the new Secretary of State for India", and that his "advice ... ought to be heard on all questions affecting the troops."¹⁴ On 4 October, Stanley informed a special meeting of the Council of India that, "having been in communication with H.R.H. the General Commanding in Chief," he wished them to consider the following resolution:

That with regard to such Military questions as, having hitherto been submitted to the Court of Directors of the East India Company, are determined by the Secretary of State in Council, reference to be made to the Commander in Chief for his opinion previous to the decision of the Secretary of State in Council being taken.

The Council's minutes recorded that "after a lengthened discussion, the further consideration of the subject was adjourned."¹⁵ The following day, the Prince Consort wrote of "our difficulties with regard to the organization of the Indian Army, which the Indian Council are seeking to withdraw from the authority of the Crown, and to deal with as their own property."¹⁶ Some members of the Council, in fact, sent a memorandum to the Queen, complaining of the departure, which the unpassed resolution implied, from "the long-established rules" by which army questions had been

¹⁴Cited in T. Martin, Life of the Prince Consort, 5 vols., London 1879, IV, pp. 308-9.

¹⁵Minutes of the Council of India, Vol. 1, pp. 127-8, 4 October 1858.

¹⁶Prince to Baron Stockmar, 5 October 1858, cited in Martin, op. cit., p. 313.

dealt with at East India House.¹⁷

It was scarcely to be expected that the Council would accept, without a struggle, the Queen's determination that military matters should be referred to the Commander in Chief before the Secretary of State placed them before the Council. It would have been difficult for the Council to have set aside the declared opinion of the Commander in Chief, at that time the Queen's first cousin. At first, the Court declined to bend before their opposition. In a memorandum which he wrote in mid-October, the Prince asserted that the logical chain of command for all of the armies in India was from the Queen, through the Commander in Chief at home to the Commander in Chief in India. He would abandon the Council's cherished "long-established rules" of procedure.¹⁸ The next month, the Prince employed Disraeli as "Mediator" in an attempt to ease the embarrassment to which Stanley's sympathy for the Council's viewpoint was giving rise. Disraeli told Stanley that "he must always act as the Minister of the Queen, and not of the Council." Disraeli understood that "on all military matters he would habitually communicate with the Commander-in-Chief, and take His Royal Highness's advice on all such points."¹⁹ Nevertheless, on 24 November, the Queen signed a memorandum which gave the

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 310.

¹⁸ Cited in *ibid.*, pp. 310-12.

¹⁹ Disraeli to Prince, 18 November 1858, printed in A.C. Benson and Viscount Esher (ed.), The Letters of Queen Victoria, 3 vols., London 1907, III, 385-7.

Commander in Chief considerably less power to influence decisions concerning the Indian armies than he would have obtained under the resolution of 4 October. The memorandum merely required that the Secretary of State should attach to any military despatch which he sent to the Queen "a statement that he ... [had] consulted His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief, and ... an intimation whether it ... [had] received His Royal Highness's approval." Furthermore, it contained the following clarifying words: "It is distinctly understood that it is not hereby intended to claim for His Royal Highness any control over the discipline or government of Her Majesty's Forces levied for exclusive service in India"²⁰ A feeling of dissatisfaction at the meagreness of this arrangement for the Crown's control over the Local army no doubt contributed to the conviction of the Queen and the Prince that the Indian armies should be drawn from the Line entirely.

In February 1859, a month before the Royal Commission reported, the Queen wrote pointedly to Derby of "her firm determination not to sanction, under any form, the creation of a British Army distinct from that known at present as the Army of the Crown."²¹ "Such an army," she claimed, "would be freed from the proper control of the constitutional monarchy. It would

²⁰ Paper endorsed "Nov. 24 1858. Minute approved by the Queen on conduct of business relating to the Indian Army", and signed by Stanley, W.P. 60.

²¹ Queen to Derby, 5 February 1859, Queen's Letters, III, p. 404.

be removed from the direct control of the Crown, and entirely independent of Parliament." She knew only too well of the Secretary of State's disposition and wished to avert an "unseemly public difference between herself and Lord Stanley." She would not be left "powerless [by his determination,] in resisting a scheme which certain persons, imbued with old Indian traditions, would appear to wish to force upon the Crown." Derby pleaded "not a little embarrassment" at what he interpreted as "[Her] Majesty's determination under no circumstances to continue a European Army in India ... different from ... the Line."²² The Queen modified her position with the explanation that her objection was not to "the continuance" of the Local army but to "the creation of a British Army distinct (in its existence and constitutional position) from that of the Crown."²³ In reply, Derby expressed the view that "the local forces in India should never exceed those sent there from home as part of the Regular Army."²⁴ From the exchange of letters the elements of a compromise began to emerge. The need to accommodate conflicting views was further suggested by the lack of unanimity among the Royal Commissioners. Finally, there was a division of opinion in the Cabinet. Stanley favoured a "large European army",²⁵ Peel, whom

²² Derby to Queen, 6 February 1859, *ibid.*, pp. 405-7.

²³ Queen to Derby, 7 February, *ibid.*, pp. 407-9.

²⁴ Derby to Queen, 7 February, *ibid.*, p. 409 and n.1.

²⁵ Stanley to Canning, 8 April 1859, cited in M. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

the Prince described as "a pearl in the Ministry",²⁶ an exclusively Line organization. The Queen requested that "when the question ... [came] before the Cabinet ... [Peel should] strictly defend the interests of the Crown and the British Army" so that "the Indian Secretary ... [would not] have it all his own way."²⁷

On 4 June 1859, the Queen, Derby, Stanley and the Commander in Chief signed a memorandum on the future arrangements for the European army in India.²⁸ The Queen later wrote that "these arrangements were in fact a compromise between the Imperial Government and the Indian Council."²⁹ The memorandum provided that two-fifths of the minimum European army required in India

²⁶ Prince to Stockmar, 5 October 1858, op. cit.

²⁷ Queen to Peel, 13 February 1859, Queen's Letters, III, p. 410.

²⁸ The nature and main contents of the memorandum are indicated by references to them in letters by Wood and the Queen (see below); in a memorandum by Wood "as to the Future of the Local Army in India" (d. 31 December 1859, W.P. 100) which was circulated to the Cabinet; and in Wood's speech on his Army Bill of 1860 (Hansard, clix, 12 June 1860, col. 371). Stanley passed the memorandum to Wood when he left the India Office (Stanley to Wood, 16 January 1860, W.P. 76). It is listed among the contents of W.P. 86, but it does not now appear in that or any other bundle of the W.P. Neither is it among the Hickleton Papers or the Halifax Collection. No check of contents was made upon the W.P. being deposited at the I. O. L. Wood himself very probably sent it to T. Martin in mid-1879. He referred to it and to his letters on the army question in a letter to Martin, endorsing a copy of the letter which he retained: "1879. Copy to T. Martin & documents July 18 Indian army" (B.M.Add.MS. 49561, fols. 243 ff.).

²⁹ Queen to Wood, 19 August 1859, W.P. 60.

might consist of Local forces.³⁰ This was the concession to the advocates of a Local army. In return, Stanley accepted provisions for a close, permanent relationship between the Secretary of State and the Commander in Chief and for the appointment of a Deputy Adjutant-General of the Indian Army to the staff of the Horse Guards.³¹

A few days after the "compromise" was recorded, the Tories went out of office. Wood was soon faced with a situation of greater difficulty than that which the memorandum of 4 June had apparently resolved. Stanley had left a number of loose ends dangling. He had asked the Military and Political Committee of the Council to consider the Royal Commission's Report.³² On 30 June, the Committee recommended that the European army should be two-thirds Local.³³ Here was an immediate rift in the compromise. On 16 July, the Queen pressed Wood to carry out the

³⁰ Wood to Queen, 8 August 1859 (copy), *ibid.*

³¹ Queen to Wood, 16 July 1859, *ibid.* On 4 June, the date of the memorandum, the Queen sent a minute to the Secretary of State (see above, p. 65). It required him to obtain her consent on all important questions before placing them before the Council, and to send copies of all despatches to her before mailing them to India. Wood parried the first request successfully, and the second caused him little difficulty except in relation to military despatches. The Queen remained tenacious in her demand that no military orders should be sent to India without her knowledge (e.g. Prince to Wood, 4 January 1860, and Wood to Prince, 8 January 1860, W.P., 60). Wood remarked upon this fact in a private letter to Elgin (19 May 1862, W.P.).

³² Minutes of Council of India, Vol. 2, p. 800, 26 May 1859.

³³ *Op. cit.*

home arrangements for which the memorandum had provided.³⁴

Early in August, she wrote a further letter on this matter, and another to express displeasure with a Bill, which Wood was trying to rush through parliament, to authorize an increase in the Local army.³⁵ Stanley had sanctioned the recruitment of Local forces up to a limit of some 25,000 men. The existing statutory maximum of 20,000 troops had already been exceeded.³⁶ However, it seemed that the Bill would be required in any case, for Wood now intimated to the Queen that the government planned to give effect to its predecessor's arrangements for a two-fifths Local army. Since the estimated minimum of the European force was 60,000, legislation would be needed to enable a Local army of 24,000 men to be established.³⁷ On 10 August, introducing his Bill to the House of Commons, he announced the government's intention to retain the Local army.³⁸ A few days later, the Queen again urged Wood to put the agreed home arrangements into operation.³⁹ Wood replied that he was having difficulty with the Council, which, by exercising its power of "absolute veto on any expenditure", might prevent the appointment of a Deputy Adjutant-

³⁴Op. cit.

³⁵Queen to Wood, 6 and 8 August, W.P. 60.

³⁶Wood to Queen, 8 August 1859 (copy), *ibid.*

³⁷*Ibid.* The minimum estimate was that of Major-Gen. Hancock, one of the Royal Commissioners, who submitted a separate report (Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1859, sess. 2, viii, pp. 611-45, esp. p. 631).

³⁸Hansard, clv, 10 August 1859, cols. 1301-5.

³⁹Queen to Wood, 16 August 1859, W.P. 60.

General of the Indian army to the Horse Guards. It was "necessary to proceed with great caution in order to secure the cooperation of very unwilling agents."⁴⁰ The Queen wrote back that she could "not apprehend" that the Council would "think fit to fight that point", for they were "well aware" of the compromise and that "the Queen would never have given her sanction to the maintenance of a separate Indian Army" without receiving some assurance as to the home arrangements.⁴¹ On 19 August, the date of the Queen's reply, Wood wrote to a friend: "Between H.M. who is for the utter destruction of the local army & the Council who would maintain one of very large dimensions I shall have no easy cards to play"⁴² A week later, he wrote to Canning: "We are embarrassed by the state of the army question The Queen and the Horse Guards are strongly for no local army, my Council and the House of Commons for one."⁴³ The compromise had, in fact, broken down. On 3 September, the Prince wrote that "the Indian Council ... [was] calling for more English regiments; which ... [were] not to belong to the regular army, or to recognise the Commander in Chief as their head, but ... [were] to be appointed

⁴⁰ Wood to Queen, 18 August 1859 (copy), *ibid.*

⁴¹ Queen to Wood, 19 August 1859, *ibid.*

⁴² Wood to Ellice, Ellice Pap.

⁴³ Wood to Canning, 26 August 1859, W.P.

and commanded by the Council direct."⁴⁴

It seems clear that the Council was not prepared to accept the terms of the compromise which Stanley, with the Cabinet's backing, had arranged with the Queen. Stanley had not put the question before the Council formally. Wood also declined to take this step, merely referring the Military and Political Committee's report to them "for perusal".⁴⁵ However, from the evidence of

⁴⁴Prince to Stockmar, 3 September 1859, T. Martin, op. cit., IV, p. 486. Martin's publication of this letter, in which the Prince alluded to "our difficulties in regard to the Indian army", together with another, of 11 October 1859, in which he regretted that the Crown could "not bring the union of the armies to bear" (ibid., p. 499), led Wood to write to Martin in 1879 (see above, n. 28). Wood complained that the letters conveyed the misleading "impression that the Queen & the Prince were trying to exert pressure" on him "for the discontinuance of the local European force." He denied that there had been, or that there was need for, any such pressure. Initially, he accepted the arrangements of his predecessors as approved by the Queen (Wood to Martin, 18 July 1879, op. cit.). Certainly, the Queen's letters do not suggest that she set out to disturb the "compromise". The arrangements of 4 June, and Wood's initial acceptance of them, have escaped, hitherto, the notice of historians, whose narratives have suffered in consequence. Dr. S.N. Singh was hardly fair in writing that, "with Stanley's removal from office the way was open for the passage of a measure providing that the whole of the European forces ... should be part of the Queen's army" (op. cit., pp. 14-15). Similarly, M. Maclagan mentioned the Court's opposition to the Local force and noted that this view prevailed after the matter had fallen from the grasp of "the brisk and businesslike young" Stanley into the "less virile hands of Sir Charles Wood" (op. cit., p. 251). As Wood wrote to Martin, it was "the mutiny of the E.I.C.'s [white] troops ... [which] very much altered the state of the case" (21 July 1879, B.M.Add.MS. 49561, fols. 249-52; see below).

⁴⁵Mins. of C. of I., Vol. 3, p. 104, 21 July 1859.

the Committee's report, and of the letters of Wood, the Queen and the Prince, it appears that the Council was dissatisfied with the proposal that a majority of the army be drawn from the Line, and jealous of the projected arrangements for liaison between the Secretary of State and the Commander in Chief and the Horse Guards. The intransigence of the Council at this stage must be accounted a factor in dissuading Wood from raising the army question in full Council until after Palmerston's Cabinet had resolved it.

Notwithstanding the Council's opposition, Wood, as he later affirmed,⁴⁶ probably would have enforced the compromise of June, had it not been for the course which events began to take in India. On 26 August, he wrote to Canning: "I confess that I see so many difficulties in the way of a local army that I waver a little in my opinion for one." This state of mind was produced by the significance which the mutiny or strike of the Company's European troops had begun to assume. These troops had objected to being converted to servants of the Queen pursuant to the Act of 1858, and, in June 1859, Canning had given them the option of taking their discharge.⁴⁷ It was at first thought that the discontent was restricted to younger men who had been recruited hurriedly during the sepoy mutiny. Even the fact of these soldiers striking

⁴⁶Wood to Canning, 26 September 1859, W.P.

⁴⁷The white mutiny is described fully in M. Maclagan, op. cit., pp.242-9.

must, of course, have reflected upon the Company's officers. Wood's earliest letters from the India Office expressed dismay at the officers' "most remarkable ignorance of the feelings & dispositions of these men, & [their] very little power of guiding or controlling them."⁴⁸ However, by the end of August, it appeared, from the large number of applications for discharge, that the spirit of insubordination had been widespread, and the officers' complicity in it was suspected. Lord Clyde, the Commander in Chief in India, who had always opposed the continuance of the Local army, saw the white mutiny as telling evidence for his case. Sir William Mansfield, Chief of the Staff in India, and Sir Patrick Grant, the Commander in Chief at Madras, both of whom had favoured a Local army, now changed their minds. Wood attached great weight to these opinions.⁴⁹ On 2 September, he remarked that "opinion" was "beginning to change a little,"⁵⁰ on 10 September, that "the advocates of the Local Army ... [were] losing ground."⁵¹

The white mutiny weakened the case for a Local army in a

⁴⁸Wood to Canning, 11 and 26 July 1859, W.P.

⁴⁹Wood to Canning, 26 August and 10 September 1859; Wood to Elphinstone, 31 August 1859; Wood to Ellice, 19 September 1859, Ellice Pap. Wood circulated selections from their letters to the Cabinet in January 1860 (W.P. 100), quoted from them in his speech of 12 June 1860 (see below; Hansard, clix, cols. 378-80), and laid them on the table of the House of Commons (Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, 1, pp. 60 ff.).

⁵⁰Letter to Elphinstone.

⁵¹Letter to Trevelyan.

number of ways. First of all, coming hard upon the sepoy mutiny, it could not but damage further the repute in which the discipline and efficiency of the Local army were held. Second, as a consequence, Local officers would be regarded as incompetent and inferior by officers of the Line. The "professional jealousies and heart-burnings", which the majority of the Royal Commissioners had seen as the "inevitable" result of selecting men from two distinct services for senior or staff appointments,⁵² would be exacerbated.⁵³ Camaraderie among the European troops in India could scarcely be expected. Third, the white mutiny changed the terms of the proposal to provide for a Local European force. Over 10,000 of the Locals took their discharge.⁵⁴ This meant that a Local army would need to be recreated, not merely continued. But, in addition, the advocates of a Local force were pressing for a proportion of two-thirds of the Europeans in arms, say 40,000 out of an estimated minimum of 60,000. The case for a Local army involved, therefore, the recruitment of over 25,000 troops for Indian service, and, upon their being trained, the discharge of as many general service Line troops who were already stationed

⁵²R.C. Report, op. cit.

⁵³"... I am very much shaken in my opinion & am by no means sure that one army would not be the best. It is clear that the Line officers will look down upon the locals as utterly incompetent to manage any men & the jealousy & heart-burning will be never-ending" (Wood to Ellice, 19 September 1859, op. cit.; see also Wood to Grey, 8 September 1859, Howick Papers).

⁵⁴Return of soldiers discharged, 28 August 1860, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, li, p. 833.

in India.⁵⁵

Wood was impressed with the growing strength of the case against a Local army. And he dismissed lightly the arguments, which Canning and the Military Councillors had advanced, for the necessity of an army over which the Indian rather than the Imperial authorities would have control.⁵⁶ The Secretary of State in Council was responsible for the military costs incurred in India regardless of whether the army was partly Local or all Line, and the Imperial Government would surely never imperil India by withdrawing essential Line forces. However, for some time after the tide of opinion had begun to turn, Wood hesitated. He assigned to an unbiased civilian the task of comparing the costs of Line and Local forces in India.⁵⁷ He learned that the former, allowing for the regular relief from Indian service which was required to keep up their discipline, would cost an extra £6000 odd per thousand men per annum.⁵⁸ He adjudged the surcharge negligible in a military budget of some £12 m., considering the importance of an efficient European army.⁵⁹ "The only objection of much weight" to abolishing the Local army would be "the

⁵⁵ Hansard, clix, 12 June 1860, cols. 372-4.

⁵⁶ Wood to Elphinstone, 31 May 1859; Wood to Canning, 3 March 1860; Hansard, op. cit., cols. 382-4.

⁵⁷ Wood to Canning, 26 September, 1859.

⁵⁸ J.T. Hammack's report on comparative costs of Line and Local armies, 18 November 1859, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, 1, pp. 18-43.

⁵⁹ Wood to Canning, 18 February 1860; Hansard, op. cit., cols. 473, 483.

destroying the nursery for staff appointments of all kinds - political etc - which the army ... [afforded] of men devoted to Indian life and service."⁶⁰

Wood was "afraid that a sufficient number of line officers would not be found to devote themselves to India."⁶¹ He could see how the Line officers might be recruited for permanent service in India. Here he fell back upon a suggestion which the Royal Commissioners had advanced - "the formation of a Staff Corps". The Commissioners had reported that the "efficiency of the Indian army ... [had] been injuriously affected by the small number of officers usually doing duty with their regiments" owing to withdrawals for staff appointments.⁶² A Staff Corps had, therefore, been envisaged whether the Local army was retained or not. Wood now simply viewed a Staff Corps as the means of providing the machinery through which Line officers might devote themselves to permanent employment in India.⁶³ However, the "great doubt" remained "whether such a corps could be maintained by volunteers from the Queen's Regiments."⁶⁴ Early in 1860, Wood was "still not clear ... how the decision [as to the Local army] should be."⁶⁵ Though he "inclined to one army" he ~~did~~

⁶⁰Wood to Elphinstone, 31 August 1859.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²R.C. Report, op. cit.

⁶³Wood to Elphinstone, 2 September 1859.

⁶⁴Ibid.; also Wood to Grey, 8 September 1859, op. cit.; Wood to Trevelyan, 10 September 1859.

⁶⁵Wood to Canning, 18 January 1860.

did not see his "way to the supply of young officers for all the requirements of India."⁶⁶ The confidence which Elphinstone, Trevelyan, Mansfield and Grant expressed on this question went far to remove Wood's doubts.⁶⁷ By March, he was "coming fast to the conclusion that the European Army must be altogether Line."⁶⁸ Palmerston and Sidney Herbert, the Secretary of State for War, were of that opinion.⁶⁹ On 2 May, a committee of the Cabinet agreed to amalgamate the European armies,⁷⁰ and on 16 May the full Cabinet "at last decided on discontinuing a separate European Army."⁷¹

Like Stanley before him, Wood refrained from taking the collective opinion of his Council before referring the question to his colleagues in the Cabinet for decision. He was questioned in the House of Commons upon the propriety of his course of proceeding.⁷² He claimed that the decision upon the future of the army was one which the British Government must take.⁷³ The Secretary of State for India, he contended, was required to consult his Council in matters such as, say, a Secretary for the

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Elphinstone to Wood, 20 July 1859; Wood to Elphinstone, 31 August 1859; extracts from letters in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, 1, pp. 60 ff.; Hansard, op. cit., cols. 388-9.

⁶⁸ Wood to Canning, 3 March 1860.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Wood to Canning, 3 May 1860.

⁷¹ Wood to Canning, 18 May 1860.

⁷² Hansard, clix, 8 June 1860, col. 188; 12 June, cols. 333-4.

⁷³ Ibid.

Colonies might himself determine.⁷⁴ But, he continued, as a Secretary of State could not himself decide a matter of such magnitude, affecting British as well as Indian interests, he had not been obliged to consult his Council. Wood was on firm ground as to the need for the Cabinet to decide the question. However, surely he ought to have placed the matter formally before the Council so that he might have informed the Cabinet of his advisers' opinions upon his proposed course. He argued that he had been "in constant communication" with them informally and that he was "well acquainted with their views."⁷⁵ He might also have remarked that he gave the Military Councillors an "opportunity of drawing up any statements ... which they thought necessary to be submitted to the Cabinet."⁷⁶ When three of them prepared papers arguing for the continuance of the Local army, around the turn of 1859, he did have them printed and circulated to the Cabinet, just as he circulated printed copies of extracts from private letters which were hostile to it.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, it was one thing to present the Cabinet with individual papers and quite another to allow the weight of the full Council's opinion to be brought to bear upon the case.

⁷⁴Ibid., 2 July, cols. 1304-5.

⁷⁵Ibid., col. 333.

⁷⁶Memorandum for Cabinet by Wood, 10 January 1860, W.P. 100.

⁷⁷Papers printed for Cabinet, W.P. 100. These papers, substantially unexpurgated, were later given to parliament, Parl. Pap., (H.C.), 1860, 1, pp. 60 ff.

On 17 May, the day after the Cabinet had taken its decision, Wood announced the fait accompli at a Council meeting.⁷⁸ He "proposed to them to take a formal step, which would give any of them who chose the opportunity of recording their dissent from the decision of Her Majesty's Government." The "formal step" was to suggest "that a letter be written to the Commander in Chief, desiring him to suspend recruiting for the Indian Army."⁷⁹ However, the Councillors, whilst "they wished it to be understood ... that their opinions were adverse to the amalgamation," "thought ... that it was too late" for them to record dissents. Accordingly, Wood did not actually propose writing the letter. On 12 June, he brought in a Bill to repeal the Secretary of State's powers to raise men for Indian service.⁸⁰ He sought the endorsement of parliament of the principle of amalgamation, whilst leaving a detailed plan for the Council to develop later. Since the Council was opposed to the principle, he thought it unwise to ask them to prepare legislation which embodied it. But he assured the House that the Council would carry out the principle if parliament approved it.

At a Council meeting on 28 June, "some papers were placed on

⁷⁸ Hansard, op. cit., cols. 333-4.

⁷⁹ Ibid., cols. 529-30.

⁸⁰ Ibid., cols. 368-95.

the table."⁸¹ Wood noticed that "the heading of one of them was reasons against the determination of Her Majesty's Government etc.", and he declined to receive them formally. After the meeting, "several papers ... - protests, resolutions, and memoranda - some referring to the scheme of the army, some against ... [the Council] not having been consulted", were given to Wood. He put them before the Cabinet, which decided that, whilst the papers could not be received "in their present shape", arrangements should be made for them to be "received as protests" against the Secretary of State's proceedings. On 2 July, Wood described this situation to the House in explanation of his failure to lay the Councillors' protests before it.⁸² He promised to give the Councillors an opportunity to put their protests in the form of dissents. The same night his Bill passed its second reading with an overwhelming majority.⁸³ The next day, he submitted to the Council the draft of a letter which he proposed to send to the Commander in Chief to request that recruiting for the Indian army be suspended. The proposal was set

⁸¹Ibid., 2 July, col. 1305. The Council may have been encouraged to agitate on this occasion, whereas they had, on 17 May, decided to remain quiescent, by the arrival of a memorandum from Canning, on or about 11 June (Wood to Canning, 11 June 1860). Canning objected strongly to the amalgamation, questioning the adequacy of the Line as a source of officers for staff appointments (memo. of 5 May 1860, Parl. Pap.(H.C.), 1860, 1, p. 295 ff.).

⁸²Hansard, op. cit., cols. 1305-6.

⁸³282 ayes, 53 noes, ibid., col. 1309.

down for discussion on 5 July.⁸⁴ On that day, dissents against it were submitted by two members of Council, and a further seven members recorded opinions against amalgamating the armies. All fourteen of the Councillors registered their objection to the Secretary of State's failure to refer the Political and Military Committee's report to them formally for discussion.⁸⁵

Once Wood had secured parliament's acceptance of the principle of amalgamation, he set up a committee of officers from the Line and Local services to consider its implementation.⁸⁶ The major problems were establishing the Staff Corps,⁸⁷ providing for the gradual extinction of the Local regiments as the troops' terms of service expired,⁸⁸ and safeguarding the rights of the Local officers under the guarantee of 1858. The last difficulty was intractable. It was examined by Royal Commissions in 1863 and in 1865, but it was still unsolved when Wood left the India Office.⁸⁹ To secure to the Local officers under a transformed

⁸⁴ Mins. of C. of I., Vol. 5, p. 2, 3 July 1860.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 6 ff., 5 July 1860. The dissents and opinions, together with a paper by Wood explanatory of his course, appear in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, li, pp. 799-822.

⁸⁶ Wood to Canning, 10 and 18 August 1860. The Report of the Committee, d. 30 August 1860, which was chaired by Lord Hotham, appears in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1861, xlii, pp. 339-60.

⁸⁷ The formation of a Staff Corps in each presidency was authorised by a Royal Warrant of 16 January 1861, which was conveyed with S. of S. to G.G.in C., 18 January (Military 27) 1861. The Staff Corps rules appear in Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1865, xxxviii, pp. 495-541.

⁸⁸ The Local troops were offered the opportunity, which most of them accepted, of enlisting for general service immediately, with a small bounty (Hansard, clxiv, 12 July 1861, col. 831-32).

⁸⁹ The Local officers were given the option of volunteering for Line service on equal rank, or, if they were in staff employment, of

military organization the promotion which they would have enjoyed if the East India Company had remained, was a formidable task. Their interests were affected not only by the amalgamation, but also by the reduction and the reorganization of the "Native" army.⁹⁰ The reduction had been commenced in 1859. With the decision as to the form of the European armies taken, Wood turned to the reorganization of the "Native" regiments.

Until the mutiny, the "Native" regiments were officered predominantly on the "regular" system. Cadets from the Company's college at Addiscombe were assigned to regiments as ensigns, and received their promotion, on the basis of seniority,⁹¹ within their regiments. The argument which had been advanced against the perpetuation of a distinction between officers of the Line and Local armies, was now brought to bear, with greater force, against the retention of the regular system. For if the officers of Local European regiments would have been regarded as inferior and incompetent, how much greater would be the ignominy of "sepoys"

89 (contd)

joining the Staff Corps. In both cases they surrendered their former privileges. Alternatively, they might remain Local officers, in which case their names were retained on regimental lists and they were promoted by seniority in their cadres. Inducements were also offered to retirement, and many officers accepted them. The documents on their alleged grievances, and on the investigations to which they gave rise, are extensive. (E.g. Hansard, clxix, 16 March 1863; clxxiii, 25 February 1864; clxxviii, 2 May 1865; Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1863, xl; 1864, xvi, xliii; 1866, xxvii; W.P. 100.)

