

THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION OF

THE MARITIME PROVINCES OF

CEYLON 179⁶~~5~~-1802

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Abstract

The Maritime Provinces of Ceylon consisted of all the land around its coast which was acknowledged as not belonging to the Kingdom of Kandy. Between 1796-1802 they were governed by the English East India Company. The Government was faced with many difficulties. They were ignorant of the languages of the country and of its real condition. The Mudaliyars, the former employees of the Dutch Company and the Muslim renters and traders wielded considerable influence. The real importance of the period is the many relationships which the Government reached with these groups without whose support their rule would have been imperilled. These relations took the form of the maintenance of the caste-system, the restoration of the headmen to their administrative positions, the employment of the Dutch as European officials and the use of the renting system for the collection of taxes.

The shadow of their power also fell over other policies. The ingenuity of the Mudaliyars allied to British ignorance prevented the land-tenure system from being worked. The same reasons reduced the success of North's agricultural policy. The Madras administration tried to correct the balance of trade in Ceylon's favour by waiving all export duties. In this they failed. North for his part steered clear of general trade policies. Both the Madras administration and North refrained from interfering with the private traders. As far as commercial crops were concerned the Madras administration wanted to have them reproduced in India

Although North opposed such a policy Ceylon's commercial products with a few exceptions continued to be neglected in his period. North was more active than his predecessors in spreading Christianity, distributing charity and fighting small-pox. Although North did enjoy a measure of success in his battle against small-pox, the benefit of his charity accrued mainly to one racial group - the burghers.

Introduction

Whereas histories dealing with the period of the English East India Company's control over Ceylon usually begin with an account of the island's conquest by the British we shall begin with an appraisal of the attempts of the early historians to master their source material. To our mind the historian is a sort of military captain leading an army of questions into the heart of his sources. We hope to show in the course of this introduction that questions in the earlier histories were not deployed in as organized a way as they should have been and that their wielders often failed to concentrate their fire.

Percival's Account of Ceylon (London 1803) consists of a miscellaneous collection of subjects chosen at random by the author. A description of a pearl fishery, an exposition of Buddhism, a description of a journey round Ceylon, and accounts of Ceylon's plant, animal and mineral life illustrate its desultory character.

Percival was an officer in the victorious British army.¹ He would have had to be a man of very many more parts to have treated adequately the many subjects on which his interest fastened. His sources as disclosed by him were the knowledge gained from his three years sojourn in Ceylon, the assistance of Dormieux, a Dutchman who took service with the English conquerors, and "the² valuable communications of several friends". Such sources of information could not save him from making² egregious mistakes such as that Buddhists believed in a Supreme God and in the

¹ Percival p 1.
² " " p 3.

immortality of the soul,³ that the indigenous⁴ of Ceylon consisted of the Sinhalese and the Veddahs, that the Portuguese when they came to Ceylon found a Brahmin king ruling over the whole of it⁵ and that the Sinhalese language possesses a strong element of Arabic.⁶

All the relevant aspects of the many topics chosen by him are never discussed as adequately as they should have been. There are many questions which can be flung at them. Why are the Tamils left out of his account? What of their religion and their way of life? Why is Buddhism the only religion chosen for discussion? Why are as many as thirty-seven pages lavished on the history of the Portuguese period of Ceylon history when only thirteen pages are given to that of the Dutch? All that both these histories consist of is an account of some of the wars fought by the Dutch and Portuguese against the Kingdom of Kandy. Why is not more told of their relationship with the people of the Maritime Provinces? His book seems however to be an attempt to introduce Ceylon to the English public, and it would be wrong to judge it as being devoid of all value. As an officer in the conquering British army all that he says about the military operations involved in the conquest of Ceylon should be regarded as the account of an eye-witness. His book also indicates the sort of information about Ceylon which would have interested an Englishman of his day.

The Reverend James Cordiner's A description of Ceylon (London 1807) is a book cast in the same mould as that of Percival. The climate of Ceylon, the system of land tenure in the time of the Sinhalese kings, the system of administration during that time,

³ Percival pp 199 and 200.

⁴ " pp 167 - 271.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Percival p 186

the topography of Colombo the architecture of its buildings, the way of life of the Sinhalese both low-country and up-country the Tamils and the Veddahs demonstrate the wide range of the subjects discussed by him.

Two sources indicated by Cordiner were Knox's An Historical Relation of Ceylon and the Pujavaliya. Cordiner would have also drawn heavily on whatever knowledge of Ceylon he had gained as Superintendent of Schools. He would however have needed the assistance of skilled knowledge in many spheres before he could have done justice to the wide range of subjects over which his fancy roamed. This is shown by the number of flagrant errors made by him. For instance he says that Ceylon's highest mountain was Adams Peak,⁷ that iron ore was plentiful in Ceylon,⁸ that the Muhammedans were Sinhalese "who profess the religion of Mahomet",⁹ and that the Mahavelli River was held in the same religious veneration by the Ceylonese as the Ganges was by the inhabitants of Bengal¹⁰ and that the tiger was common in Ceylon.¹¹

Unlike Percival Cordiner dwells on many aspects of Government policy. Many important aspects of the subjects chosen by him are not discussed. We are apprised of some aspects of the Government's policy with regard to Christianity but not of its attitude to the other religions. While something is said of the renting of the fish tax there is nothing said about arrack renting or about the many other taxes whose collection was farmed. There is reference to the examination of some applications for charity made by North

7	Cordiner	p	8.
8	"	p	13.
9	"	p	117.
10	"	p	149.
11	"	p	102.

in the course of his tour of Ceylon. The various other aspects of the Government's charity policy are however not discussed. We could add to the number of the historical sins of omission attributable to the Reverend James Cordiner. We hope however that we have enumerated enough to establish our charge that Cordiner discussed his subjects too slightly. The value of Cordiner's book is that as in the case of Percival he shows those aspects of Ceylon which an Englishman found interesting. Because he was the Superintendent of Schools what he says on the subject of religion and education should also be given attention.

Lord Valentia was another Percival and Cordiner but with one difference. He does not try to write about the economic and social conditions of Ceylon. Therefore he avoids committing the sort of error which we have noticed in the works of Cordiner and Percival. His is a three-volume work about his travels in India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt. It is called Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt, (London 1809). Chapter VI and the beginning of Chapter VII are devoted to Ceylon. They concern themselves mainly with the relations of the British Government with the Kingdom of Kandy, the errors committed by the Madras Administration and the reforms introduced by North.

Valentia's work suffers from the effects of an unalloyed admiration for North. About North he says "I cannot conclude this chapter without a testimony to the merit of Mr. North's administration. His mild and benignant character and conciliatory policy were essentially beneficial in reconciling the minds of the natives to the British Government after the monstrous conduct of

those who ruled in the Island when it was under the control of the Presidency of Madras".¹² Such an attitude leads Valentia to make gross exaggerations. He makes out that after North's reforming activity "instead of an exhausted treasury the revenue was nearly equalled to the civil expenditure".¹³ Our thesis will be occupied in showing how far from the truth this statement is. Many of North's policies were hampered by his inability to make ends meet. Again Valentia boasts of how North liberated "the lower orders" from the control of the Mudaliyars.¹⁴ Our thesis will tell a different tale. It will tell how the British Government was driven by the weakness of its power to rely heavily on the co-operation of the Mudaliyars. Far from being able to bridle the power of the Mudaliyars the British Administration was forced in this period to defer to it. Valentia's attitude is also unfair both to the Madras Administration and the administration of the defunct Dutch company. As we shall see, in most of the reforms that North put into effect he was guided by the proposals of the Committee of Investigation. If the short-sighted Andrews was part of the Madras Administration so was the Committee of Investigation who followed in his wake. Valentia utters many strictures about the Dutch Administration without advancing sufficient proof of them. He says that the "Dutch had imbibed a notion that an undivided share of an estate prevented emigration; they therefore would not permit an estate to be divided among the children at the death of a parent, but compelled them to be tenants in common".¹⁵

12 Valentia p 313.
 13 " p 315.
 14 " p 315.
 15 " p 310

More knowledge of Ceylon's land tenure system would have shown Valentia that the roots of the system of joint tenancy reached back to a time much earlier than the period of the Dutch rule. He also says that the "Dutch discouraged agriculture and thereby increased the distress of the natives and depopulated their territories"¹⁶. There is no evidence given in support of this accusation.

In the manner of both Percival and Cordiner Valentia neglects many aspects of the themes treated by him. For instance, although he talks about the abolition of accomodessans achieved by North he does not tell us enough about the reasons that induced North to take such a step.¹⁷ He speaks of North's intention of driving out the Aumildars and dubashes but throws no light on how and why¹⁸ so many of them were continued at their posts.

During the period of his stay in Ceylon Valentia was probably North's guest. In the relaxed atmosphere that must have prevailed between host and guest it is probable that Valentia mistook what North hoped to do in Ceylon for what he had actually done.

Anthony Bertolacci's A view of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon (London 1817) is of a better quality than previous works. The questions discussed by Bertolacci are more closely related to one another than in any other book on the period. The themes of his book reduce themselves to an examination of the Government's policy in relation to commercial products, its land tenure policy and the policies followed by it in the collection of inland tolls and other internal taxes.

16 Valentia p 311.
 17 Chapter II p 86
 18 Chapter VI p 297

A serious shortcoming in Bertolacci's book is seen when we look for the history of the Government's policy in the spheres outlined by him. It could be argued that this was not the view-point adopted by him. He chose to be a reformer. Throughout his book he remains engrossed with the task of advising the Government on how it could improve its policy. He has taken on the mantle of chief counsellor. Having held in our period the relatively humble post of Post-Master General and at a later time a similar sort of post as Comptroller of Taxes he was perhaps trying to sublimate in this form ambitions for higher office which if entertained by him remained ungratified during his career in Ceylon. The result of this predilection for giving advice is that when he states the policy of Government in any particular sphere it is very often the policy which was being followed at the time of his writing. Its history is often neglected. This is well illustrated by the apology he makes when departing from his usual practice he gives the history of the relationship between the Ceylon Government and the Rajah of Travancore over the sale of Ceylon tobacco in his kingdom. He says "The reader will pardon this minute examination into the nature and effects of the measure: its being thus recorded may hereafter be useful to that colony should other measures of a similar nature be advised in cases of urgency: and perhaps the example may not be lost in the administration of the other colonies which in many branches of commerce may be placed under like circumstances".

Another major shortcoming in Bertolacci's book which could be attributed in part to the one we have just discussed is that very

19 Bertolacci p 171.

often he does not try to ascertain the manner and extent to which Government policies were put into effect. To take but one example no attempt is made to see how far the Government was able to operate the land tenure system and why they failed to do so. If Bertolacci had made this sort of examination he would have brought to light the social forces in the country of which the British had to take into account in their administration. Bertolacci would have been wiser to have examined not only the economic policy of the Ceylon Government but also its social policy.

So far we have been evaluating books written by persons who were associated with Ceylon during the period about which our thesis is written. We now come to works which are studies made of this period at much later times. L. J. B. Turner in Collected Papers on the History of the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon 1795-1805 (Colombo 1923) concerns himself mainly with Government policy. The topics chosen by him are never discussed as thoroughly as they should have been and they bear little relationship to each other, with the result that his book degenerates into an ill-assorted collection of unrelated facts. For instance, the chapter on the Madras Administration contains the following topics - the dates on which Jervis and Andrews assumed office, the function of the early collectors, the manner in which judicial power was distributed between them and the Military Commandants, the various offices held by the South Indian officials whom Andrews employed in lieu of the indigenous headmen, the sources of revenue in Jaffna, the amount of revenue collected in Mullaitivu, the amount of money brought in by the three pearl fisheries, the causes for the rebellion of 1797,

the types of money in circulation, the post of Commander-in-chief and its various incumbents, the allegation that the renters had engrossed judicial functions, the charges levelled against Andrews, the Superintendent of Revenue and the proposals made by the Committee of Investigation.

This failure gives rise to other weaknesses in the book. Much of the policy followed by the Ceylon Government in the period of the Madras Administration is neglected - its attitude to Christianity and the other religions, its charity policy and the important role the deacons of the Dutch Reformed Church were permitted to occupy in that sphere, its policy with regard to commercial products, the view it took of export and import taxes and how it relied on the renting system for the collection of taxes are some of the matters which could have been ventilated.

There are several aspects of Government policy in the North period which did not receive from Turner the attention due to them. Although the various officials who manned North's departments are mentioned no attempt is made to ascertain the features of the indigenous administration. We are told of the institution of a Committee of Superintendence together with its auxiliary sub-committees to take charge of the distribution of charity but nothing is said of the principles guiding the Government in that matter. When it comes to religion there is nothing said of North's vital relations with the Dutch Reformed Church. Nor is anything mentioned about his attitude to Roman Catholicism. The currency changes made in this period are mentioned but not enough is said about the reasons necessitating so many alterations. Several of

the commercial products such as coffee, cardamums, pepper, elephant and the cloth industry are not mentioned. Of the many internal taxes only two, the joy tax and the uliyam are mentioned.

There are several important sources for this period which have not been used by Turner. These are the Consultations of the Government of Madras and the Supreme Government of Bengal and the Diaries and Proceedings of North's various departments. Turner confessed that he did not know when the Board of Revenue and Commerce was formed, ²⁰ whether the coconut tax was collected and the events which gave rise to the Committee of Investigation. He could have discovered the necessary information in these sources.

The neglect of policy in both these periods is caused to an extent by a tendency in Turner to look upon Government as the functioning of departments. The structure of departments and the persons who manned its higher rungs are described but often little or nothing is said about the policy which inspired their foundation. In this way the importance of some departments come to be obscured. To take but one example, the land registry department, which was occupied with the very important task of establishing the identity of service tenure lands and after the revocation of the service tenure system with the development of individual ownership and the improvement of agriculture, is placed on a par with the Master Attendants Department, which was commissioned to help ships calling at Ceylon's ports with the loading and unloading of their cargoes.

We now come to C. R. de Silva's Ceylon under the British

Occupation (Colombo 1942). This is a work which covers the period from 1795-1833. It describes the judicial reforms introduced by the British, the various stages in the British military conquest of Ceylon and their relationship with the Kingdom of Kandy. Its main themes, however, are the history of the various import, export and other internal taxes the changes made in the system of land tenure and the system of compulsory labour.