⁹⁰ M. Maclagan writes as though the discontent of the Local officers arose only from the abolition of the Local army: "Since Wood had decided in favour of amalgamation, he could scarcely repine at having to solve these hard cases ..." (op. cit., p. 254).

⁹¹ In Madras and Bombay some account was taken of merit.

officers". Wood made the point in a letter to Canning, on 10 October 1860:

If a regiment is to have its officers put in at the bottom as Ensigns, and rise regularly by seniority to the top, for the Native regiments, they will at once be a different class of officers - sepoy officers - and looked down upon by the officers of the Europeans. There is no point in which our military men are so unanimous as that there should be no assignable distinction between the officers serving with Europeans and Natives. The Native would not look up to his officers as such unless they were part and parcel of the European troops, that is, of the Queen's army. Therefore, we consider it necessary that they should all come from the same service, i.e. subalterns of the Line, going into the Staff Corps, and thence appointed to Native Regiments.

The officering of certain "Native" regiments by a greatly reduced complement of officers, drawn from the Indian army generally, had become known as the "irregular system". Wood now envisaged the recruitment, by test, of capable Line subalterns to the Staff Corps, and their appointment, by selection, to "Native" regiments. He was claiming that the argument for an "equality of position and status" of all British officers in India, led inexorably to the choice of an irregular organization. "The question," he wrote, "turns on the mode of supplying the officers, and this must not be from a separate source, which is sure to lead to evil."⁹²

However, Wood favoured the irregular system for other reasons as well. He would have pressed for a predominantly irregular organization even if the abolition of the Local army had

⁹²Wood to Canning, 10 October 1860 (1).

not strengthened the case against the regular system.⁹³ As early as February 1860, he had told Canning not to reconstitute any of the fifty-nine regular Bengal infantry regiments which had disappeared and been replaced by irregulars during the mutiny.⁹⁴ In March, he had declared his intention of converting all of the "Native" cavalry regiments to the irregular system.⁹⁵ As President of the Board of Control, Wood had corresponded with Dalhousie about making the latter change.⁹⁶ Major Jacob had used the irregular cavalry system to great advantage on the Sind frontier. As few as three well-chosen officers had, with competent Indian assistants, commanded irregular regiments, whereas up to twenty-seven officers were on the cadres of the regulars. The irregulars were, therefore, far less expensive, whilst they offered opportunities of responsibility and promotion to competent Indians. These reasons, which had impressed Wood in 1854, were of even greater weight after the mutiny. Funds were short and it seemed desirable to conciliate capable Indians. Wood told Canning that "the expense of the European officers of a Regular Native Regiment ... [was] nearly half ... [its] total cost."⁹⁷ The

⁹³Wood to Sir R. Napier, 9 January 1861. Both the Royal Commission and the Military and Political Committee had reported in favour of the entire cavalry and portion of the infantry being officered by the irregular system (op. cit.).

⁹⁴Wood to Canning, 18 February 1860.

⁹⁵Wood to Trevelyan, 26 March 1860 (1).

⁹⁶Wood to Dalhousie, 6 October 1854; Dalhousie to Wood, 15 March 1855, W.P.; Wood to Grey, 6 October 1857, Howick Pap.; Hansard, clv, 19 July 1859, col. 51.

⁹⁷Wood to Canning, 18 February 1860.

"officers of a regular regiment cost nearly as much as a whole irregular regiment."⁹⁸ An irregular system could be maintained "at two-thirds of the cost of a regular machine."⁹⁹ Wood wrote to Trevelyan that under the irregular system "Native officers ... [were] placed in some trust and responsibility," whereas "the Native officer in a Regular Regiment ... [was] a mere non-entity."¹⁰⁰

Furthermore, the irregular system offered some hope of improving the relations between British officers and their Indian troops. One of Wood's first reactions to the mutiny had been of surprise at the "most extraordinary" lack of any "intimation" of what had been "going on" among the sepoys.¹⁰¹ In 1862, he countered thus an argument which Sir Hugh Rose, then the Commander in Chief in India, and a stout advocate of the regular system, had expounded:

You insist upon the mess & home of a regular regiment I believe that the comfortable home which the officers have made ... had to some extent the effect of estranging them from the men, & the men from them. I wish to see the officers under the necessity of seeing & knowing much more of their men than they have done. Nothing is more striking than the fact that throughout the mutiny the persons who knew least of the feelings & probable conduct of the troops were the officers.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Wood to Canning, 24 October 1860.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Wood to Trevelyan, 9 April 1860. Wood later wrote to Lawrence that he was "anxious ... to employ natives in all situations for which they ... [were] fitted", short of giving them "command over a company of white European Soldiers" (2 May 1864). He could not "well imagine ... a Brahminical Hindoo living with a mess of Englishmen, eating beef, & drinking wine, going to church with the troops etc etc" (Wood to Lawrence, 3 June, 1864).

¹⁰¹ Wood to Grey, 22 September 1857, op. cit.

¹⁰² Wood to Rose, 3 February 1862.

The irregular system, with fewer European officers, and responsible Indian officers, would destroy the rigid segregation of the cadres of British officers from their troops. The careful selection of irregular officers would lay the basis of personal allegiances of soldiers to their leaders. The "best state of feeling between the white officer & [the] black soldier" was, Wood told Rose, that of "a Chief & his clansman."¹⁰³ "The attachment & obedience of Orientals" he believed to be "more to persons than to rules."¹⁰⁴ In the House of Commons, he quoted with approval Frere's view that "the unwritten rules of common sense applied according to the judgment of a single selected officer ... [were] much better adapted to the government of Native troops than [the] written rules" of the regular system.¹⁰⁵ He could also appeal to the authority of Lord Elphinstone and John Lawrence in support of his decision to convert the entire Native army to the irregular system.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Letter of 25 April 1862.

¹⁰⁴ Wood to Mansfield, 19 June 1865.

¹⁰⁵ Hansard, clix, 12 June 1860, col. 387.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid; Lawrence's memorandum on the irregular system, 27 June 1859, W.P. 86; Elphinstone to Wood, 20 July 1859, W.P. The conversion to the irregular system was made gradually so that the position of the remaining Local officers might be affected as little as possible (Wood to Canning, 9 October 1861). As the ranks of the cadres thinned, through retirements or voluntary transfers to the Line, the regular regiments were placed on the irregular system. In 1865, the changeover was complete in Bombay, whereas it was just being commenced in Madras (Wood to Denison, 26 April 1865). S. of S. to G.G. in C., 18 January (Military 27) 1861, approved the irregular system in principle, and fixed the number of European officers at six for each regiment.

The adoption of the irregular system of officering regiments was only one of the means by which Wood sought to "deregularize the Native Army".¹⁰⁷ He wished, as he told Rose, "to insulate the regiments one from another."¹⁰⁸ On a very simple level, this meant abstaining from numbering the regiments in series. "I am," he wrote, "against 1. 2. 3 7⁴ regiments. It looks imposing and gives an appearance of strength, which I believe did harm in the late mutiny."¹⁰⁹ "I don't," he explained to Rose, "wish any regiment to feel that it is part of a large united or connected body ...; the consciousness of strength had a good deal to do with the mutinous disposition"¹¹⁰ On a somewhat more subtle level, "insulating the regiments" meant depriving them of common elements. That could be accomplished by "raising regiments in districts", rather than at central recruiting stations.¹¹¹

Wood explained to Canning the advantage of district recruiting:

What led to the general mutiny? That the Oudelement leavened the whole Army. Every regiment sympathised with every other. The Goorkhas and the Punjabees did not. They were unmixed regiments from the same districts

¹⁰⁷ Wood to Rose, 3 February 1862.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Wood to Wilson, 9 April 1860; also Wood to Canning, 10 October 1860(1); Wood to Rose, 26 February and 3 March 1862; Wood to Elgin, 3 March 1862. The numbering of regiments went, in fact, much further than Wood wished after the mutiny.

¹¹⁰ Wood to Rose, 3 February 1862.

¹¹¹ Wood to Canning, 10 October 1860(1). Wood attributed to Lord Elphinstone the suggestion that regiments should be raised in districts.

[and] they did not mutiny A regiment of Oude men might all agree and mutiny, but would be put down by the neighbouring regiments; one Goorkha, one Punjabee. If half of each were Oude men, you would have no one to depend upon.¹¹²

A district regiment would be "a community, not an Army."¹¹³ Wood wished "never ... to see again a great Army, very much the same in its feelings and prejudices and connections, confident in its strength, and so disposed to unite in rebellion together."¹¹⁴

"If one regiment mutinies," he wrote to Canning, "I should like to see the next so alien that it would fire into it."¹¹⁵ As far as possible, he would restrict the operations of regiments to the areas in which they were recruited. That would prevent existing antipathies within Indian society from being weakened by more frequent communication between groups.¹¹⁶ He advised

Elgin:

Keep your Sikh regiments in the Punjab, & they will be ready to act against the Hindoos; keep your Hindoos out of the Punjab & they will be ready to act against the Sikhs I should not put ... [men] to general service all over India unless it was necessary Depend upon it the natural antagonism of races is no inconsiderable element in our strength.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Wood to Denison, 8 April 1861.

¹¹⁴ Wood to Canning, 8 April 1861.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Wood to Elgin, 10 May 1862.

¹¹⁷ Wood to Elgin, 19 May 1862.

However, Wood did not favour raising regiments on a racial basis. Besides developing distinctions between regiments, he wished to destroy common feelings of race, caste or religion within them. "In one Regiment, raised say, in Oude, I would have Mahomedans, Hindoos, high caste and low caste, Christians, and every possible variety of race and religion," he wrote.¹¹⁸ This would prevent a regiment's "being too much of one hue", and counter any tendency to "fraternising & combining among the troops."¹¹⁹ He summed up the policy of mixing castes and sects within district regiments: "... as regards Armies and Regiments in India, I am for 'Divide et impera'."¹²⁰

The military reconstruction which Wood supervised balanced the "Native" force with a large complement of Europeans of the Line, and provided checks against the emergence of an insurrection among the sepoys. By the end of 1866, the pre-mutiny number of 256,000 Indians in arms had been slashed to 122,000, the European

¹¹⁸ Wood to Rose, 26 February 1862. The Royal Commission on the army had recommended "that the Native Army should be composed of different nationalities and castes, and as a general rule, mixed promiscuously through each regiment."

¹¹⁹ Wood to Elgin, 10 May 1862.

¹²⁰ Wood to Denison, 8 April 1861. Though Wood was concerned to mix castes and sects within each regiment, and to "keep the number of high caste men in bounds" (Wood to Elgin, 19 May 1862), he left to the discretion of the authorities in India whether or not to compose companies homogeneously of separate castes or races (Wood to Rose, 25 April 1862). He does not seem to have been concerned to isolate the leaders of Indian society by organizing companies along caste lines, preferring instead to attach them to British rule by giving them responsibility.

force increased from 45,000 to 61,000 men.¹²¹ In locating the European regiments, the possible need to repress a regiment of Indians was borne in mind.¹²² All field artillery was transferred to the Europeans, whereas before the mutiny three quarters of the gunners had been Indians.¹²³ The Government of India was enjoined to employ "native police" in substitution for soldiers wherever possible because the former would not develop the "esprit de corps of an army."¹²⁴ These measures, together with the "deregularization" of the "Native" army, were effective in preventing the recurrence of anything like the events of 1857-8. To the end of British rule, the sepoy army remained loyal. The delocalizing of the European forces, and the periodic relief which it involved, cleared from India those elements which might have become undisciplined or brutalised by the butchery of the mutiny, and those which might become disgruntled. The Staff Corps proved an effective device for tapping the Line to ensure a flow of capable officers willing to devote themselves to an Indian career.

Of all of the reforms for which Wood was responsible, the

¹²¹ Adjutant-General to Milit. Sec. to Govt. of India, 16 March 1867, W.P. 100.

¹²² Ibid.; Wood to Rose, 16 March 1863.

¹²³ Adj.-Gen. to Milit. Sec. to Govt. of India, op. cit.; Wood to Clerk, 18 March 1861; Wood to Canning, 27 May (2) and 26 July 1861. This course was suggested by the Royal Commissioners.

¹²⁴ Wood to Canning, 26 June and 16 September (2) 1860.

reconstitution of the army was probably the most successful. Faced with a problem of imperial security, his keen awareness of the mechanics of a power situation, his sure touch in the development of checks and the weighting of balances, in short, his Whiggish instinct for self-preservation, held him in good stead. It is tempting to say that his greatest success lay in solving a problem which, though critical for England, was of no relevance to the development of India. To such a remark, he would have replied:

I am anxious not to place everything upon mere force, or upon the authority of the Government, but to depend mainly upon measures of improvement and upon the influence of reason. Still, to be able to act in this way the Natives of India must feel, and we must feel, that we are not to be shaken in our military supremacy. The Englishman must feel that he is so safe that he has nothing to fear, for fear and jealousy are always cruel. The Natives must feel that it is useless to quest and conspire against us. Thus and thus alone, after what has happened, can we place ourselves in such a position that we may be able to extend those blessings to India which I believe it is our duty to confer.¹²⁵

The argument is fair. However, it is not by reference to fair words but to the "blessings" which Wood actually extended to India that his policy must be judged. These were more costly and had to be dispensed with greater circumspection. The good intentions of the reforming Indian administrator came at last to the crucible of financial policy, there to be reduced to their essence or to disintegrate.

¹²⁵Hansard, clix, 12 June 1860, cols. 394-5.

Chapter 11

Finance

The mutiny was a financial disaster. Between 1857 and 1860, the public debt underwent a seventy per cent increase, as a result of which the annual revenues were saddled with an additional interest charge of some £2 m. In 1859, the military charges stood at almost twice their pre-mutiny level of £12½ m. The annual deficits for the three years 1857-60 averaged about £10 m.¹ The most pressing problem facing Britain was the restoration of financial stability. This was necessary initially to make the Indian empire economically viable. The very persistence of British rule depended upon the reduction of expenditure. Much of the attraction of the pacific frontier policy and of Canning's conciliation of the "native chiefs and gentry" lay in their facilitating the slashing of the garrisons with safety. Looking beyond the immediate future, the reform of the legal and educational systems, the extension of the permanent settlement and the construction of railways and public works would depend upon bringing India's expenditure within her revenue.

Even before he went to the India Office, Wood was adamantly opposed to India ever becoming financially dependent upon England.²

¹J. Wilson's "Financial Statement", 18 February 1860, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, xlix, pp. 315-40. See also P.J. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 73; MacLagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-9.

²Hansard, clii, 18 February 1859, col. 542.

In his first letter to Canning as Secretary of State he made it clear that he was "most unwilling to allow English credit to be brought to aid that of India." He had "heard some people talk of the uselessness of India to us, and ... [did] not wish to add to that feeling by ... its bringing a pecuniary charge upon us."³ It was, therefore, "not to be expected that an annual charge should be borne by England for India."⁴ Neither would the imperial government guarantee the interest payable on the Indian debt.⁵ One reason for Wood's determination to make India financially independent was, no doubt, the realization that English assistance would certainly mean greater parliamentary interference with Indian affairs.⁶ More important was his Polonian conviction that "borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry". No more should be borrowed than was indispensable. Every "inducement" was needed "to force the Government of India to economy."⁷ His answer to the post-mutiny financial dilemma was

³ 25 June 1859, W.P.

⁴ Wood to Canning, 26 July 1859, W.P.

⁵ Wood to Elphinstone, 31 August 1859, W.P.

⁶ On 4 April 1859, Wood opposed a suggestion for appointing a committee of the House of Commons to investigate reducing Indian expenditure: "The House ... could have no acquaintance with the feelings, the prejudices, and the interests of the people of India, all of which must be considered in dealing with this subject" (Hansard, cliii, 1369). Baring believed that parliament would make ill-considered, hasty reductions in expenditure (Baring to Clerk, 23 September 1860, Clerk Pap.).

⁷ Wood to Elphinstone, 31 August 1859, W.P.

"rigid economy"⁸ - "to use the paring knife with a ruder hand."⁹
 It was the Secretary of State's task to point out the direction
 of the blade.¹⁰

Wood fixed upon the extraordinary military expenditure as
 the object of his special attention, and he urged its reduction,
 in unremitting private letters, upon every senior official in
 India. Never did he hold any hopes of cutting the civil estimates.
 No reduction in civil expenditure seemed compatible with efficient
 administration. As improvements were made in the judicial and
 police systems, in education, in communications and irrigation,
 civil costs would rise steadily.¹¹ Financial stability, therefore,
 turned upon military reductions. He wrote of this to Canning:
 "I consider this question - i.e. the combined question of finance
 and military force - as the point upon which our Indian Empire
 depends."¹² He badgered ceaselessly the Governor-General,¹³ the
 Governors of Madras¹⁴ and Bombay,¹⁵ James Outram (the senior member

⁸Hansard, clx, 13 August 1860, cols. 1186-7.

⁹Wood to Canning, 26 July 1859, cited in Maclagan, op. cit., p. 261.

¹⁰"Mere general orders sent out for a reduction of expenditure would
 not produce much effect and the Home Government must be prepared to
 point out and to insist on certain definite reductions" (Hansard,
 cliii, 4 April 1859, col. 1369).

¹¹See, e.g., Hansard, clii, 18 February 1859, cols. 547-9; clv, 1
 August 1859, col. 779; clxxx, 29 June 1865, col. 930; Wood to
 Trevelyan, 25 June 1859; Wood to Canning, 11 July 1859 and 26
 June 1860, W.P.

¹²Wood to Canning, 11 July 1859.

¹³Wood to Canning, 3 and 7 November 1859, 26 June, 24 August, 16
 September (2), 24 November, 1860, 26 February, 4 and 26 March,
 26 April, 10 May 1861, W.P.

¹⁴Wood to Trevelyan, 25 June 1859, 26 January, 10 and 26 March
 1860; Wood to Denison, 25 January 1861, W.P.

¹⁵Wood to Elphinstone, 17 November, 3 December 1859, W.P.

of the Supreme Council)¹⁶ and Frere.¹⁷ Soon after coming into office, he put into effect a proposal, which Stanley had been considering, for appointing a finance member to the Supreme Council.¹⁸ From late 1859, successive finance members became whipping boys in Wood's unrelenting campaign against military expenditure.¹⁹ With the co-operation of Canning, and their assistance with the details, military charges were reduced to pre-mutiny levels by 1862, and the balance of the Indian accounts could be struck in black ink instead of red.²⁰

Beyond the immediate task of bringing military expenditure within India's means, the finance member of the Supreme Council was to lay the foundations of a continuing system of financial control and of economic stability.²¹ Wood regarded him as the "chancellor of the exchequer for India."²² The Secretary of State was required by the 1858 Act to present an annual statement

¹⁶ 26 November 1859, 26 March 1860, W.P.

¹⁷ 10 November 1859, 26 March 1860, 9 January 1861, W.P.

¹⁸ Wood to Canning, 25 June 1859; Maclagan, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

¹⁹ Wood to Wilson, 10 and 26 November 1859, 26 January, 10 and 26 March, 10 May, 26 June, 23 and 24 August 1860; Wood to Laing, 24 January, 26 February, 11 and 25 March, 10 and 16 May, 1861; W.P.

²⁰ S. Laing's Financial Statement, 16 April 1862, in *Abstract of Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Parl. Pap. (H.C.)*, 1862, xxxviii, pp. 613-29.

²¹ *Hansard*, clv, 1 August 1859, col. 784; 9 August 1859, cols. 1269-70.

²² Wood to Canning, 26 July 1859.

of Indian finance to parliament.²³ For this to be done, and for the Secretary of State in Council to exercise financial control over India, reliable accounts were needed, not only of past operations, but also of those in hand and in mind, for the current and the coming years. In making his appointments of finance members, Wood looked for men with knowledge of public accounts, with the ability to reorganize departments of state, with commercial understanding so that they could formulate revenue policy, and with financial acumen, so that they could control monetary matters.²⁴

In the first instance, Wood's choice fell upon James Wilson, who combined these attributes with distinction. A variegated career, at the Board of Trade, the Board of Control, the Treasury, and as editor of the Economist, had given him a close acquaintance of public departments and a theoretical grasp of financial and commercial questions.²⁵ He introduced the budget

²³Op. cit., §.53. Wood had, in fact, in 1853, undertaken to make an annual financial statement to the House of Commons. For the first statement, see Hansard, cxxxv, 8 August 1854, cols. 1436-63. For his statements as Secretary of State, see Hansard, clv, 1 August 1859; clx, 13 August 1860; clxiii, 3 June 1861; clxviii, 17 July 1862; clxxii, 23 July 1863; clxxvi, 23 July 1864; clxxx, 29 June 1865. The Secretary of State was also required to present an annual report of "Moral and Material Progress" to Parliament. The reports, and the detailed accounts for India, were printed in Parl. Pap. (H.C.) - see e.g. 1860, xlix; 1861, xliii and xlvi.

²⁴Wood to Canning, 26 July and 26 September 1859; Wood to Elgin, 9 October 1862(2); Wood to Ellice, 22 September 1860, Ellice Pap.; Wood to Grey, 14 November 1862, Howick Pap.

²⁵E. Barrington, The Servant of All, 2 vols., London 1927; W. Bagehot, "Memoir of the Right Hon. James Wilson" [1860], in Mrs. R. Barrington (ed.), The Life and Works of Walter Bagehot, 10 vols., London, 1915, III, 302-48.

system, achieving thereby a measure of financial control over all prospective expenditure in India, and providing the home government with a view of the heads of revenue and expenditure for three years at a time - the past, the present and the forthcoming years.²⁶ He took a long stride towards introducing a paper currency into India, and made an imaginative beginning to introducing elasticity into the Indian revenues.²⁷ His early death, in August 1860, posed a problem of succession with which Wood wrestled,²⁸ in the event, unsuccessfully. First, he chose Samuel Laing, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. He soon regretted the decision bitterly. Wood's minute attentiveness to financial details irked Laing, who was impatient of interference from home. Wood's insistence upon a full and frequent exchange of views and information with the finance member must have caused the latter the frustrations of the servant with two masters. Laing negotiated arrangements for a paper currency which the Supreme

²⁶ Report of Moral and Material Progress for 1860-1, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xxxix, pp. 17-18.

²⁷ See below.

²⁸ Wood sought advice on the vacancy in many quarters - among the Whigs from the Chief Whip and Edward Ellice, from the radicals Bright and Joseph Parkes, and from Lord Stanley (letters to Ellice 22 September 1860, Ellice Pap.; Bright, 20 September 1860, Bright Pap., B.M.Add.MS. 43388, fol. 37; and letters from Stanley, 27 September, 1 October, Hickleton Pap., and 21 September and 8 October 1860, W.P.). Stanley at first thought that Laing was not of the calibre required for the position, but later agreed that he was the best person available.

Council approved but which Wood regarded as negligent and improvident. He defended Canning's proposal for a "contract law" and his waste land sales resolutions, openly criticizing Wood's hostility towards them. Wood soon came to regard him as excessively ambitious and over-keen to cut a figure among the English population of Calcutta. He deprecated his "popularity-hunting" speeches in Manchester when ill-health drove him back to England for the summer of 1861. In short, Laing displayed an independence, and even a waywardness, which Wood found difficult to tolerate. Their relationship was never a happy one. Their differences extended to questions of classification in the accounts and to procedures for purchasing stores. Wood considered that Laing's handling of such matters indicated a professional incompetence. Several months after Laing's final return to England, he pressed Gladstone to scrutinize errors in his financial statements with, it would seem, a view to hounding him from public life.²⁹

²⁹The Wood-Laing controversy became public and kept Indian journalists busy for months. The press reports fill a scrap book in Wood's papers (W.P., 103), the personal correspondence countless pages in Wood's letter books (for Laing's letters see W.P. 58). See Hansard, clxviii, 17 July 1862, cols. 429-35, and Wood's despatches to the G.G. in C. of 2 August (Financial No. 122) 1861 and 9 June (Fin. 83) 1862, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xxxviii, pp. 583-5, 637-45, for his criticisms of Laing's errors in the presentation of the accounts. For Laing's replies, see his minute of 9 December 1861, and memorandum of 10 July 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 598-601, 649-60. See also, Wood to Gladstone, 27 November 1862, Gladstone Pap., B.M., Add.MS. 44184, fol. 104.

After his experience of Laing, Wood noted: "I want a gentleman who will not play tricks."³⁰ In October 1862, he appointed Sir Charles Trevelyan. He had recalled him without hesitation from the Governorship of Madras in 1860, when Trevelyan had publicly opposed the declared taxation policy of the Government of India.³¹ Since then, Trevelyan had been tugging at Wood's coat-tails for an Indian appointment.³² Wood believed that he had learned discretion as a result of his recall of 1860.³³ Further, with the return of financial equipoise in 1862, revenue problems had become less pressing, whilst the arrangements for the issue of a paper currency and the reorganization of the Indian accounts and of departmental procedures remained uncompleted. Wood was prepared to overlook Trevelyan's "revolt" over the income tax partly in order to obtain the service of his long experience, as Assistant Secretary to the Treasury, in reorganizing financial establishments.³⁴ Whilst Wilson had improved the form of presenting financial statements and had made

³⁰ Wood to Ellice, 26 July 1862, Ellice Pap.

³¹ For the official correspondence on the incident, see Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, xlix, esp. S. of S. to Gov. of Madras, 10 May (Public 23) 1860, pp. 376-7. For an analysis, see S. Bhattacharyya, "Trevelyan, Wilson and the Foundations of Indian Financial Policy", Bengal Past and Present, lxxx, I, (1961), pp. 65-73.

³² Trevelyan to Wood, 4 May 1861, Hickleton Pap.

³³ Wood to Grey, 17 November 1862, Howick Pap.; W. Bagehot to Wood, 29 November 1862, Hickleton Pap.

³⁴ Wood to Grey, 14 November 1862, Howick Pap.; Wood to Elgin, 2 September (3) and 9 October (2) 1862. See J. Hart, "Sir Charles Trevelyan at the Treasury", E.H.R., lxxv (1960), pp. 92-110.

them more useful, the information upon which they were based remained poorly classified and inadequately audited, and book-keeping procedures were still archaic.³⁵ Further, Wood was convinced that, whilst civil expenditure in toto must rise, there was nevertheless room for economy by eliminating wastefulness in individual departments.³⁶ However, while at this time he believed India to require a reformer of procedures and establishments rather than a manager of the revenues, he was concerned most of all to send out somebody with whom he could work congenially upon monetary policy. On 10 July 1862, he wrote to Elgin that his "principal reason" for wishing to send out a finance minister to succeed Laing was "as regards the paper money": "I can hardly give positive directions from hence, & I want to send somebody who is thoroughly sound in principles of currency whom I could trust in that respect" Wood had worked harmoniously with Trevelyan when he had been Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had leaned heavily upon him during the Irish famine and had consulted him frequently on

³⁵ Wood to Elgin, 3 December 1862; Wood to Trevelyan, 27 April 1862 and 18 November 1864; Wood to Frere, 16 September 1864; Wood to Massey, 17 April 1865; Trevelyan to Gladstone, 25 November 1862, printed as appendix to Report to Secretary of State by M.H. Foster, one of a Commission appointed in September 1863, to enquire into the mode of keeping Indian accounts, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1866, lii, pp. 138-9. Trevelyan was writing, with Wood's authorization, to seek the services of Foster, who was Assistant Paymaster-General.

³⁶ Wood to Elgin, 2 September 1863; Wood to Trevelyan, 2 September 1863; Wood to Delane, 26 October 1862; W.P.

Indian affairs during his term at the Board of Control. He was, in short, a friend of his.

Wood had been quite unsuccessful in attempting, through Wilson and Laing, to introduce a paper currency system upon what he regarded as a sound footing. The question had a special personal significance for him. He had been chairman of the parliamentary committee on banking in 1840. As a result of its labours, Peel's famous Bank Charter Act of 1844 was introduced. Peel had complimented him upon his handling of the committee and the pair were in complete agreement upon fundamentals in banking policy. With Peel's help, he had weathered the commercial crisis of 1847, when, to preserve confidence in the currency, the Bank of England was authorized to continue to issue banknotes after the limits set by the 1844 Act had been reached.³⁷ During the crisis of 1856-7, he was the adviser and confidant of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, G.C. Lewis,³⁸ and later he was to sit beside Gladstone through the financially uncertain days of mid-May 1866.³⁹ He was fully confident of his judgment where currency questions were involved, and he was anxious to exercise it in India. A

³⁷ See ch. 1, above.

³⁸ Hansard, cxi, 28 February 1856, cols. 1539-43; Wood to Lewis, 6 October and 3 November 1856, Halifax Papers, Add.MS. 49531, fols. 229-30, 243. See also Lewis's letters to Wood during the 1856-8 period, Hickleton Papers.

³⁹ Halifax to Northbrook, 16 May 1866, printed in Baring's Northbrook, op. cit., II, 223.

widely circulating paper currency would be of commercial benefit, it would reduce the need to shuffle bullion around India's 365 treasuries, and it would enable a lesser stock of treasure to be kept.⁴⁰

In 1859, a paper circulation, issued by a bank in each of the presidency towns, was in existence.⁴¹ The government held shares in each of the three banks, and had representatives on their boards of directors. However, the issues were open to serious objection. As they were small in scale and convertible into coin only at the head offices of the respective banks, they were unacceptable as the major media of commercial transactions throughout India. When Wood came into office, the Government of India had already recommended establishing an extended note circulation under its own direct control.⁴² Wood discussed the question at length with Wilson, who, he had told Gladstone some years earlier, "was not altogether of the orthodox faith in these matters,

⁴⁰ Wood to Elphinstone, 2 November 1859; Hansard, clx, 13 August 1860, col. 1193.

⁴¹ A recent, well-documented, account of the introduction of government notes, between 1859 and 1866, is given by S.N. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-42. Singh has not, however, consulted Wood's voluminous correspondence on the question, nor penetrated his overweening interest in the question to any depth.

⁴² Gov.-Gen. in C. to S. of S., 27 April (Financial 61) 1859, and enclosed Note on the Extension of the Paper Currency, by C.H. Lushington, Financial Sec. to the Govt., in Currency Pap., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, xlix, pp. 105-8. See also, S.N. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

though very nearly so."⁴³ He and Peel had found Wilson a difficult member of the committee which enquired into the monetary crisis of 1847. However, he now expressed his confidence that "Wilson will carry out my ideas as well as his own - that is to say we agree."⁴⁴

Unfortunately, the minute on currency, which Wilson wrote in December 1859, exposed a fundamental disagreement.⁴⁵ For it propounded the doctrine, which Wood regarded as a heresy, that banknotes might be issued to the extent of three times the amount of bullion held in reserve, provided that the balance of the banknotes was covered by a holding of government securities. That is to say, the asset backing for the liability created by the issue of the banknotes must be in bullion as to one-third of its amount, but might be in government securities as to the remaining two-thirds. Wood, appealing to the "sound principle" of the 1844 Act, held that allowing two-thirds of the total issue to be backed by government securities gave inadequate assurance of convertibility. In the event of a "run", the securities would be unsaleable and the notes presented for conversion to coin might well exceed the

⁴³Wood to Gladstone, 2 January 1853, Gladstone Pap., B.M.Add.MS. 44184, fol. 53. The occasion was Wilson's appointment as Financial Secretary to the Treasury. Wood advised Gladstone to seek the advice of George Arbuthnot on currency questions. Wood offered the finance membership of the Supreme Council to Arbuthnot upon Wilson's death (Wood to Lewis, 25 September 1860, B.M.Add.MS. 49531, fols. 341-3).

⁴⁴Wood to Canning, 26 September 1859.

⁴⁵Currency Pap., pp. 109-22.

bullion reserve. It was essential to issue banknotes against government securities only to a somewhat lesser extent than the minimum requirement of the community for its transactions. Further notes might, of course, be issued to the full extent of the bullion held. The problem was to establish the community's minimum requirement for banknotes. Then a fixed sum might be set, to the limit of which banknotes might be issued against government securities, and any further issue would require bullion backing.⁴⁶

Wood believed that he had "indoctrinated Mr. Laing" on currency before the latter left for India late in 1860.⁴⁷ He was due for a shock. The Government of India did, in 1861, pass an act which provided for the withdrawal of the banks' paper currencies and for the issue of government notes. Only £4 m. in notes was to be issued against securities, and beyond this fixed

⁴⁶ Wood to Wilson, 10, 22 March, 26 April 1860; S. of S. to G.G. in C., 26 March (Financial 47) and 30 November (Financial 195) 1860, in Currency Pap., pp. 128-31, and Further Currency Pap., Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xxxviii, p. 668. "All that is to be expected of a paper currency is that it should do what a metallic currency would do but with greater convenience and economy" (Wood to Frere, 24 November 1860). Cf. the political economist, B. Price, who wrote, on 25 March 1861: "Wood has ... upset Wilson's glorious scheme the last Indian minute was the glory of his life. And to be overthrown by such contemptible, despicable twaddle, as that a paper currency must vary in quantity as if it were metallic" (cited in E. Barrington, *op. cit.*, I, p. 54).

⁴⁷ Wood to Frere, 18 December 1860.

sum, full bullion backing was required.⁴⁸ However, in spite of Wood's entreaties to the contrary,⁴⁹ Laing proceeded to develop, and the Government to execute, an agreement with the Bank of Bengal for the management of the issue.⁵⁰ Where Wilson's proposal had offended "sound scientific principles", Laing's arrangement was open to serious "practical objection."⁵¹ The danger in giving a private bank exclusive agency for the issue of banknotes throughout Bengal, was that the banking interests of a private company became entwined around the government's requirement for a stable, convertible currency.⁵² The Bank Act of 1844 had, Wood confessed, left the issue with the Bank of England, but in that instance the government had been encumbered by long tradition, and, in any event, the issue and banking departments were rigidly segregated.⁵³ The Bank of Bengal was an altogether unhallowed and less imposing institution,⁵⁴ and there could be no guarantee

⁴⁸ Act XIX of July 1861, Further Currency Papers, pp. 694-6.

⁴⁹ Wood to Canning, 31 March, 9 October 1861; Wood to Laing, 31 March, 16 May 1861, 2 January 1862; S. of S. to G.G. in C., 2 May (Financial 75) 1861, Further Currency Pap., pp. 688-93. The latter was a response to Laing's minute of February 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 681-5.

⁵⁰ Agreement with Bank of Bengal, 26 September 1861, enclosed with G.G. in C. to S. of S., 10 February (Financial 19) 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 697-8, 705-8.

⁵¹ Wood to Elgin, 12 March 1862.

⁵² Wood to Laing, 26 March 1862.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Wood to Laing, 3 April 1862.

that it would not, in a time of monetary stringency, continue to accommodate the commercial world beyond the statutory limit.⁵⁵ Even the Bank of England had, in 1847, done that.⁵⁶ "You have," Wood told Laing, "placed the credit of the Govt. at the discretion of the Bank of Bengal."⁵⁷ Further, for the ostensible purpose of compensating the Bank for losing its right to issue its own currency, and for handling the government issue, the agreement was garnished liberally with rewards and concessions which seemed "preposterously favourable."⁵⁸

The despatch on the question disapproved strongly of the arrangements.⁵⁹ However, in spite of strong opposition in Council,⁶⁰ Wood determined to let the agreement stand. The alternative would have exposed the members of the Government of India "to personal

⁵⁵ Wood to Laing, 9 April 1862.

⁵⁶ Wood to Elgin, 15 September 1862.

⁵⁷ Wood to Laing, 26 March 1862.

⁵⁸ Wood to Elgin, 18 March 1862. The details of the agreement are discussed in Singh, op. cit., pp. 134 (and n.3), 135. The main concessions to which Wood objected were: The Bank was to receive $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent commission on the notes issued, and was to receive the government's cash balances in deposit. It would be paid an allowance for managing the government's account and was to be free to dispose of its balances as it chose. It might also deal in foreign exchange. (See Wood to Laing, 26 March 1862.) Wood traced the "bonus" to the Bank "by the rise in their shares" (Wood to Laing, 19 March 1862) - from 6550 Rs. in December 1861 to 7800 Rs. in March 1862 (Wood to Laing, 26 March 1862). "The wicked world," he told Elgin on 9 April, "asks what shares are held in the Bank by the promoters of these measures." He later learned that two members of the Supreme Council, Beadon and Grey, were shareholders in the Bank (Wood to Trevelyan, 24 September 1863). By November 1863, the share price stood at 11000Rs. (Wood to Trevelyan, 26 November 1863).

⁵⁹ 8 April (Financial 55) 1862, Currency Pap., op. cit., pp. 714-18.

⁶⁰ Wood to Laing, 9 April 1862.

actions for non-performance of contract, & would have damaged the Govt. in the eyes of the Calcutta & Indian world, besides causing great derangement & confusion in the monied world there."⁶¹ But Wood had it in mind for Trevelyan to reopen

negotiations with the Bank and to wean the currency issue from it.⁶² When Trevelyan was despatched for India, Wood noted

that he was "aware of all we wish on currency."⁶³ Trevelyan made a preliminary reconnaissance of the situation and reported

home.⁶⁴ In reply a despatch was sent out, in June 1863, pressing for a negotiated withdrawal of the Bank's issue rights in return for certain concessions as to banking.⁶⁵ After a long correspondence, but before Wood resigned from office, arrangements were made to place the control of the currency circulation in the hands of the government.⁶⁶

Wood had a passionate personal interest in currency questions,

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Wood to Elgin, 10 July 1862.

⁶³ Wood to Elgin, 26 November 1862. See S. of S. to G.G. in C., 16 September (Financial 158) 1862, Currency Pap., Parl. Pap., (H.C.), 1864, xliii, pp. 276-82.

⁶⁴ Minute of 28 February 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 300-5. Wood thought the minute to be "very good" (Wood to Trevelyan, 9 April (2) 1863).

⁶⁵ 10 June (Financial 103) 1863, Currency Pap. (1864), pp. 309-11. See Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-8. For Wood's commentary on the despatch, see his letter to Trevelyan, 10 June 1863.

⁶⁶ See Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-40, for the terms of the settlement.

which led him to give them a quite disproportionate amount of his attention.⁶⁷ "I should be glad," he told Trevelyan in 1863, "to see a paper currency on really sound principles established under my auspices."⁶⁸ In 1864, he became uniquely anxious about the subject, as negotiations with the Bank seemed to stumble towards a stalemate. In the middle of the year, he was appealing to the ministry's uncertain tenure of office as a reason for haste: "Our existence," he noted, "depends on a man of 79 [i.e. Palmerston] ; & one cannot reckon on any long tenure of that kind."⁶⁹ Again, in the context of a letter to Trevelyan on currency, dated 3 August 1864, he wrote: "There is no saying what may happen next year to us." Personal interest and personal ambition played large parts in Wood's appointment of Trevelyan, and in his arrangement of the priorities of financial questions. Ironically, the results of his currency reform were a disappointment,⁷⁰ and posterity has been severely critical of them.⁷¹ Tragically, a financial matter of greater importance fell, after Wilson's

⁶⁷Wood's letters to India continued to make long and avid references to paper currency as long as he was in office. In 1864, the question of introducing the sovereign into India was mooted, and he attacked it with like enthusiasm (see W.P. 97; Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1865, xxxix).

⁶⁸Wood to Trevelyan, 25 August 1863. See also Wood to Trevelyan, 17 September 1863.

⁶⁹Wood to Trevelyan, 17 June 1864.

⁷⁰See "Report of Commission to enquire into the operation of Act XIX of 1861", Simla, 4 October 1866, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1867-8, xlix.

⁷¹See J. C. Coyajee, The Indian Currency System (1835-1926), Madras 1930, pp. 14-19.

death, into comparative neglect.

The immediate post-mutiny problem of reducing the extraordinary military expenditure aside, India's greatest financial need was for a stable but elastic revenue. It was no creation of the mutiny's. Within six months of becoming President of the Board of Control, Wood had written to Dalhousie: "The only thing that disturbs me is your finance; one cannot but fear that the opium revenue is not very certain, and yet much more than your surplus depends upon it."⁷² He later described the proceeds of the opium monopoly as his "bête noir".⁷³ After the land tax, it was the major source of revenue. Yet the profits varied with the size of the crop and the price paid in China; their existence relied upon the failure of the Chinese to grow the plant themselves. Opium profits could soar to £8 m. in 1862 and produce a surplus of almost £2 m., or plunge in the following year to £6.8 m. and leave a surplus of less than £100,000.⁷⁴ Of the other pre-mutiny sources of revenue, the salt tax, which yielded some £3 m., was a mixture of customs duty, excise and government monopoly.⁷⁵ It was a burdensome tax upon the consumption of an essential commodity. Whilst it was disagreeable to the free trade climate of mid-Victorian England, it was thought to admit of little

⁷² 24 June 1853.

⁷³ Wood to Grey, 26 January 1865, Howick Pap.

⁷⁴ P.J. Thomas's tables of Indian revenues, op. cit., appendix F, p. 500.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 41-4.

increase. Indeed, the salt manufacturers of Cheshire, the Manchester school, and a strong Tory whip had, in 1853, contrived to introduce a clause into Wood's Bill to abolish the duty.⁷⁶ The action was countermanded in the House of Lords. Before the mutiny, customs duties yielded some £2 m., of which one half arose from salt.⁷⁷

In 1854, Dalhousie wrote to Wood in high seriousness: "Additional revenue must be obtained somehow."⁷⁸ He elaborated upon the inevitable increase in civil expenditure as Britain pressed ahead with public works and education. Canning's first glimpse of Indian finance left him "uncomfortable" for the future.⁷⁹ In all but one of the years from 1853 to 1862 a deficit was recorded. As Secretary of State, Wood not only denied the possibility of reducing the civil expenditure, but committed himself, in word at least, to educational, judicial and public works policies which must cause it to rise. Furthermore, he approved, in principle, the permanent settlement of the land revenue, which

⁷⁶ Hansard, cxxix, 28 July 1853, cols. 913-59, and 15 August 1853, cols. 1724-56; Wood to Dalhousie, 19 August 1853; Wood to Grey, 6 August 1853, Howick Pap. On 8 August 1853, Wood wrote to Dalhousie: "... it is so popular a topic to declaim against a government monopoly, and taxing such a necessity of life, that ... it [may be] difficult to prevent the House of Commons interfering improperly in Indian finance."

⁷⁷ P.J. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁷⁸ 15 August 1854, W.P.

⁷⁹ Maclagan, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

would, in due course, render the source of forty per cent of the entire revenues of India inelastic. In short, the process of improving India, and in particular the development of her agricultural resources, demanded that some flexibility be introduced into the revenues. If that problem could not be solved, then much of Wood's policy would, of necessity, fall under the blade of the "paring knife".

In 1860, Wilson, with the support of the Supreme Council, began to introduce a measure of revenue planning into a fiscal policy which had rested upon an enhanceable land revenue, upon government monopolies, and upon hopefulness. The basis of Wilson's plan was an income tax, to be applied to all incomes above £20 per annum. In addition, he proposed to levy a licence tax upon members of all trades and professions. This levy would reach those classes whose incomes were difficult to assess and who paid little towards the revenues of India in other respects. Where the income tax, which affected fixed income earners and landowners most, was regarded as a temporary measure, for five years only, the licence tax would be permanent. Thirdly, he revised the customs duties, establishing a ten per cent ad valorem tariff upon the generality of imports, with the object of improving their yield. The consumption of luxury goods, which had borne a twenty per cent duty, would be stimulated. However, the most interesting aspect of his tariff policy was his treatment of cotton goods, which accounted for rather less than a half of the total value of imports.

Whilst the levy on piece goods was unaffected, the duties on cotton twist and yarn were doubled. It seemed unlikely that the demand for English twist and yarn would diminish as a result of the increase.⁸⁰

Wood was uncertain of his judgment in settling the details of new forms of taxation for India, and he was quite prepared to leave them for the Government of India to determine. However, he did regard the financial crisis which the mutiny had precipitated as providing a good opportunity for placing the revenues on a more manageable and equitable basis. In September 1859, he had written to Canning that he would "gladly avail ... [himself] of the present opportunity of imposing taxes which may provide for present need, and give a surplus after 2 or 3 years." "You could," he advised, "spend a surplus very well in many ways - public works ..., reducing the salt tax, d^o customs, for savings, and you would be in a condition to meet a falling off of the opium if it should take place."⁸¹ In fact, he would have liked "to get the edge of the wedge in for as many new sources of income as possible; to have light taxes of various sorts, which may hereafter bear increase if the necessity arises."⁸² The Indian authorities must decide which forms of taxation would be acceptable to Indian thought and custom. The principle was to "try whatever may be

⁸⁰Wilson's Financial Statement of 18 February 1860.

⁸¹Letter of 26 September.

⁸²Wood to Trevelyan, 25 December 1859.

a future not unpopular source of revenue: and prepare for the dark day of a falling revenue from opium." "How, what and where," he told Trevelyan, he would "leave to ... Indian heads to devise and execute."⁸³ He commended, therefore, Wilson's trilogy of taxes and told the House of Commons that he could "do nothing better than give ... cordial support to the Government of India, who ... [have] the best means of judging what taxes it is possible and expedient to levy."⁸⁴

An Act for the collection of the income tax was passed in August 1860.⁸⁵ Wood's 'only serious worry seems to have been that Wilson, in his enthusiasm, and through his lack of Indian experience, would press its collection too hard at first. He was prepared, for the sake of making a start, to suffer evasion. The levy could be extended and the collection tightened as the tax became more familiar.⁸⁶ As for the cotton duties, Wood came under fire from Manchester from the beginning. At the end of March, he gave a Manchester deputation "no hopes" of a reduction of the ten per cent, though he conveyed to India their opinion that the rated

⁸³ Wood to Trevelyan, 26 January 1860.

⁸⁴ Hansard, clx, 13 August 1860, col. 1191. Wood wrote to Canning, on 8 November 1859: "We have had a long discussion in Council on your new tax I do not know that their opinion is worth much. I certainly feel that my own is not. You will have learnt the general feeling of the county ... and you must be guided by what you learn." See also, Wood to Wilson, 26 January, 10 March and 9 April 1860.

⁸⁵ Act XXXII of 1860.

⁸⁶ Wood's letters to Canning and Frere, 10 May 1860.

values chosen for the application of the ad valorem levy were unfair.⁸⁷ In May and August, he repulsed Manchester pressure in the House of Commons by appealing to the necessitous condition of the Indian revenues.⁸⁸ The third of Wilson's taxes - the licence duty - had still not been applied when he died, in August 1860, and early in 1861 Wood was urging Laing to put it into effect.⁸⁹

With Wilson's death, the attempt to provide stable yet elastic sources of income began to founder. The first actual casualty was the licence tax. Laing put it on the shelf in his budget for 1861-2. He estimated that it would yield only £600,000, and preferred to transfer £500,000 of the charges for the local governments to defray from local taxes, rather than demand it at "four million doors". He envisaged the possibility, in the future, of substituting the licence tax for the income tax on the lower income groups.⁹⁰ Even before this sacrifice of the licence tax,

⁸⁷Wood to Wilson, 26 March (3 and 4), 3 April 1860; Redford, op. cit., II, pp. 21-5. Apparently the rated value for the ad valorem levy had been set at the 1859 boom level, instead of at an average of past years' prices. As a result of Manchester's representations to Wood, fairer valuations were adopted in 1860 (Manchester Chamber of Commerce Annual Report for 1860, cited in Redford, op. cit., II, p. 25; Gov.-Gen. in C. to S. of S., 29 June (Sep.Rev.16) 1860, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1860, lii, pp. 199-200).

⁸⁸Hansard, clviii, 24 May 1860, col. 1652, and clx, 14 August 1860, 1257.

⁸⁹Wood to Laing, 25 March 1861.

⁹⁰G.G. in C. to S. of S., 2 May (Financial 63) 1861, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xxxviii, pp. 565-75. The licence tax act was passed (Act XVIII of 1861) during Laing's absence in England, but was finally given up in his budget for 1862-3 (Laing's Financial Statement of 16 April 1862; G.G. in C. to S. of S., 19 April (Financial 58) 1862, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1862, xxxviii, pp. 163-4).

Manchester had begun a strong offensive to beat down the cotton duties. In the shadow of Wilson's death, Wood wrote:

They are getting up a strong feeling against the 10 per cent on English manufactures. His [i.e. Wilson's] knowledge of free trade opinions kept sober people quiet and steady; and his acknowledged ability imposed on grumblers here. I cannot find anybody whose character and authority weigh as his did.⁹¹

Laing, who later showed an inclination to court popularity at Manchester,⁹² slashed the duty on yarn by half in his first budget.⁹³ Wood was an accessory before this fact, or, more correctly, the chief culprit. He could never really regard the ten per cent as more than a short-term rate, for it might well inhibit trade and become a protectionist duty.

Before Laing had gone to India, Wood had suggested that he might restore the duties on twist and yarn to five per cent, the level at which they had been fixed prior to Wilson's tariff reforms. Where, with Wilson's backing, he could feel confident that the ten per cent duties were sound in principle, Wood, left to himself, immediately began to quaver.⁹⁴ Perhaps the duty on yarn was operating to protect the small mills which had emerged at Bombay. If so, reducing it might increase the customs revenue. "I hear," he told Laing in March 1861, "that Bombay yarn is sent

⁹¹Wood to Canning, 16 September 1860 (1).

⁹²Wood to Ellice, 1 October 1861, Ellice Pap.; Wood to Canning, 2 October 1861; Wood to Elgin, 24 September 1862 (2).

⁹³Hansard, clxiii, 3 June 1861, col. 487.

⁹⁴Wood to Canning, 7 December 1860.

to Calcutta to the exclusion of English yarn which pays duty."⁹⁵
 When Laing had taken the cue and reduced the duty, Wood wrote:
 "I am charmed at your reduction of the duty on yarn."⁹⁶ In the
 following year, with a healthy surplus in prospect, and Manchester,
 in the throes of the cotton famine, pressing him with deputations,
 and in the Commons,⁹⁷ he felt that he could no longer maintain
 the existing duties. He wrote to Elgin:

I wish you would reduce the duties on manufactured goods
 to 5 per cent if you can There is a strong feeling
 in the manufacturing districts about this matter. They
 are suffering sensibly, & altho' ... I don't believe that
 the 10 per cent has anything to do with the matter, it
 would be extremely popular to do it.⁹⁸

Laing cut the duty on manufactured goods back to five per cent
 and that on yarn to 3½ per cent.⁹⁹ At the same time, expecting
 a substantial surplus, he abandoned any thought of compounding the
 income and licence taxes into a permanent scheme. He consigned
 the latter to oblivion and repealed the former on incomes in the
 £20-£50 range.¹⁰⁰ Laing was a staunch opponent of both of these
 new forms of taxation in India.¹⁰¹

After the presentation of the budget for 1862-3, Wilson's

⁹⁵ Wood to Laing, 31 March 1861 (2).

⁹⁶ Wood to Laing, 27 May 1861.

⁹⁷ Wood to Elgin, 25 February 1862.

⁹⁸ Wood to Elgin, 3 March 1862.

⁹⁹ Laing's Financial Statement of 16 April 1862; Hansard, clxviii,
 17 July 1862, col. 429.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Laing's memorandum of 10 July 1862.

original taxes had been largely dismantled. The licence tax had never been applied, the income tax on the lower range of incomes had been repealed, and the cotton duties had been reduced. Of the changes, Wood had favoured only the last. He was now to cling to the remaining cotton duties with impressive tenacity. In June 1862, he told a deputation from Lancashire that, with regard to the duty on manufactured goods, they had "nothing to expect beyond the reduction to 5 per cent."¹⁰² That "ought to be permanent." The duties brought in an invaluable revenue of about a million pounds a year. He thought that provided the duty was low it was "not sound political economy to say that it cannot be maintained because it has a slight protective effect."¹⁰³ And that objection might be met in another way.

Wood had never been satisfied with the suspension of the licence duty.¹⁰⁴ In August 1861, he had asked Canning to "twist it into a permanent tax of some sort."¹⁰⁵ He favoured the scheme of combining it with the income tax to form "a moderate permanent tax, which can be raised in difficult times, as we raise our Income Tax [in England]". He explained his object:

¹⁰²Wood to Elgin, 18 June and 25 August 1862; Hansard, clxxvi, 21 July 1864, cols. 1812-13.

¹⁰³Wood to Frere, 16 June 1863.

¹⁰⁴Wood to Canning, 26 March 1861 (1).

¹⁰⁵Wood to Canning, 17 August 1861.

I consider 7d. in the pound here as our normal state. If we want more, it costs nothing in collection to make it 9d. or 10d. it seems to me that it will be a great thing if you can put your revenue on a certain basis, without having to invent new taxes very often I really do not see how for the future you will be able to dispense with this source of revenue.¹⁰⁶

He lamented, in April 1962, that the Government of India "did not mix up the Income & Licence tax and put the two into a shape which might be permanent."¹⁰⁷ A chance had been missed of creating a permanent, enhanceable tax, and at the same time of levying one which would countervail any protectionist effects of the cotton duties. For "a licence tax upon traders would have included the Cotton Spinning Manufacturers."¹⁰⁸ A single licence-income tax seemed an elegant solution to India's long-term financial problem of unstable, inelastic revenue in the face of rising civil expenditure. The steady yield of an income tax, which had been almost £2 m., might be obtained from a compounded income-licence tax, with fixed income earners paying an income tax, and variable income earners, who were difficult to assess, paying a licence tax.¹⁰⁹ The cotton duties could be defended in a logical argument over their protectionist implications, by appeal to the compensating licence tax which Indian manufacturers were required to pay. When Laing left India, Wood wrote to Frere, the finance member pro tem,

¹⁰⁶ Wood to Canning, 1 September 1861.

¹⁰⁷ Wood to Denison, 25 April, 1862.

¹⁰⁸ Wood to Laing, 10 May 1862.

¹⁰⁹ Wood to Frere, 29 August 1862.

and to Elgin, expressing these views.¹¹⁰

At this very time, Wood chose Trevelyan, an inveterate opponent of the income tax, to succeed Laing. Apparently Wood had reached an agreement with Trevelyan before his departure, for he wrote to him later:

I certainly thought that we had fully understood each other before you went away, that the Income tax, & all other taxes were to be left alone, till the period for considering the question of repealing or continuing some modified form of the Income tax arrived

The five years, for which Wilson had originally proposed the income tax, did not expire until 1865. However, in his first budget, Trevelyan, apparently under some pressure from other members of the Supreme Council, reduced it from four per cent to three.¹¹¹ Wood disliked the step but let it pass.¹¹² He continued to press for a licence duty,¹¹³ and soon after Lawrence arrived in India, in January 1864, he was urging him to "devise some new & not unpopular tax."¹¹⁴ As the termination of the temporary income tax drew near, he saw attractions in changing it from a central, universal levy to a local one. Until Trevelyan's "revolt" over the income tax in April 1860, he had been working towards the

¹¹⁰ Ibid., and 2 April 1863; Wood to Elgin, 25 August and 16 September 1862.

¹¹¹ Hansard, clxxii, 23 July 1863, col. 1297; Wood to Elgin, 16 June and 3 August 1863.

¹¹² Wood to Trevelyan, 23 May (1) and 10 June 1863.

¹¹³ Wood's letters to Elgin and Frere, 16 June 1863.

¹¹⁴ Wood to Lawrence, 23 March 1864.

decentralization of the authority to levy taxes.¹¹⁵ A measure of local taxation appealed to him because of his Whiggish admiration for local self-government. In his first budget speech, Laing had expressed his preference for local taxes above Wilson's licence and income taxes. During Laing's sojourn in England in the summer of 1861, Wood discussed "the idea" of a local income-licence tax with him and thought it "not a bad one."¹¹⁶ However, he had then postponed further consideration of such a scheme until the time arrived for the removal of the temporary income tax. Now, in June 1864, he wrote to Trevelyan: "I hold strongly to leaving as much of ... [the income tax] as you can in the shape of a local tax for local purposes."¹¹⁷ Public works, education and police charges in each presidency might be defrayed by a local income tax."¹¹⁸

In April 1865, Trevelyan figured in a second rebellion over the income tax. In February and March, it had become apparent that abolishing the tax as a general charge would mean budgeting for a deficit in the forthcoming year. Trevelyan and Lawrence had led Wood to believe that the tax would be preserved,¹¹⁹ and he

¹¹⁵ See ch. 3, above.