De Silva's book contains many factual errors, at least about our period. Referring to the renting system in the first few years of British rule he says that "Many of these Malabar adventurers speculated in tax farming: and having purchased most of the rents..."²¹ The majority of the rent farms from the commencement of British rule were held by Ceylonese both Sinhalese and Tamils.²² These farms were not engrossed by South Indian speculators. Discussing the constitutional changes necessitated by North's appointment as Governor in 1798 he says that the Committee of Investigation "thus far had partly acted executively. Henceforward it became purely advisory and investigatory".²³ The Committee of Investigation save for winding up its affairs did not act in any capacity whatever after North's assumption of office. De Silva alleges that at the outset of North's tenure of office the authority of the Mudaliyars was defined "in order to circumscribe the exercise of arbitrary power".²⁴ Apart from restoring the Mudaliyars to office there is no record of North having done any such thing. Comparing the Dutch Government's

21 De Silva p 196.
 22 Chapter I p 53 ff
 23 De Silva p 209.
 24 " " p 215.

prozelytising zeal on behalf of Christianity to that of the British he states that the British Government abolished "the last vestiges of open religious compulsion by dropping the stipulation of a particular religious belief for holders of official appointments".²⁵ During our period it was insisted that the holders of every post should be members of the Dutch Reformed Church, of the Church of Rome or of the Church of England.²⁶ It is stated that salaries were paid to the headmen by the Committee of Investigation.²⁷ Such a proposal was made by the Committee of Investigation but it was never acted upon. It is implied that after the abolition of the land tenure system effected by North and upheld by Maitland the caste-basis of the compulsory services was reinforced.²⁸ The service-tenure system was always organized on the basis of castes. Another suggestion made is that the Committee of Investigation recommended the restoration of import and export duties because of the loss of revenue caused by their withdrawal. The reason given by the Committee of Investigation was different. They advised the restoration of these taxes because the expansion of trade which it was hoped would be engendered by their removal had not taken place.²⁹ More errors made by De Silva will be revealed in the course of our thesis.

There is a persistent want of critical examination of evidence. There is a tendency to accept statements made by officials at their face-value. For instance De Silva accepts North's version of his quarrel with his Madras officials. This

25 De Silva p 226.
 26 Chapter VI p 310
 27 De Silva p 340.
 28 " " p 285.
 29 Chapter V p 227

leads him to make the serious mistake of imagining that both North's superiors in India and the Court of Directors shared the censorious view that North came to hold of the Pearl Fishery Commissioners. ³⁰ Andrews, whose handling of the earlier pearl fisheries was criticized by North after leaving Ceylon, enjoyed ³¹ an illustrious career in the Madras Civil Service. Again by adopting the strictures that Maitland made of North's abolition of the service-tenure system De Silva fails to draw sufficient attention to the fact that Maitland did not restore that system and to explain how such a savage critic of North's tenurial reforms as Maitland came to uphold the most important part of them.

This failing gives rise to another. Statements made in one place are often contradicted in another by the mouths of officials. Arguing that with the establishment of British rule the renting system fell into the hands of South Indians, De Silva states that "In the wake of the Malabar officials came a crowd of adventurers from the Coast seeking their fortunes in the Island....Many of these Malabar adventurers speculated in tax-farming and having purchased most of the rents proved 'a set of wretches whose speculations are plunder whose interests are permanently foreign to those of the country and whose rapacious dispositions are perpetually urged forward by the precariousness of their tenure'". ³² Later on we are told, however, that the renting system was continued during the Madras Administration "but the great mistake was made of allowing headmen and Government employees to become renters and

³⁰ Dundas to North, 15 July 1800, North MSS.

³¹ Turner p 111.

³² De Silva p 196.

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of arming them with judicial powers". The second statement is derived from Agnew a member of the Committee of Investigation and is far nearer the truth. The whole farming system is subjected to an excoriating attack - ³⁴ "It is not necessary here even to outline the theoretical objections to a system of farming taxes for the antithesis is obvious between the temporary financial interest of a farmer concerned with exacting the maximum profit on his speculation and the permanent interest of cultivator and Government occupied with the extension and prosperity of agriculture". ³⁵ On another occasion however we hear from Boyd holding the office of first secretary that the farming system was "the most productive cheapest and easiest way of realizing the revenue". ³⁶ There is no attempt made to reconcile these two statements.

The sources used have also not been evaluated properly. The fact that for the exposition of Company policy the records left behind by that institution have a higher value than the secondary works of contemporary writers were they even former Company employees is not grasped. As a result there is far too great a reliance on secondary works. For instance De Silva makes a distinction, ³⁷ derived from Bertolacci, ³⁸ between gardens and paddy fields in connexion with the land tenure system which is unknown to the records. Again an explanation inspired by ³⁹ Bertolacci is offered in the name of the Government for the preponderance of export duties in contradistinction to import

33	De Silva	p	374.
34	"	"	pp 374-376.
35	"	"	p 374.
36	"	"	p 380.
37	"	"	pp 323 ff
38	Bertolacci	pp	283 ff
39	"	pp	341 ff

duties which took the form of arguing that the burden of export duties unlike import duties was borne by foreign buyers. No such explanation is to be encountered in the Company records. It would have been strange for the English East India Company, which had many other possessions in Asia than Ceylon and was involved in buying and selling over an even wider area to have shown special consideration for the Ceylonese buyer.

There is also not enough of a search made for the Government's policy, with the result that aspects of it which were closely related are often treated in a disconnected way. The attempt to register land is treated separately from the land tenure system whereas it was an integral part of the Government's policy to ascertain the lands of the service-tenure system and establish individually owned land-holdings in opposition to it. Perhaps if this had been done the extent to which the service-tenure system was obscure to the British officials would have been better appreciated. The renting system is dealt with only in relation to the collection of the paddy dues. If its use for the collection of most of the taxes had been studied the need for the Government to rely upon it would have been driven home. Again Ceylon's commercial products are studied only from the viewpoint of the export taxes imposed upon them. If export and import taxes had been studied separately from the attempts made to develop commercial products the view of the former as sources of revenue rather than as instruments for promoting trade and the lack of a uniform policy with regard to the latter could perhaps have been better assessed. Too often the wood is missed for the trees.

We hope that we have convinced our readers of the need for another study of this period. The main failure of our predecessors consists in their inadequate awareness of what they were doing. As a result the study of British policy is often thwarted by attempts to discuss the economic and social conditions of Ceylon at the time. Another result is very often the lack of a clear relationship between the many topics chosen for discussion.

We wish for our part to ask a series of consciously chosen and related questions about the policies pursued by the British Government with regard to the land tenure system, trade, agriculture the development of commercial products and the system of renting. These are the economic policies of the British Government which will be examined by us. In the realm of social policy we shall analyse the attitude taken by the British Government towards the various races, religions and castes in Ceylon of that time and conclude with an examination of policy with regard to the dispensation of charity and the combating of diseases like small-pox and leprosy.

In this process we shall be able to show to what extent the policies pursued by the British Government were affected by the power of various social groups in Ceylon at the time. The British had to rely on the co-operation of these social groups. In governing Ceylon they had to reckon with their hosts.

Historical Background

What brought the British to Ceylon at this time was their war with Revolutionary France. When the Netherlands came under the sway of that country it was decided to move against the former Dutch colonial possessions. The capture of the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon was part of that manoeuvre.

If the decision to capture Ceylon was dictated by the needs of Britain in Europe the manner in which it was executed was decided by the British in India. At this point Ceylon's European and Indian connexion joined to determine her history. The military expedition against Ceylon was placed under the command of Colonel James Stuart. The first attack was delivered against Trincomallee on 18 August 1795. The military operations proceeded very smoothly because there was surprisingly little resistance put up by the Dutch and Colombo surrendered on 15 February 1796. In this way Ceylon began her long connexion with Britain through the English East India Company.

The civil government was entrusted to those who had been responsible for the military operations. This was the Government of Fort St. George. Supreme control was delegated by it to Colonel James Stuart who was invested with "a discretionary authority as well Civil as Military on the Island of Ceylon". Robert Andrews was appointed Superintendent of Revenue with three of his fellow Madras officials John Jervis, Robert Alexander and George Garrow as assistants. This was a temporary arrangement whose provisional nature was influenced by the uncertainty

attending Ceylon's political future. It was uncertain whether it would remain within the possession of the British. Its fate would be decided at a peace treaty with France and Holland. In this way Ceylon's European connexion continued to tell on her history.

Before long the reforming zeal of Andrews precipitated a full-scale revolt against the infant British Administration. The legislative measures which gave rise to this revolt have been outlined in the course of our thesis. The Government at Fort St. George appointed a Committee of Investigation on 9 June 1797 to inquire into the causes of the revolt and propose measures of reform which would restore political stability in the country.

Before this Committee completed its deliberations Frederic North was appointed Governor by a commission dated 26 March 1798. Dundas assured the Court of Directors that this was also a provisional arrangement.¹ It was only on that understanding that they became reconciled to his appointment by the Crown.² Britain had not yet made up its mind whether it would keep Ceylon. That question continued to hang on the outcome of a peace treaty. As things were Ceylon's Indian connexion continued to take a share in influencing its history. Ceylon's constitution was modelled on that of the subordinate Indian Presidencies. It was placed under the control of the Supreme Government of Bengal and North was enjoined to be in constant communication with the Government of Bengal and the Court of Directors.

By the end of 1801 another political change had supervened.

1 General Court meeting, 30 Jan. 1798, Court Minutes 1797-98.

2 Ibid.

A decision had been taken to keep Ceylon in Britain's possession. As a result Ceylon became transformed into a Crown Colony ending her associations with India and the East India Company.

The Ceylon Government throughout this whole period received only two direct communications from the Court of Directors. The first letter contained the instructions sent by the Court of Directors to North.³ The second letter, while informing North that no cinnamon ships would be sent for the year 1800, acknowledged the many letters sent by North to the Court of Directors and went on to say that those despatches were "under consideration" and would "be replied to by an early opportunity".⁴ That hope remained unfulfilled during our period. Dundas commissioned North's brother-in-law, the ever compliant Douglas, to draft answers to the despatches. It was however not a project which was completed. The explanation of its failure is best left to Douglas - "two days afterwards (viz. 26 September) Mr. Dundas signified to me his intention of naming me to the King for a situation of very high trust and which he thought it might be necessary for me to enter upon almost immediately....The same cause makes it impossible for me to proceed with the outline of answers to Mr. North's Dispatches so as to bring it to a conclusion according to my original design".⁵ Whatever might have been Douglas's personal good fortune it seems that the affairs of Ceylon did not receive the attention that was their due.

From the view point of the policies pursued by the British Government in Ceylon the subjects relating to her affairs

³ Court of Directors to North 25 May 1798.
⁴ " " " " 10 Sept. 1800.
⁵ Douglas Papers by S. G. Perera p 198.

mentioned by the Court of Directors in their Despatches to the Governments of Madras and Bengal were of a secondary and unimportant nature. They consist of such matters as the number and pay of the artificers in Ceylon, the appointment of a military official called the Major Brigade, the diverting to Ceylon of part of the surplus provisions for the projected expedition to Manilla, the table money of Colonel Fraser, the receipt by the Court of Directors of a model and a survey map of Fort Ostenburgh at Trincomallee, the sale of the Dutch ship Amelia, the delegation to the Government of Fort St. George of the task of deciding the amount of commission to be paid to Greenhill for having collected the cinnamon in Ceylon, permission to George Arbuthnot to take out William Middleton as his servant provided the former signed a bond that the latter would not leave the island, the information that a fourth cinnamon ship was being sent to Ceylon for the cinnamon season of 1798 and orders to the Supreme Government to keep separate accounts of all military stores supplied to Ceylon, to help those who participated in the

6	Military despatch of Court of Directors to Madras	7 May 1800,
		para 105.
7	" " " " " " " "	22 May 1800,
		para 21.
8	" " " " " " " "	7 May 1800,
		para 155.
9	" " " " " " " "	7 May 1800,
		para 149.
10	" " " " " " " "	29 May 1799,
		para 12.
11	" " " " " " " "	7 May 1800,
		para 280.
12	Commercial despatch of Court of Directors to Madras	3 Sept. 1800,
		paras 1-5.
13	Public despatch of Court of Directors to Madras	8 April 1801
		para 9.
14	Political Despatch of Court of Directors to Bengal	25 July 1798,
		para 33.
15	Military despatch of Court of Directors to Bengal	7 May 1800,
		para 83.

capture of Ceylon to dispose of their prize money¹⁶ and to inform¹⁷
the Court of Directors of all supplies sent to Ceylon.

The few matters of importance discussed were the announcement
and description of the constitutional changes impending in Ceylon
in 1798,^{18,19} and in 1801,^{20,21} the assurance to the Madras
Government that they would be reimbursed by the Court of Directors²²
for the copper supplied by it to Ceylon and the approval of both
the civil service appointments made by North and his proclamation²³
relating to the establishment of civil courts. The Court of
Directors brought their minds to bear on the commercial regulations
promulgated for Ceylon in 1798 only in their Public despatch of
26 March 1801 when as they themselves observed "the new arrange-
-ment which has taken place relative to Ceylon supercedes the
necessity of an answer to this paragraph".²⁴ The new arrangement
which relieved the Court of Directors of the burden of a reply
was of course Ceylon's transformation into a Crown colony.

It would be wrong to conclude from all this that the Ceylon
Government was left completely to its own devices. In fact in the
period of the Madras Administration Ceylon's officials were

16	Political despatch of the Court of Directors to Bengal	4 Oct. 1797, para 74.
17	" " " " " " " " " " " "	" Bengal 26 Mar. 1801, para 83.
18	Public despatch of Court of Directors to Madras	25 May 1798, paras 66 & 67
19	" " " " " " " " " " " "	Bengal 25 May 1798, para 145.
20	" " " " " " " " " " " "	Madras 22 April 1801, paras 4-11.
21	" " " " " " " " " " " "	Bengal 22 April 1801, paras 8-15.
22	" " " " " " " " " " " "	Madras 9 May 1797, para 18.
23	" " " " " " " " " " " "	Madras 11 June 1800,
24	" " " " " " " " " " " "	Bengal 26 Mar. 1801, para 5.

chosen by the Madras Government and sought the advice of their
 25
 superiors on all matters of importance. We shall see how one
 26
 official was castigated for acting without instructions and how
 27
 the precipitate action of another was countermanded. The whole
 of that relationship is evident in the account we shall give of
 the history of that period. It is not necessary to repeat it here.
 In the North period there were the Royal Instructions, the Royal
 Commission and the Instructions from the Court of Directors. There
 were occasional letters sent by Dundas. There were the replies
 sent from the Madras Government and the Bengal Government. A few
 letters were also addressed from their side to the Ceylon
 Government. Most of these we shall encounter in the course of our
 narration of the history of this period. North was also enjoined
 by the Court of Directors' Instructions "to keep a diary of your
 proceedings and transactions a copy whereof is to be regularly
 transmitted to us from time to time and another copy to the
 28
 Governor General in Council". There is not one letter sent by
 the Bengal Government raising a discussion on its own initiative
 of matters contained in North's diaries. It does not seem as if
 much attention was paid to these diaries. Greater attention to
 North's despatches or to his Diaries would have won for his
 superiors a better knowledge of the manner in which their
 Instructions were being carried out in Ceylon. It would not be
 very wrong to say that the Ceylon Government had by way of the

25 The Board's drafts of secret letters to India (Answer to letter of 18 Aug. 1795) (Answer to letter of 28 Nov. 1795) and the secret and circular despatches to Bengal (letter to Bengal 31 May 1790) (letter to Bengal 3 Aug. 1796) and to Madras (letter to Madras 3 Aug. 1796) deal mainly with the military conquest of Ceylon and negotiations with the King of Kandy.