¹¹⁶ Wood to Canning, 9 October 1861.

¹¹⁷ Wood to Trevelyan, 17 June 1864.

¹¹⁸ Wood to Trevelyan, 29 September and 16 October 1864; Wood to Lawrence, 15 October 1864; Hansard, clxxvi, 21 July 1864, col. 1812.

¹¹⁹ Trevelyan to Wood, 20 February 1865.

contented himself with expressing a hope that they would "contrive to make it more productive" "by an improved assessment."¹²⁰ At a meeting of the Supreme Council, on the day preceding the presentation of the budget, Trevelyan proposed to discontinue the income tax and he carried the Council with him. Lawrence stood alone in favouring its retention and he declined to veto the decision of the meeting. He did, however, refuse to condone a proposal of Trevelyan's to increase the salt tax. To balance his budget, Trevelyan proposed to resort to export duties, and to floating a loan for £1.2 m. in England.¹²¹ Wood described the budget as "a complication of mistakes". He considered that "to discontinue a tax, almost as it were to create the necessity of borrowing, ... [was] monstrous."¹²² Export duties were a "sin against [free trade] principle."¹²³ He disallowed the duties¹²⁴ and the loan,¹²⁵ but, sidestepping a conflict with the civil servants,

¹²⁰ Wood to Trevelyan, 27 February 1865; to Lawrence, 10 March 1865; to Massey, 17 March 1865. See also Wood's telegram to Lawrence, 27 March 1865, W.P.

¹²¹ Lawrence's account of these events is printed in R.B. Smith, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 462-3. On 29 June 1865, Wood explained to the House of Commons what had happened (Hansard, clxxx, cols. 932-5). On 19 April, he had written to Lord Grey in puzzlement: "I cannot make out the Indian budget. If the telegrams are true it is directly the reverse of what Trevelyan said he intended." See also M. Naidis, "A Note on Sir John Lawrence and the Income Tax", B.P.P., lxxix (1960), pp. 74-82.

¹²² Wood to Massey, 15 May 1865.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Wood telegraphed his disapproval (Wood to Beadon, 10 May 1865). See also Hansard, clxxviii, 8 May 1865, col. 1600.

¹²⁵ The loan was "perfectly unjustifiable" (Wood to Massey, 10 April 1865).

who disliked paying it, he did not press the income tax.¹²⁶ He imagined that Lawrence would "have to reimpose the Income tax, perhaps under another name, next year."¹²⁷ In January 1866, he harked back to his earlier thought of raising a combined income-licence tax in each presidency for local needs.¹²⁸ He was then on the verge of quitting the India Office. He had, by his indecision and uncertainty, long since forfeited his opportunity of putting India's revenues on a sound footing.

Wood did much to steady India's tottering finances after the mutiny. He bludgeoned the Government of India to pare military expenditure to a fine point rapidly. Seeking to establish the foundations of financial control, and to introduce orderly accounting procedures, he chose an accomplished financier and a tried reformer of administrative systems, as the first and third finance members of the Supreme Council. He refused to allow a private bank to meddle with monetary policy, or English commercial interests to dictate tariff policy. Later, in retirement, as a seventy-six years old peer, he launched a long attack upon

¹²⁶ "The Civil Servants & holders of Govt. Securities, who pay the Income tax in full are impatient of the tax, & prefer exempting themselves instead of attempting to obtain a fair taxation of other classes. They are willing enough to tax the native in the shape of salt or the merchant in the shape of export duties. They look rather too much to themselves & too little to the public" (Wood to Massey, 15 May 1865).

¹²⁷ Wood to Lawrence, 16 May 1865.

¹²⁸ Wood to Frere, 1 January 1866.

Lord Salisbury's reduction, under Manchester pressure, of the cotton duties.¹²⁹ When, in 1882, they were finally repealed, he wrote that "the repeal was a bribe to the Lancashire manufacturers."¹³⁰ However, Wood was not the man for the job of introducing elasticity into the Indian revenues. His intention of establishing a permanent and enhanceable income-licence tax was commendable. But he failed to refine this crude notion into a tangible scheme, or to convince the Indian authorities that it had any merit, or to find a finance minister who might propose a better solution to India's revenue problem. On this vital question he held the reins all too loosely. Laing and Trevelyan bolted ahead on their own unfortunate courses, dismantling the licence and income taxes as they went, and making no provision for introducing local taxes in their place.

Wood's failure to pursue revenue policy as resolutely as he did, say, monetary policy, requires an explanation. So much more of what he was working for - education, public works and railways, law reform, the permanent settlement - depended upon it. Wood's Achilles' heel as a financier and as an administrator was his utter inability to convince himself, and others, that any policy was sufficiently right or desirable as to require taxation.

¹²⁹ Hansard, ccxxvii, 14 March 1876, cols. 1947-58, esp. 1949-53. See S.N. Singh, op. cit., pp. 116-31, for an account of the cotton duties controversy between 1858 and 1919.

¹³⁰ Halifax to Ripon, 21 September 1882, B.M.Add.MS., 43530, fol. 95.

He had failed, miserably, in 1848, to convince the Commons of the need for an increase in the income tax, and Disraeli had "poured scorn and ridicule" upon his fiscal proposals.¹³¹ Again, in 1851, Wood was unable to secure more than a short extension of the income tax. Yet Peel before him, and Gladstone after, managed to present the tax as essential to the reduction or repeal of duties, and, therefore, to commercial prosperity. The genius of a Gladstone in 1853 was to win acceptance of the income tax as the basis for an imaginative plan of reducing and repealing duties.¹³² In the 1860's, India awaited a Gladstone, who could barter education, public works, railways and the permanent settlement - the springs of economic regeneration - for stable taxes.¹³³

Wood lacked the Gladstonian touch. His English experience with the income tax had been traumatic, and it made him ultra-cautious in India. When Wilson first introduced the tax Wood was fearful of the reaction of Indians. He appealed to Frere, with his long experience of India, to "counteract" any tendency of Wilson's to impose the tax rigorously if the people resented it.¹³⁴

¹³¹W.F. Monypenny and G.E. Buckle, Life of Benjamin Disraeli ..., 2 vol. ed., London 1929, I, p. 921. See also ch. 1, above.

¹³²Sir S. Northcote, Twenty Years of Financial Policy..., London 1862, pp. 194 ff.

¹³³Lord Mayo tackled the revenue problem in 1870 by introducing a measure of decentralization in the form of a local cess (C.H.I., VI, pp. 517-18).

¹³⁴Wood to Frere, 10 May 1860.

He advised Canning to "submit to a large amount of cheating rather than run a risk of violence."¹³⁵ Such an attitude was scarcely conducive to rendering the tax an effective and reliable source of revenue. To condone evasion was to encourage it, and to expose the tax to criticism on the grounds of its unequal incidence. The tax became unpopular and Wood drew back from conflict over it on each occasion that the finance minister in India touched it - in 1862, when Laing exempted lower incomes from it, in 1863, when Trevelyan dropped it by one per cent, and in 1865, when it was repealed. Each time he justified his inaction, despite his disapproval, on the grounds of the popularity of the step taken.¹³⁶ However, beneath his inadequacy to cope with fiscal problems lay, perhaps, misgivings about the policies for which the revenues were required. In the latter stages of his career as an Indian administrator, disappointment at India's responses to policies intended for her regeneration became pronounced in his private letters. There was a note of incredulity and desperation in his reception of reports that the grant-in-aid system was inadequate to stimulate wealthier Indians to set up vernacular schools. He came to doubt the remunerativeness of irrigation and roads, and questioned the assumption that Indians

¹³⁵ Wood to Canning, 10 May 1860.

¹³⁶ Wood to Canning, 25 April 1862; Wood to Trevelyan, 10 June and 25 August 1863; Wood to Beadon, 10 May 1865.

would consume more dutiable commodities as their prosperity increased. Considering the condition of India, he expected too much too soon from the application of simple teachings about encouraging self-help and allowing economic man freedom from interference. Like other mid-Victorian liberals he held these principles dear. When their results in India fell short of expectations founded upon experience of England, he felt, perhaps, less inclined to seek the finance which their implementation required.

Conclusion

Achievement of a Whig Imperialist

It would be wrong to suggest that "Sir Charles Wood's Indian Policy" was a corpus of laws and procedures which Wood himself devised and executed. He was distinguished not by any originality of thought, but by a readiness to seek counsel wherever it might be found, by his judgment in evaluating opinions, and, when he had set his course, by his effectiveness in disarming opposition and overriding objection. His talent was essentially administrative. However particular the problem, he consorted with experts to become familiar with its details. As a result, his breadth and depth of knowledge became enormous. Algernon West, his private secretary from 1861 until 1866, recalled that "many [men] ..., on leaving his room, expressed their astonishment at the perfect intimacy he displayed on matters supposed by them to be technical, or only to be obtained after a long residence in India and years of application."¹ Lord Northbrook, who had been his secretary at the Board, and who was the parliamentary Under-secretary of State for India from June 1859 until January 1861, and again from July 1861 until April 1864, regarded him as "a man second to none in his knowledge of and attention to Indian affairs."²

"Le Whig," wrote Balzac, "est la femme de votre gouvernement"

¹Recollections, I, p. 287.

²Mallet's Northbrook, p. 57.

[Anglais]."³ Wood was a master of manoeuvre. Fortified by his grasp of Indian problems, he advanced his chosen solutions to them with a singular shrewdness and a certain courage. West was struck with "the ability he showed in managing his Council."⁴ His practice of frequent informal consultation with Councillors, and his arrangements for preparing despatches, diminished dissension. He overruled his Council on but four occasions, and on only one of these, when the opening of senior civil appointments to uncovenanted persons was in question, was a major policy decision involved. He circumvented the Council over only one matter of importance, the abolition of the Local army, placing it directly before the Cabinet and parliament. Disregarding the opinions of the Council and the Viceroy, he revealed his acumen as a tactician by his exceptional treatment of that question. When policies pursued by the Viceroys met with his approval but seemed in danger of being overturned in Council, he allowed concessions in details, whilst insisting upon "the essence". Thus were approved Canning's "conciliatory" line with the "gentry" of Oudh and the Punjab, and the successive denials of the Raja of Mysore's claims. He was also astute in shepherding Indian bills through parliament. His Bill of 1853, and his proposals for the army, the Civil Service, the Indian councils and the high

³Cited in E.M. Whitty, The Governing Classes of Great Britain ..., London 1854, p. 137.

⁴Private Diaries, p.2.

courts, were all enacted intact in principle. In 1861, Lord Canning noted with admiration that he had worked his bills on the three latter questions through parliament "like a brick".⁵ In relation to the authorities in India, he reduced tension by the practice of full and frequent informal communication. He was nevertheless firm in reprimanding the Governors-General for taking policy decisions without consulting him, and he was prepared to exercise his power of disallowance. Dalhousie considered him a "carping" President of a "Board of Interference",⁶ Canning thought him "snappish, but very fair."⁷ He overbore the former's arrangements for a Legislative Council, and the latter's for selling waste lands, for introducing penal proceedings into breach of contract suits, and for circulating a paper currency. He had the facility for implementing what he approved, and for overthrowing what he did not.

When he handed back the seals of his office in February 1866, Britain's grip upon India was firm. The joint pillars of Imperial power - a body of civil officials replenished by recruits selected from England's best schools and universities, and a

⁵Lord E. Fitzmaurice, The Life of ... Earl Granville, 2 vols., London 1905, I, p. 380. Wood's close relationship with Stanley over Indian affairs, between 1859 and 1866, followed the pattern of his contacts with Peel over Treasury business between 1846 and 1850. In both cases this close consultation went far towards drawing the teeth of the opposition in parliament.

⁶Private Letters, pp. 308, 322.

⁷Canning to Frere, 24 October 1860, in Martineau's Frere, I, p. 358.

military force officered from the British Army - were in place. They were buttressed by treaties on the north and north-west frontiers, and by arrangements with Indian princes, with the talugdars of Oudh and the sirdars of the Punjab. The institutional framework of legal codes and procedures and titles to property was largely secured. The trunk railway system was substantially complete and the government was beginning to receive reimbursement for the returns which it had guaranteed.⁸ India's expenditure and revenue were in equilibrium. Wood's function in relation to this stable Imperial edifice had been that of the supervising architect.

From the viewpoints of his party and of his country, Wood was an eminently successful minister. From that of India he was a mixed blessing. He was scrupulously fair in protecting Indians against exploitation by British commercial interests. He rebuffed the demands of indigo planters and cotton manufacturers for concessions which would have meant the sacrifice of the civil and property rights of Indians, and he prevented the development of discriminatory legislative bodies. However, to consolidate British power he was prepared to burke the claims of the Raja of Mysore, and to fan caste, communal and regional animosities among

⁸In the first half of 1866, the profits of each of the E.I.R. Company and of the G.I.P. Company exceeded the interest which was guaranteed to them (E.C.S. Williams, op. cit., p. 50).

Indian troops. The pax Britannica served the interests of India, but the price demanded for it was high. The representation of Indians on the legislative councils was small, and Wood provided for it partly as a security measure, a safety-valve, partly as a counterweight to the representation of non-official Europeans. As for employment in the Civil Service, Indians were rarely appointed to positions of executive responsibility, and, whilst they were freely employed in the judicial line, they were not trusted to sit alone in the judgment of cases involving Europeans. Partly for political reasons, Wood was more interested in allying the government with "the natural chiefs and leaders of the people" than in encouraging "native talent" to seek senior positions in its service. But there were advantages to Indians in being associated with the legislative and judicial processes, and Wood also had them in mind. In 1862, he claimed that his "course" was "to improve the native, reconcile him ... to our rule, & fit him for ruling himself."⁹ It was a sincere enough profession, but he had a long-distance "course" in mind. In government and administration, whenever there was tension between Indian self-determination and Imperial control, Wood resolved it by elevating the latter above the former. And, as his initial unfavourable reaction to the Ilbert Bill showed, he was still, in the 'eighties, cautious in demarcating areas of likely tension.

⁹Wood to Elgin, 28 August 1862, W.P.

India might reasonably have looked more readily to social and economic policy for the "blessings" of British rule. But here the mid-Victorian shibboleths were applied and found wanting. Wood's Education Despatch is an impressively pious statement of intention. It gave direction and organization to the attempt to treat the malady of ignorance, but the cost of the remedy could not be met by injunctions to self-help and the provision of grants-in-aid. In the realm of economic policy, the view that the soil belonged to the state seemed to justify departures from the doctrine of laissez-faire. Expenditure on irrigation and roads, and any loss of the guaranteed interest payments made to railway companies, would be offset by an enhanced revenue from the land. Experience of the expansion of the British economy after the "railway age" gave rise to sanguine expectations that railways in India would lead to regeneration. With regard to land revenue policy, Wood's adherence to laissez-faire encouraged him to authorize the gradual extension of the permanent settlement as particular areas became substantially cultivated and as revised assessments took account of improvements. He thought that the restriction of government demands would stimulate thrift, and that improving landlords would buy out the inefficient. The surrender of the right to enhance the land revenue would be offset by the greater capacity of Indians to bear other forms of taxation, as they became more prosperous. The results of these policies disappointed Wood's expectations. Public works did

not become remunerative immediately. The trunk railways required supplementary feeder lines, which private enterprise, lacking confidence in India's capacity for regeneration, was loth to undertake unaided. And, even where, in consequence of material improvements, Indians seemed to enjoy a greater prosperity, Wood observed that their consumption of taxable articles failed to rise. Wood became disenchanted with India's responses to the social and economic doctrines of his age before he resigned. Yet he was not prepared to embark upon a more constructive course. He was restrained from large scale expenditure partly by disappointment at past results, and partly by his inability to devise a fiscal policy to raise revenues to offset it.

Wood was the minister for India at a stage when stability was of preponderating importance, in an age when laissez-faire was synonymous with "sound principle". As he was a cautious man in financial and political matters, and a somewhat unconstructive reformer, he reflected, in exaggerated form, the limitations of the Imperial viewpoint in the mid-nineteenth century. He also revealed the prejudices of his class, the aristocratic, propertied Whigs. He had a preference for recruiting English gentlemen to the Civil Service.¹⁰ When he thought of delegating magisterial and

¹⁰ G.M. Young wrote of "the obstinate survival of aristocracy in Victorian England": "Of two rich men, or two clever men, England was not afraid to prefer the gentleman, and the preference operated for the benefit of many gentlemen who were both poor and stupid Mr Gladstone had two names for this peculiar habit of mind. Once he called it 'a sneaking kindness for a lord'; at another time, ... 'the shadow which the love of freedom casts or the echo of its voice in the halls of the constitution'" ("Portrait of an Age", in Early Victorian England, 1830-1865, 2 vols., [Cambridge 1934], 1951 edn., II, pp. 485-6).

revenue functions to Indians, it was in terms of extending the powers of the "native gentry". The association of local Indian magnates with the process of government seemed "natural" to a member of the squirarchy of Yorkshire. In India as in England, he deprecated centralization, and he had no thought of establishing a bureaucracy of educated Indians. He looked to "local effort" for the initiative in setting up schools and managing them. He conceived of India's economic development essentially in terms of agriculture.

Notwithstanding his limitations, Wood accepted with sincerity the responsibility for carrying the arts of civilization to India. To discharge it, he brought English experience, expertise and capital to bear. British society was undergoing an expansion of consciousness and was eager for the transfusion.¹¹ Indian appointments ceased to be the patrimony of the Company man, and Indian stocks to be the monopoly of their incumbents. Strong links were forged between the Indian services and the public schools, the universities and the British Army. Indian investments were taken up by the generality of monied men.¹² Wood's policy

¹¹Young emphasised the importance of Thomas Arnold's ideas for the youth of the eighteen-fifties, "of all the decades of our history [that which] a wise man would choose ... to be young in": "The world, as ... [Arnold of Rugby] conceived it, needed new rulers, and the rulers needed a new faith 'He made us think,' a pupil wrote, 'of the politics of Israel, Greece and Rome' He took the self-consciousness of the English gentry, benevolently authoritative, but uneasily aware that its authority was waning, and gave it religious and historic justification." Young considered William Arnold's novel Oakfield, the story of a young gentleman confronting his destiny in India in 1853, as conveying "most completely the effect that [Thomas] Arnold made on those who came under his influence" (ibid., pp. 473 and n.1, 479).

¹²L.H. Jenks estimated that by January 1868, some 50,000 Englishmen

helped to send Britain into the age of imperialism with a sincere sense of obligation and a strong base. The commitment of conscience, men and resources to India was formidable and complex.

The logic of the complex relationship which had developed between Britain and India by the late 'sixties escaped Lord Lawrence. He assessed the situation ineptly in the context of relating a remarkable prophesy to Halifax:

... A Hindu astrologer has been prophesying that a member of your house - he hinted at a grandson yet unborn - will some day succeed me as Governor-General. I wonder if he will find much change in India. I doubt it. We have got peace firmly established in the land, and our troubles of ten years ago finally ended any attempts to unsettle our patria potestas. If ever he comes, however, this descendant of yours, he will have a quicker voyage to India than mine was; for I hear that hair-brained scheme of M. Lesseps for digging a canal from Suez to the Mediterranean is actually taking shape.¹³

The "hair-brained scheme of M. Lesseps" created an ulcer in "the sick man of Europe". Suez became a vital link in Britain's line of communication with India, and to subdue intrigue in the Middle East, Gladstone authorized the occupation of Egypt in 1882. That exercise was but the preliminary to Britain's participation in the partition of Africa, the first line, as it were, of what Professor Gallagher and Dr Robinson have recently

12 (contd)

held shares or debentures in Indian railway companies (op. cit., p. 219).

¹³ Lawrence to Halifax, November 1868, cited in Earl of Halifax (Lord Irwin), Fulness of Days, London 1957, p. 109.

described as "a gigantic footnote to the Indian Empire."¹⁴ At the same time, the logic of liberalism led to a course of concessionism, as surely in India as in England. Whilst Egypt was being bombarded, in India Lord Ripon was dispensing the munificent liberalism which was to nurture a freedom movement.¹⁵ In 1926, Lord Irwin, Halifax's "grandson yet unborn" of 1868, sped to India to ease a situation made tense by the conflict of Imperial self-interest and nationalist aspirations. Highminded liberalism and apparent self-interest had always been strange bedfellows.

¹⁴"The Partition of Africa", ch. XXII, in New Cambridge Modern History, 1962, XI, p. 616. See also J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, Africa and the Victorians, London 1961, esp. p. 465 ("From start to finish the partition of tropical Africa was driven by the persistent crisis in Egypt"); p. 464 ("If the papers of the policy-makers are to be believed, they moved into Africa not to build a new African empire but to protect the old Empire in India").

¹⁵Ripon, like Northbrook before him, had been Under-secretary of State for India under Wood. The latter was proud of his "élèves". He had given Northbrook strong support at home, and he wrote to Ripon on 25 January 1883: "How smoothly India would work with you at Calcutta and me at Westminster" (B.M.Add.MS. 43530, fol. 151). Later, a third of Wood's Under-secretaries, Lord Dufferin, became Viceroy (1884-88). The fourth, the Earl of Kimberley, whom Lord Morley described as "of ... the breed of patrician Whig", "at the top of the Whigs that I have known," was Secretary of State for India on three occasions, 1883-85, 1886, and 1892-94 (Morley's Recollections, 2 vols., London 1917-18, II, pp. 246-7). As a postscript to Wood's Indian policy, it is interesting to note that three of the four "élèves" coalesced (having divided over Irish Home Rule in 1886) to secure an amendment to the Tory Councils Bill of 1890, so that the principle of representation was admitted (Lords' debates of 6 and 13 March 1890). The fourth, Dufferin, had urged this step to forestall the more radical demands of the emergent nationalist movement (e.g. Dufferin to Lord Cross, 4 January 1887, Cross Papers, I.O.L., Eur. MSS. E 243, No. 22).

Halifax had resolved their conflicts in terms of Imperial supremacy. Irwin would "find much change in India." He was to see that in the light of her fair words, Britain could legitimise the liaison only through the extension of representative institutions.

Bibliography

A. PRIVATE PAPERS

1. Sir Charles Wood's papers: Until the early 1950's, these were all in the possession of Wood's grandson, the first Earl of Halifax, at Hickleton, Yorkshire. In 1955, the late Lord Halifax deposited most of the Indian papers at the India Office Library. The Admiralty papers and an assortment of other documents were lodged in the British Museum. The remainder of the papers were removed to the residence of the present Earl of Halifax, at Garrowby, Yorkshire.

a. Wood Papers (W.P.), India Office Library, MSS.Eur. F78:

This collection, of which a preliminary handlist has been prepared, contains copies of virtually all of the letters which Wood wrote to India, and many of those which he wrote on Indian affairs to persons in England, whilst he held the portfolio for India (India Board Letter Books, Vols. III-VII, January 1853 - May 1856; India Office Letter Books, Vols. 1-22, June 1859 - February 1866; indexed). The collection also contains the originals of virtually all of the letters, and the enclosures to them, which he received from India, and many of those which he received on Indian affairs from persons in England (India Board, bundles 1-5, 17-24, 28, 32, 51; India Office, bundles 55-80, 87-93, 112-115). Wood's correspondence with particular governors-general and governors is often partly or largely duplicated in the collections of their papers, e.g., 8th Earl of Elgin, Lord

Lawrence and Lord Elphinstone collections at the India Office Library; Dalhousie collection at the National Library of Scotland; Canning collection (see M. Maclagan, 'Clemency' Canning, London 1962, pp. 353-4); Sir Charles Trevelyan's Letter Books and Sir William Denison's papers at the Bodleian Library. Wood's correspondence extended to many civil officials of lesser rank, in particular to members of the Supreme Council, and to military officers. In addition, the collection contains a large number of bundles, which Wood and his secretaries assembled, on particular subjects (India Board, bundles 10-16, 25-27, 29-50; India Office, bundles 81-86, 94-111). These bundles have been little used by historians. Many of them are valuable as evidence of Wood's working methods and of the development of policies.

b. Halifax Papers, British Museum, Add.MSS. 49531-49593:

Especially 49531 (correspondence with the Queen, the Prince Consort, Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston and Sir George Cornwall Lewis); 49552 (correspondence with Sir F. Baring, Sir T.E. Perry); 49558 (occasional letters from Canning and M. de Lesseps); 49561 (papers concerning the Indian armies, and the second Afghan war).

c. Hickleton Papers, Garrowby: Major T.L. Ingram has prepared an excellent catalogue of this collection (copy in B.M. Students' Room). Arrangements were made for the present writer to consult the most relevant sections of the papers at the City Library, York. A "Political Journal", describing at length the

crises in the liberal party from 1835 until 1868 (books "A"- "E"), is of particular interest. Wood compiled the narrative at the time of the events and revised it during his retirement. The greater part of the "Journal" may be consulted in the form of a typescript which the second Viscount Halifax had made. The other papers consulted include files of letters from miscellaneous correspondents during the 1853-66 period, as well as separate files of letters from the following: Lord Aberdeen, W. Arbuthnot (member of Council of India, 1858-74), the Duke of Argyll, T.G. Baring, Thomas Baring, Russell Ellice (Chairman of East India Company, 1853-4), Sir James Graham, Lord Granville, Sir G.C. Lewis, T.B. Macaulay, Major J. Oliphant (Deputy Chairman of E.I. Co., 1853-4), Lord Palmerston, the Prince Consort, the Queen, R. Bosworth Smith, Lord Stanley, Sir C.E. Trevelyan.

The present writer also had the benefit of reading the following unpublished papers by Major Ingram:

"The Hickleton Papers", a lecture given at Sheffield Public Library on 3 May 1957, to the Committee of the National Register of Archives in South Yorkshire.

"Historical Introduction" to the Hickleton Papers, down to the year 1763, n.d. [1958].

"A Guide to the Church of St. Wilfred, Hickleton", 1956.

2. Other private papers:

a. British Museum Additional Manuscripts:

Aberdeen, 43198, especially letters from Wood, 1853-55.

Bright, 43388, occasional letters from Wood.

Broughton, 36467, occasional letters from Wood.

Gladstone, 44184-6, letters from Wood, 1839-85; 44333 and

44376, letters from Sir C.E. Trevelyan and B. Jowett, 1853-55.

Iddesleigh, 50023, 50040, occasional letters from Wood.

Peel, 40544, 40546, 40598-40602, especially letters from Wood,

1844-50.

Ripon, 43529-43531, letters from Halifax, 1881-83.

b. Public Record Office:

Russell, P.R.O. 30/22/5-30/22/13 and 30/22/25-30/22/26,

especially several hundred letters from Wood, 1845-65.

Granville, P.R.O. 30/29/21, miscellaneous papers, 1853-55, and

Granville-Canning correspondence, 1856-62.

c. India Office Library:

Clerk, MSS.Eur. D.538, especially letters from T.G. Baring, Sir

H.B. Frere, Sir T.E. Perry, Lord Stanley, Sir J.P. Willoughby,

1859-63; and Clerk's commonplace books. Many of the papers

are jumbled and some are flocking.

Elgin, MSS.Eur. F.83, especially enclosures to letters from Wood,

1862-63, listed in catalogue by Mrs M.C. Poulter, MSS.Eur.C.141.

Northbrook, MSS.Eur. C.144, especially letters from Wood, 1872-76,

in nos. 20-23, printed.

Norton, MSS.Eur. B.140, 2 letters on Wood's education despatch.

Notes on Opening the Civil Service, 1859, MSS.Eur. D.557, removed

from Wood Papers.

d. Bodleian Library:

Trevelyan's Letter Books, copies of letters by Trevelyan, 1840-65, consulted for 1853-55 period.

e. National Library of Scotland:

Ellice Collection, for letters (71) from Wood to Edward Ellice, 1846-62.

f. University of Durham, The Prior's Kitchen:

Howick Papers, for letters (614) from Wood to 3rd Earl Grey, 1830-85; for letters from Wood to 2nd Earl Grey, 1833; and for letters from 2nd Earl Grey to Lord Howick, 1839-40.

B. INDIA OFFICE RECORDS1. For Wood's Presidency of the Board of Control (1853-55):

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Board's Collections, nos. 149.783 and 150.834.

Letters from Board to Court, Vols. 17-19.

Letters from Court to Board, Vols. 21-22.

Register of Drafts and Previous Communications, Vols. 7-8.

2. For Wood's Secretaryship of State (1859-66):

Minutes of the Council of India.

Dissents by members of the Council of India.

To list the several hundred volumes of despatches, "collections to despatches" and "home correspondence" relevant

to the period of the study would be pretentious. Sections of the Public, Educational, Judicial, Legislative, Financial, Revenue, Public Works, Political and Military despatches to India series, of the collections of Indian papers to them, and of the home correspondence, have been consulted. The volumes of despatches from each department are listed by year, and those of "collections" by year and despatch number, in the I.O.L. "List of General Records, 1599-1879" and in the I.O.L. "Political and Secret Records" (see indexes under "India"). The only exception to this generalization is that there are no collections to military despatches, for which a separate "Miscellaneous Military Series" (indexed) was maintained. As for the home correspondence in each department, the key to locating particular documents lies in the registers for each department, except for the military department, where a "memoranda of military references" series was maintained (see List of General Records index under "Registers").

C. OFFICIAL PRINTED SOURCES

Acts of Parliament:

3 & 4 Will. IV, c. 85 (Charter Act, 1833).

1 Vic., c. 70 (Haileybury College, 1837).

16 & 17 Vic., c. 95 (Government of India, 1853).

18 & 19 Vic., c. 53 (Closure of Haileybury College, 1855).

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Parliamentary Papers (House of Commons): These were listed annually in the index volumes under "East India". The lists were collated and indexed for the 1801-1907 period in 1909 (H.C. lxiv). The papers of particular importance for the present study are:

1852-3	xxvii-xxxiii	Select committees on the operation of the Charter Act of 1833.
	lxix	Corr. concerning the Government of India Act of 1853.
	lxxiv	Public works.
	lxxvi	Railways.
1854	xlvii	Cession of Berar.
	xlviii	Public works; railways; lapse of Nagpur.
	xlix	Sind frontier.
1854-5	xl	Public works loan; railways; Karauli; lapse of Jhansi; report of Macaulay Civil Service committee and corr.
1856	xxv	Report of Law Commission.
	xlvi	Dalhousie's "final minute"; annexations from 1848 to 1856; annexation of Oudh.
1857	xi	Persian war.

1857-8	vii (2 parts)	Select committee on colonization.
	xiv	Select committee on East India railways.
	xxxvii	Return of forces in India at outbreak of mutiny.
	xliii	J.S. Mill's memorandum on E.I. Company's administration.
1858	xliii	Corr. on recruiting and training civil servants.
1859 (sess. iv 1)		Select committee on colonization.
	v	Royal Commission on Indian armies.
	xviii	Temporary attachment of Dhar.
	xix	Return of sums guaranteed for railways and public works.
	xxiii	Return of strength of armies in India.
(sess.2)	v	Select committee on colonization.
	xxiii	Corr. on tariffs; return of capital raised by railway companies since 1849-50.
	xxiv	Measures adopted pursuant to education despatch of 1854.
1860	xlix	Corr. on paper currency; recall of Trevelyan; capital paid up by guaranteed railway companies.
	l	Committee of Council of India report on Indian armies; opinions on, and cost estimates of, a Local army.
	li	White mutiny; dissents and opinions of members of Council of India on the Local army decision.
	lii	J. Danvers' railways report; navigation of the Godavery; valuation of imports for customs duty; claim of Azim Jah to nawabship of the Carnatic.
1861	xlii	Amalgamation of Line and Local armies.
	xliii	Canning's despatches on Indian councils; dissents and opinions of members of Council of India on Civil Service Bill; construction of irrigation works by joint stock companies; corr. on finance.
	xliv-xlv	Corr. on indigo contracts; indigo commission report.

- 1861 (contd) xlvii Settlement of claims of Mysore stipendiaries; claims of Azim Jah; restoration of Dhar; administration of Oudh.
- xlvi Moral and material progress report (1859-60).
- 1862 xxxviii Corr. on finance; paper currency arrangements with Bank of Bengal; amalgamation of armies.
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INDEPENDENTLY

OF THE THESIS

Articles

by

Robin James Moore

Submitted

as

Subsidiary Papers

Contents

<u>Paper</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. The Abolition of Patronage in the Indian Civil Service and the Closure of Haileybury College, <u>Historical Journal</u> , Autumn 1964, vol. 7, no. 2.	4
2. The Composition of "Wood's Education Despatch", <u>English Historical Review</u> , date of publication indefinite, accepted for publication in August 1963. <i>(Now set down for publication in January or April 1965.) R.M. 22/vii/1964.</i>	27
3. Imperialism and 'Free Trade' Policy in India, 1853-4, <u>Economic History Review</u> , August 1964, vol. XVII. 1.	59

Subsidiary Paper 1

The Abolition of Patronage in the Indian Civil Service
and the Closure of Haileybury College
(Historical Journal, Autumn 1964, vol. 7, no. 2).¹

During the three great nineteenth century debates on the charter of the East India Company, Whiggery's finest orators arraigned the system of patronage by which the Directors nominated civil servants to appointments in India. In 1813, Lord Grenville, in a speech to which for decades men turned for "inspiration and guidance",² advocated the appointment of writers "by free competition and public examination from our great schools and universities."³ Defeated at the time, the case for the competitive principle was revived twenty years later by Macaulay in an address before the House of Commons which, it was said, would "console the young people for never having heard Mr Burke."⁴ That "universal genius", as Sir Charles Trevelyan, his brother-in-law, once described him,⁵ carried into legislation a plan for selecting by competitive examination the students for Haileybury, the Company's training

¹ At the outset, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr K.A. Ballhatchet, under whose direction this research was conducted.

² H.H. Dodwell's Chapter I, "Imperial Legislation and the Superior Governments, 1818-1857", The Cambridge History of India, 1932, Vol. VI, p.1.

³ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴ Quoted in Eric Stokes, The English Utilitarians and India, Oxford 1959, p. 45. See Hansard, 3rd Series, xix, 10 July 1833, esp. cols. 524-6.

⁵ Trevelyan to Sir Charles Wood, 2 February 1854, Trevelyan's Letter Books (T.L.B.), Bodleian Library.

college for civil servants. Nominees, four times as numerous as the places at the College, would be examined and the best of them enrolled.⁶ However, as Macaulay's biographer observed, "backstairs influence in Leadenhall Street" contrived to render the plan inoperative, until "backstairs influence in Parliament" effected its repeal.⁷

In June 1853, Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control, presented to the House of Commons a Bill to renew the Company's charter.⁸ Lord Russell and Sir James Graham, who, together with Wood, comprised the committee of Cabinet which "brought in" the Bill, saw it as preparing for the Crown's assumption of direct control over India.⁹ It was natural, therefore, that the Whig minister for India, concerned that the patronage must never fall to the Crown and become the plaything of party, should have embodied the competitive principle in the Company's last charter. Macaulay, "broken down in health, uncontrollably nervous,

⁶ 3 & 4 William IV, c. 85, ss. CLLL - CVII.

⁷ G.O. Trevelyan, The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, 2 vols., London 1876, Vol. II, p. 339. See also "Correspondence between the Board of Control and the Court of Directors ... upon ... the Act of 1837, relating to Appointments at Haileybury College", Parliamentary Papers (H.C.), 1852-3, lxix; and 1 Vic. c.70.

⁸ "Government of India Bill ... Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 9th June 1853", in India Office Library Parliamentary Collections, 120. For Wood's speech see Hansard, 3rd Series, cxxvii, 3 June 1853, esp. cols. 1156-1158.

⁹ H.H. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 16. Russell had wanted to limit the term of the Bill to five years (Russell to Vernon Smith, 4 December 1857, Russell Papers, P.R.O. 30/22/13).

and unable to control the pitch of his voice", delivered his last major speech in the Commons, before a "respectfully eager House", in determined support of Wood's plan to abolish civil patronage.¹⁰ Robert Lowe, later to be renowned as a reformer of the English Civil Service and reviled as the most intellectual of Whigs, then Secretary to the Board of Control, spoke as a kindred spirit.¹¹ In August 1853, the Bill, substantially intact, passed into law.¹² However, its Civil Service clauses, their implications for the future of Haileybury, and the reasons for Wood's decision, of November 1854, to close the College, have eluded the understanding of historians.

Macaulay's biographer wrote inaccurately of "Sir Charles Wood's proposal, that admissions to the Civil Service of India should be distributed according to the result of an open Competitive Examination."¹³ L.S.S. O'Malley perpetuated this fallacy when

¹⁰ [E.M. Whitty], History of the Session 1852-3, London 1854, p. 175; cf. G.O. Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, II, p. 340 ff. For Macaulay's speech, see Hansard, cxxviii, 24 June 1853, esp. cols. 746-758.

¹¹ G.M. Birdwood described him as an "intellectual charlatan", in his address, On Competition and the Indian Civil Service, London 1872, p. 21. See A. Patchett Martin, Life and Letters of the Right Hon. Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke, 2 vols., London 1893, Vol. II, pp. 78-9. For his speech, see Hansard, cxxviii, 23 June 1853, esp. cols. 638-641.

¹² 16 & 17 Vic. c.95.

¹³ G.O. Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, II, p.343.

he declared: "Appointments in the Indian Civil Service were thrown open to competition by Act of Parliament in 1853"¹⁴ Certainly, the Act deprived the Company of its civil patronage, and substituted competitive examination for nomination as the system for admitting students to Haileybury. However, as Macaulay pointed out in the report of the Committee which was appointed to give effect to these provisions,¹⁵ youths who were admitted to Haileybury became not civil servants but "civil servants elect". To insist upon the distinction is not to split hairs. In 1853, it seemed vital to a select group of civil service and educational reformers, who urged the Government to take power to remove it. Chief among them was Benjamin Jowett, then a Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College,¹⁶ whose persuasiveness caused Wood to arrange for his Bill to be altered after it had already been passed at all stages by the House of Commons. Through the insertion of amendments, which the Government carried when the Bill was before the

¹⁴ L.S.S. O'Malley, The Indian Civil Service, 1601-1930, London 1931, p. 241. See also C.S. Parker, Life and Letters of Sir James Graham, 1792-1861, 2 vols., London 1907, Vol. II, p. 209; Sir Edward Blunt, The I. C. S., The Indian Civil Service, London 1937, pp. 45-6; Naresh C. Roy, The Civil Service in India, Calcutta 1958, Foreword (by N.K. Sidhanta), p. viii, and pp. 66-68.

¹⁵ "Report, dated November 1854, from the Committee ... [on] the Examination of Candidates for the Civil Service of the East India Company", Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1854-5, xl.

¹⁶ Evelyn Abbott and Lewis Campbell, The Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett, 2 vols., 2nd ed., London 1897, Vol. I, p. 185.

House of Lords in Committee, power was obtained for examining other candidates, as well as Haileybury students, for appointments to the Civil Service. The Act did not throw the appointments open to competition but provided that the Government might do so.

In the following year, the influence which prevailed upon Wood to take power to open the Civil Service examinations to general competition, induced him to use it. Jowett worked tenaciously for this end. He became an energetic and influential member of Macaulay's Committee. In consequence of the Committee's report, Wood decided to close Haileybury, thereby leaving the appointments to the Civil Service open to competition among the products of the universities.

Sir Charles Wood's original scheme for disposing of the Company's civil patronage is expressed clearly in his official statements, in his private papers and in the Bill which he placed before the Commons. The Civil Service section of an outline of his plan, which he sent to the Court of Directors on 1 June 1853, reads:

The appointment of students to Haileybury ... to be open to competition under regulations to be framed by the Board of Control from time to time, and laid before Parliament.¹⁷

In Wood's private papers appear, in his own hand, two sets of

¹⁷ "Heads of the proposed Plan for the Future Government of India", enclosed with a letter from Wood to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the East India Company, 1 June 1853, and printed with other correspondence regarding the proposed Act., Parl. Pap., (H.C.), 1852-3, lxix.

notes for the proposed Bill.¹⁸ In the later set, the Civil Service section provides:

Annual number of admissions to Haileybury to be determined as at present. Admission by competition under regulations of Board of Control - from time to time & to be laid before parliament. Examiners to be appointed as at present. Age of admission 18. Three (two) years course of instruction principally in history law & jurisprudence. Board of examiners for appointments to India to be named by B. of Control, & Certificates of conduct from Masters at Haylebury [sic].

Wood's Bill reflected these intentions faithfully.¹⁹ In his defence of one of the Civil Service clauses before the House in Committee, Wood expressed his approbation of the College warmly: "With regard to education, he thought the only place where an education could be acquired that would fit a person for employment in India was at Haileybury."²⁰

It is clear that in the form in which it passed through the Commons, the Bill was intended to establish "the principle of competition as against nomination,"²¹ whilst at the same time retaining Haileybury as the centre at which all "civil servants elect" would be trained and examined before receiving their appointments to India. Dr Ghosal, in a special study of the

¹⁸Wood Papers (W.P.), 11, India Office Library. The earlier paper, headed "I", is of quarto, the later, which is endorsed "Memorandum. Indian Govt.", of foolscap.

¹⁹Op. cit., clauses 32-39.

²⁰Hansard, cxxix, 22 July 1853, col. 685.

²¹Lord Stanley's phrase, *ibid.*, col. 664.

Civil Service, has argued that the introduction of such legislation presaged the closure of the College:

Once the competitive principle was adopted, the fate of the Institution of Haileybury was practically sealed, because the institution was the product of the system of nomination and designed to counteract its possible ill-effects.²²

Civil service reformers of the day would have rejected the logic of this proposition. Not only did Wood's scheme command the support of members of the ministerial party, such as Macaulay and Lowe. It also won the approval of Sir Charles Trevelyan, the champion of civil service reform in the mid-nineteenth century.²³

Trevelyan, who was then Assistant-Secretary to the Treasury, had recently been commissioned by Gladstone, in his first term at the Exchequer, to enquire into the state of the English Civil Service. Together with Sir Stafford Northcote, he gave his name to the famous report of February 1854, which recommended that appointments to the Home service be made on the results of competitive examination. He had himself passed through Haileybury, to a distinguished career in India. As a witness before the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Indian affairs in 1853,

²² A.K. Ghosal, Civil Service in India under the East India Company, Calcutta 1944, pp. 332-3.

²³ Jenifer Hart, "Sir Charles Trevelyan at the Treasury", English Historical Review, 1960, lxxv, pp. 92-110. See also Edward Hughes, "Civil Service Reform, 1853-5", History, 1942, xxvii, pp. 51-83.

he made what amounted to a reasoned defence of the Civil Service sections of the Government of India Bill.²⁴ On 28 June, after explaining to the Committee the merits of competitive examinations, he commended Haileybury: "The real uses of Haileybury are, that it furnishes a very satisfactory system of special instruction for the Indian Civil Service, and, if it is properly administered, a satisfactory test of conduct." He believed that the universities would be less suitable as training centres for young men who were to be sent to India. In common with the members of the Government who proposed the Bill, he saw no inconsistency between the competitive principle and Haileybury's monopoly of the appointments. The ministry's proposals would have left the College standing on firm foundations. The first cracks appeared in them as the result of a pressure which was applied from Oxford.

Whilst Wood was steering his Bill through Committee, a group of educational reformers had a discussion which was to result in the amendment of its Civil Service provisions. On Tuesday 19 July, Trevelyan wrote to the Rev. Dr. Charles Vaughan, Headmaster of Harrow, to ask whether he might visit the school to "consult".

²⁴ "Second Report of Select Committee of the House of Lords, ... [on] the ... Government of Her Majesty's Indian Territories", 28 June 1853, paras. 6897-6921, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, xxxii.

him and Jowett, who was staying there as a guest.²⁵ He would be accompanied by his colleagues,²⁶ in the project upon which he was seeking advice - "an Enquiry into the Establishment of the Committee of Council for Education, one vital point of which is to secure the services for the headquarters office of young men equal in education and ability to the best who are annually turned out at the Universities." Trevelyan proposed Thursday 21, or, as an alternative, Friday 22 July, for the visit. It seems that a meeting took place on one of those days and that the talk drifted to the Government's Indian Civil Service proposals. As Trevelyan explained them, Jowett must have become critical immediately, and in the discussion which ensued, Vaughan must have shared his misgivings. Trevelyan, if he was not at once convinced by their arguments, must at least have been sympathetic. For in the days which followed, Jowett, aided by Vaughan and Trevelyan, lobbied for the amendment of the Bill.

On Saturday 23 July, Jowett wrote to Gladstone,²⁷ the member for Oxford, alluding to his conversation with Trevelyan, and deploring the Government's intention of leaving with students of

²⁵T.L.B., op. cit.

²⁶Northcote and Lingen ("head of the Education Office in London"). See Abbott and Campbell, op. cit., I, pp. 49-50, 185, for Jowett's previous acquaintance with them.

²⁷W.P., op. cit., 51.

Haileybury the "monopoly" of Indian civil appointments;²⁸

... I venture to submit that it would be ... more liberal, if while Haileybury was retained all persons under a certain age say 21 or 22 were admitted to the final examination members of the University, Dissenters, everybody ... should be eligible to be examined without passing through Haileybury The change is very slight, not one of principle, and now, if at all is the time to make it, as if Haileybury is once allowed the exclusive privilege of educating for these appointments it will be difficult to open them.

The "advantages" in opening the appointments to general competition were, he urged, "very great - to the University almost incalculable." He continued:

I cannot conceive a greater boon which could be conferred on the University than a share in the Indian appointments. The inducement thus offered would open to us a new field of knowledge: it would give us another root striking into a new soil of society: it would provide what we have always wanted, a stimulus reaching beyond the Fellowships, for those not intending to take orders: it would give an answer to the dreary question which a College Tutor so often hears asked by a B.A. even after obtaining a first Class & a Fellowship: "What line of life shall I choose, with no calling to take orders & no taste for the Bar & no Connexions who are able to put me forward in life?"

He concluded with the plea: " ... you love Oxford too well not to do what you can for it."

On Tuesday 26 July, three days after writing this letter, Jowett obtained an appointment to see Wood, but he was disappointed

²⁸ Jowett's biographers did not advert to his opposition to the original scheme, of which they shared G.O. Trevelyan's misunderstanding (op. cit.) - see Abbott and Campbell, op. cit., I, p. 185.

when the latter was detained at the House.²⁹ Thereupon, he wrote one letter to Wood,³⁰ and another to Gladstone. With the first he enclosed the original, with the second a copy, of a letter which Vaughan had written to Trevelyan that very day.³¹ Vaughan's letter could not have gone through the mail. It seems, therefore, to have been a stratagem within a campaign planned by Jowett, Vaughan and Trevelyan. The letter expressed "strong objection ... to the proposed constitution of Haileybury." Since only students of the College were to be eligible for appointments, and since the proportion of the latter to the former was high, it would prove "impossible to have an efficient probation." Jowett represented the letter to Gladstone and to Wood as containing "the opinion of a most successful schoolmaster that the Government plan for Haileybury will not succeed." He told the former that he had seen Lowe and found him "strongly favourable to the proposed change." He still hoped for an interview with Wood, and asked Gladstone to "stir him up on the subject." In his letter to Wood he expressed his request pointedly:

All I venture to suggest is that the Board of Control should reserve to itself the right of dealing with the subject. Suppose the Act so expressed that it might be matter for after consideration whether all or none or how many of these appointments should be tied up to Haileybury.

²⁹ Jowett to Gladstone, 26 July 1853, W.P., 51.

³⁰ Jowett to Wood, [26 July 1853], *ibid.*

³¹ Vaughan to Trevelyan, 26 July 1853 (original and copy), *ibid.*

Besides sending the original of Vaughan's letter to Wood and a duplicate to Gladstone, Jowett transcribed and retained a copy of it. For this he soon conceived a purpose. Trevelyan suggested that he should see Lord Granville,³² who was soon to introduce the India Bill to the Lords. Jowett manoeuvred for approaches to be made to Granville from two directions at once. He passed his copy of Vaughan's letter to Dr Henry Liddell, Headmaster of Westminster, who agreed immediately with the views which it expressed. On Wednesday 27 July, Liddell wrote to Granville, enclosing the copy,³³ and putting a case for "empowering the President of the Board of Control to insist on an Examination previous not to admittance into Haileybury, but to the appointment itself; and further to allow all young men, whether educated at Haileybury or not, to become Candidates for the appointments." "A very slight alteration in the Bill would", he believed, "give him full power in both these points." The same day, Jowett, with full knowledge of Liddell's letter, sought an interview with Granville.

Just as Granville was receiving these entreaties, Wood was confronted with the result of Jowett's plea to Gladstone. He received a letter from Lord Aberdeen, the Prime Minister, enclosing

³² Jowett to Granville, 27 July 1853, Granville Papers, P.R.O. 30/29/21.

³³ Ibid. (letter and enclosure).

the Vaughan-Trevelyan and Jowett-Gladstone letters of 26 July, which the member for Oxford had just left with him.³⁴ Aberdeen had written:

I think Dr Vaughan's opinion in a matter of this kind ought to possess great weight. I suppose it will be possible for you to retain the necessary power to act in such an emergency as is supposed. At all events it can do no harm to be thus armed
It would be a great misfortune if our liberal intentions with respect to education should practically be defeated.

By 27 July, less than a week after their meeting at Harrow, Jowett, Vaughan and Trevelyan had recruited the support of Gladstone, Aberdeen, Lowe and Liddell in their campaign to have the Civil Service clauses of the India Bill changed. Their victory was soon to follow. Wood's papers contain the original, Granville's a copy, of a further letter from Jowett, lacking a date and an addressee, but probably written in response to a request for a full statement of the changes suggested. Its writer proposed "simply that the Board of Control should reserve to itself the right of regulating these appointments ... and not confine them by the words of the Act of Parliament to Haileybury." The Bill was amended in the House of Lords in a manner which satisfied this request precisely.

The Government's amendments to the Civil Service clauses of the Bill which the House of Commons sent up were not recorded

³⁴Aberdeen to Wood, 27 July 1853, Aberdeen Papers, B.M.Add.MS. 43198, fol. 145. My italics.

satisfactorily by either Hansard or The Times.³⁵ Although Hansard reported Granville as proposing an amendment to the first of those clauses, it falsely noted that, following an objection from Monteagle, he withdrew it. The Times avoided this error but, like Hansard, quite overlooked the important changes which were made in later clauses. Both accounts recorded comments of Granville's about admitting candidates who had not passed through Haileybury to the final examinations, but neither indicated the amendments in support of which he made them. What occurred may be realized by comparing the Bill "Brought from the Commons, 1st August 1853", with the Bill "Ordered to be printed, on the 8th August 1853", and by studying the list of "Lords' Amendments".³⁶ The amendments removed the Board's powers to prescribe the branches of knowledge in which "Students leaving the said College ... for the Purpose of entering into the Civil Service ... of the said Company in India, ... shall be examined", and to appoint the necessary examiners.³⁷ They substituted for them the wider powers of decreeing the branches of knowledge "in which Candidates for Appointment to the Civil ... Service ... of the said Company in India ... shall be examined", and to appoint the necessary examiners.³⁸

³⁵ Hansard, cxxix, 8 August 1853, cols. 1448-9; The Times, 9 August 1853.

³⁶ These documents appear in the India Office Library Parl. Coll., 120, op. cit.

³⁷ Commons Bill of 1 August, op. cit., clauses XL and XL111.

³⁸ Amended Bill of 8 August, op. cit., clauses XL1 and XL111. Wood seems to have considered other amendments to achieve the same effect. These appear on two copies of the Bill of 9 June, op. cit.:

Even in the form in which it was proclaimed, the Government of India Act of 1853 did not envisage the closure of Haileybury. Certainly, Granville imagined that successful candidates for the Civil Service would continue to be predominantly Haileybury men.³⁹ As late as August 1854, Wood clearly envisaged the retention of the College.⁴⁰ However, from August 1853, the initiative in the movement for Civil Service reform passed increasingly into the hands of Jowett and Trevelyan. They steadily transformed the case for opening the appointments to general competition, into one for effectively closing them to all but the products of the universities, and in which no provision could be made for Haileybury.

By the beginning of October, Jowett had placed a "L[etter] on the Indian Examinations" before Trevelyan, who had sent a copy of it to Wood.⁴¹ Apparently the latter indicated his willingness to receive a detailed proposal on the subject. For among his papers there appears a document endorsed "Examinations. Mr Jowett & Sir C. Trevelyan, 27 November 1853", bearing Jowett's name at the end, and opening with the sentence: "In accordance with your kind permission I offer some remarks on the proposed Examination for Writerships."⁴² Jowett assumed that appointments to the Civil Service would be

38 (contd)

(1) bound with coloured card-board and interleaved with sheets of plain white paper (see cl.XXXV11); (2) endorsed "Government of India Bill Amendments" (cls.XXXV11 and XXX1X); W.P., 50. Lord Wharncliffe gave notice of, but did not propose, an amendment to the Bill of 1 August (cl.XL11) which would have required the Board of Control to open the final examinations to persons who had not attended Haileybury (Lords' Amendments, op. cit.).

³⁹Hansard, cxxix, 8 August 1853, col. 1448.

⁴⁰Ibid., cxxxv, 8 August 1854, cols. 1456-7.

⁴¹Trevelyan to Jowett, 3 October 1853, T.L.B.

⁴²W.P., 3.

opened to general competition, and suggested the age of candidates and the branches of knowledge in which they should be examined. That is, he expressed his view of how the Board of Control should use the powers which he had urged it to take under the Act. Men of up to 22 years of age should, he argued, be admitted to the examinations, which should be designed to test their mastery of the best elements of a liberal education. English gentlemen, with the intellectual maturity and the connexions within society which the universities enabled them to cultivate, should compete for the Indian posts. This raised the question of Haileybury's future. Jowett considered, only to reject, the possibility of sending the successful candidates there for a year's probation and training before they were posted to India. To be suitable for such a purpose, the College would, he argued, have required fundamental changes in its constitution and staff. The College must therefore be closed, or, perhaps, retained to train students who might compete with the graduates for the appointments.

Besides collaborating over a scheme for examining candidates for the Indian appointments, Jowett and Trevelyan were at this time working out the details of a proposal for introducing the competitive principle into the English Civil Service. Trevelyan regarded a paper of Jowett's, "Organization of the Permanent Civil Service", as the "practical application" of the Trevelyan-Northcote report,⁴³ with which in fact it was bound for presentation

⁴³Trevelyan to Gladstone, 31 January 1854, Gladstone Papers, B.M.Add.MS. 44333, fol. 123.

to Parliament in February 1854.⁴⁴ In January, Trevelyan told Gladstone of their plans for an "Establishment for the purpose of testing the qualifications of Candidates for Civil Employment" in England and India. He reported:

We have now worked up to the standard prescribed by Parliament last Session for India; and the selection for the Home and Indian Services may be made by the same Examiners from the same Body of young men - such additional arrangements being made in respect to the Indian service as the peculiar circumstances may require.⁴⁵

For Jowett and Trevelyan the projects for the Indian and the Home appointments had a common objective. The introduction of competitive examinations for both services would, Trevelyan wrote in October 1853, "replace our two great Universities, & especially Oxford, in relation with the active life of the country, & lead to a great improvement in the course of study & in the application of the rewards they have to offer."⁴⁶ In January 1854, he sent a paper to Gladstone, arguing that "the first appointments made by Her Majesty's Government to the Civil Establishments at home & abroad should, according to the precedent of the last Session in regard to the Indian Writerships, be employed in stimulating the education of our youth."⁴⁷ Jowett had, of course, expressed such a view to Gladstone on the occasion of his first plea for amending

⁴⁴ Evelyn: Abbott and Lewis Campbell, (ed.), Letters of Benjamin Jowett, M.A., London 1899, p. 44 ff.

⁴⁵ Trevelyan to Gladstone, 20 January 1854, B.M.Add.MS. 44333, fols. 103-4.

⁴⁶ Trevelyan to Jowett, 3 October 1853, op. cit.

⁴⁷ Paper endorsed "Thoughts on Patronage, Sir C.E.T. Jan. 17. 54", B.M.Add.MS. 44333, fols. 91-4.