26 Chapter II p 78
 27 VI p 333

28 Court of Directors to North 25 May 1798.

indifference of its superiors acquired a sort of autonomy in this period.

During Dutch rule Ceylon was divided into three divisions - Colombo, Galle and Matara. The chief official at Colombo was the Governor assisted by a political Council. Galle and Jaffna were placed under the control of Commandants each equipped with a political council on the model of the one at Colombo. Both these units acknowledged the suzerainty of the Governor and council at Colombo which in its turn obeyed the Government at Batavia. This set-up was superimposed on the indigenous administrative system. In this system there was a Mudaliyar for each district or korale. He was placed under the control of the Mahamudaliyar and the Mudaliyar of the Attepattu. The former waited upon the Governor for his orders and the latter upon the European official in charge of each district known as the Disave. The Mudaliyar of the Korale was responsible for the work of the headman of the village known as the Vidane. He had also under his charge the indigenous military apparatus which consisted of lascoryns commanded by Muhandirams, Arratjes and Kanganies with varying degrees of authority. This was the system of administration which the British found on their arrival in Ceylon. During our period the British Government made certain minor changes in the European section of the administrative structure. The Maritime Provinces came to be divided into seven administrative units - Colombo, Galle, Matara, Jaffna, Trincomallee, Chilauw and Batticoloa. They were placed under Collectors or Agents of Revenue and Commerce

as they later came to be called. These officials occupied a position similar to that of the Disaves under the Dutch. The function of policy-making was vested in the Commander-in-Chief and after 1798 in the Governor. This power was not shared with a council. In the indigenous section of the administration the British Government introduced no changes whatever except for one short-lived and abortive attempt to do without it.

Another matter which should be emphasized is the manner in which the headmen were chosen. All the evidence we have encountered points to the conclusion that the posts of the headmen were hereditary. North cogitating with the Commissioners of the Wannia the manner in which the Government should conduct itself in the case of the Mudaliyar of that area who had raised a forlorn banner of revolt said "...it is my wish that Government should rather suffer some inconvenience from his incapacity or indifference and those of the other chiefs in the same situation than that the minds of the people should be unsettled and their intrigues and ambitions provoked by frequent and arbitrary changes of their immediate and hereditary chiefs".²⁹ Cornelis De Alvis Vidane, Mohandiram of Galle, while complaining to North that Lieutenant Short had struck him on the head and broken his comb, said "your humble petitioners great grandfather was Mahavidaan at Caltura, his grandfather Mohandiram and Interpreter of the Galle Corle and his father Vidaan Mohandiram of Calture who being deceased your Excellency was pleased to bestow his service on the petitioner".³⁰ The agent of Revenue and Commerce at Mahagampattu recommending Don Juan

29 North to Commissioners of Wannia 25 Sept. 1799, Public Dept.

30 Cornelis de Alvis Mahavidane to North 7 Feb. 1801, 7 Feb. 1801, Public Dept.

Abbeystickreme Guneratne to the vacancy of Muhandiram of Mahagampattu caused by the death of his brother referred to the fact that "his father was Muhandiram of the same district under the Dutch Government".³¹

It is also useful to cast our eyes over the wide range of administrative duties performed by the headmen. To the headmen seem to have fallen some of the duties performed by the police-men of today. The Mudaliyar of the Happitigam Korale arrested and sent before the Agent of Revenue and Commerce the ringleaders of the revolt against the joy-tax in his area.³² When the Commandant of Negombo heard that a certain Petipas was being subjected to an assault he sent the Mudaliyar Simon with twelve lascoryns to his rescue.³³ They also seem to have acted as functionaries of the law courts.³⁴ The Attepattu Mudaliyar helps in serving summonses. Appu, one of the witnesses in a case in which Sinne Tamby and others were charged with having committed assault on Petipas, was served with notice to attend court by the Vidane.³⁵ Macdowall inquiring into the same case in its early stages asked the Mudaliyar of the Alutkoer Corle to summon the parties before him.³⁶ It was the duty of the headmen to help in recruiting coolies. Joinville, Superintendent of the Cinnamon Plantations complained to North of their negligence in this connexion in the cinnamon department.³⁷

According to the commandant at Trincomallee it was only after "many

31 Pendergast to Board of Rev. & Comm. 4 April 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 32 Gregory to Boyd 8 May 1800, 12 May 1800, Rev. Dept.
 33 Rex vs Sinne Tamby and others 21 Feb. 1800, Sup. Court of Crim. Jud.
 34 North to Fiscal Court at Colombo 13 Aug. 1801, Public Dept.
 35 Rex vs Sinne Tamby and others 30 April 1800, Sup. Court of Crim.
 36 " " " " " " 21 Feb. 1800, " " " " Jud.
 37 Joinville to North 10 Mar. 1802, Rev. Dept.

evasions" that the Mudaliyars of the area sent him twelve lascoryns. Bertolacci complained that he had not received sufficient assistance from the Mudaliyars of Negombo, Chilauw and Maraville when he was trying to recruit lascoryns and kangar for the Postal Department.³⁹ General Wemyss, who filled the post of Commander-in-Chief after Ceylon became a Crown colony, wrote to North of how some engineers repairing a bridge needed coolies and "some felling axes" and how they addressed themselves to the Mudaliyar of the area for relief.⁴⁰ Although a survey department had already been formed,⁴¹ the services of the headmen were enlisted for the purpose of ascertaining some Malapala betel-nut gardens in the Galle area⁴² and for determining whether some other gardens in Bentotte, Hikkaduwa and Ambalangoda belonged to the Government or not.⁴³ Surveyors entering any district for the purpose of making a survey were required to give notice of their arrival to the headmen of the area.⁴⁴ Presumably it was the duty of the headmen to help them whenever their assistance was required. In two of the other new departments the help of the headmen was found to be necessary. Post-masters on whom fell the duty of supplying provisions for travellers were instructed to seek the assistance of the headmen.⁴⁵ Despite the formation of the Civil Engineers department the duty of ascertaining river-levels in order to prevent floods was to be entrusted to the care of headmen.⁴⁶

38 Dickson to Boyd 10 May 1799, 11 May 1799, Public Dept.

39 Bertolacci to Boyd 17 Aug. 1802, Public Dept.

40 Wemyss to North 9 Aug. 1804, North MSS.

41 Chapter II p 102

42 Smitsz to Board of Rev. & Comm. 13 Sept. 1801, 18 Sept. 1801, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

43 " " " " " " " 17 Dec. 1801, 18 Dec. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

44 Boyd to Board of Rev. & Comm. 5 June 1801, 8 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

45 Governor's order, Government Gazette, 22 Mar. 1802, North MSS.

There were a number of miscellaneous functions which came to be performed by them. The Mahamudaliyar was the unfailing medium⁴⁷ for communications with the Court of Kandy. When children were needed to fill the provincial schools the headmen were enjoined⁴⁸ to send them. The Mahamudaliyar was asked to help in finding⁴⁹ pupils for the new Sinhalese school at Colombo. The mudaliyars were called in to help in ascertaining the amount of the collect-⁵⁰ions made by the joy tax renters of Galle⁵¹ and Matara. The Committee of Superintendence charged the Mahamudaliyar of Colombo with the task of finding fifty pounds of cotton for their spinning⁵² wheels. The Mudaliyars cajoled people into having themselves⁵³ innoculated. Johnstone the Agent of Revenue and Commerce at Chilauw testified to the help given by the Mudaliyar of the Madampe in organizing an elephant hunt by saying that he "is the only person from whom I have been able to collect any information respecting the mode of getting the Elephants across the river⁵⁴ and past the different tanks".

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- 46 Hamilton to Board of Rev. & Comm. 24 Nov. 1801, 25 Nov. 1801, Board
of Rev. & Comm.
- 47 De Meuron to Harris 21 Mar. 1798, 3 April 1798, 2309, Madras Mil &
Pol. Proc.
- " " " " 11 April 1798, 24 April 1798, 2842, Madras Mil.
& Pol. Proc.
- 48 Chapter VI p 311
- 49 Cordiner to North 25 Oct. 1799, 28 Oct. 1799, Public Dept.
- 50 Smitsz to Board of Rev. & Comm. 30 July 1801, 3 Aug. 1801, Board
of Rev. & Comm.
- 51 Gibson to " " " " 25 Nov. 1801, 30 Nov. 1801, Board
of Rev. & Comm.
- 52 Dormieux to Mahamudaliyar 15 Feb. 1801, Comm. of Supt.
- 53 Orr to Dormieux 10 Aug. 1800, 11 Aug. 1800, Comm. of Supt.
- 54 Johnstone to Board of Rev. & Comm. 17 Sept. 1801, 21 Sept. 1801,
Board of Rev. & Comm.

CHAPTER ONE

Renting

We ought to begin our story with a chapter on the renting system because it is in that sphere that the administrative weakness of the British Government and its need to rely on the co-operation of powerful social groups is most sharply demonstrated. This chapter will be divided into two parts - the first part being devoted to an examination of the machinery of renting and the second to an analysis of the general policy pursued by the Government in relation to renting.

Generally renting took the form of a sale of the Government's right to collect taxes. The nature of these taxes however varied considerably. The collecting of export and import duties was usually farmed. The collection of the import duty on cloth was farmed.¹ The export duties on betel-nut,² coffee, pepper, cardamums³ and tobacco⁴ were also farmed. In the case of tobacco there was an additional brokerage tax known as Makalary which was also farmed.⁵ Besides these there was another set of import and export duties levied on trade from one part of the island to another.⁶ Presumably these were also farmed. In certain places import and export duties under their general name of sea-customs were collected directly by the Government. We shall consider them more fully when we come to discuss amani or direct collection by the

1 North to Wellesley 16 Nov.1798, Rev.Dept; Barbut to Boyd 5 July 1799, 6 July 1799, Rev.Dept.
 2 Fridel to Barbut 29 Nov.1799, 16 Jan.1800, Rev.Dept.
 3 Andrews to Webbe 15 July 1796, 29 July 1796, 2582, Madras Rev.Proc.
 4 Mootiah Chetty to Barbut 7 Jan.1799, 8 Jan.1799, Rev.Dept.
 5 Ibid.
 6 Gahagan to Board of Rev.& Comm.1 Oct.1801, 12 Oct.1801, Board of Rev.& Comm.

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Government. All these taxes were farmed by the Dutch.

Internal taxes were also farmed. The taxes on commodities sold at the bazaars were farmed.⁸ According to De Meuron the bazaar tax in Dutch times was "a slight one levied on the ground occupied by the shop".⁹ Persons could only indulge in gaming and cock-fighting at authorised places. When they did so they were subjected to a tax. This tax was also farmed.¹⁰ Duties on the trade with the independent kingdom of Kandy known as the toll at the passes were also farmed. Both these taxes had been farmed by the Dutch.¹¹ The "joy tax" which the British farmed was an innovation of theirs. It was imposed on all persons wearing ornaments.¹² These taxes were all collected in money.

The coconut tax, although belonging to this class, deserves¹³ to be set apart by virtue of its peculiar fate. As we shall see Andrews, the Superintendent of Revenue when Ceylon came under British rule, thought that the immunity from all taxation enjoyed by the coconut gardens should be ended. He imposed a tax of a fanam per coconut tree on every plantation bearing more than fifty trees.¹⁴ As this tax is commonly accepted as one of the causes of the Revolt of 1797¹⁵ it is worth our while to assess the extent to which it was collected. Andrews in his general statement of the "Receipts and disbursements of the island of Ceylon from 1 Sept-

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- 7 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 8 Gregory to Boyd, 7 May 1800, 8 May 1800, Rev. Dept.
 9 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 10 Conditions of the Gaming and Cock-fighting Rent, 29 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 11 Andrews to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.
 12 Champagne to Boyd 30 April 1800, 8 May 1800, Rev. Dept.
 13 Chapter II p 79
 14 Andrews to Hobart 8 July 1796, 29 July 1796, 2585, Madras Rev. Proc.
 15 Ceylon Under the British Occupation De Silva p 333; Collected Papers on the History of the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon 1795-1805 Turner p 104; A view of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interest of Ceylon Bertolacci p 324.

-ember 1795 to 30 April 1798" records only one collection of the tax. This was at Colombo and the amount was seventy-seven pagodas and fifteen fanams. Andrews estimated the number of taxable coconut trees in the Colombo districts as 10,000,000. If we take the Star Pagoda as worth forty-five fanams at the official exchange rate it is evident that only 3,480 trees were subjected to the tax. There is no record of the tax being collected in any other area. We learn from the Jaffna Diary of the reluctance of Jervis who was the Assistant Superintendent of the area to collect the tax in his territories. As late as 17 March 1797 he made it clear that he had not collected the tax. He intimated to Andrews his fear of "a very alarming opposition" were he to collect it. Although Andrews communicated to Jervis the strict injunction of the Madras Government that the tax be collected all that Jervis contrived to do was to number the trees. In a statement of revenue and expenditure of the Jaffna district submitted on 31 August 1797 the coconut tax figures only as an estimate. By 2 September 1797 the tax was abolished by the Madras Government. The reasons for this decision will be examined later. The failure to implement this tax can only be explained on the grounds that most of the British officials must have realized as Jervis had done, that it was an unpopular measure. To the extent that the tax was collected in the Colombo districts

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- 16 Andrews to Comm.of Inv.10 Nov.1798,10 Nov.1798,Comm.of Inv.
 17 Ibid.
 18 Andrews to Webbe 6 Sept.1796,20 Sept.1796,3364, Madras Rev.Proc.
 19 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb.1801.
 20 Jervis to Andrews 17 Mar.1797, Jaffna Diary.
 21 Andrews to Jervis 27 May 1797, " "
 22 Jervis to Andrews 31 Aug.1797, " "

23

it was farmed.

There were other internal taxes which were collected in kind. These were also farmed. The paddy tythe renter bought his farm with money. He collected the share of the cultivator in kind. This was the pattern followed by the renter of the fish arm and the renter of the tobacco farm which consisted of collecting a tenth part of all the tobacco grown. As regards these taxes the practice of the Dutch had been the same.

There was another kind of internal tax which invested the renter with the monopoly of sale. The renter bought from the Government the right to sell arrack. Such a right could only have been maintained if all the arrack that was distilled were sold to him. Owners of coconut trees needed the permission of the renter even to draw toddy for their private use. In Dutch times the right to collect the tax on arrack was granted to a selection of "indigent widows". Later this right was enlarged to a monopoly and transferred to a renter on condition of his paying compensation to the dispossessed widows. The right to sell salt was also farmed in British times. Individuals collecting salt at the salt pans could carry away a heap on condition of leaving behind another for the renter. The Salagama caste who were employed in peeling cinnamon were allowed to collect salt for their

- 23 Doyle to Hobart 10 April 1797, 29 April 1797, 1229, Madras Rev.
 24 North to Jewell 6 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept. Proc.
 25 Conditions for the fish farm 25 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 26 Andrews to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.
 27 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 28 Gregory to Champagne 5 July 1799, 6 July 1799, Rev. Dept.
 29 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 2 June 1801, 3 June 1801, Board of
 30 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv. Rev. & Comm.
 31 Gregory to Board of Rev. & Comm. 27 Aug. 1801, 19 Nov. 1801, Rev. & Comm. Dept.
 32 Gregory to Boyd 25 Feb. 1800, 28 Feb. 1800, Rev. Dept.

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 private use. These conditions would have detracted from the effectiveness of the salt monopoly. In Dutch times just as in the case of arrack the right of sale moved from poor widows to retail renters.³⁴ The renter of the betel-leaf was made the sole purchaser and vendor of the article.³⁵ This tax was an innovation of the British. In British times only the chank fishery renter was empowered to sell chanks. Whether the chank fishery renter in Dutch times enjoyed the same rights as his British counterpart cannot be known. De Meuron makes no comment on this matter. The closeness with which the British followed the Dutch practice on renting leads us to the belief that the Dutch chank fishery renter was a monopolist as well.

There are rent-farms which fall into categories of their own. Coconut gardens owned by the Government were farmed out in two year periods.³⁶ The holder of the garden paid a tax to the Government. This farm was in essence a lease. The Dutch on the other hand rented their coconut gardens for a period of ten years.³⁷ As a result their character as leases would have been accentuated.

In the first three years the pearl fishery was farmed to a single renter.³⁸ The renter in turn auctioned the boats needed for fishing daily to a number of bidders.³⁹ In 1799 the Government displaced the renter and sold the boats itself.⁴⁰ Since the purchasers of the boats earned with it the right to the catch it is unlikely that a monopoly of sale could have been created. A pearl

33 Gregory to Champagne 17 June 1799, 19 June 1799, Rev. Dept.
 34 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 35 Board of Rev. & Comm. to Jewell 11 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 36 Gregory to Boyd 21 Mar. 1800, 22 Mar. 1800, Rev. Dept.
 37 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 38 Andrews to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.
 39 Ibid.
 40 North to Wellesley 27 May 1801, No. 19, 14 Aug. 1801, Bengal Pol. & Sec. Cons.

fishery was last held by the Dutch Government in 1766. On that occasion it was farmed to a Muslim renter.⁴¹

The renter of "stray" cattle was invested with their possession. When the legal owner claimed the cattle he was required to pay the renter "a small fee". If no claim was made within a specified time the renter could sell them for his own benefit.⁴² There was a different arrangement under the Dutch. The right to appropriate stray cattle was a perquisite of the Commandant of Kalpitiya.⁴³

It was the practice to rent the farms for a one-year period. There were only two exceptions to this rule. The paddy tythe was rented for a three year period.⁴⁴ and government coconut gardens for two years.⁴⁵ With the Dutch all farms were rented for a year with the exception of the coconut gardens.⁴⁶

The renter was required to pay his rent in quarterly instalments.⁴⁷ As the fishing rent began in the "bad monsoon", Gregory, Collector of Colombo suggested that only a quarter of the fishermen's dues should be collected in the first six months.⁴⁸ North approved. In 1801 the Board of Revenue and Commerce decided that the time for the payment of rents depending upon "season and weather" should be accommodated to "the degree to favourableness or otherwise of the several months".⁴⁹ Presumably rents more independent of the weather continued to be collected

41 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 42 Gahagan to Board of Rev. & Comm. 19 Aug. 1801, 27 Aug. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 43 Ibid.
 44 Gregory to Boyd 7 May 1800, 8 May 1800, Rev. Dept.
 45 Resolution 22 Mar. 1800, Rev. Dept.
 46 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 47 Resolution 25 June 1800, Rev. Dept.
 48 Resolution 22 Mar. 1800, Rev. Dept.
 49 Board of Rev. & Comm. to Gahagan 11 Aug. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

in quarterly instalments. The Dutch also collected payments from
 50
 renters in quarterly instalments. There was no concession made
 to the renter on account of bad weather.

The renters were called upon to offer "securities" for their
 rent. Today these securities would be called sureties. On the
 51
 failure of the renter his obligation devolved on his sureties.
 They were compelled to perform the contract. 52 This system of
 sureties was known to the Dutch. 53 North added to the number of
 persons who were bound by a renter's contract. In signing the
 54 Kaul the renter and his securities bound themselves and their
 "heirs, executors, administrators and assigns" to perform the
 55 contract. Sometimes it fell to the lot of a widow to do so.
 Such a person was Paatma Umma widow of the joy renter Sikander
 56 Mira Lebbe.

It was the practice in the pre-North period to receive sealed
 57 proposals for the rent-farms. De Meuron recommended that in their
 58 place sale by public outcry should be adopted. After making a
 sale of sea-customs on tobacco and other duties at Jaffna by
 public outcry, Barbut recommended the use of that method. Accord-
 -ing to him the process of bidding attendant on a public sale
 59 ensured high offers. North presumably converted by this reason-
 -ing issued a resolution declaring that farms should be sold by
 60 public outcry. The method of sealed proposals however continued

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- 50 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 51 Alexander to Andrews 20 Sept. 1797, 30 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
 52 Smitsz to Board of Rev. & Comm. 22 Dec. 1801, 23 Dec. 1801, Board of
 53 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv. Rev. & Comm.
 54 Renter's agreement.
 55 Resolution 23 Dec. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 56 Board of Rev. & Comm. to Smitsz 5 Oct. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 57 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 58 Ibid.
 59 Barbut to Alexander 22 Aug. 1798, 2 Sept. 1798, Comm. of Inv.
 60 Resolution 28 April 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

to have adherents. The Board of Revenue and Commerce recommended the use of sealed proposals for purchasing the pepper needed for packing the cinnamon investment.⁶¹ In his memorial on timber Tolfrey advised that its sale should be by "either public or sealed proposals".⁶² The sealed proposals with their greater secrecy had as Mcdouall suggested the effect of combating combinations of the renters.⁶³ This virtue probably explains their survival. The Dutch Government usually sold its rents by public outcry.⁶⁴

On certain occasions the renters were allowed to pay less money than had been stipulated in their contracts. The granting of these concessions was known as remission. The pleas of renters for remission were investigated by the collectors and their successors the Agents of Revenue.⁶⁵ On some occasions, presumably when the collectors could not make up their minds the renters were examined on oath by magistrates.⁶⁶

Remissions were most commonly granted when factors outside the control of the renter supervened to frustrate him. When chank fishery divers were summoned to the pearl fishery the chank fishery renter was granted a remission. The spread of the cattle disease in the Galle, Matara and Colombo districts earned remissions for the renters of the paddy tythe.⁶⁷ A ban on gaming imposed on Malay soldiers caused a remission to be given to the gaming and cock-fighting renter.⁶⁸ Other instances of remissions of this sort was the lowering of the duty on betel-nuts from ten to seven and a half

61 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 8 Oct. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 62 Tolfrey's memorial on timber 20 Nov. 1801, " " " " "
 63 Mcdouall to Champagne 17 July 1799, 17 July 1799, Rev. Dept.
 64 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 65 Gibson to Board of Rev. & Comm. 27 Aug. 1801, 3 Sept. 1801, Board of
 66 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 3 Aug. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 67 " " " " " " " 30 June 1801, " " " " "
 68 " " " " " " " 15 June 1801, 16 June 1801, Board of
 Rev. & Comm.

Rix dollars (Rds) ⁶⁹ and the recruiting of fishermen for service
on the Embassy to Kandy. ⁷⁰

On the failure of a renter to perform rents for which in the
view of the Board of Revenue and Commerce he had offered too much,
he was granted remission. ⁷¹ This was another common source of
remission.

Remissions recommended by the local officials were generally
accepted by the Board of Revenue and Commerce. Several times,
however, the Board rejected such recommendations when they thought
the amount of money to be reduced was too big. ⁷² There is no
instance of a recommendation made by the Board being turned down
by North. A statement made by North expresses the Government
attitude to remissions: "The resources of the country are so little
known that great miscalculations must inevitably take place in the
value of the farms" ⁷³. The system of granting remissions to hard-
-pressed renters was known in Dutch times. There is however too
little evidence with which to assess its scope.

A renter was allowed to sub-rent his farms "as it may be
difficult for him otherwise" ⁷⁴. A sub-renter violating his contract
with the principal renter was suable in the courts. ⁷⁵ The
Government, however, refused to enter into direct relations with
the sub-renters. It was specially stated that the renters could
not plead as a cause for remission the failure of the sub-renters

69	Resolution 12 Mar. 1799, Rev. Dept.
70	Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 27 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
71	" " " " " " 15 June 1801, 16 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm
72	" " " " " Hamilton 11 Dec. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm " " " " " North 13 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
73	North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.
74	Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 15 June 1801, 16 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm
75	Smitsz to Board of Rev. & Comm. 16 Sept. 1801, 17 Sept. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm

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to honour their obligations.

De Meuron's memoirs say nothing about Dutch policy towards sub-renting. The records of the British Government do not suggest that sub-renting began in British times. Therefore the very silence of de Meuron argues for the view that the Dutch Government like its British successors did not enter into direct relations with the sub-renters.

In the North regime the renter was called upon to perform administrative tasks. We find North approving the suggestion of Gregory to include a general condition in all rents "that in all points of dispute where the rights of Government may be affected the renter shall inform the revenue manager thereof who if he sees good cause shall carry on a suit before the proper tribunal for its determination and Government shall bear half the charges and the renter the other half in case the suit be lost".⁷⁷ Again North when forbidding the cutting of timber in government forests said "if any person after the publication hereof is detected therein he shall be punished with utmost severity and the Moodeliars and renters of the districts are required to exert themselves in seeing these orders duly executed".⁷⁸ Thus the renter was sometimes made a guardian of the law in a matter which fell outside the scope of his rent.

Defaulters of the joy tax were brought before the magistrate by the renter. In the judicial process which followed he acted as prosecutor.⁷⁹ Disturbances of the peace at gaming places were

76 Ibid.

77 Boyd to Gregory 4 April 1801, Rev. Dept.

78 Proclamation 14 Nov. 1798, 28 Nov. 1798, Pub. Dept.

79 Smitsz to Board of Rev. & Comm. 23 Oct. 1801, 26 Oct. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm; Gregory to Boyd 29 Sept. 1800, 29 Sept. 1800, Rev. Dept.

quelled by the renter with the assistance "of the Vidaans and
⁸⁰
 other native headmen". The arrack renter placed assistants "at
 stations where a road, river, canal etc. entered the limits of
 his rents" to examine the passports of those transporting arrack,
 to grant them passports when they lacked them and "if thought
⁸¹
 necessary to attend them through his limits". These are
 illustrations of the administrative functions performed by the
 renter.

It seems likely that similar administrative powers were
 wielded by renters during the regimes of Andrews and of the
 Committee of Investigation. The evidence of such a relationship
 however in these periods is sparse. This feature of the records
 seems to suggest that dependence upon the renters increased in the
 North period. It is likely that during Dutch times the renter
 wielded administrative powers similar to those enjoyed by his
 counterpart under the British. The conditions of rents mentioned
 by De Meuron disclose such powers. There is not however enough
 evidence to ascertain the exact degree of the Government's
 dependence on the renter.

The most likely cause for the liaison between the Government
 and the renters was the weakness of the Government's administrative
 power. The Board of Revenue and Commerce while planning a betel-
 leaf farm for Batticaloa hinted at this problem: "The way in
 which the Beetle leaf will turn out to most advantage is to allow
 the renter to be the sole purchaser and vendor of that article as
 taking a tenth of what others would purchase could not last long

80 Conditions of the Gaming and Cock-fighting Rents 29 June 1801,
 Board of Rev. & Comm.

81 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 2 June 1801, 3 June 1801, Rev. & Comm
 Dept.

in consequence of the inclination every person would have to purchase secretly and the difficulty if so of proving what quantity they had bought whereas in the other way the smallest purchase if deducted (sic) except from the renters would be liable to punishment or fine".⁸²

We should now turn to an examination of the policy pursued by the British Government in relation to renting. To say this is not to say that what we have been considering so far were not policy matters. There was however a policy less closely connected with the machinery of renting.

The British Government expanded the renting system. This is a noticeable difference between them and their Dutch predecessors. In the Andrews period several new taxes were farmed. A gaming rent was introduced at Colombo and Galle.⁸³ Betel-leaf farms and betel-nut farms were established at Colombo, Galle and Trincomallee.⁸⁴ Nowhere in De Meuron's memoirs is there evidence that these taxes were levied by the Dutch. According to De Meuron the Dutch collected the tobacco tythe only in the environs of Colombo. In the Andrews regime this tax was extended to Galle, Kalpitiya, Puttalam and Trincomallee.⁸⁵ McDouall the collector of the Colombo districts shows us his awareness that these taxes had been increased in this period by saying: "Having taken into consideration the petition referred to me yesterday I have the honour to inform you that as the tax on the articles of Beetleleaves, Arreck-nut [Betel-nut] and Tobacco has been considerably increased since the capture of Colombo as stated therein I have directed the

⁸² Board of Rev. & Comm. to Jewell 11 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

⁸³ Andrews to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Bazaar farmer not to levy the duty on Beetleshops and promised him a remission on the Amount of the Rent in proportion to their number".

In the North period the joy tax was imposed. The tax on the ferries at Gindorah and Bentotte collected earlier by Government officials was farmed. The possession of stray cattle was farmed. "In Dutch times the use of spirituous liquors was restrained from the inhabitants of the interior". The British introduced arrack-farms outside the four gravets of Colombo and the four gravets of Galle. The rationale for this expansion was that legalizing the drinking of arrack would restrict illicit consumption.

Some farms of the Dutch were abandoned by the British. A collection of miscellaneous taxes had been farmed by the Dutch at Manaar. They were intended mainly to provide information about the contact between the Court of Kandy and the coast. The British did not farm these taxes. The Uliyam and the Chicos and a tax of a similar sort levied on the Nallava and Pallava castes were also abandoned. These taxes are discussed at greater length in the chapter on "Land and Labour".