Wood's Bill. In December, he reiterated, in words very like those Trevelyan had used two months earlier, that "the election by examination to the Civil Service in India & possibly at home" would, by "replacing Oxford in its true relation to the Church & the Country, ... have the greatest effect upon it."⁴⁸

Trevelyan not only brought to Wood's attention Jowett's notions of how the Board of Control should use the powers which it had taken. He was also an active counsellor of the Indian minister over the composition of the Committee which was appointed to report upon the means of carrying the Civil Service provisions of the Act into effect. He seems to have represented to Macaulay Wood's offer of the chairmanship of the body, for on 11 November 1853 he relayed his brother-in-law's acceptance of it.⁴⁹ A fortnight later, he related Dr Vaughan's advice that Jowett should be a member of the Committee.⁵⁰ When, in February, Wood offered the latter a place he accepted it with alacrity.⁵¹ Trevelyan looked upon Jowett as the representative for Oxford, and J.S. Lefevre, who had agreed to join, as the representative for Cambridge and London. With these two as members, and Macaulay in the chair, he advised Wood against further additions to the proposed body.⁵² However, to them Wood added the Rev. Henry Melvill (Principal of Haileybury)

⁴⁸ Jowett to Gladstone, 14 December 1853, B.M.Add.MS. 44376, fols. 210-215.

⁴⁹ Trevelyan to Wood, 11 November 1853, T.L.B.

⁵⁰ Trevelyan to Wood, 25 November 1853, T.L.B.

⁵¹ Jowett to Wood, 2 February 1854, W.P., 3.

⁵² Trevelyan to Wood, 2 February 1854, T.L.B.

and Lord Ashburton.

Macaulay wrote the Committee's report himself.⁵³ Apparently Jowett considered this to be "the most satisfactory arrangement of all." Macaulay finished the task on Saturday, 8 July 1854. His biographer noted: "He ... read it over to his brother-in-law on the Sunday. 'Trevelyan', he says, 'was much pleased'." The document makes curious reading. Since the Committee was appointed pursuant to the Act of 1853, the report sought to observe the order of the legislation. It recommended 18-23 years as the age limits of candidates for Haileybury, and prescribed, in terms similar to Jowett's, the branches of knowledge in which they were to be examined. Like Jowett, its author expected that "among the successful competitors will frequently be young men who have obtained the highest honours of Oxford and Cambridge", and anticipated "an effect which will be felt in every seat of learning throughout the realm."

Having ensured by its recommendations that "nine-tenths of those who are admitted to the college under the new system will be older than nine-tenths of those who quit it under the present system", the report proceeded to doubt Haileybury's suitability as a centre of training and probation for men of such maturity. In other words, the College might not be fit to receive the students for whose entrance requirements the Committee was submitting recommendations. The report observed that whilst some sections of

⁵³Report of November 1854, op. cit. For its authorship, see Trevelyan to Jowett, 13 June 1854, T.L.B.; also, G.O. Trevelyan, op. cit., II, p. 372.

the Act "clearly implied" that "Haileybury is to be kept up", others "as clearly implied" that "persons who have not studied at Haileybury" might be admitted to the Civil Service. Though Macaulay stated explicitly that "whether the law ought to be altered is a question on which we do not presume to give any opinion", he undermined Haileybury cleverly and effectively.⁵⁴

Under the Act Haileybury might have been expected to remain, a training centre to which entry was obtained by competition, and from which students vied with university men for the Civil Service posts. That was all the reformers had originally sought. In November 1853, Jowett's recommendations on the age of candidates and the subjects for the examinations for the writerships had implied the domination of university men. However, Jowett had imagined that Haileybury might continue to exist as a centre for training youths to compete with them. Macaulay now followed the lines of Jowett's recommendations on the age of candidates and subjects for examination. But the Act had provided for the application of the competitive principle to students entering Haileybury, and Macaulay set up his proposals as though his selected candidates were to be sent to the College. Further, the Act intended that there "should be a period of probation" for the "civil servants elect". Macaulay was able, therefore, to pose the question of Haileybury's future solely in terms of its ability to receive graduates for

⁵⁴The mistaken belief that the report recommended "the abolition of the Company's college at Haileybury" was expressed by G.O. Trevelyan (op. cit., II, p. 373), and by L.S.S. O'Malley (op. cit., p. 241).

further training and probation. To this, as Jowett had argued, there was only one sound answer. By an ingenious tactic Wood was to be led to close the College, thereby transferring its "monopoly" of the Indian posts to the universities.⁵⁵

When, in November 1854, Wood received the report, he told the Court of Directors that he concurred in "the general tenor" of it.⁵⁶ His problem was to decide whether, admitting the desirability of sending university men to India, Haileybury might still be retained. His conclusion expresses the decisive reasons for closing it:

Upon the best consideration which I have been able to give to the subject, this college, as it is now constituted for the education of youths from the age of 17, appears to me to be altogether unsuited to the instruction of gentlemen, many of whom may have passed through the full course of education at one or other of the universities, and some of whom may perhaps have even entered upon their studies for the Bar. Nor does it appear to me that any change in the constitution of Haileybury would render it possible that gentlemen residing there would have the opportunity of acquiring the knowledge which it is most desirable that all the civil servants of the East India Company should possess.

Wood's decisions to close Haileybury and to open the Civil Service examinations to the gentleman graduate, the distinguished product of a liberal education, mature of judgement and with established roots

⁵⁵ Though the inspiration for the report came chiefly from Jowett, Macaulay's astute development of this stratagem in terms of the provisions of the Act is reminiscent of his "tactically ... brilliant success" in his "Education Minute" of 1835 (see Percival Spear, "Bentinck and Education", The Cambridge Historical Journal, vi, 1938, pp. 78-101, esp. p. 84).

⁵⁶ Wood to Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the East India Company, 30 November 1854, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1854-5, xl.

in English society, reflected the complete success of the education reformers' campaign.

Since July 1853, the course of the movement to replace the system of patronage with the principle of competition had undergone a profound change. It had then been no intention of the Whig reformers - Wood, Macaulay, Lowe and Granville - to send university men to govern India, or to close Haileybury. The first steps towards these ends were taken in November 1854 because it was believed practicable to blend the reform of the universities with the abolition of patronage. Jowett had been the first to appreciate the advantages for the universities of such an integration of purposes, and on these grounds Vaughan and Liddell rallied to his support immediately. Trevelyan, whose over-riding concern was for Civil Service reform, in India and at Home, was quick to perceive the strength which support from prominent educationalists would bring to his crusade, and he joined with them readily.⁵⁷ For Jowett he was an invaluable ally. As Assistant-Secretary to the Treasury, he had access to Gladstone, who was at once Chancellor of the Exchequer and the member for Oxford. In the same capacity he had won the confidence of Wood, who had held the Chancellorship throughout the 1846-1852 period of Whig government. Late in 1853,

⁵⁷In the closing months of 1853, and early in 1854, Trevelyan sought the declared support of educationalists for the introduction of the competitive principle in the English Civil Service. Binding Jowett's paper (op. cit.) with the Trevelyan-Northcote report was one example of this policy. Another was his request, addressed to Vaughan in a letter of 3 May 1854, for an opinion of the report in a form in which it could be laid before Parliament (T.L.B.).

Wood actually requested him to enquire into "the Establishment of the Board of Control."⁵⁸ Granville, who was chairman of the Lords' Committee on Indian affairs, had found him, early in 1853, a useful adviser on prospective witnesses and on the questions which might be put to them.⁵⁹ Finally, he was Macaulay's brother-in-law and sometime confidant.

G.M. Young alleged that "Macaulay annexed the Indian Civil Service to the Universities."⁶⁰ This judgement suggests the blend of ideas which made the closure of Haileybury a consequence of the abolition of patronage, but fails to identify the mind in which the synthesis was developed. The scheme which Macaulay supported in July 1853 fell far short of that which Jowett sketched for Wood four months later.⁶¹ And when, in his report of 1854, Macaulay wove together the strands of Civil Service and educational reform, the fabric resembled Jowett's handiwork closely. Jowett, abetted by Trevelyan, evolved and presented the plan which, because of the elegance with which it combined the principles of university reform and competitive examination, was accepted by the intellectual Whigs who, in 1854, were charged with shaping the future of the Indian Civil Service.

⁵⁸Trevelyan, in letters to Gladstone, 18 December 1853, and to T.R. Redington, 16 September 1854, refers to this enquiry and to the report which resulted from it. For Wood's reliance upon him during the Irish famine, see C. Woodham-Smith, The Great Hunger, London 1962, passim.

⁵⁹Granville Papers, op. cit; T.L.B., op. cit., February-July 1853.

⁶⁰Quoted in Hughes, op. cit., p. 52.

⁶¹That Macaulay's own ideas at the time accorded in detail with Wood's original scheme, is suggested by the questions which he, as a member of the Committee of the House of Commons on Indian affairs, put to Sir George Clerk on 5 April 1853 (First Commons' Report, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), xxvii, paras. 2217-2223).

Subsidiary Paper 2

The Composition of "Wood's Education Despatch"*

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(Now set down for publication in January or April 1965.) R/M. 22/iii/1964

The importance of "Wood's Education Despatch" to India¹ has never been questioned. It proposed a comprehensive scheme for the diffusion of practical knowledge, through the English and vernacular languages and under the control and financial aid of the State. It was known to successive generations of Anglo-Indians as "the Magna Charta of English Education in India" or as "the Intellectual Charter of India". When Sir Charles Wood, as President of the Board of Control for India, presented it to the House of Commons in August 1854 his speech was acclaimed, and he was led to believe that the Despatch would assure him of "immortality" as one of the "renovators of India".² Lord

* At the outset, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. K.A. Ballhatchet, under whose direction this research was conducted, and to the Earl of Halifax, who allowed me to consult certain of the Hickleton Papers. Reference to the latter was facilitated by Major T.L. Ingram, who has catalogued the papers and who placed selections from them at the City Library, York, for my use.

¹ "Despatch from the Court of Directors of the East India Company to the Governor-General of India in Council, - (No.49, dated the 19th July 1854)", printed in H. Sharp and J.A. Richey (ed.), Selections from the Educational Records of the Government of India, 2 vols., Calcutta 1920-2, Part II, 1840-1859, pp. 364-393.

² Hansard, 3rd Series, cxxxv, 8 August 1854, cols. 1458-1476. Sir T.E. Perry "heard the speech ... with unmixed gratification", and affirmed: "If the tenure of the right hon. Gentleman's office was to be characterised by the measure of education ... the name of Sir Charles Wood would be linked by the grateful natives of India with the two or three English names they loved to honour." (Cols. 1463-4). J.G. Phillimore "fully concurred in the panegyrics which had been pronounced on the speech." (Col. 1475). See Wood to Dalhousie, 9 August 1854, in Wood's Papers (W.P.), India Office Library.

Dalhousie, to whom it was addressed, wrote to Wood: "Your scheme is a very great one, and has been received with great applause in India."³ Well into the current century, it was still regarded authoritatively as "the foundation of the whole fabric of Indian education",⁴ "the climax in the history of education",⁵ "the measure which "finally determined the organisation of education in India".⁶ In 1935, Sir Philip Hartog pronounced it "one of the most statesmanlike and most democratic documents in the history of educational administration."⁷

To the present day the parentage of this prodigy remains obscure. Historians have continued to refer to it briefly as "Wood's Education Despatch" because, in the words of a work republished since Independence, "it was probably written at the instance of Charles Wood."⁸ B.T. McCully, in his 1940 study, asserted that "the document has never been regarded as the creation

³ Dalhousie to Wood, 18 September 1854.

⁴ Rev. W. Miller's Introduction to The Educational Policy of the State in India, Madras 1900.

⁵ H.R. James, Education and Statesmanship in India, 1797-1910, London 1911, p. 37.

⁶ A. Mayhew, The Education of India, A Study of British Educational Policy in India, London 1926, p. 294 (note 1 to p. 62).

⁷ Sir Philip Hartog, Some Aspects of Indian Education Past and Present, Being the John Payne Lectures for 1935-6, Oxford 1939, p. 18.

⁸ Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, A History of Education in India (During the British Period), Bombay 1951 ed., p. 204.

of the President of the Board of Control."⁹ He believed "the procedure usual" in drafting despatches "would seem to point to John Stuart Mill" as its author, but, failing to find "convincing proof", left the mystery unsolved. Biographers of some of Wood's famous contemporaries have accredited the Despatch, in varying degrees, to the heroes whom they balanced on the scales of greatness. Claims have been made for the substantial contribution by Lord Dalhousie, Alexander Duff and Lord Northbrook to its form and content. These may be settled by a close study of Wood's papers, which, together with the official India Office Records, permit a definitive pronouncement to be made upon the evolution of the Despatch.¹⁰

In 1854, despatches to India normally began their life in the offices of the East India Company in Leadenhall Street.¹¹ Upon receiving instructions from the Chairman of the Company, a clerk penned a draft and pencilled his name upon it. When this paper assumed a form which the Chairman approved, it was sent up,

⁹ B.T. McCully, English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism, New York 1940, pp. 135-38.

¹⁰ The key sources are two bundles of Wood's papers, one of which he inscribed: "these papers contain the various stages thro' which the Education dft. of 1854 passed". (W.P.,12). The other contains memoranda on education in India, written in the 1852-4 period (W.P.,25).

¹¹ C.H. Philips, The East India Company, 1784-1834, Manchester 1940, pp. 21-22, outlines the procedure generally, and notes the reference which describes it, as it obtained in 1852, in detail - Parliamentary Papers (H.C.), 1852-3, xxx, evidence of J.C. Melvill, Secretary of the East India Company, 6 May 1852, paras. 187-191, 246-257.

as a "Previous Communication" ("P.C."), to the President of the Board of Control, in Cannon Row, for perusal, amendment and return. Thereupon it became a "draft" despatch and was placed before a Committee of the Court of Directors. The coupling of the fact that the Court initiated despatches, with the knowledge of Mill's employment as an Assistant in the Examiner's Department,¹² led McCully to give credence to the possibility that Mill drafted the famous Despatch. There is no evidence to support such an ascription in the Company's records, which suggest that no previous communication on the subject was issued. Although these documents were systematically recorded in the Company's "Register of Drafts", none is entered against the education draft in question.¹³ However, among Wood's papers¹⁴ there appears a document headed: "India Public Department. Promotion of General Education in India". On the back of it is written: "proposed P. [revious] C. [ommunication] from E. [ast] I. [ndia] House." The word "proposed" suggests that it had not been approved by the Chairman, and this would explain why the paper was not acknowledged in the Register of Drafts.

¹²The East India Register and Army List for 1854, London 1854, p. xix.

¹³"Register of Drafts and Previous Communications", Vol. 8, draft No.585, dated at East India House 4/5 July 1854. There is no "Board's Collection" to the draft. The Court's copy of the draft appears in "Despatches to India and Bengal", Vol. 87.

¹⁴W.P., 12.

That someone at Leadenhall Street produced the first stage of the Despatch is suggested by a comment in one of Wood's letters on education. Sir J. Melvill, the Company's Secretary, was, he wrote in November 1853, "framing something on the subject."¹⁵ As he was senior to Mill, Melvill might have arranged for the task to be delegated to him. However, one may feel confident that this did not occur. From the pencilled notations of the names of authors against drafts in the Company's Register, it appears that Mill was then engaged on "Political" correspondence. Furthermore, a record which Mill kept of the despatches he drafted makes no mention of the Education Despatch.¹⁶ On the other hand, whenever, at this time, the Register of Drafts shows an author's name against despatches on education, it is always that of E.D. Bourdillon, a Clerk in the Correspondence Department. The same name is entered in pencil under the heading to the "proposed P.C." Since the Company's clerks generally pencilled their names on such papers, it seems reasonable to call the document "Bourdillon's draft".

Bourdillon's draft contained several of the leading provisions of the Despatch. Its author acknowledged his debt to

¹⁵ Wood to J. Marshman, 22 November 1853.

¹⁶ India Office Library Home Miscellaneous Series, Vol. 832.

the evidence presented to the 1852-3 Parliamentary Committees on India.¹⁷ It seems certain that he also used a paper written by J. Marshman, which Wood sent to Melvill.¹⁸ Marshman, who was the editor of the Friend of India, had been one of the chief witnesses to appear before the Lords' Committee. The evidence placed before that Committee had revealed the disparateness of the education offered in different parts of India. It had indicated the success in imparting "useful knowledge" through the vernaculars which had been achieved by missionary schools, especially in Madras, and by the indigenous schools which Lieutenant-Governor Thomason had encouraged in parts of the North West Provinces. It had indicated, therefore, the existence of agencies which might be used to extend education under a system of grants-in-aid such as that which was already operating in England. Further, it showed that Bengal's concentration upon government promotion of higher education, at the expense of mass education, was bearing meagre fruit.

Marshman and Bourdillon reiterated the major findings of the Committee. Grants-in-aid should be made to missionary and

¹⁷ Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, xxxii, contains the second report of the House of Lords, which comprises the oral evidence and written papers submitted to the Committee on education, 26 May - 26 July 1853.

¹⁸ Wood to Marshman, op. cit. The paper, headed "Notes on Education in India", and dated 12 November 1853, appears in W.P., 25.

indigenous schools where they imparted, through the vernacular or English languages, secular knowledge of an approved standard. Government colleges for higher learning through English should be further extended. In addition, Marshman took up the case for universities at the presidency towns. He followed the lines of a plan, which the Calcutta Council of Education had submitted in 1845, and which C.H. Cameron had explained before the Committee, for the adoption of London's as the model for Indian universities.¹⁹ Government and non-government colleges would become affiliated institutions. The Despatch incorporated all of these suggestions. However, these early papers give but a pale promise of the grand scheme which eventually emerged.

Existing problems pressed upon Marshman without squeezing out a vision for the future. His plan was directed largely at mending old errors and resolving old conflicts. As the Councils and Boards of Education at the presidency towns were partial to government schools he would, whilst leaving them to superintend those schools, instal besides them "public Authorities" to administer grants-in-aid. As they were opposed to teaching through any language but English, he would establish "separate Councils of Vernacular education". As they favoured government school

¹⁹ Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, xxxii, Cameron's evidence, 7 July 1853, paras. 7316-7360. The submission of 1845 is printed as Appendix O.

candidates so he would set up universities as the examining authorities. Marshman would have spread the seeds of new jealousies and antagonisms to replace the old. Not surprisingly, Wood wrote to him after he had read the paper: "I confess that I do not see my way clear as yet."²⁰ Marshman's reply, which summarized his views on elementary education, emphasised his essential passivity. The government should, he wrote, merely "announce from the seat of Authority that vernacular education is recognised as part of the educational machinery of the State, instead of leaving it ... an unsettled question ...; - and also that the principle of Grants in Aid ... has the fullest sanction of the Board of Control and the Court of Directors."²¹

Bourdillon's draft was also tentative. For a demi-official paper it was starkly deficient in its appreciation of the place of an education programme within general policy. He groped to suggest inducements for Indians to educate themselves highly but reaffirmed the Company's policy that "mental cultivation" should not be considered above "moral character" in making public appointments. Logically, therefore, he deemed premature the proposals for universities. His paper skirts the question of the extent and emphasis of government initiative in education. In

²⁰Wood to Marshman, op. cit.

²¹Marshman to Wood, 28 November 1853.

the end, he abandoned to the Governor-General in Council the task of framing "a general scheme applicable to the whole of India."

The evidence presented to the House of Lords' Committee on India in June and July 1853 convinced Wood of the need for educational reform.²² However, for several months he was, like Bourdillon, inclined to leave with the powers in India the task of proposing a general scheme. In August, he began to press Dalhousie for a plan.²³ Three months later, he was looking to India for "something which will serve as a trial system and if it succeeds as a model".²⁴ Still, in January 1854, he thought that "any detailed scheme ... must come from India."²⁵ However, soon afterwards he showed signs of impatience. His mounting interest in the question is reflected in a letter of 24 January to Lord Elphinstone, the new Governor at Bombay, where education seemed "the most advanced". He wrote confidently of the feasibility of universities, more hopefully than previously of the workability of grants-in-aid, and affirmatively of the need for the government's religious neutrality. About this time he must have decided to take the matter into his own hands. It

²²When he finally presented the Despatch, Wood told the Commons: "... it was evident from the evidence given before the Committee, that a great deal still remained to be done." (Hansard, loc. cit., col. 1458).

²³Wood to Dalhousie, 19 August 1853.

²⁴Wood to Marshman, op. cit.

²⁵Wood to Dalhousie, 4 January 1854.

seems likely that his main constructive work on the Despatch was done during February, March and early April. For by 17 April, an advanced draft in manuscript form had passed from the Board of Control, through the hands of Macaulay, to Sir Charles Trevelyan.²⁶ And on 24 April, Wood was able to tell Dalhousie: "I have got a draft dispatch nearly ready for you on the subject of education generally."

To devil for him Wood used his private secretary, Thomas Baring, who, as Lord Northbrook, later became Viceroy of India. The latter's biographer recorded that "he had had the privilege under the instructions of that statesman of drawing up the despatch" on education.²⁷ Baring's was the hand which prepared successive drafts of the Despatch. He annotated two manuscript and five printed drafts to show, as Wood wrote, "the various stages through which the Education dft. of 1854 passed." His first essay, which is bundled with the "stages", was a summary of the conclusions to be drawn from the evidence of the "Committees of both Houses last year" (ie. 1853). His findings read like answers to questions posed by his chief:

²⁶ Trevelyan's letter books, Bodleian Library. The draft must have been the one which Baring endorsed "2nd copy revised" - see below.

²⁷ Bernard Mallet, Thomas George, Earl of Northbrook, London 1908, p. 58.

The general result of the information showed that in the North Western Provinces alone was there anything approaching to a systematic scheme for educating ... the people That wherever practical education had been attempted it had been most successful, - and that a very considerable private agency might be taken advantage of, if Grants in aid were sanctioned. There was ample information from which to draw up a general scheme and to make Native Education an integral part of the ordinary administration in India.

Convinced, perhaps by Baring's essay, that he need not await further Indian experiments to point the way, Wood sketched an outline for a scheme of education. Baring expanded it into a paper, to which Wood's plan is attached, and marked it: "Education draft first copy". The paper does not appear in its original form. Wood altered it drastically, making excisions and pencilling comments, whilst Baring has obscured some of the latter by writing over them. Besides altering the "first copy", Wood drew up a fresh plan, tighter, better integrated and more comprehensive than the first. Baring then made a second complete draft, using Wood's second plan as his guide. He inscribed the draft "2nd copy revised". Inside it he folded Wood's plan, which is marked: "I put this in as it is rearranged as far as it goes according to your arrangement." Wood adjudged the "2nd copy" worthy of circulation, and in this form the Despatch entered upon the first of many excursions to advisers whose influence we must presently survey. However, the major constructive work was now complete. Few of the Despatch's hundred paragraphs were yet to be written. If, as has been claimed, the impress of Dalhousie and Duff is

evident upon the finished product then it ought to be apparent at this stage.

Sir William Lee-Warner believed that "in the matter of education posterity has never given to Lord Dalhousie the credit that is his due ... in laying down the principles to be followed."²⁸ He wrote: "In fact to him India owes a debt of gratitude for the great educational despatch of 1854, of which the whole merit is too often credited to Sir Charles Wood."²⁹ Professor Stokes recently showed some sympathy for the Governor-General's claims, arguing that Wood's Despatch "stole Dalhousie's thunder", and that "Dalhousie had already suggested a similar policy."³⁰ Dalhousie's own reaction to the Despatch provided fertile soil for the growth of such impressions. His diary entry of 12 October 1854 expressed chagrin that his own proposals for educational reform had been ignored. He complained:

This Education despatch ... is a mere clap-trap put forth to the House of Commons by Sir Charles Wood; whereby he seeks to filch for himself the whole credit of all that has been, or is to be, done; thus unduly detracting from the credit which fairly belongs to the Government of India and to the local administration.³¹

²⁸ Sir William Lee-Warner, The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie, 2 vols., London 1904, Vol. II, p. 206.

²⁹ Ibid, I, p. 399.

³⁰ Eric Stokes, The English Utilitarians and India, Oxford 1959, p.251.

³¹ Quoted in M.N.Das, Studies in the Economic and Social Development of Modern India; 1848-56, Calcutta 1959, p.261. For this study, Das made use of the private papers of Dalhousie and Wood. Though he reproduced selections from the documents which comprise W.P., 12 and 25, (pp.248-250, 264-5 and Appendix F.), he did not tackle the question of the authorship of the Despatch. He therefore made no direct claim that Dalhousie contributed to it, though he

A few days earlier he had written bitterly in a private letter, claiming that Wood had "shown the shabbiest injustice to the Government of India" in the Despatch.³²

If Wood had made substantial use of letters or documents on education which Dalhousie had sent Home, there would be grounds for recognizing claims for the latter's influence upon the Despatch. But this seems scarcely to have been the case.³³

On 19 August 1853, Wood wrote to Dalhousie about education, asking him "to desire somebody to prepare a report shewing existing matters as they are, and also what is feasible in the way of extension." The Governor-General directed him to the "very complete printed reports of everything ... in the India House."³⁴ However, on 17 November he wrote to Wood of some measures which he had in hand:

I have now on its way thro' the Govt. of India a very large proposal for native education in the three divisions of the Presidency of Bengal. Another proposal for a General College here is also on its way.³⁵

31 (contd)

accepted and elaborated, somewhat uncritically, the latter's account of Wood's motives (e.g., pp. 255, 258, 260). He was under some misapprehension as to the character of the documents in W.P., 12. (See e.g., pp. 248-50 and notes 24-6).

³² Dalhousie to Sir George Couper, 8 October 1854, in J.G.A. Baird (ed.), Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie, London 1910, p. 324.

³³ Sir H. Verney Lovett made a suggestion to the contrary in his Chapter VI, "Education and Missions to 1858", The Cambridge History of India, 1932, Vol. VI, p. 120.

³⁴ Dalhousie to Wood, 4 October 1853.

³⁵ Lee-Warner (op. cit., II, p. 207) and Das (op. cit., p. 240) conveyed a misleading impression of Dalhousie's progress with these proposals, by quoting this passage from a copy of the letter which apparently omitted the words "thro' the Govt. of India".

By 24 January 1854, Wood had evidently received no proposal, for on that date he wrote to Lord Elphinstone that he was "very anxious to see" Dalhousie's promised "scheme of education". As late as 13 June, the Governor-General could boast of having sent Home only "a scheme of general vernacular education for all the North Western Provinces."³⁶ The papers concerning Bengal, the Punjab and a Presidency College were still in India.³⁷ It remains to decide whether the scheme for the North West Provinces, which he had sent to the Court in November, influenced the Despatch.

In June 1854, Dalhousie complained that Wood had "not alluded to" the document.³⁸ In explanation, Wood replied: "The scheme for vernacular education in the N.W. Provinces never came up [to me] at the time when you sent it, & I only disinterred it from the E.I. House, on the receipt of your letter."³⁹ Since Wood's letter to Elphinstone of 24 January, two months after the document had left India, suggests that he had seen nothing of Dalhousie's on the question, there seems no reason to question this story. Dalhousie was wont to exaggerate his achievement in the field of vernacular education. Thus, when he complained for a second time that the scheme he had sent Home in November had

³⁶The Company's "Register of Drafts" gives the date of the letter with which Dalhousie presented this scheme as 4 November 1853 (Vol. 8, Draft No. 808).

³⁷Dalhousie to Wood, 13 June 1854.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Wood to Dalhousie, 9 August 1854.

never been acknowledged, he referred to it as "a proposal for a complete system of Vernacular Education for the N.W.Provs., the Punjab and Bengal."⁴⁰

In retrospect, on the eve of his retirement, Dalhousie appreciated the scheme of the Despatch as "far wider and more comprehensive than the Local or Supreme Government could ever have ventured to suggest."⁴¹ He conceived of his responsibility for proposing reforms as limited to the scope of his promised schemes for vernacular education and a General College in the Bengal Presidency. "When these are with the Court," he had told Wood, "I shall have played my part in the matter of education."⁴² In truth, in only one respect is it likely that he contributed to the composition of the Despatch. He was very concerned for female education. The subject was raised in a letter to the Company, dated 3 February 1854. In the first Baring-Wood draft no special attention was given to it. However, it is given prominence in the "2nd copy", and paragraph 83 of the Despatch acknowledges explicitly Dalhousie's views on the matter.