The collecting of taxes by government officials without the mediation of renters was known as amani. In 1799 Vydelinga Chetty

- 86 Mcdouall to Champagne 10 May 1799, 10 May 1799, Rev. Dept.
 87 Champagne to Boyd 30 April 1800, 8 May 1800, Rev. Dept.
 88 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 25 Sept. 1801, 26 Sept. 1801, Rev. Dept.
 89 Cahagan to Board of Rev. & Comm. 19 Aug. 1801, 27 Aug. 1801, Board of
 90 Gregory to Boyd 31 Mar. 1801, 4 April 1801, Rev. Dept. Rev. & Comm.
 91 Resolution 3 Aug. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 92 Gregory to Boyd 31 Mar. 1801, 4 April 1801, Rev. Dept.
 93 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 94 A tax payable by Muslims and Chetties in lieu of performing
 95 A similar tax payable by the people of Jaffnapatam. service.
 96 Andrews to Hobart 8 July 1796, 29 July 1796, 2585, Madras Rev. Proc.

by engineering a combination among renters concentrated all the sea-customs of Jaffna in his hands. The British Government was driven by his ingenuity to collect the sea-customs of the place in amani.⁹⁷ The reason given by North for this action was that amani collection would be more profitable to the Company as in the "particular situation of this town the whole capital appears to be engrossed by one individual".⁹⁸ Barbut informed North that he had decided to collect the duty on cloth produced in Jaffna by amani. He explained that the sum of money offered by the would-be renter was too small.⁹⁹ It was also decided to collect the sea-customs at Manaar in amani.¹⁰⁰ Probably the meagreness of the sums offered by the prospective renters combined with the success of measures of a similar sort already adopted persuaded the Government to take this step. These are the only amani collections that can be elicited in this period. Compared with the collection of taxes delegated to renters it was small.

This impression is reinforced when we consider the position occupied by amani collection in Dutch times. According to De Meuron the Dutch collected the tax of the 20th penny on the sale of immoveables, the "Stamp Paper" tax, the betel-nut duty, quit rent on the house and garden of De Uitvlucht, the tax on "timber delivered" the capitation tax, the choya root or madder tax, the lime or chunam tax, the export duty on palmeiras and the tax on oil.¹⁰¹

Lord Hobart as Governor of Madras enjoined the Committee of Investigation to choose Sinhalese as renters "where that preference

97 North to Barbut 11 Sept. 1799, Rev. Dept.

98 Ibid.

99 Barbut to North 20 Aug. 1799, 11 Sept. 1799, Rev. Dept.

100 Barbut to Boyd 25 Jan. 1800, 14 Feb. 1800, Rev. Dept.

101 Collected Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

can be admitted without material loss to the revenue receipts".¹⁰²
 The revolt of 1797 occurred mainly in the Sinhalese areas. Hobart felt that if South Indian renters had flocked into Ceylon since the establishment of British rule their presence would have given rise to the discontent which engendered the revolt.¹⁰³ To him however, the invasion of the renting system by South Indians was only a conjecture. This is a matter with which we shall occupy ourselves later. We refer to it here only in order to explain the motives behind his insistence on Sinhalese renters.

In the period 1797 to 1798 the only non Tamil in the Jaffna districts was the Englishman John Podmore. Visowenaden Sinnetamby¹⁰⁴ was probably a Muslim. It was clearly not the intention of the Committee of Investigation to instal Sinhalese renters in the Jaffna districts. In the Colombo districts for the same period there were seven non-Sinhalese comprising of Muslims, Burghers or Dutchmen and Tamils. There was a total of twenty-three rent farms in this area.¹⁰⁵ In the Galle districts in this period there were nine Sinhalese and ten non-Sinhalese renters holding the nineteen rent farms.¹⁰⁶

In two cases Sinhalese were expressly preferred. David Ilangakoon was chosen renter in spite of the fact that he offered 200 Rix dollars less than his Muslim rival.¹⁰⁷ The Committee of Investigation withdrew the farm of the Mahagampattu land rent from a Muslim and offered it to a Sinhalese on the condition of his making as high a bid as the disqualified candidate.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Hobart to Comm.of Inv.9 June 1797,4 Aug.1797,Comm.of Inv.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Jervis to Comm.of Inv.11 Aug.1797,6 Sept.1797,Comm.of Inv.

¹⁰⁵ Alexander to Andrews 16 Sept.1797,23 Sept.1797,Comm.of Inv.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Alexander to Andrews 20 Sept.1797,30 Sept.1797,Comm.of Inv.

This was not however a consistent policy. The Committee chose two Muslims when two Sinhalese had made offers for the rents. ¹⁰⁹ The difference between Louis Johannes Mahavidaan and his Muslim rival was 692 Rds. In the case of Haramanis de Silva the difference being 180 Rds was much less.

Matters stood in this ambiguous way when North arrived. He did not exhort his officials to prefer Sinhalese renters. Indeed he made no statement on the subject whatsoever. We are left with the task of inferring his policy from the rent proposals in his period.

At once we are struck by an increase in the number of Muslim renters. In the Galle, Matara district several land rents which in the period 1797 - 98 had been in Sinhalese hands by the period 1799 - 1800 have gravitated to Muslim hands. ¹¹⁰ This was true of the land rents for Marakadde, Ranne, Gangabadde Pattu, the four Bygams, Mahewitte and Morrua Korale. As the paddy tythes were rented for a three-year period these persons continued to be renters throughout our period.

The Galle salt retail rents held by a Sinhalese in the period 1799 - 1800 were acquired by a Muslim in the next period. ¹¹¹ The Matara Bridge rent held by Cornelis Martin Michaelisz accrued to Sleema Lebbe Oemoer Lebbe in the following period.

There are two instances of farms of this nature reverting to Sinhalese renters. Ahamadoe Neinda Meestrie held the coconut garden of Wallalawitte Korale in 1799 - 1800. In 1800 - 1801 it

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

110 Gregory to Champagne 16 July 1799, 18 July 1799, Rev. Dept.

111 Gregory to Boyd 7 May 1800, 8 May 1800, Rev. Dept; Smitsz to Board of Rev. & Comm. 30 July 1801, 3 Aug. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

came to be held by Salman de Sylva.¹¹² The Matara salt farm possessed in 1797 - 98 by Mira Lebbe Nainda Oedeann was acquired in 1799 - 1800 by Abran de Silva Weerakoon.¹¹³

There is no further evidence of rent-farms held by Sinhalese falling into the hands of Muslims. It is possible however to establish the proportion of Muslims by examining the races of the renters.

During the term 1800 - 01, the only period for which full lists are available, all the Galle bazaar rents were held by Muslims. Two out of the five coconut garden renters were Muslims. One of the seven fish-renters was a Muslim. The gaming and cock-fighting rents and the salt retail rents were held by Muslims.¹¹⁴ Besides one Burgher or Dutch person all the non-Muslim renters were Sinhalese.

At Matara nine of the eighteen land revenue renters were Muslims. Four of the ten coconut garden renters were Muslims. Five of the seven fish rents were held by Muslims. All eight of the joy rents were in the hands of Muslims. Three of the non-Muslim renters in these farms were Burghers or Dutch persons.¹¹⁵ All the others were Sinhalese.

There were other rent-farms in non-Muslim hands. At Galle the arrack-rent was possessed by a Sinhalese. At Matara the arrack-rent, the salt retail rent and the gem quarry rent were held by Sinhalese.¹¹⁶

The single farms for whole districts of Colombo in the periods

112 Ibid.
 113 Ibid.
 114 Ibid.
 115 Ibid.
 116 Ibid.

1796 - 97 and 1797 - 98 have proliferated in 1800 into several separate farms for different sources of revenue. It is therefore impossible to compare the two lists. The proportion of Muslims in the period 1800 - 01 however, can be established. Four of the seven Chilauw farms were held by Muslims. The others were two Sinhalese and a Tamil. Eleven of the nineteen land revenue farms were held by Muslims; the rest were six Sinhalese a Burgher or Dutch person and a Tamil. One of the seven coconut garden renters was a Muslim; all the others were Sinhalese. Four of the eight fish rents were in the hands of the Muslims; the others in this case were two Tamils and two Sinhalese. The four arrack-rents were in the hands of Burghers or Dutch persons. One of the bazaar renters was a Tamil; the others were Muslims. One of the salt retail renters was a Muslim; one was a Burgher or Dutch person; and the other was a Sinhalese. Three of the four gem quarry renters were Muslims; the other was a Sinhalese. Two of the six joy tax rents were held by Muslims; a Burgher or Dutch person held two of the other farms; the others were a Sinhalese and a Tamil. The incumbent of the tobacco crop rent was a Sinhalese. The gaming and the cock-fighting rent, the betel-leaf rent, and the betel-nut rent were held by Muslims.¹¹⁷ The general tendency emerging from this examination is that of an increase in the number of Muslim renters.

It was a different story in the Jaffnapatam districts. The term Moorman is attached to Muslim renters in a list of renters for 1799 contained in the Jaffna Diary. The Tamils are distinguished either by the designation Vellale or Chetty. In a list of

twenty-eight land-rents "of the different churches" there was not
 one single Muslim. The renters were all Tamils. ¹¹⁸ There were
 thirty-seven other land-rents in the four provinces. Four of
 these renters were Muslims. The rest were all Tamils. ¹¹⁹ There
 were twelve fish-farms. They were all held by Tamils. ¹²⁰ The
 three arrack and toddy farms were held by one Burgher or Dutch
 person and two Tamils. ¹²¹ The rents of the duties at the passes,
 the cloth tax and the weights and measures were all held by Tamils ¹²²
 One probable reason for the difference is that the Muslims had
 made a home for themselves in greater numbers in other provinces
 than in Jaffna.

The multiplication of Muslim renters in the Colombo and the
 Galle districts needs to be explained. Gregory rejecting the
 petition of two Dutch invalids for rent farms furnishes us with
 an explanation. They are he says "against the General order to
 dispose of such rents to the highest bidder". ¹²³ The principle
 of the highest bidder has become the predominant criterion.
 According to North "the Lebbies form the greatest number of small
 capitalists and active merchants in the country". ¹²⁴ Therefore it
 is not surprising that often the distinction of being the highest
 bidder fell to them.

There were two other policies which the Committee of
 Investigation urged on the new governor. They proposed that the
 Mudaliyars should be set up as judges to hear disputes between the

118 21 Jan.1799 Jaffna Diary.

119 Ibid.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

123 Gregory to Boyd 21 Mar.1800, 22 Mar.1800, Rev.Dept.

124 North to Court of Directors 5 Mar.1799.

125

renters and the taxpayers. It was necessary for this purpose to debar the Mudaliyars from renting. For the term 1797 - 98 in the Galle and Matara districts there were five Mudaliyars. In the same period in the Colombo districts there were eight Mudaliyars. The Committee of Investigation was not unaware of this adverse development. Thus the Committee tells Hobart "In the present year the very desirable object of totally separating the duty of the Mudaliyars from that of the renters may not in every instance be attainable as many of those who have proposed for the farms are persons whom under existing circumstances it will be proper to appoint Mudaliyars". However, the Mudaliyars continue to figure as renters in the later period. The fact that North never invested the Mudaliyars with judicial authority probably explains this development. The lack of the *raison d'etre* of the policy may have made the administration indulgent to renter Mudaliyars. One feature, however, is noteworthy. The number of the Mudaliyar renters declines. The only Mudaliyar renting for 1800 - 01 in the Colombo districts is Philip Fernando Mudaliyar of the Chandos. Ilangakoon Maha-mudaliyar is the only mudaliyar renter in the same period for the Galle and Matara districts. It is possible that the increase in the number of the Muslim renters had the effect of thinning the ranks of the Mudaliyar renters.

"If the revenues are to be farmed the farms should be separated as much as possible and be for distinct objects. The farm for the whole revenue of every description in any particular

125 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart 16 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
 126 Alexander to Andrews 20 Sept. 1797, 30 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
 127 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart 16 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
 128 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 13 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.;
 Hamilton to Board of Rev. & Comm. 28 Aug. 1801, 31 Aug. 1801, Board
 of Rev. & Comm.; Gregory to Boyd 7 May 1800, 8 May 1800, Rev. Dept.
 129 Gregory to Boyd 7 May 1800, 8 May 1800, Rev. Dept.

district should on no account be allowed." ¹³⁰ The motive of this policy was "to bring to light the real value of their respective districts". ¹³¹ In the Jaffna districts for 1796 - 97 and 1797 - 98 there was only one case of several sources of revenue and districts being lumped into one farm. All the other farms were for "distinct objects" of revenue. ¹³² Trincomallee was divided according to the nature of the sources of revenue into seven farms. ¹³³ So were the Galle and Matara districts. ¹³⁴ In the Colombo district however the practice during this time differed. Fifteen of the twenty-three farms were for whole districts. ¹³⁵ In 1800 - 01 the Galle and Matara districts the division of farms according to the nature of the source of revenue was developed further. Two farms were divided into units smaller than before. Where there had been one fish-farm for Galle and another for Matara there were nine fish-farms in Galle and seven in Matara. ¹³⁶ In this period the nature of the source of revenue has become the basis of the rent farms in Colombo as well. ¹³⁷

Did the renter for one period hold farms again in the following period? This is another aspect which should be examined. There is no express statement on this subject and so we must resort again to the rent proposals. Four of the eighteen Jaffna renters in 1797 - 98 held farms in the earlier periods. ¹³⁸ Of these,

Taumoderam Pulle, Anatana Kanagaria and Visvanadan Muttukumaran

- 130 Hobart to Comm.of Inv.9 June 1797,4 Aug.1797,Comm.of Inv.
 131 Resolution 16 Sept.1797,Comm.of Inv.
 132 Jervis to Comm.of Inv.11 Aug.1797,6 Sept.1797,Comm.of Inv.
 133 Jervis to Andrews 7 Sept.1797,30 Sept.1797,Comm.of Inv.
 134 Alexander to Andrews 20 Sept.1797,30 Sept.1797,Comm.of Inv.
 135 " " " 16 Sept.1797,23 Sept.1797,Comm.of Inv.
 136 Gregory to Boyd 7 May 1800,8 May 1800,Rev.Dept.
 137 Ibid.
 138 Jervis to Comm.of Inv.11 Aug.1797,6 Sept.1797,Comm.of Inv.

figure in the renting list of 1799 as well. ¹³⁹ Five of the nineteen
 Galle renters of 1797 - 98 appear on the list of 1796 - 97. ¹⁴⁰
 Seven of Colombo's twenty-three renters were "present renters". ¹⁴¹
 In the Colombo rents for 1800 only Barend de Vos and D. G. Fridel
 from the list of 1797 - 98 survive as renters. ¹⁴² In the Galle and
 Matara districts in the same period besides the paddy tythe
 renters who were holding their farms for a three year period Mira
 Lebbe Nainde Oedeann, Lieutenant Amat and Mahamudaliyar Ilangakoon
 appear again. Jayasekera Pattebendige Abran held the Matara
 arrack-rent for 1799 - 1800 and 1800 - 01. ¹⁴³ Another renter
 falling into this class is Vydellinga Chetty. He rented the pearl
 fishery at Manaar in 1797 and 1798. The chank fisheries for both
 these periods were rented by him. ¹⁴⁴ He also rented 108 of the 344
 boats auctioned at the pearl fishery in 1799. ¹⁴⁵ There does not
 seem to have been any government policy directed either to
 encourage renters from one period to farm again in the succeeding
 period or to prevent them doing so. Probably the wealthier of the
 renters were able to bid for rent-farms again. Who these were
 will become clearer when we have made the next inquiry.

Did a renter hold more than one farm? Taumoderam Pulle and
 Ambalavana Mudaliyar held eight farms in 1796 - 97. Kadergamer
 Viswanathan and Sangara Pulle Muttu Tambie rented two farms in
 the same period. Viswanathan Sangra Pulle did the same. ¹⁴⁶ In

¹³⁹ 21 Jan. 1796 Jaffna Diary.

¹⁴⁰ Alexander to Andrews 20 Sept. 1797, 30 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

¹⁴¹ " " " 16 Sept. 1797, 23 Sept. 1797, " " "

¹⁴² Gregory to Boyd 7 May 1800, 8 May 1800, Rev. Dept.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Andrews to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

¹⁴⁵ Pearl Fishery Commissioners to Champagne 22 April 1799,
 26 April 1799, Rev. Dept.

¹⁴⁶ Jervis to Andrews 11 Aug. 1797, 6 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

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1797 - 98 Thetaw Mapana held two farms. In this period at Trincomallee Taumoderam Pulle rented six of the seven of its farms. In the 1799 renting lists in Jaffna Rasanayaga Mudaliyar held nine farms, Velapa Mudaliyar nine, Sandarasegere Mudaliyar five, Velaydaritna Mudaliyar four and Taumoderam Pulle two. The total number of farms rented in this period at Jaffna were eighty-five.

In the Galle and Matara districts for 1797 - 98 Mira Lebbe Nainde Oedeann held three farms. All the other farms were rented individually. In the Colombo districts for the same period no renter held two farms. In 1800 one Muslim held four farms and another three farms. Two Muslims and three Sinhalese held two farms each. All the other farms, fifty-three in number were rented individually. In the Galle and Matara districts for the same period Mohideen Lebbe Kanneka Pulle held five farms. Don Salman de Silva and Seeg Aidroos Kesie Lebbe Marikkar held three farms each. Eight other persons among whom was Mira Lebbe Nainde Oedeann held two farms each. The remaining forty-nine farms were held individually.

If we take the number of years and the number of farms as our criteria Vydelinga Chetty, Taumoderam Pulle and Mira Lebbe Nainde Oedeann emerge as the wealthiest of the renters.

There is an idea current about renting in this period to which we should now give our attention. There is a belief that with the establishment of British rule "there came a crowd of adventurers from the coast seeking their fortunes on the island" who engrossed

147 Ibid.

148 21 Jan. 1799, Jaffna Diary.

149 Alexander to Andrews 20 Sept. 1797, 30 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

150 " " " 16 Sept. 1797, 23 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

151 Gregory to Boyd 7 May 1800, 8 May 1800, Rev. Dept.

152 Ibid.

153

the farming of the revenues into their hands.

One of the ways of ascertaining the truth of the matter is by examining the rent proposals for the early years. The first revenue period for Jaffna was from 1 September 1795 to 30 April 1796.¹⁵⁴ In the Jaffna Diary there is "A list of the Rents and Duties as stipulated by the Dutch for the year 1795 - 96 commencing 1 September 1795".¹⁵⁵ There are twenty-five names in this list. Sometimes the renters paid their monies to the Government in monthly instalments.¹⁵⁶ Twenty-one of the twenty-five names in the Dutch list figure among those who are mentioned as having paid "the monthly kist" for January 1796. One of the uncorroberated names is that of the renter of the fish duty "of the nine salt places".¹⁵⁷ We are told elsewhere, however, that all those who rented fish-farms in Dutch times were continued by the British Government.¹⁵⁸ One of the other three names is that of John Podmore renter of the duty of selling arrack and toddy in the district of Jaffnapatam. He has displaced Johannes Wilhelmus Otto who figures in the Dutch list.¹⁵⁹ It is the only change which can be definitely established. The two missing renters could have been South Indian newcomers. On the other hand their names could have been omitted by way of a clerical error from the list of renters continued from the Dutch period.

In the period 1796 - 97 there were eighteen renters in the Jaffna districts.¹⁶⁰ Four of these names recur in the renting

153 De Silva pp 195-96.

154 Andrews to Comm.of Inv.10 Nov.1798,10 Nov.1798,Comm.of Inv.

155 8 Jan.1796 Jaffna Diary.

156 12,13,14,15,16,18,28 Jan.1796,Jaffna Diary.

157 19 Jan.1796,Jaffna Diary.

158 Ibid.

159 28 Jan.1796,Jaffna Diary.

160 Jervis to Andrews 11 Aug.1797,6 Sept.1797,Comm.of Inv.

lists of the period 1797 - 98.¹⁶¹ As we shall soon see it is very unlikely that there could have been any alien renters in that period. One of these persons in the period 1796 - 97 held two farms, eight of the other farms were rented jointly by Uduvil Vellanen Ambalavana Mudaliyar and Udupitty Vellalen Cheydoenga M Mapana Mudaliyar Taumoderam Pulle. This Taumoderam Pulle is the father of the Taumoderam Pulle who appears in the Dutch lists of renters for the period 1795 - 96. Two farms were held by Viswanathan Sangara Pulle and by Vydelinga Chetty.¹⁶² Both these names occur in the Dutch lists to which we have referred. One farm was rented by a person described as a Muslim from Wanarpone.¹⁶³ The one person remaining to be mentioned is that of Nallur Madapallie Paramanader Kandapen.¹⁶⁴ Both these persons together with Taumoderam Pulle's partner could have been new arrivals from South India. On the other hand since Wanarpone Nallur and Uduvil are place-names in Jaffna it is more likely that they were inhabitants of that place than strangers.

Since the British conquest of the Colombo and Galle districts was completed on 16 February 1796 the renting periods for these areas begin from 1 September 1796. In the Colombo districts for the period 1796 - 97 there were twenty-four renters. Eight of these were Mudaliyars. One was a Mohandiram.¹⁶⁵ As we shall learn the Mudaliyars and Mohandirams were the chief indigenous administrative officers in Ceylon at that time. Among the Mudaliyars are the names of Bandaranayake and De Saram.¹⁶⁶ As is

161 Ibid.

162 Ibid.

163 Ibid.

164 Ibid.

165 Andrews to Hobart 2 Nov. 1797, 17 Nov. 1797, 3947-3949, Madras Rev.

166 Ibid.

well known the Mahamudaliyars of Ceylon were frequently recruited from these two families. Among the others there were five Sinhalese names.¹⁶⁷ Of the remaining number Abubacker was described as a Malay Captain.¹⁶⁸ The salt renter D. G. Fridel was a Dutchman.¹⁶⁹ One farm was rented by "four inhabitants".¹⁷⁰ The remainder were Joseph Casie Chetty, Saviel Nonis, Jyacum Pillai, Bava Lebbe, Lebbe Marikkar son of Mohammed Lebbe another Lebbe Marikkar and Mohammed Meera Lebbe.¹⁷¹ These persons could be represented as the elusive South Indian renters.

The renting lists for the Galle districts for this period are not available in the records. The rent proposals of these districts for the period 1797 - 98, however, give us some help. As we shall learn the Committee of Investigation subjected the origins of the applicants for renting for the period 1797 - 98 to a searching examination. It is, therefore, unlikely that renters of alien origin were numbered among them. Seven of these renters are described as renters of the preceding period.¹⁷² The Sinhalese among them were Salman de Zylva Gajenayake Mudaliyar, Simon Weerasesgure Muhandiram, Dinees Wijesooriendre Muhandiram and Samirewickreme Goonesekere Williappu Muhandiram. Salman de Zylva Gajenayake Mudaliyar rented two farms.¹⁷³ The others were Mira Lebbe Nainde Oedeann a Muslim and Jacob Aldus described as a "half-caste man". The holders of the twelve remaining farms are obscure. It is possible that they were South Indians.

167 Ibid.

168 Ibid.

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

171 Ibid.

172 Alexander to Andrews 20 Sept. 1797, 30 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

173 Ibid.

There are several statements made by the Government officials of the time which proclaim the fact that the renters chosen for the period 1796 - 97 and the succeeding periods were either the same as those appointed by the Dutch Government or were inhabitants of the country. Jervis tells Hobart that "copies of cowles that were granted by the late Government to their renters are nearly taken and will be shortly forwarded to Madras and Government by referring to them will be easily enabled to draw out and transmit the necessary cowles that are to be given in future to the renters under this district".¹⁷⁴ The term "this district" refers to Jaffnapatam. On a later occasion Andrews informed the Madras Government that "the Moodeliars of Corles or provinces as employed by the Dutch are the only people who have come forward with proposals for renting the land but whether their offers are in any degree proportioned to the value of the districts tis impossible for me to determine..."¹⁷⁵ This statement speaks of the identity of the renters throughout the whole of Ceylon for the period 1796 - 97. It is evidence to the effect that the preponderant majority of the renters for this period were of indigenous origin. Some time later Andrews made another revealing comment: "...in making the selection particular attention has been paid to the character and circumstances of the proposers and most pointedly so as to their connections and influence in the districts likewise their affinity of caste to those whom they would be concerned with and this list I submitted under existing prejudices to General de Meuron who from long residence on the Island and at

174 Jervis to Barbut 30 Dec.1795, 12 Feb.1796, 438, Madras Rev.Proc.
 175 Andrews to Webbe 6 Sept.1796, 20 Sept.1796, 3360, Madras Rev.Proc.

Colombo might have been able to point out any impropriety in the selection..."¹⁷⁶ Here Andrews is referring to the rent proposals for the period 1797 - 98. His remarks put beyond doubt the indigenous character of the renters for this period. If further proof were needed of the identity of the renters for the period 1797 - 98 it should be noted that the Committee of Investigation debarred four candidates for renting on the grounds that they were of alien origin.¹⁷⁷ There was also Hobart's injunction, whose¹⁷⁸ fate we have already examined, to choose Sinhalese as renters.

To lay the ghost of the South Indian renter we could summon as witness those who above all would be capable of testifying to whatever reality it had. They are the government officials of the time. It is a common assumption among historians that the rapacity of alien South Indian renters was a major cause for the revolt of 1797.¹⁷⁹ Therefore it is in the accounts given of this revolt that the malignant South Indian renter is most likely to be lurking. Hobart does not list the South Indian renter in his list of causes for the disturbances of 1797 given to the Revenue Department at the Fort St. George Presidency. He speaks of the resentment felt by the Mudaliyars against the Malabar Kaccheris servant employed by Andrews to perform their functions.¹⁸⁰ These were a different set of people. The South Indian renter is conspicuously absent from the assessment of the sources of the disturbance made by Agnew, a member of the Committee of Investigation.¹⁸¹ De Meuron attributes the disturbances to two factors - the revocation of the

176 Andrews to Webbe 15 Aug. 1797, 8 Sept. 1797, 2769, Madras Rev. Proc.

177 Resolution 6 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

178 Hobart to Comm. of Inv. 9 June 1797, 4 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

179 De Silva p 196; Ceylon Tennent p 72; Turner p 108.

180 Ibid.

181 Agnew's minute 20 Sept. 1797, 30 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

service-tenures and the fact that the revenue farms were held by "Lubby Moors and others of castes considered by the mass of people inferior to their own".¹⁸² Davy Robertson, who was Town Major at Colombo during North's governorship, submitted a memorandum while sojourning in England to Dundas and Douglas, (North's brother-in-law.) The causes for the revolt of 1797 given by him were the abolition of feudal tenure, the coconut tax and the intrigues of the Court of Kandy.¹⁸³ Individually neither did Alexander nor Jervis who were Assistant Superintendents of Revenue speak on the subject. Andrews also remains silent. Collectively however the Committee of Investigation of which Andrews was a member spoke of "those tumults which are now the consequence of Moors and Chitties holding a degree of authority as farmers of the Revenue to which in their hands the Pride and Prejudice of the native Cingalese cannot and will not submit without resistance".¹⁸⁴ It is important to emphasize that this statement along with that made by De Meuron does not say that the Moor and Chetty renters came to Ceylon with the British. In fact these remarks imply that these Moors and Chetties were inhabitants of the country and if they came from South India that they did so some time before the British.

The apparition of the South Indian renter first appears in a statement made by Hobart. Writing to the Committee of Investigation he said "but if it be true that the farms now rented are most of them held by Malabars who since our possession of the Dutch settlements have gone from the coast for that purpose I am certain that no mode for destroying a country could have been devised that

¹⁸² Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

¹⁸³ Robertson's memorandum Ceylon Vol. 54.

¹⁸⁴ Comm. of Inv. to Hobart 16 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

was more likely to accomplish its end with dispatch and aggravation
 ..."¹⁸⁵ It is important to note that this is a conjecture.
 Moreover it was left out by Hobart in his minute to the Revenue
 Department of Fort St. George. The Madras Government intimated
 to the Court of Directors that Kaules in Ceylon in the past few
 years had been granted without sufficient information.¹⁸⁶ This is
 a vague statement. The manner in which the Kaules were deficient
 is not mentioned. Governor North was also an unwitting
 poltergeist. According to him the farming of the revenues had
 been entrusted "to a set of rapacious and hard hearted strangers"
 at the beginning of British rule in Ceylon.¹⁸⁷ The striking thing
 is that in three other statements made by him on later occasions
 the South Indian renter is missing as the villain of the piece.
 His place is taken by the Malabar administrative officials who in
 the early years of British rule displaced the Mudaliyar and the
 Muhandiram as the factotum of the British Government.¹⁸⁸

Besides the Government officials of the time it is possible
 to call in as supplementary witnesses in our inquiry the writers
 of the time - Lord Valentia, the Rev. J. Cordiner, A. Bertolacci,
 Hugh Cleghorn and Captain R. Percival. Apart from Percival all the
 others when they refer to South Indians mean the Malabar
 administrative servants. Percival did not write on this theme at
 all. According to him the unrest was caused by some of Andrews'
 taxes.¹⁸⁹ The others testify that the power delegated to these
 servants aroused in the headmen a strong aversion to British rule.

185 Hobart to Comm. of Inv. 9 June 1797, 4 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
 186 Madras Rev. letter to the Court of Directors 16 Oct. 1797, Paras
 187 North to Court of Directors 5 Mar. 1799. 47-53
 188 Ibid.
 189 An Account of the Island of Ceylon Percival p 233.

Not once are South Indian renters mentioned.

We should now turn to the historians of the period to see what they have made of the problem. Turner while confessing to difficulty in understanding what the Committee of Investigation meant when it spoke of the union of the power of the renter and judge says "It is not particularly clear to what these phrases are intended to refer but the reference is probably a double one firstly to the fact that the only judges other than military officers sitting on Courts Martial were the officers of the Revenue Department and secondly to what was probably the fact that many of these revenue officers especially the Aumildars were renters or farmers of the revenue as well as revenue officers".