In 1879, George Smith exclaimed that "it was Dr Duff who succeeded in placing the keystone in the arch of his aggressive educational system by the famous Despatch of 1854."⁴³ The great

⁴⁰ Dalhousie to Wood, 4 August 1854.

⁴¹ "Dalhousie's Final Minute", 28 February 1856, Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1856, XLV.

⁴² Dalhousie to Wood, 13 June 1854.

⁴³ George Smith, The Life of Alexander Duff, D.D., LL.D., 2 vols., London 1879, Vol. II, p. 231.

missionary was, asserts his biographer, "emphatically ... its author", and his "handiwork can be traced not only in the definite orders, but in the very style of ... the great educational charter"⁴⁴ Smith explains his claim thus: "... Dr Duff and Mr Marshman worked out the educational portion of their statements before the [House of Lords'] committee, in a form which Lord Northbrook, ... embodied in the memorable Despatch"

That Duff "worked out" his statement in written form is established by the presence, in Wood's papers, of a "Brief Memorandum on the subject of Government Education [in] India", addressed to Wood from Edinburgh, signed "Alexander Duff", and dated 25 January 1854,⁴⁵ three days before he sailed for America.⁴⁶ The missionary does not explain his submission of the paper to Wood at that time. However, Wood and Duff had been in communication over education reform since the preceding June.⁴⁷ In reply to a letter from Wood, Duff had, in August, offered "any further information ... which it may be in my power to supply." Late in October, when he was in London, Duff sought an interview with Wood on the question, but the latter was out of town. There-

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 241, 245.

⁴⁵W.P., 25. William Paton, in his later study (Alexander Duff, Pioneer of Missionary Education, London 1923), assumed unwisely that Duff and Marshman produced a joint paper, "a memorandum for Government" (p. 159).

⁴⁶Smith, op. cit., p. 255.

⁴⁷Duff to Wood, 25 August and 2 November 1853, Hickleton Papers. In his earlier letter, Duff referred to Wood's "favour of June 22nd."

upon, he wrote to Wood, urging the "desirableness of immediately transferring to India the principle of grants in aid", and advising him upon how this "could ... be best carried out." Of the "only two courses open - either to send out voluminous written instructions ... or send out a living man ... as a special government Educational Commissioner, [he] would most strenuously advocate the latter." Though no reply from Wood appears to be extant, a reasonable assumption would be that he was more impressed by Duff's views on reform than by his advice for implementing them, and pressed him for a summary of the former. The memorandum of 25 January, presented without overture, but with "deep regret" that the writer's impending departure from England left him "utterly unable to do anything like justice to the subject", seems likely to have been sent to comply with a request from Wood. In any case, two things are certain. First, Duff did not favour the issue of the Despatch which has been attributed to him. Secondly, the memorandum which he wrote became a source of which those who drafted the Despatch made good use.

Duff's memorandum consists of eight parts, the last two of which Wood disregarded. He summarised his points in marginal headings, the first of which reads: "The grand fundamental principle - the promotion of improved European knowledge only." His first sentence begins: "In India, there are endless erroneous systems ... which ... embody much of what is notoriously false...." He developed these remarks in part I of his paper. Wood's second

plan, after providing for introductory comments, proceeded:

"Object. Imparting the improved science and philosophy of Europe. Oriental science not worthy in these days." The thoughts are developed and expressed "emphatically" in paragraphs 7-10 of the Despatch.

In his part II, Duff argued the need to use "the media of the vernacular or English languages" for instruction. "The basis of all natural Education must be vernacular", which, though little used at present, was essential for teaching "the great mass of the people." In his second plan Wood followed his notes on "Object" with the words: "Medium. English language hitherto for none other sufficient ... to mass however must be in vernacular ... English and Vernacular main objects to be done together. Otherwise no chance of having the means of imparting generally European knowledge." In the Despatch these points are expanded into several paragraphs and Duff's very expressions occur.⁴⁸

Duff sideheaded his part III: "Duty of Government. What?" Beyond putting the case for grants-in-aid "to any schools" imparting "improved European knowledge", he argued that "Government should uphold no permanently exclusive schools of its own." Rather, it should "establish schools in destitute districts - & when matured, withdraw [its] ... exclusive countenance and

⁴⁸ Paras. 11-14.

support ... - handing them over to the grants in aid system" and to "the management of the natives themselves." He observed: "This process of partial withdrawal from some of the existing institutions, might even now be begun." In this way "the natives ... would be initiated into habits of self-reliance and self-action." A section of Wood's first plan reads:

Govt. colleges ... withdraw exclusive support where able to contribute & grant it where not given now At the same time establish similar institutions where they do not now exist - support altogether at first, gradually withdraw as they become more self-supporting.

The role of government is enunciated at several points in the Despatch. Paragraph 52 commends the grants-in-aid system as "fostering a spirit of reliance upon local exertions", whilst paragraph 61 remarks that government would "supply the wants of particular parts of India by the establishment, temporary support, and management of places of education of every class...." And the next paragraph reads:

We look forward to the time when any general system of education entirely provided by Government may be discontinued ... and when many of the existing Government institutions ... may be safely closed, or transferred to the management of local bodies

Parts IV, V and VI of Duff's paper treated of "Requirements needed for working out the system", "A University for conferring degrees", and "Policy of government, with reference to Christianity." Questions of organization and machinery required much more searching analysis than Duff supplied in his part IV, which mentioned summarily the need for teacher training, inspection,

school-books, and an increased education grant. As for universities, Duff was preaching to the converted. Before he received the memorandum, Wood had accepted the need for a scheme identical to Duff's, with one exception.⁴⁹ The missionary proposed professorships in Oriental languages, and the suggestion should be credited to him since Wood took it up as a query in his first plan and it became a provision in the Despatch.⁵⁰ Part VI advocated voluntary Bible classes in government schools. Though he had previously inclined to rejecting this proposal,⁵¹ Wood admitted it to his first plan and to the drafts, only to expunge it later under pressure from another quarter.

The substantial influence of Duff's memorandum is undeniable. Smith's assertion that his "handiwork can be traced ... in the very style" as well as in the contents of the Despatch is justified. His paper contained little which was new in principle, but it compiled a cogent and convincing case for reform from the stock of materials freely available. It conveyed to Wood an imaginative grasp of the workability of current notions of reform in a context with which its author was intimately familiar. However,

⁴⁹Wood to Elphinstone, 24 January 1854.

⁵⁰Para. 32.

⁵¹Wood to Elphinstone, 24 January 1854.

Wood then did more than merely supervise the trimming and expansion of the memorandum to the shape of an official paper, though even this would have been a considerable task. Some of the provisions which Duff favoured as good in themselves Wood re-examined, transforming them to give purpose and direction to educational reform. Baring had reported that "wherever practical education had been attempted it had been most successful", and that "a general scheme ... to make Native Education an integral part of the ordinary administration of India" might be constructed. Wood aimed to develop a "general scheme" of "practical education" as part of a larger policy for regenerating the country. In his address to the House of Commons on 8 August 1854, he stressed that "by far the greatest defect of the education given in India is its want of a practical character."⁵² Wood's concentration upon this problem explains the Despatch's emphasis on the useful and the practical.

Duff's paper did advocate "useful" learning for the "mass". However, it neither emphasised the concept in the context of higher education, nor considered the implications of such an emphasis for Indian policy generally. Hitherto, in Bengal, where higher education was most advanced, the policy had been to direct students' ambitions to higher distinctions in European literature and philosophy. This reflected the "Anglicist" policy of

⁵²Op.cit., col. 1459.

providing a "class of interpreters" between the English governors and the millions of Indians whom they governed. Wood believed the policy unwise unless suitable careers could be provided by the government for those who distinguished themselves.⁵³ Though he pressed Dalhousie to instal a certain number of them in elevated posts, he affirmed that high public places could not be found for all.⁵⁴ On the other hand, India lacked "good clerks, good judges, perhaps, good railroad servants, good civil engineers for ordinary works, good policemen and village accountants and measurers."⁵⁵ Hence, in the Despatch Wood provided channels through which Indians might be given practical education and their energies poured into tasks of regenerating the backward economy. Encouragement to pursue training in engineering, teaching and medicine, by offering prospects of government employment in these fields, was mentioned specifically.⁵⁶ Wood summed up thus

⁵³Wood to Dalhousie, 8 June 1854.

⁵⁴Wood to Dalhousie, 24 November 1853. Wood here expressed his inclination to declare in a special despatch the policy of extending higher and wider employment to Indians. Among his papers there are two drafts on the subject in Baring's hand and one in Wood's ("Employment of Natives - proposed dispatch to India", W.P., 39). In a letter to Dalhousie of 24 February 1854, he explained that because of "some difficulty in the Court" no despatch would be sent. He concluded: "... I shall leave it to you to act on the suggestion if you approve it, and see your way to doing anything which will open a career to educated natives in the Public service." After the annexation of Nagpur he again pressed Dalhousie: "I hope that in the administration of Nagpur you will be able to find employment of a higher description for natives." (Wood to Dalhousie, 24 April 1854).

⁵⁵Wood to Dalhousie, 8 June 1854.

⁵⁶Paras. 65, 66, 68, 79, 80.

the integration of the new stress in higher education within Indian policy generally:

You want Surgeons and Engineers, & Superintendents of railroad works & of irrigation works, & so forth. Train up men for practical purposes. Give the means of conferring distinction on people who choose to educate themselves highly, but educate yourself for practical employment. These are my principles, & I have endeavoured to carry them out as far & fast as I can in the dispatch⁵⁷

Wood underlined his shift in higher educational policy by a fresh approach to the question of scholarships. From the moment that he sketched his first plan, his opposition to the existing system of senior scholarships was apparent. They were, he believed, invariably taken by those who could well pay their way, and served only to swell that class of "highly educated gentlemen", learned in literature and philosophy, "whom you cannot employ." Wood favoured instead the introduction of scholarships to provide a path from the lowest school to the highest, and ultimately into technical and professional careers.⁵⁸ He was dissatisfied with the expression of these principles in the earlier drafts and continued to work over the question assiduously until the phrasing of paragraphs 63-4 of the Despatch was achieved. The knowledge to be imparted to scholarship holders was, therefore, in the words of paragraph 4, that which would "teach the natives of India the marvellous results of the employment of labour and capital, rouse them ... in the development of the vast resources of their

⁵⁷Wood to Halliday (then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal), 24 July 1854.

⁵⁸Ibid.

country ... [and] confer upon them all the advantages ... of wealth and commerce"

Besides the end of economic regeneration, Wood's notions on scholarships reflect the social aim of giving to "superior talent in every class ... that encouragement and development which it deserves."⁵⁹ The upward movement of the individual, as well as the forward thrust of society, would be facilitated. For this to occur the linguistic barrier between lower and higher schools must be surmountable. Here again Wood built on Duff's paper. Duff had contended that the classical Oriental languages should be applied to the "enrichment" of the vernaculars. Wood took up the point and it is expressed prominently in the Despatch. However, where Duff continued to speak of "two sets of schools", the lower teaching "the great mass" through the vernaculars, the higher instructing the "middle and higher classes" through English, Wood refused from the outset to grade schools on a linguistic basis. The pressure of declared policy would be applied at once to make the vernaculars an adequate medium for a "superior education".⁶⁰

Smith overstated a good case for Duff's influence by expanding it into a claim for his substantial authorship of the Despatch. The stride from the missionary's memorandum to the state paper was a long one. Duff's paper expressed engagingly

⁵⁹ Para. 63.

⁶⁰ Paras. 8, 14, 32, 44.

the current ideas of Indian reformers, which Wood, with Baring's help, then turned into a tool for renovating India economically and socially, fitting it with care into the machinery of modernization which was already in motion.

It may be imagined that Duff's influence upon the Despatch did not end with the memorandum which he submitted on 25 January. There is good reason to discountenance such a speculation. It is true that in his speech before the Commons, Wood remarked: "... the plan has been submitted to Dr Duff with whom I had a long conversation regarding it."⁶¹ This may have been merely a vague reference to a discussion held prior to Duff's departure for America on 28 January, pursuant to which, perhaps, he tendered his paper. But even if Wood's words were taken to indicate a meeting after Duff's return home, it is most unlikely that the composition of the Despatch was affected by it. Duff left New York on 13 May and arrived at Edinburgh on 29 May, whereupon he fell ill. "When," Smith relates, "by the middle of June he was able to travel by easy stages, he went south by Lancaster to Great Malvern."⁶² It is quite possible that he then travelled the short distance to London and that he discussed the draft Despatch with Wood. However, the first printed draft appeared before 12 June and subsequent alterations were few and clearly acknowledged. There remains the possibility that Duff, though himself

⁶¹ Hansard, loc. cit., cols. 1462-3.

⁶² Op. cit., pp. 291-3.

absent from London, exercised through an advocate a continuing influence upon the drafting of the Despatch. Apparently he sought to do so through Sir Charles Trevelyan,⁶³ who wrote to him on 11 February:

I duly received your letter from Liverpool We are ... entirely of one mind as to the practical measures to be adopted upon the great subject of Indian Education I shall do all in my power at the Bd. of Control.

However, neither in Trevelyan's letter books nor in Wood's papers is there any evidence that he gave effect to this promise. A letter which he wrote to Macaulay on 17 April suggests that he felt it unnecessary to do so:

I return the draft of the Dispatch It is comprehensive and complete to a degree which equals my highest expectations It has been written with such a mature knowledge of all that has been done or proposed, & the views taken in it are so just and liberal, that I have really nothing to suggest. Pray tell Wood what pleasure it has given me.

The document into which Wood and Baring had poured their initial labours - "2nd copy revised" - was, like subsequent drafts,

⁶³ Throughout 1853 Trevelyan had been an energetic advocate of educational reform for India. Dalhousie had written of him to Wood on 4 October: "Trevelyan is a Pundit upon education, & will at once point out what you want." His association with Lord Granville, the Chairman of the Lords' Committee, had been close. He had suggested the names of witnesses to be examined on education, and proposed questions which might be put to them. He had arranged private interviews with Granville for Duff and other witnesses, and his evidence reveals that he and Duff were kindred spirits. When, however, he once wrote to Wood, on 13 June 1854, it was to question the policy of establishing professorships in Oriental languages, which, it will be remembered, Duff had suggested in his memorandum. See his letter books for 1853; Granville Papers (P.R.O. 30/29/21); Smith, op. cit., p. 234; Parl. Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, xxxii, and xxxiii, Appendix 4.

submitted to the scrutiny of a number of authorities. Baring acknowledged their contributions upon the face of these papers. The "2nd copy revised" is endorsed: "Copy sent to Macaulay, Prinsep, Perry, Marshman."⁶⁴ Except for Macaulay's, these names, and Wood's, are written against many of the excisions, interpolations and changes of phraseology to which the paper was subjected. Few of the alterations did more than improve the drafting. However, it seems that Perry was responsible for intensifying the secular tone of the Despatch.⁶⁵ He caused the deletion of a provision for voluntary Bible classes in government schools. His name also appears against a new clause, providing that only schools which required fees would receive grants-in-aid, which, together with an assertion of Wood's that payment induced "a more regular attendance & greater exertion on the part of the

⁶⁴ T.B. Macaulay and H.T. Prinsep had, in Lord Auckland's phrase, "butted at each other like wild bulls" as the protagonists of the opposing sides in the "Anglicist" - "Orientalist" contest over higher education in Bengal in the 'thirties (quoted in Stokes, op. cit., p. 196, n.1). Sir T.E. Perry had, in 1852, retired from the positions of Chief Justice, and President of the Board of Education, for Bombay. He entered the House of Commons soon afterwards.

⁶⁵ Perry's secular bent is also reflected in his later advice to Wood that Elphinstone's "Education minister" was, because of his over-scrupulous Christianity, "not the proper man to work out your despatch." (Perry to Wood, 24 November 1854).

pupils," became paragraph 54 of the Despatch.⁶⁶ Prinsep's alterations suppressed some echoes of the old "Anglicist" viewpoint, and Marshman's caused the mode of state aid to be left open. Wood's sharpened the expression of his policies on scholarships and public employment.

The "2nd copy revised" was, Baring noted, "printed with alterations". On 30 May, probably whilst the document was with the printer, a manuscript copy was put into Committee at East India House.⁶⁷ The minor drafting changes which the Committee made, before approving it on 7 June, appear upon a copy inscribed: "2.India House alterations in Committee". Wood accepted them, added a few more himself, and elaborated upon the values of scholarships. Baring entered all the changes upon a copy endorsed: "3.revised duplicate sent to E.I. House Jun.12." After the Court had made some further slight amendments and, on 28 June, approved the document, he marked up a copy inscribed:

⁶⁶ In the face of reports that it was disliked by the Madras missionaries, Wood later argued tenaciously for this paragraph. The fees would swell the funds available for education. Further, if only the government schools required fees, missionary schools would attract all the pupils, and "we are destroying our own schools.... Look what a handle to attack we should give, as all the Missionary schools are more or less proselytizing schools." (Wood to Harris, 25 October 1854).

⁶⁷ The Court's copy of the "draft" (op. cit.) bears a record of the stages through which it passed at East India House.

"4. as sent up [to the Board] in draft from the E. I. House. alterations in red ink. suggested alterations in blue ink." The "suggested alterations" consist of Baring's comments upon the Court's changes, and his summaries and evaluations of the opinions of a "Mr Beadon"⁶⁸ and a "Mr Edward(e)s".⁶⁹ The results of Wood's deliberations upon Baring's notes appear upon a further copy: "5. draft as sent up [to the Board] by the Court. alterations made by the Board in red ink as returned [to the Court] in draft." That is to say, Wood's acceptance of the Court's alterations was indicated by their incorporation in "5" in black ink, whilst his rejections, as well as the "suggested alterations" which he had approved, appeared in red ink. On 10 July, the document was sent to the Court,⁷⁰ who signed it two days later. Within a week the famous Despatch appeared in print.

⁶⁸ Cecil Beadon was Secretary to the Government of India. Dalhousie, in a letter which explained that he was "obliged to go home for six months on private affairs", expressed a high estimation of him (Dalhousie to Wood, 5 May 1854). On 24 July, Wood replied: "I have been much pleased with Mr Beadon on more than one occasion" Beadon's complete comments on the draft, which Baring retailed to Wood in brief, appear on a printed copy marked "Mr Beadon" (W.P., 25).

⁶⁹ William Edwards had held a number of civil appointments, including that of Under-Secretary to the Government of India, during fifteen years in Bengal. He retired from the position of "Deputy Commissioner of Simlah and its dependencies" on furlough in December 1852 (Parl.Pap. (H.C.), 1852-3, xxxii, 26 May 1853, paras. 5783ff.). A plan for educational reform which he had given to Lord Glenelg was sent on to Macaulay, who showed it to Trevelyan. The latter believed it had been "in substance comprehended in the admirable Despatch." (See his letters to Macaulay and Edwards, 17 April 1854). The frequent misspelling of Edwards' name in Wood's papers led to identify him incorrectly as Sir Herbert Edwardes (op. cit., pp. 264, 317).

⁷⁰ For the letter which accompanied the draft, see Redington to Melvill, 10 July 1854, in "Letters from the Board of Control", Vol. 19.

Of the changes which were made to the successive copies of the printed draft, few involved more than the correction of factual errors, the omission of superfluous detail, or the substitution of tactful for blunt phraseology. However, the suggestions of "Mr Beadon", Secretary to the Government of India, commanded Wood's attention. They were responsible for a number of significant omissions and inclusions to satisfy the proprieties and to meet the exigencies of the administrative situation. His main influence was to cause the modification of the printed draft's insistent tone in its references to the abandonment of school management by the government as local native authorities were adjudged capable of assuming that responsibility. The permissive rather than compulsive statement of this policy in the Despatch owes much to Beadon's conception of the dangers of precipitate delegation.⁷¹ On the other hand, his arguments for the retention of senior scholarships, and for the use of the Bible as a class-book during lessons on English literature in state schools, tested, without making the least impression on, Wood's implacability on these matters.⁷²

The composition of the Despatch was a long process, with

⁷¹Paras. 61-2, 86.

⁷²Wood to Halliday, 24 July 1854; Wood to Dalhousie, 25 November 1854.

which, Wood remarked, "we have taken great pains".⁷³ The document itself acknowledged the work of many whose principles and practice it wished to see accepted and more generally applied. The contributions of others Wood acknowledged before the Commons,⁷⁴ and in a letter to Dalhousie.⁷⁵ Those whom he mentioned as having been "consulted" were: Duff, Macaulay, Prinsep, Perry, Marshman, Glenelg, Beadon, "Dr Mouat (the Secretary to the Council of Education in Calcutta)", "Mr Norton (who was President of the Council of Education at Madras)", Sir Edward Ryan, Mr Seton Carr and Mr Bayley, as well as "other gentlemen of eminence connected with the Indian service", and "everybody we could think of here, as being an authority on the subject."⁷⁶ The document embodied the best opinions, and even the best expressions, of many men - officials and private persons, missionaries and secularists, Anglicists and Orientalists. None of them provided Wood with a ready-made scheme. The emphasis of the final product, and the place which it gave education policy in the administration generally, are the result of his work. He planned the Despatch, supervised and helped in the drafting of it with pertinacious

⁷³Wood to Halliday, 24 July 1854.

⁷⁴Hansard, loc. cit., cols. 1462-3.

⁷⁵Wood to Dalhousie, 24 July 1854.

⁷⁶Both Lee-Warner and Das had difficulty with Perry's name. The former referred to "Berry" (op. cit., II, p. 208), the latter to "Terry" (op. cit., p. 259).

care, and ultimately admitted or rejected the many suggestions to improve it. On these grounds it seems appropriate that the document should continue to be referred to as "Wood's Education Despatch".

⁷⁷ Baring apparently circulated several copies of the printed draft early in June. It is certain that Norton, Seton Carr and Dr Wise (who appeared before the Lords' Committee) saw copies at about that time. (See Trevelyan to Wood, 13 June 1854; Wise to Wood, 10 June 1854; Baring to Norton, 9 June 1854 - catalogued as a separate accession at the India Office Library).

Subsidiary Paper 3Imperialism and 'Free Trade' Policy in India, 1853-4¹
(Economic History Review, August 1964, vol. XVII.1)

In his recent article, 'The Anti-Imperialism of Free Trade',² Professor O. MacDonagh set out to break the connexion which Gallagher and Robinson had drawn between British overseas expansion and free trade policy during the mid-Victorian period.³ MacDonagh sought 'a definition of free trade in terms, first, of groups, secondly, of beliefs, and finally, of political technique'. He accepted the Manchester school as the essential free trade group. In terms of their beliefs, free trade was a 'portion of a general political attitude', a political morality which included 'economy, pacifism, anti-rentier and anti-aristocratic prejudices'. Their political technique was not to seek office, but to 'infiltrate the enemy position by exercising pressure ... upon susceptible statesmen.' MacDonagh then proceeded to question the relationship between 'free trade' and imperialism, 'especially in the 1850's', through a study of Cobden's thought. After establishing that 'Cobden was both sensitive and opposed to

¹I am indebted to Dr K.A. Ballhatchet, who supervised this research. The Earl of Halifax kindly allowed me access to sections of the Hickleton Papers, and Major T.L. Ingram's assistance enabled me to refer to them quickly and conveniently.

²Economic History Review, 2nd ser. XIV (1961-2), 489-501.

³J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', Econ. Hist. Rev. 2nd ser. VI (1953), 1-15.

imperial growths and exercises because of his adherence to free trade', he concluded that 'free trade' policy represented an 'implacable opposition to imperialism.'¹

Manchester's policy towards India is a prominent theme in MacDonagh's analysis. He believed that the pamphlet, How Wars are got up in India (1853), provides 'the fullest and most consecutive of Cobden's condemnations of contemporary imperialism.' Without question, Manchester deplored Dalhousie's wars, and generally his annexations. To the evidence of Cobden's pamphlet might be added the many questions and speeches on extensions to British India which the Mancunians put before the House of Commons. However, it would be wrong to suppose that Manchester's Indian policy was merely negative. MacDonagh's concentration upon Cobden's conviction of the worthlessness and futility of British rule in India obscures their pressure for positive reform. They propounded, in fact, a policy of internal development through the promotion of communications and public works. There is good reason to suggest that this policy was inspired by the motive of obtaining Indian cotton, and that the espousal of it involved condoning improvements being effected by private capital upon which the returns were secured against the public revenue of India. That

¹C.A. Bodelsen, long ago, described 'the Manchester School' as 'the centre of Separatism' during the mid-Victorian period (Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism [Copenhagen, 1924] (1960 edition), pp. 32-6). Unlike MacDonagh, however, he was little concerned with Manchester's Indian policy during the fifties.

is to say, in anti-imperialist terms, the Manchester school were associated with the 'exploitation' of India as a source of raw material, and as a field for the guaranteed investment of 'finance capital'.¹ If these contentions are justified, MacDonagh's case for 'the anti-imperialism of free trade' would require modification.

I

Occasion for the full expression of Manchester's Indian policy was provided in 1853 by the imminent expiry of the East India Company's charter. On 11 March, in the Commons, Bright questioned Russell on the Whig-Peelite ministry's intentions for 'the future government of India.'² Bright stressed his position as a representative of 'that constituency which ... is probably the most deeply interested in ... the question', and as one who, in 1848, had 'obtained and presided over a Committee to enquire into the obstacles which existed to the cultivation and growth of cotton in India'. He announced that he would oppose a renewal

¹ Much has been written of the exploitation of India as a market for Manchester's cotton goods (e.g. A. Redford, Chap. III, 'Manchester and India ...', in his Manchester Merchants and Foreign Trade (Manchester, 1934-56), II, 21-31; P. Harnetty, 'The Indian Cotton Duties Controversy, 1894-1896', English Historical Review, LXXVII (1962), 684-702). H. Furber recently endorsed the view which Ottavio Barié had expressed (Idee e dottrine imperialistiche nell'Inghilterra Vittoriana (Bari, 1953), pp. 18 et seq) of 'the failure of the "Manchester school" to grapple with the problem posed by the economic importance to the Midlands of the possession of India' ('The Theme of Imperialism ... in Modern Historical Writing of India', Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, ed. C.H. Philips (1961), p. 338).

² Hansard, 3rd ser. CXXV, (1853), 37-47.

of the Company's charter, chiefly because of the past neglect of 'material improvements'. On the evidence of petitions recently sent Home, he believed that there were 'virtually no roads in the country', and that railroad construction was 'proceeding with a dilatoriness ... and inefficiency of management and hopelessness of results'. He complained of the 'impossibility of introducing articles from abroad into the interior, or of conveying the products of the interior to the ports', and deplored the want of irrigation and the disrepair of canals and reservoirs. From the evidence of the 1848 committee, he had concluded that the reason for the Indians' failure to grow more cotton was their 'degraded condition', for which he blamed the government's 'unaccountable neglect' of public works. The Company had, therefore, made a 'scandalous sacrifice of the interests of the district of this country with which I am connected.'¹

Bright urged that permanent legislation for the government of India should await the completion of enquiries which were then being made by parliamentary committees on Indian affairs. He expected that the evidence presented to them would confirm his view of the need for a large reform of the governing authorities. He was supported in the Commons by J.G. Phillimore, who referred

¹For the agitation of Bright and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, between the 'cotton famine' of 1846 and 1850, to have India's potentiality as a source of raw cotton investigated and developed, see A. Redford, *op. cit.* I, 223-5; D. Thorner, Investment in Empire, British Railways and Steam Shipping Enterprise in India, 1825-1849 (Philadelphia, 1950), pp. 112-14, 117-18 n.24, 145-59.

to the 'neglect of internal communication' and the reluctance 'to spend money on public works', and by J.F. Blackett, Danby Seymour and Cobden.¹ However, Russell left no doubt of the ministry's intention to legislate during the current session, and this made a large reform in the governing powers unlikely.² His announcement drew a quick response from Manchester. On 13 March, two days after the debate, Bright helped to form the 'Indian Reform Society'. He was joined on its committee by Phillimore and Blackett, whilst Danby Seymour became its first president.³

In the following weeks, Bright prepared for an attack upon the Government's proposals. At this period 'the subject [of India] was hardly a day out of his thoughts and his reading was almost confined to it'. About a week after the debate, he addressed a 'commercial meeting in Manchester on Indian affairs and complained that neither its resolutions nor its petition to Parliament were "earnest enough".' On 18 March, he advised Russell 'not to go wrong by hasty legislation', and four days later talked with Robert Lowe, Secretary to the Board of Control for India, 'on Indian affairs'. On 25 March, he 'spoke of India' with Sir William Molesworth, then a member of the Cabinet, who 'said he should

¹Hansard, loc. cit. 55, 57-8, 63.