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Several aspects of this statement ought to be examined. The collectors were invested with a certain measure of judicial power during the period that Colonel Stuart was Commander in Ceylon.

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It was never intended that this judicial power should be exercised by the administrative subordinates of the collectors at the Kaccheries. Such an abdication of authority by the collectors would have amounted to a grave dereliction of duty. It would also have been illegal. It would need more evidence to establish such a state of affairs than one uncorroborated statement purported to have been made by the Committee of Investigation. It is also strange that such a state of affairs has not provoked the curiosity of the historians more than it has done. The rest of the statement made by Turner is a mere hypothesis with no evidence adduced in its

190 Bertolacci p 32; A Description of Ceylon Cordiner p 102; Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt Vol.1 Valentia p 314; J.R.A.S.(Ceylon) Part II Vol.III new series 1953 H. Gleghorn.

191 Turner p 108.

192 26 Mar.1796, Jaffna Diary.

support. Elsewhere he makes a remark part of which is in accordance with the views outlined by us: "It may be noted that though the renters of the rents in the Northern Provinces were nearly all 'Malabar Chetties' we find many Sinhalese and Burgher names in the lists for the Western and Southern Provinces".¹⁹³ Where Turner is diffident Tennent is definite. "The Customs duties and other sources of income were farmed out to Moors Parsies and Chitties from the coast".¹⁹⁴ He supplies no evidence whatsoever in support of this statement. Therefore it should be given little value. De Silva derives his vision of a horde of South Indians peopling the renting system from a statement of Lord Hobart which we have already observed and a quotation from Burnands Fragmens sur l'Etat...de l'isle of Ceylon.¹⁹⁵ In his reproduction Hobart's statement is shorn of the vital conditional clause which preceded it. In this way a mere conjecture becomes transformed into a statement of fact. According to Burnand who was a Dutch official but unblessed with office under the British it was Jervis's reckoning that 32,000 people came to Ceylon with the British in order to make their fortunes. Burnand does not tell us where and to whom Jervis made this statement. What is more Burnand did not convert these people into renters. It is de Silva who does so.

We feel obliged to try to explain to the reader how the legend of the South Indian renter came to gain currency. There was the hypothesis made by Hobart. The gap in the renting list of the Galle districts for the period 1796 - 97 also might have concealed twelve South Indian renters. We also discovered seven

¹⁹³ Turner p 114 footnote number 73.

¹⁹⁴ Tennent p 72.

¹⁹⁵ De Silva p 195.

renters in the renting lists of the Colombo districts for 1796 - 97 who might have been South Indians. It is extremely unlikely however that these are the South Indians for whom we are searching. As we have heard from Jervis copies of kaules granted by the Dutch were being sent to the Madras Government as early as 1 February 1796. Even if this statement is regarded as one restricted to Jaffna the likelihood is that the same thing was done in the other places. This is not the conduct of officials surreptitiously apportioning the rent-farms to South Indians.

There is another phenomenon which might have lent substance to the legend of an invasion of Ceylon by South Indian renters. It is probably true that Muslims and Chetties who had originally come from South India probably during the period of Dutch rule had acquired wealth in Ceylon. Some of them probably became renters. For instance we know that Vydelinga Chetty who was a renter during Dutch times was a South Indian.¹⁹⁶ It is to such a development that the comments on the subject made by de Meuron and the Committee of Investigation refer. Since they were government officials in Ceylon at the time more weight should be given to their opinions than to those of North and Hobart. It is also probable that the unsatisfactory nature of the early kaules in Ceylon alluded to by the Madras Government in their letter to the Court of Directors referred to this development.

There are several factors which may have contributed to mislead the historians. As we have seen the Malabar administrative servants who manned the kaccheris at the time were often

196 Andrews to Comm.of Inv.10 Nov.1798,10 Nov.1798,Comm.of Inv.

excoriated as the authors of many disdeeds in Ceylon. These were however a set of people distinct from the renters. The term adventurer was used at that time to refer to an entrepreneur. In that period it was as respectable a term as the word businessman would be today. It should also be stressed that the term Malabar was used to refer to both Tamils of Ceylon and those of South India. ¹⁹⁷ Persons unmindful of these refinements might be led to attribute both an anti-social propensity and an undue preponderance to the South Indians in Ceylon at the time.

We should conclude our inquiry into the renting system and the policy of the British Government in relation to it with two observations. The renting system was in essence a form of taxation. When renting gave the renter as in the case of arrack, betel-leaves and chanks the monopoly of sale it was a taxing of the right to sell. Import and export duties were taxes. The tolls at the passes taxed the passage of saleable goods. The pearl fishery when rented was a tax on the right to fish for pearls. The rent of the coconut gardens was a tax on the right to own them. The farms of paddy, tobacco and fish brought to their renters a share of the produce. These demonstrably were taxes. So were the bazaar tax and the joy tax and the gaming tax as their names readily disclose.

It was also a creature born out of the administrative weakness of the British Government. The collection of taxes is today a function performed by government officials. The fact that such a task had to be delegated to non-governmental persons exposes the limited nature of the government's power. As we

have seen the Board of Revenue and Commerce by remarking that the renter of the betel-leaf would be better able to detect any infringement of the monopoly of sale hints at this problem. Such a condition would have stemmed from various causes. As we shall see in later chapters the ignorance on the part of the government officials of the languages of the country, the hostility of the Dutch remaining in Ceylon to British rule and the lack of sufficient British officials contributed to the creation of such a situation. The British expanded the renting system more than the Dutch. They also increased the number of persons liable to perform the renters' contracts. These actions show that in this period British power was weaker than that of the Dutch had been. The real character of the renters was that of administrative assistants. We have seen the Muslims come to occupy these positions in increasing numbers. The extension of liability on the renters' contracts could be represented as a search for administrative assistants. Looked at from this angle the recruiting of a Muslim widow to act in this capacity symbolizes the fragility of British power in this period.

CHAPTER TWO

Land and Labour

Service tenure consisted of the right to hold land as a reward for regularly performing certain services for the state. These services were performed by social groups known as castes. Castes differed in the main from one another according to the nature of the service performed by each. The Washerman would wash clothes and the toddy tapper would draw toddy from the toddy yielding tree. The lands of the castes were divided among their component families. Land tenure in Ancient Ceylon¹ rested mainly on this basis.² As Lord Hobart said: "No individual was³ therefore taxed but in the object of his profession."

Our inquiry is into the encounter between the myrmidons of the East India Company and this land system. Our first glance should fall on the condition of this land system when the British came to Ceylon.

The industrious and versatile Brigadier General de Meuron, diverting himself from the call of arms into investigating the economic and social conditions of Ceylon under the Dutch, speaks of Neinde Paraveniya tenure. This form of tenure included the service lands of the castes and the Accommodessans.

Accommodessans were lands held free from dues by the indigenous officials of the Dutch Government in return for the performance

1 Ceylon during the time of the Sinhalese kings.

2 Farmed Revenue, De Meuron memoirs, Comm.of Inv.

3 Extracts from the Minutes of Consultation in the Political Department, Fort St. George, 16 Feb.1798, 15 Mar.1798, Comm.of Inv.

of their official duties.⁴ These did not always consist of the possession of land. Sometimes they took the nature of the exemption of the officers' private lands from dues. At other times their nature was the right of their holders to appropriate for themselves the dues which certain lands owed to the state. De Meuron continues to speak of Ottu and Ande tenure. Ande lands paid half of their produce in lieu of service. Ottu lands were service free lands⁵ paying one tenth of their produce.⁶

Malapala, Nelapala,⁷ Ratninda,⁶ Muttetu and Ratmaherre Kanuhis Paraveniyas were other tenures known to the British. Malapala lands were lands alienated to private owners but reverting to the Crown from the death of their donees. These lands generally paid an Ande share once they had been assigned anew to other owners. Nelapala lands reverted to the Crown at the emigration of their owners. In new hands they would also pay Ande chares.⁸ Ratninda and Muttetu lands were Crown lands which had been granted to donees on the condition of their paying Ande shares to the Government.⁹ Muttetu was the Tamil name for such lands.¹⁰ Ratninda was their Sinhalese name.

Ratmaherre tenure came into being when land belonging to the Crown was cultivated without permission. Such land generally paid one tenth of its produce to the state. If the errant

4 Collected Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm.of Inv.
 5 Alexander to North, 17 Oct.1798,17 Oct.1798, Rev.Dept.
 6 Proclamation 3 May 1800; Proclamation 3 Sept.1801, Pub.Dept.
 7 Gregory to Boyd,18 Dec.1800,6 Jan.1801, Rev. Dept.
 8 Alexander to North,17 Oct.1798,17 Oct.1798, Rev.Dept.
 9 H.W.Codrington Ancient land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon p 23
 10 Ibid

cultivator was able to secure the sanction of the state albeit posthumously he could hold such lands free of tax for three years.¹¹ In Kanuhis Paraveniya - empty of tree stumps - forest strips were cleared and burnt for an evanescent culture of dry grains¹² and were soon abandoned after the gathering of a few years' produce.¹³ This was also known as Chena cultivation. This was really a form of cultivation within the wider Ratmaherre tenure and not a distinct tenure in itself. The British Government however regarded them separately.¹⁴

Houses were hired from their owners for rent.¹⁴ North¹⁵ purchased the House and gardens of Hulftsdorp for the Government. There is no evidence of the owners of these houses paying any dues to the Government. They should therefore be placed in a different type of tenure from those we have been hitherto considering. It is to be noted that this species of ownership was confined to the "big cities" of Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee. It seems likely that the British continued a Dutch practice. The owners of the houses in Trincomalee from whom the Commanding Officer had rented them seem to bear Dutch names.¹⁶

According to Codrington,¹⁷ in this period there was a tenure known as Purchase Paraveniya. This consisted of lands bought by individuals from private owners. Such lands

11 Alexander to North, 17 Oct. 1798, Rev. Dept.

12 These are grains other than paddy.

13 Jewell to Boyd, 1 May 1801, 15 May 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

14 Resolution 28 April 1801, Military Board.

15 North to Court of Directors, 30 Jan. 1800.

16 Resolution 28 April 1801, Military Board.

17 Codrington p 12.

continued to pay an Ottu share to the Government regardless of the sale. Did the British Administration know of Purchase Paraveniya? The British records of this period do not mention this term. According to General De Meuron the Dutch levied a tax of 5% on the transfer of lands and other immovables from one owner to another. There is, however, no mention of Purchase Paraveniya or the amount which such lands paid to the Government.

The terms of sale of Government land in British times threw some light on this problem. After the sale as before it such lands were obliged to pay the same dues to the Government.¹⁸ Such dues after the Proclamation 3 May 1800 came to be one fifth from lowlands and one tenth from highlands.¹⁹ Sale did not bring absolute ownership to the owner. In the context of Ceylon land tenure absolute ownership consisted of holding land free of any obligation to pay dues to the Government. Such a felicity did not accrue to the purchaser. He continued to pay dues to the Government - the same dues as before. In their manner of selling land the British Administration betray the influence of the canons of Purchase Paraveniya.

Can we discern a similar conformity in practice and unawareness in theory in the case of Nindagam tenure? According to Codrington²⁰ this form of tenure was common in Ceylon in this period. Lands held by Nindagam tenure were free from the payment of all dues to the Government. The records of this period display

¹⁸ Gregory to Boyd, 18 Dec. 1800, 6 Jan. 1801, Rev. Dept.

¹⁹ Board of Rev. & Comm. to Smitsz, 8 Oct. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

²⁰ Codrington p 8

complete ignorance of this term. There is no mention of it by De Meuron nor by the other members of the Committee of Investigation. North in his several pronouncements on land tenure does not use the term once. It is true that arable lands within the four gravets of Colombo defied the collection of taxes from the beginning of British rule.²¹ The owners of the coconut gardens by a series of revolts two of which occurred in the Dutch times²² and one of which confronted the British Administration early in its history²³ staved off all taxation. When North on his arrival withdrew Andrews' land reforms and reverted to the status quo he ipso facto restored the coconut garden owners to their erstwhile immunity. It must be noted however that the terms of the Proclamation of 3 May 1800 and 3 September 1801 by implication include the coconut gardens within their ambit. This aspect will be discussed further when we come to examine North's land reforms closely. North intended all land to be subjected to taxation. He placed all land in Ceylon in three categories - Service lands, Ande lands and Ottu lands.²⁴ By the terms of the Proclamations of 3 May 1800 and 3 September 1801 all lands were to pay one fifth from lowlands and one tenth from highlands. Therefore if any lands achieved the status of Nindagam tenure it was by frustrating the administration. Theirs was Nindagam tenure by default.

It is Bertolacci's view that "the tenure of land in that part of the island which is inhabited by the Malabar nation is

21 Farmed Revenues; De Meuron memoirs, Comm.of Inv.

22 Codrington p 40

23 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart, 6 Feb.1798, Comm.of Inv.

24 North to Court of Directors, 25 Feb.1799.

totally different and much more simple".²⁵ De Silva echoes this view and bequeaths to us the obligation of examining closely the land tenure in the Tamil districts. Land tenure in the Jaffna districts called Jaffnapatam by the British was different from that in the rest of the Tamil districts. Therefore they should be considered separately. The land tax in Jaffnapatam was three fanams on twenty ladses²⁶ (a unit for measuring land in this area). Other taxes collected together with the land tax were the house tax, the tax on the oil trees Margosa and Ilepe and the tax on the Palmeira tree.²⁷ The reckoning of the land tax in money and the amalgamation of other taxes with it raises the presumption that these taxes were paid in money.

Besides these taxes one tenth of the paddy grain called tythe was collected in Jaffna.²⁸ These tythes were not paid in money. The renter bought from the Government with money the right to collect the tythes. The tythes were paid to him in kind.²⁹ Commutation of land taxes into money payments which De Silva speaks of as the common practice in the Jaffna districts³⁰ had not invaded this sphere.

In the Jaffna districts in lieu of the obligation for personal service a personal tax was levied. When the tax fell on the Moor and Chetties within these districts it was known as Uliyam. When it fell on the Tamils it was called Chicos.³¹ This

25 A view of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interest in Ceylon A. Bertolacci p 295.

26 Barbut to North, 8 Nov. 1798, 12 Nov. 1798, Rev. Dept.

27 Jervis to Comm. of Inv. 11 Aug. 1797, 6 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ceylon under the British Occupation C. R. De Silva p 331.

31 Agnew to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

was a tax paid by all the castes. The Mallavas and Pallavas who were slaves of the Malabar inhabitants or of the Dutch Company paid an additional tax of six fanams or twelve days labour.³² The personal tax differentiated the land tenure in the Jaffna districts sharply from that in the Sinhalese districts.