²Ibid. 55.

³R.P. Masani, Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India (1939), p. 59; The Diaries of John Bright, ed. R.A.J. Walling (1930), p. 145 n.1; The Times, 10 May 1853.

convey my ideas on the subject to his colleagues'.¹ On 15 April, he moved for a return detailing expenditure on public works in recent years.² The same day, he noted in his diary:

Had some talk with Wood [President of the Board of Control for India] ... on the position of the Govt. and our section, and told him plainly that a large party could not be kept together without some respect being shown to every influential section of it.³

In May, he spoke on India at Bristol, and, on 1 June, at Birmingham.⁴ When Sir Charles Wood introduced his Bill, on 3 June, he knew that its provisions would be opposed by the 'Indian Reform Association'.⁵

During the Commons debate on Wood's Bill, the members of the Indian Reform Society 'clustered ... closely below the gangway' of the House.⁶ They held a meeting on the day following the first

¹Bright's Diaries, pp. 138-41, 145 n.1. The meeting which Bright addressed was probably that which the Mayor of Manchester called 'to consider the better development of the resources of British India, and the consequent amelioration of the condition of the people [sic]' (The Times, 17 Mar.). For a petition, dated 25 April, from the 'City of Manchester', see Select Committee on Indian Affairs, Parl. Papers (H.C.) 1852-3, XXVII, App. 7, p. 251.

²P.P. (H.C.) 1852-3, LXXIV.

³Bright's Diaries, p. 141.

⁴Ibid. p. 145 n.1.

⁵Hansard, 3rd ser. CXXVII, 1097-8.

⁶Ibid. CXXVIII, 776, 1010; see also [E.M. Whitty], History of the Session 1852-3 ... (1854), p. 176. Whitty wrote, with something of the satirist's exaggeration, of the alignment over the Bill as being 'Sir Charles and Mr Lowe against the Indian Reform Society - these being the only two parties ... taking the slightest notice of the legislation' (p. 194).

night's debate,¹ which had been wholly taken up by Wood's introductory speech of five hours and by Bright's virulent two-hour reply to it. Later in the debate, the group were referred to as 'Young India'.² They were, it was said, 'better known as the Manchester school'.³

In his second reading speech,⁴ Bright reiterated his views of 11 March, confident that 'he was ... speaking almost the unanimous sentiments of the merchants and manufacturers of Manchester'. This was no glib boast. Earlier in the debate, Wood had alluded to representations which the cotton interest had 'earnestly pressed' upon him.⁵ Again, Milner Gibson had presented a petition from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures which they had drawn up on 22 June, after Bright had impressed upon them the connexion between the 'Government of India question'

¹Bright's Diaries, p. 146.

²R.D. Mangles (Hansard, loc. cit. 776), Cumming Bruce (ibid. 990) and Digby Seymour (ibid. 1010) used the expression. It also occurs in letters from Wood to Dalhousie, e.g. 4, 8, 24 June, 8 July, 8 Aug. 1853, Wood Papers (subsequently referred to as W.P.), India Office Library. All references to the Wood-Dalhousie correspondence relate to letters in this collection.

³Cumming Bruce, op. cit. Sir Robert Inglis also spoke of the 'Manchester school' during the debate (op. cit. 656). W.H. Sykes, a director of the Company, associated 'the Manchester school' with the case for increasing India's cotton production. On 31 May, he sent to the Morning Chronicle a copy of a letter, published in Bombay, which he believed to be a 'reply' to them (P.R.O. 30/29/21).

⁴Hansard, loc. cit. 877-80.

⁵Ibid. CXXVII, 1111.

and 'the permanence and stability of the supply of cotton'.¹ Bright now attacked the Company's failure to build roads for 'agricultural, commercial and economical purposes', and contrasted such niggardliness with the liberality of 'the people of Manchester [who] had expended more for their internal improvement than the East India Company with their vast empire.'

Bright's colleagues echoed his sentiments. Phillimore described the Company's public works policy as 'disastrous'.² Danby Seymour called for such a government as would encourage the investment of English capital in India, in consequence of which 'the aspect of Hindoostan would be changed enormously before ten years had passed.'³ Digby Seymour, who acknowledged his attachment to the 'Young India' group, revealed that India's consumption of British goods was low compared with South America's, and that whilst England's imports of American cotton had climbed steadily, the quantities drawn from India had remained constant.⁴ 'How', he asked, 'was that to be accounted for? America had 11,000 miles of railway; but in India ... the expenditure for

¹The Times, 22 and 24 June 1853. For this and similar Manchester petitions, see S.C. on Indian Affairs, P.P. (H.C.) 1852-3, XXVIII, App. 2, pp. 241-2, 252. On 9 Aug., after the Commons had passed the Bill, Wood received a memorial from the Manchester Commercial Association, expressing their concern over the 'extension and improvement of cotton cultivation' in India (W.P.1).

²Hansard, loc. cit. 1238.

³Ibid. 1339-40.

⁴Ibid. CXXVIII, 1009-1016.

railways had not been more than sufficient to place 100 miles in course of construction.' He condemned the existing form of government because he believed that it inhibited internal development:

What were the tests they ought to take in order to try the merits of the system? He would ask whether by the present system peace was encouraged - whether the works of peace, such as canals and roads, the means of transit and internal traffic flourished ...; instead of peace, the system had been the instigation and the cause of war

Cobden, who 'saw no benefit which could arise to the mass of the English people from their connexion with India, except that which might arise from honest trade', drew the same antithesis between the existing system as productive of wars, and reformed government as the basis of development.¹

II

Manchester's arguments did not deflect the Aberdeen ministry from its purpose of renewing, with modification, the Company's charter. However, in Sir Charles Wood the Manchester school found a 'susceptible statesman', and their subjection of him to their technique of 'exercising pressure' contributed to the impressively energetic prosecution of public works and railways during his Presidency of the Board of Control. Wood was apprehensive of the effect of the Reformers' opposition to the uneasy coalition Government in what he described as a 'very uncertain' House of

¹Ibid. 822-3, 831.

Commons.¹ On 8 March, he remarked upon Disraeli's 'disposition to join the Radicals in opposing any [Indian] legislation',² and after the debate of 11 March, he predicted 'a nasty storm about India'.³ On 24 March, he wrote to Dalhousie: 'The Manchester people want to pull down the Directors [of the East India Company] because they don't grow cotton; ... Disraeli and Derby are ready to join in any opposition to us' On 24 May, he elaborated upon 'the Manchester school's' dissent from his plan for the future government of India.⁴ During the same period, he gave particular attention to railways and public works.

On 8 March, Wood pressed Dalhousie, 'with some anxiety', for a report on the best means of providing India with a system of railways. 'Our Manchester people', he commented, '... look, and naturally, with great interest to opening the cotton growing districts'. He wrote at length on this, and associated questions, in the next mail.

... I hope that you will have reported on railroads before I have to bring in my Bill. I am very anxious to push the railroad from Bombay into the Cotton Districts if I knew which is really the best line. The other points are to do in the Madras and other districts what has been done in the North West Provinces; improve the irrigation, and open roads for conveying the cotton down

¹Wood to Dalhousie, 8 June 1853.

²Letter to Dalhousie.

³Wood to 3rd Earl Grey, 14 Mar. 1853, in Howick Collection, The Prior's Kitchen, The College, Durham.

⁴Letter to Dalhousie.

....This is in truth the only thing that the Manchester people care for, and if I can satisfy them that these points will not be neglected, I hope to keep them all in good humour. They are however a powerful body in the House of Commons, and besides this I think they are right in their object; it would be a great point to render ourselves somewhat independent of United States cotton.¹

Wood's next letter to Dalhousie repeated that he was 'anxious to push forward the railroads and irrigation'. An increased import of Indian cotton 'would be a great national object, besides satisfying a large and powerful party in this country.'² On 8 May, he was, like Manchester, 'very anxious to see a period of peace and internal improvement', and favoured 'spending any surplus [revenue] in Public Works'.³

In his speech of 3 June, Wood acknowledged the importance of railways and public works to the British cotton interest.⁴ He promised that upon receiving Dalhousie's proposals 'no time shall be lost in carrying the railroads through and no expense shall be spared to effect that object.' As for other works, he alluded to the results of the enquiries into the superintendence and execution of public works which the Company had commissioned in 1850.⁵ Dalhousie's recommendations for a new

¹Wood to Dalhousie, 24 Mar. 1853.

²8 Apr. 1853.

³Letter to Dalhousie.

⁴Wood had been briefed by memoranda on public works by his secretary, T.G. Baring ('Public Works. Bengal', n.d.), and by 'Mr[Edward] Thornton' (31 May 1853) from the 'Examiner's Office', East India House, (W.P. 36). For the public works section of his speech, see op. cit., 1111-18.

⁵Despatch from Court of Directors to Governor-General, 30 Jan. 1850, in 'Board's Collections', No.149.783, India Office Records.

department of public works in Bengal had been approved, and similar organizational improvement would be introduced in the other presidencies. He also referred to a recent despatch to India, providing for the reform of the system of estimating public works requirements and costs in each presidency, and thereby facilitating the control of the Governor-General and the Home Government over the execution of improvements. It also provided for 'a considerable portion of the revenue' to be spent annually on public works. Wood had had a large hand in shaping this despatch.¹

The first outcome of Wood's promise to hasten works of improvement was his ready approval of Dalhousie's proposals for India's great trunk railroads.² He had, in January, noted his inclination to have the main lines constructed by 'private Companies under Government control'.³ Now, in July, with Dalhousie's scheme before him, he recorded that the Government's guarantee of interest on the private capital invested in 'the

The reports of the Commissioners, and the documents reflecting the action which arose from them, appear in P.P. (H.C.) 1852-3, LXXIV, and 1854, XLVIII.

¹Despatch of 24 May (No.32) 1853. The Court's copy of the document shows Wood's alterations in red ink ('India and Bengal Despatches', 81). They are also acknowledged in Stark to Melvill, 20 May 1853, in 'Letters from the Board to the Court', 17. Wood intended the despatch to carry to India the form of the Parliamentary Ordnance Estimates which he had settled as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1846-52 (Wood to Lieut.-Gen. G. Anson, 25 Nov. 1854, W.P.).

²Wood to Dalhousie, 19 Aug. 1853.

³Wood to Dalhousie, 22 Jan. 1853.

construction of the main trunk lines may properly be given.'¹ He wrote of the 'objects' of railways policy as 'the general & public advantages of the government & people of India generally, and also the commercial advantage of carrying produce to & from the coast.' He again expressed his concern to open 'the great cotton districts of Berar to the Western coast'. For these purposes, then, he agreed to the Government's guarantee of five per cent per annum interest for ninety-nine years, on the capital invested by shareholders in the companies engaged upon constructing the authorised lines.² In so doing he was employing the method of financing and constructing Indian railways upon which Manchester had, four years earlier, placed its imprimatur. For in 1849, Bright and Cobden, together with other members of parliament for the Midlands and representatives of Manchester

¹ 'Memorandum on Indian Railroads', 30 July 1853, W.P. 27.

² A few months later, Wood was obliged to go further, and to guarantee principal as well as interest on £1m. worth of debentures in the East Indian Railway Company. He did so to avert a stoppage in construction when a gap in the cash flow was occasioned by the Company's inability to float its shares, guaranteed as to interest, on the capital-cautious money market of early 1854 (J.C. Melvill, ex-officio director of the E. I. R. Company, to Wood, 9 June 1854, Hickleton Papers; unsigned memorandum, 'East Indian Railway Company', [late 1854], W.P.27; Wood to Dalhousie, 24 Mar., 8 Apr., 24 May, 24 June, 24 July 1854). For an account of the lines under construction and in contemplation by early 1855, see [Anon.], Railways in India: Their Present State and Prospects ... with Observations upon the Terms of the Guarantee Granted ... (1855). See also E. Davidson, The Railways of India (1868); W.J. Macpherson, 'Investment in Indian Railways, 1845-1875', Econ. Hist. Rev. 2nd ser. VIII (1955) 177-87; M.N. Das, Studies in the Economic and Social Development of Modern India: 1848-56 (Calcutta, 1959), pp. 26-108.

commercial interests, had attended at the Board of Control to press for the adoption of the guarantee system.¹

III

By mid-August 1853, having received and sanctioned Dalhousie's report on railroads, Wood could reflect on that question: 'I have done ... to the utmost ... what depends on me'² However, he was prevented from advancing other improvements by the Governor-General's tardiness in submitting recommendations on the reorganisation of the system of superintendence and execution of public works at Madras and Bombay. He remained uneasy at the prospect of opposition from the Manchester school. On 8 October, he cautioned Dalhousie that Danby Seymour was on his way to India. On 24 November, he wrote:

... I hope to have a year or two of peace and quiet ... which will ... tranquillise our Indian Reformers. I wish to hear of nothing but railroads and annicuts and roads etc.

And on 24 January 1854, he noted:

... Parliament is well disposed to interfere in Indian matters, it is bent now on internal improvement ... and I wish to shew some good steps in that direction One cannot nowadays disregard the public opinion of the House of Commons

Early in 1854, whilst he was awaiting Dalhousie's suggestions for reorganisation, Wood began to think about a plan for

¹Thorner, op. cit. pp. 158-9.

²Wood to Dalhousie, 19 Aug. 1853.

accelerating the construction of large public works. For some time, he had been urging Dalhousie to reduce his cash balances, which he considered excessive to the extent of some £5m., by paying off part of the public debt.¹ Such a step would reduce the annual charges against the Indian revenue. On 8 February 1854, however, he wrote to Dalhousie of 'making a small hole in your balances' to improve the 'internal administration' of Madras. On 24 March, he confessed to have 'somewhat modified' his earlier opinion as to paying off debt. He would now prefer to see the 'investment of [the surplus] money in public works'. A few days later, he told Dalhousie that a despatch would be sent out on the question.²

In May, Wood wrote a rough paper, estimating Dalhousie's probable surplus cash balances at the end of the 1853-4 financial

¹ 25 Apr., 19 Aug., 6 Oct., 8 Nov., 24 Dec., 1853.

² 8 Apr. 1854. Wood was no doubt influenced by the theories of Lieut.-Col. A. Cotton, Chief Engineer at Madras, who believed that investment in public works would yield high returns in the form of increased land revenues. The Times (29 Dec. 1853 and 3 Jan. 1854) published selections from Cotton's book, Public Works in India (1854). Memoranda critical of the book by Col. D. Sim (7 Feb. 1854) and J. Chapman (Feb. 1854) appear in W.P. 42. Wood wrote to Dalhousie of the appeal of Cotton's views (8 Feb., 24 Mar., 8 Apr., 10 July 1854). He was also impressed by the Madras Commissioners' Report (P.P. (H.C.) 1852-3, LXXIV), which Baring retailed to him in memoranda ('Roads. Madras', n.d. and 'Irrigation. Madras', n.d. W.P. 36), and which he considered 'Cottonian' (Wood to Harris, 24 Sept. 1854, W.P.). He later came to regard Cotton's expectations as 'too sanguine' (ibid. and Cotton to Wood, Nov. 1854, W.P. 36).

year, and discussing the desirability of applying a large portion of them to the execution of new, substantial public works.¹ After being redrafted, the sections of the paper concerning the balances were included in a 'Financial Despatch' which the Directors sent to the Governor-General on 7 June.² Wood ensured that the despatch prepared Dalhousie to receive further instructions about large works, and he required the Court of Directors to frame a separate despatch to give expression to his requirements.³ Wood received an early draft on the subject from the Court,⁴ and worked over it until the final form of the 'Despatch on ... the Execution of Important Public Works', dated 5 July, was achieved.⁵

The despatch of 5 July required the Governor-General to decide, upon the basis of estimates supplied by each presidency, the works which might, with advantage, be financed out of the surplus balances. The selected works should be those which would 'promote in the largest degree the development of the resources

¹ 'Materials for Public Works Draft', n.d. W.P. 36.

² Despatch of 7 June (No.22) 1854. The Court's copy shows Wood's alterations in red ink (India Despatches, 87). Paras 6-11 followed Wood's paper closely.

³ Redington to Melvill, 22 May 1854, in Letters from Board to Court, 17.

⁴ 'Register of Drafts', 8, Dft. 546.

⁵ Despatch of 5 July (No.43) 1854, India Despatches, loc. cit.; Redington to Melvill, 20 June 1854, in Letters from Board to Court, loc. cit.

of the country and the improvement of the condition of the people.¹ The despatch distinguished between 'important' works, which Dalhousie might nominate, and normal repairs and maintenance and small works, which ought to be defrayed out of the annual revenues. The former would be authorised to the extent that their execution could be superintended. When the surplus balances were exhausted, public works loans would be raised to carry them forward.²

Whilst Wood planned for the advancement of large works, he became increasingly uneasy at Dalhousie's failure to send Home the long-awaited plans for reorganizing the public works departments at Madras and Bombay. Further, he was annoyed that Dalhousie had not required Madras to introduce the system of estimating which he had decreed a year earlier.³ The reports of the commissions of enquiry at the minor presidencies had long been completed,⁴ and

¹Cf. the expressions used at Manchester in Mar. 1853 (see above).

²A despatch of 20 Dec. (No.96) 1854 averred that the despatch of 5 July 'recognized the principle' of public works loans (India Despatches, 89). The first public works loan, of £2 $\frac{1}{2}$ m. for fifteen years, bearing a guaranteed five per cent interest, was opened on 12 Mar. 1855 (Despatch to Court, 12 Mar. (No.30) 1855, RP. (H.C.) 1854-5, XL).

³Dalhousie to Court, 7 Oct. and 23 Dec. 1853, Board's Coll., loc. cit.

⁴The first Madras report was completed in Jan. 1853, the Bombay report the following month. Though Dalhousie was well advanced with the Bombay reforms during 1853, he claimed, in a letter of 29 June 1854, which finally acquainted Wood with his progress, that he did not receive the 'final reports' from Madras until Jan. 1854.

the evidence of inefficiency which they contained exposed Wood to serious criticism. On 9 May, he wrote to Dalhousie:

I hope that you have made some progress in arranging for a more systematic arrangement of public works. We are all very anxious about it here, and I am in expectation every day of having something said about it in the House of Commons. You must remember that we have a public to satisfy

Wood alluded to the question with mounting impatience in subsequent letters.¹ He authorised the issue of a summary command to the Governor-General, in a terse despatch of 14 June, to carry out 'at once' his orders of 24 May 1853 with respect to estimating at Madras.² That despatch goaded Dalhousie:

We need scarcely repeat the great anxiety we feel to be put in possession, with as little delay as possible, of the conclusions at which you may arrive on the whole subject of the execution of Public Works in India

When Dalhousie reacted violently against such treatment,³ Wood explained what had 'led to my urging you':

I was anxious to be able to state to the House of Commons that you had made progress in what they have taken up as the great desideratum in India.⁴

Wood had good reason for wanting to put his house in order quickly. The Government was so torn by internal dissension over Russell's Reform Bill, and over policy in the Crimea,⁵ that on

¹ 24 May, 8 June, 10 July.

² Despatch of 14 June (No.39) 1854, India Despatches, loc. cit.

³ Dalhousie to Wood, 29 June 1854.

⁴ 24 Sept. 1854.

⁵ See Wood to Russell, 9, 25 Dec. 1853, 28 Feb., 26 and 28 Mar., 4 June 1854, P.R.O. 30/22/11; Wood to Grey, 7 and 9 June 1854, Howick Coll.

4 May he told Greville despondently:

Parties were at an end, and the House of Commons was no longer divided into and governed by them;... and business could no longer be conducted in Parliament in the way it used to be.¹

With Manchester persistently attentive to Indian questions, Wood lived in fears of an adverse vote. In April, Bright had jogged him on the need for recent Indian accounts to be placed before the House.² On 11 July, Blackett, supported by Danby Seymour, Bright and Phillimore, pressed for an enquiry into land tenures in Madras.³ Wood staved them off with a promise that the condition of the Madras ryot would soon be improved by 'large expenditure on public works.'⁴

IV

On 8 August, Wood presented to the House of Commons his first annual statement on the finances and the general progress of the affairs of India.⁵ He gave prominence to his efforts to encourage the cultivation of cotton. He mentioned the recent

¹The Greville Memoirs, ed. H. Reeve (1888), VII, 159.

²Hansard, 3rd ser. CXXXII, (1854), 785.

³Ibid. CXXXV, 43, 59, 62, 75, 86.

⁴Ibid. 86. Blackett's motion was defeated by only five votes (64 Noes, 59 Ayes). The influence which the Indian Reformers exercised during the 1854 session was reflected, in the following February, in Palmerston's proposal to make Danby Seymour Secretary to the Board of Control in his first administration. Charles Villiers sounded Bright on the appointment (Bright's Diaries, p. 186).

⁵Hansard, loc. cit. 1450, 1452-7.

'lapse' of the cotton-growing state of Nagpur, which even Manchester had not questioned in the House,¹ and spoke of the surveys of the Godavery River which he had authorised. If it proved navigable, the Godavery might 'open up one of the greatest cotton districts in India, and bring down that valuable product at a much cheaper rate than any ... railway, to the great advantage of the people of this country.' He told of the progress which had been made in railway construction, and of the large increase of funds which he had made available for public works. Having at last learned that Dalhousie was making good progress with the new public works departments,² he was able to report with satisfaction upon the question of reorganisation.

In a thin House, Wood's account of his efforts to promote public works won the plaudits of Manchester. Though Bright himself was absent, Sir T.E. Perry, who acclaimed 'the soundness of his views' and argued that his speeches on Wood's Bill in 1853 had revealed his 'statesmanlike mind', praised Wood for giving 'to public works in India a stimulus such as those

¹Wood to Dalhousie, 8 Mar. 1854. Dalhousie stressed the bearing of the acquisition of Nagpur and Berar upon 'the supply of raw cotton' (4 Mar. 1854).

⁶Dalhousie to Wood, 29 June 1854.

enterprises had never before received.'¹ Danby Seymour 'admitted great improvement ... had been made during the last twelve months in the government of India, which in great measure was due to the influence and exertions of [Wood]'² J.G. Phillimore 'fully concurred in the panegyrics which had been pronounced on the speech.'³ He 'took great interest [in] ... the navigation of the Godavery ... [which] would do more for India than any other step that could be taken, and ... enable us to grow cotton at a much cheaper cost than could be done by America itself.'

The Manchester school was clearly more sympathetic towards Wood's statement of August 1854 than it had been towards his Bill in 1853. There seems no doubt that the change of attitude arose from his attentiveness to the cotton question and from his vigorous prosecution of railways and public works. It seems

¹Op. cit. 1464-6. Perry had retired from the post of Chief Justice of Bombay in 1852. In 1853, he had written a number of letters to The Times under the pseudonym of 'Hadjee', opposing the renewal of the Company's charter (e.g. 7, 14 Mar.). He was returned an M.P. in May 1854, and became a vocal opponent of annexation (D.N.B.; R.P. Masani, op. cit. passim). Bright noted on 25 February 1855 that Seymour and Perry had 'called': 'Long conversation with ... Perry [who] compliments me; ... wishes me when war is over to lead the independent party in the House I spoke of my Sect and principles as great obstacles to any official career, which he and Seymour would not admit.' (Diaries, p. 191.)

²Hansard, loc. cit. 1474.

³Ibid. 1475.

reasonable to claim that the Manchester school underwrote the Government's heavy investment of borrowed funds in public works,¹ and its pledge of the security of the returns on the capital invested in private railways.² Such policies were consistent with those which Manchester espoused both before and after the period under review. In the late forties, 'manufacturers and Members of Parliament from Manchester ... were among the leading advocates of governmental intervention to underwrite railways for India.'³ And early in the sixties, the Chamber of Commerce 'called for a loan [of some £30m. or £40m.], backed if necessary by an imperial guarantee, to finance public works' in India.⁴

¹In his 'final minute', Dalhousie referred to the government's 'enormous expenditure ... annually ... upon public works', and attributed the financial deficiencies of the years 1853-6 to it. In 1853-4, £2½m. was so spent, in 1854-5 £3m. Whilst of these sums 'a very large proportion [was] expended on new works', in 1855-6 the estimated charge for what Wood had termed 'important' works was £2¼m. (Dalhousie to Court, 28 Feb. 1856, P.P. (H.C.) 1856, XLV).

²Early in 1855, arrangements had already been made for railway companies to construct lines which would cost an estimated £22½m. to complete, on the understanding that the interest on the sums raised from time to time would be guaranteed at five per cent for ninety-nine years (Select Committee on East India Railways, P.P. (H.C.) 1857-8, XIV, see paras. indexed under 'Guarantee'; Railways in India, op. cit., pp. 41-3). L.H. Jenks estimated that by summer 1857, the returns on £14m. had been so secured (The Migration of British Capital to 1875 (1938), p. 213). J.N. Sahni (Indian Railways ... 1853 to 1953 (New Delhi, 1953), p. 187) and N. Sanyal (Development of Indian Railways (Calcutta, 1930), graph facing p. 1) agree with this estimate. From Sahni's data it appears that the rate of 'net earnings' on 'capital at charge' in 1855 was .7 per cent, in 1857, 1.25 per cent.

³Thorner, op. cit. p. 178.

⁴Redford, op. cit., II, 13.

Just as the costs of the earlier wars and annexations were met from the revenues of India, so now the interest charges which arose from the application of the Reformers' policy of internal development increased the dependency's financial burden. Ironically, in this instance Manchester's technique of 'exercising pressure upon susceptible statesmen' contributed to the existence of a class of investors with a fixed interest in the permanence of the imperial connexion. Manchester's Indian policy helped to create a class of rentiers or finance capitalists which Hobson later described as the 'taproot of Imperialism'.¹ Yet MacDonagh averred that 'anti-rentier' prejudice was endemic to 'free trade', and that Cobden 'fully anticipated Hobson's theory of imperialism'.

V

In his analysis of the relationship between 'free trade' and imperialism in the 1850's, MacDonagh erred in concentrating almost exclusively upon Cobden's thought. He insisted that 'free trade' 'must mean doctrine translated into immediate political objects by specific persons and associations.' He ought, therefore, in his consideration of 'free trade' policy as regards India, to have looked beyond Cobden, who appreciated that on this

¹J.A. Hobson, Imperialism, A Study [1902], (1948 edition), pp. 81-2, 85. Jenks, pitching his emphasis somewhat later than the period under review, discerned a link between public works investment and imperialism: 'From 1857 to 1865 the major movement of British capital was towards India, to transform the land with public works And the effort that was made brought home with the dividends a spirit ripe for imperialism' (Op. cit. p. 207. See pp. 213-32 for Jenks's development of the argument that Indian railways investment played a central role in Britain's later extension of her empire).

question he held 'opinions of a somewhat abstract kind, and not adapted for the practical work of the day.'¹ At the time of the Mutiny, in the context of a discussion of Britain's government of India, he wrote: 'For a politician of my principles there is really no standing ground.'² He recognized as 'abstractions' the 'free trade' principles which led him to denounce British rule in India as 'protectionist'.³ By following Cobden's thought too exclusively, MacDonagh exaggerates 'the anti-imperialism of free trade' at the level of practical politics. In relation to India during the 1853-4 period, his 'free trade' group employed its characteristic political technique to press a positive policy of economic development. It is necessary to recognize that as 'Reformers' they contributed to the strength and endurance of Britain's imperial connexion with India.

¹Cobden to Mr Ashworth, 16 Oct. 1857, quoted in J. Morley, The Life of Richard Cobden (1903 edition), p. 671.

²Cobden to Col. Fitzmayer, 18 Oct. 1857, ibid. p. 678.

³Ibid.