In his letter to the Court of Directors of 18 February 1801 North referring to the salaries of the headmen in Jaffna says "from the high state of cultivation in the country one tenth of the net proceeds of the land Rents has been established as an adequate remuneration for them". This scheme was not introduced by North or by his British predecessors in office. It is therefore safe to assume that it was the practice when the British came to Ceylon. We could call these salaries accomodessans after a form of it not uncommon in the Sinhalese provinces.³³ To adopt this title would not be to introduce service tenure in the Jaffna districts for the essence of that institution consisted in remunerating caste groups with title to land.

We should now turn our attention to the other Tamil districts. In the revenue period of 1 September 1795 to 30 April 1796 "Body Tax" was collected in Manaar, Trincomallee and Batticoloa.³⁴ This "Body Tax" is almost certainly the Personal tax collected in lieu of labour. The fact that this tax is not mentioned under its better known appellation of Personal Tax and the restriction of its collection to the Tamil districts warrants

32 Jervis to Hobart 12 Feb. 1796, 5 Mar. 1797, 497, Madras Rev. Proc.

33 Farmed Revenues, De Meurons memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

34 Andrews to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

this conclusion. This body tax could include Uliyam i.e., the charge on the Moors and the Chetties. The remark of De Meuron however that this tax brought in a substantial revenue in the Batticoloa and Manaar districts ³⁵ favours the view that besides the Moors and the Chetties Tamil residents of a longer standing paid this tax. Therefore it is a valid proposition that in these Tamil districts the obligation to perform service could be commuted into a money payment.

There is evidence to suggest that service tenure in its more orthodox form existed in these areas. When North introduced a new scale of pay in the form of varying shares of the paddy crop for the headmen in the Batticoloa district he stipulated "provided that nothing herein stated do derogate from the right hitherto enjoyed by all or any of them of being conveyed by land or water when employed on the public service in such manner and by such persons as have been hitherto charged with that duty". ³⁶ There is an implication in this statement that services were performed in the same way as in the Sinhalese provinces. It is arguable that money rather than title to land constituted payment for these services. There is however no evidence in the records that such payments were made. It is justifiable to expect the records to bear witness to such payments when usually all expenditure receives meticulous scrutiny and requires the sanction of superior officials. It is also significant that the members of the Committee of Investigation

³⁵ Collected Revenue, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

³⁶ Resolution, 18 Sept. 1800, Rev. Dept.

when debating the advisability of re-introducing the Personal Tax speak of it as an institution peculiar to Jaffnapatam - "...the tax called Chicos formerly established at Jaffnapatam in lieu of personal service and the Oulliame of the Moors and the Chetties"³⁷. This is the opinion of the whole Committee of Investigation. "Similar reasons lead one to recommend the re-establishment of the Personal Tax at Jaffnapatam known by the name of Chicos and the Oulliame of the Moors and Chetties in every other part of the Island"³⁸ This is the voice of Major Agnew. General De Meuron says "but at Jaffnapatam it was of too great importance to be neglected by government"³⁹. It is safe to assert that in the Tamil districts other than Jaffnapatam a considerable proportion of land was held on service tenure.

De Silva declares that a practice of commuting dues into money payments was widespread in these districts.⁴⁰ This does not seem to be true. It is likely that the personal tax whenever it was paid was paid in money. The paddy tythe however followed the pattern of Jaffnapatam with the renter buying the right to rent in money and receiving the dues from the cultivator in kind.⁴¹

An important question which we are obliged to answer at this stage is the proportion of lands which had acquired non-service

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- 37 Comm.of Inv. to Hobart, 12 Nov. 1798, Comm.of Inv.
 38 Agnew to Comm.of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm.of Inv.
 39 Collected Revenue, De Meuron memoirs, Comm.of Inv.
 40 De Silva p 337.
 41 Jervis to Andrews, 7 Sept. 1797, 30 Sept. 1797, Comm.of Inv;
 Jervis to Andrews, 17 Aug. 1797, 6 Sept. 1797, Comm.of Inv;
 Resolution 18 Sept. 1800, Rev.Dept; Jervis to Fair 12 Feb.
 1796, 5 Mar. 1796, 500-505 Madras Rev.Proc.

tenurial rights. De Silva takes Bertolacci to task for his failure to set out the non-service tenures. He is himself guilty of a sin of omission. He fails to discern that the majority of lands were held on non-service tenurial rights. North makes this fact known twice.

In a letter to the Court of Directors he says "It will therefore be necessary only to premise that the lands of this colony are divided into three grand classes, the Ottu, the Ande and the Parveni. The first are held by a payment of a tenth of the produce, the second by that of one half and the third by personal services of various kinds and descriptions"⁴². This is a definite statement that more than half the lands were of non-service-tenure. In the revocation of service-tenure impending on the 1 May 1802, the headmen were to receive a salary along with a share of the land tax and the joy tax. Speaking with reference to these measures he says "This arrangement will increase very considerably the Receipts of the Head-men for the lands so held by the tenure of service form nearly one half of the Cingalese districts of the Island"⁴³. The converse of this statement is that a little more than one half of the lands were held by non-service-tenures.

The coconut gardens with their immunity from taxation bear witness to the large size of the non-service-tenures. Van Angelbeek petitioning against the coconut tax proposed by the British asserts that the Supreme Government of Batavia had

42 North to Court of Directors, 26 Feb. 1799.
 43 " " " " " 18 Feb. 1801.

exempted the gardens within the four gravets of Colombo or in their vicinity "from every tax".⁴⁴ Since that time the area of immunity seems to have widened. Two of the examples among four others given by Van Angelbeek himself of gardens of this nature in 1797 were the garden of the heirs of "the late Deputy Fiscal Charlet" at Panadure and the gardens of the same owners at Delduwe. Both these places are well outside the environs of Colombo. Neither Bertolacci⁴⁵ nor Codrington⁴⁶ in their account of the abortive attempts of both Governor Domburg and Governor Schreuder to impose a coconut garden tax confine the successful resistance of the coconut garden owners and their attendant freedom from fiscal burdens to the Colombo districts. The testimony of De Meuron⁴⁷ is that "The Dutch company possessed large gardens of which those planted with coconut trees were the most considerable. It was customary to farm them for ten successive years... The greater part of them were sold in 1795 - some few still remain which might be applied to a good purpose". Andrews included coconut gardens of all the maritime provinces within the sweep of his censure "The whole face of the country is covered with luxuriant plantations of coconut trees the property of the Dutch or rich natives from which no Revenue⁴⁸ is collected..."

44 Van Angelbeek's letter to the Gov-General in Council, Fort William, Mackenzie Collection.

45 Bertolacci p 332.

46 Codrington p 40

47 Farmed Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

48 Andrews to Webbe, 15 July 1796, 29 July 1796, 2582 Madras Rev. Proc.

It is possible to appraise the size of non-service-tenures from another angle. The paddy tythe for Jaffna in the year 1786⁴⁹ reckoned in money amounted to Rds 11,043, 6 fanams, 12 pice. In the year 1798 it was Rds 11,500. In the Galle and Matara districts for the year 1799 the Ottu and Ande lands paid a sum of Rds 43,695.⁵⁰ We confine ourselves to the Galle and Matara districts and to one year because these are the only figures available. The fact that paddy lands in the Galle and Matara districts brought in a revenue approximately four times bigger than the paddy tythe of an area where land rested on a non-service basis proclaims loudly the size of non-service-tenures in the Sinhalese provinces.

So far we have considered from a number of aspects the state of land tenure in the Maritime Provinces when the British came. It is now necessary to turn to the examination of the vicissitudes of their land policy.

Revenues were collected in Ceylon by the British as early as 1 September 1795.⁵¹ The first intimation of the revocation of service tenure was on 8 July 1796.⁵² It was to come into effect on 1 September 1796. It is a safe assumption that between these two periods land tenure continued to be what it had been in Dutch times. What this was we have already seen.

Andrews' first reform was the abolition of the Chicos and

49 Jervis to Comm.of Inv.11 Aug.1797,6 Sept.1797,Comm.of Inv.
 50 Gregory to Champagne,16 July 1799,18 July 1799,Rev.Dept.
 51 Andrews to Comm.of Inv.10 Nov.1798,10 Nov.1798,Comm.of Inv.
 52 Andrews to Webbe,8 July 1796,29 July 1796,2585,Madras Rev.Proc

the Uliyam. He thought them to be oppressive to the "lower order of people".⁵³ Hobart and his council at Fort St. George did not relish drastic changes: "until our possession of the island shall become permanent."⁵⁴ This was their attitude when Andrews proposed this change. They were however presented with a fait accompli. In the interval between the sending of the letter and the receiving of a reply, on his own initiative, Andrews abolished these taxes. Although they castigated him for his presumption the Government of Fort St. George, seeing a need for an appearance of deliberation in government policy, sanctioned this measure.⁵⁵ Its incidence was in the Tamil speaking districts. In the Sinhalese provinces it was decreed that no one would be obliged to perform labour "without receiving adequate compensation" for it.⁵⁶ This meant by implication that labour was to be hired with money. Andrews does not disclose the reason for the decision. Since, as we shall soon see, he demanded half the produce from all land it is probably the increase of revenue implicit in that measure which motivated him.⁵⁷

All lands were to pay half their produce. Both Bertolacci and Codrington make the mistake of reducing this payment to one tenth.⁵⁸ De Meuron in his own compilation and the members of the Committee of Investigation clearly put the amount as half.⁵⁹ Paddy lands in Jaffna continued to pay one tenth.⁶⁰ Bertolacci

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- 53 Webbe to Andrews, 29 July 1796, 2586, Madras Rev. Proc.
 54 " " " 2 July 1796, 2319, " " "
 55 Resolution 29 July 1796, 2585, Madras Rev. Proc.
 56 Ibid.
 57 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart, 16 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
 58 Bertolacci p 290; Codrington p 61.
 59 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart, 16 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
 60 Jervis to Comm. of Inv. 11 Aug. 1797, 6 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

and Codrington may have fallen into the error of extending this arrangement into the Sinhalese provinces.

The supersession of the Mudaliyars and other indigenous officials had connections with the land tenure.⁶¹ The Accommodessans with which the Dutch had paid them for their services were suppressed. Their lands like all others were called upon to pay half their produce. Andrews often expressed uneasiness at the power exercised by the Mudaliyars.⁶² It is very probably this feeling which impelled him to dismiss them from office.

The coconut tax was an important item of Andrews' land reforms. Coconut gardens all over the island had escaped taxation from Dutch times. He wanted to end this immunity. Coconut gardens with more than fifty trees were to pay a silver fanam on each tree.⁶³ The poor of the country bore an inequitable burden of all taxes. "I found the heaviest taxes levied on the lower order of Native Inhabitants while the opulent merchant and extensive land-holder contributed little or nothing towards the expence of protecting himself and property which government incurred."⁶⁴ The coconut garden owners were rich people and in his opinion the imposing of a tax upon them would go some way to redress the balance between the rich and the poor. The Governor-in-Council at Fort St. George approved of the measure.⁶⁵ They rejected the arguments of Van

61 2 Sept. 1796, Jaffna Diary.

62 Webbe to Andrews, 2 July 1796, 2319, Madras Rev. Proc.

63 Resolution 29 July 1796, 2586, Madras Rev. Proc.

64 Andrews to Doyle, 4 April 1797, 29 April 1797, 1243-1247, Madras Rev. Proc.

65 Webbe to Doyle, 29 April 1797, 1249-1251, Madras Rev. Proc.

Angelbeek and his fellow petitioners against the tax. To say that the tax was a violation of the guarantee of private property embodied in the Articles of Capitulation was to the Government of Fort St. George to give "such a latitude of interpretation as is not justified by reason or experience". The indulgence shown the coconut gardens by the Dutch Government was no criterion of conduct for the British Government. What was more, the withdrawing of the tax on the export of arrack would more than recoup any losses brought upon the coconut garden owners by the new tax.

How far were Andrews' reforms carried out? According to De Silva, their effect was slight. ⁶⁶ Facts point to a different verdict. These land reforms caused a revolt. In the causes for the revolt commonly given by the British officials the new ⁶⁷ revenue demands play a large part. In the majority of the ⁶⁸ provinces the revenues were collected despite the revolt. It was only in the main theatres of the revolt - Salpity Korale, Rygam Korale and the Hewagam Korale - that revenue collection was hampered. Even in these places Andrews reported that there was a deficit of only 6,000 Rupees. ⁶⁹ The testimony of Governor North was that their effect was widespread. "I have no doubt that although the Restoration of the Neynde Paravenie lands

66 De Silva p 339

67 Extract from the Minutes of Consultation in the Political Department Fort St. George, 16 Feb. 1798, 15 Mar. 1798, Comm. of Inv; Agnew to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv. Farmed Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

68 Andrews to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

69 Andrews to Hobart, 9 Oct. 1797, 27 Oct. 1797, 3557-3559, Madras Rev. Proc.

will be highly popular the exaction of the personal services by which they are held will meet with difficulties and objections unfelt and unthought before their late suppression".⁷⁰

The Committee of Investigation was established on 9 June 1797.⁷¹ On 16 August 1797 they recommended that the Andrews land reforms should be revoked. The first of their reasons was that these lands were held on a tenure of service "from the remotest period". Their second reason was that the wishes of the people had not been consulted when the change was introduced. Thirdly, the services demanded in the past had been "generally slight". Fourthly, the holders of lands in Ceylon had by virtue of length of possession "a kind of prescriptive right to some indulgence".⁷² They also stressed, rather incongruously with their earlier claim that services were slight, the relief to Government expenditure that service tenure would bring.⁷³ At first they favoured the reduction in the land tax in conjunction with a renewed demand for services.⁷⁴ They later came round to the view that the demand for any share in the produce of service lands should cease "and in lieu of them that the Personal services be exacted as formerly".⁷⁵

Major General Doyle pressed for the abolition of the coconut tax. Acting on his own initiative he suspended the collection of the tax.⁷⁶ The Government of Fort St. George

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- 70 North to Wellesley, 5 Jan. 1799, Rev. Dept.
 71 Regulation 9 June 1797, 1664, Madras Rev. Proc.
 72 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart, 16 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
 73 " " " " " 6 Feb. 1798, " " "
 74 " " " " " 16 Aug. 1797, " " "
 75 " " " " " 6 Feb. 1798, " " "
 76 Doyle to Hobart, 10 April 1797, 29 April 1797, 1229, Madras Rev. Proc.

tenurial system to restore them to office. This change was embodied in the Proclamation of 3 July 1798. By the terms of the same Proclamation service tenures were to be restored. These reforms were to come into effect from the 1 September 1798. They therefore should be considered within Governor North's tenure of office.

The members of the Committee of Investigation at first with the exception of Alexander but later with his consent⁸⁵ recommended the restoration of the Uliyam and the Chicos. An obligation to perform service or pay a personal tax in its place was the custom of the island. This was one of their reasons. They also argued that the tax would bring in the substantial revenue of 30,000 Rds.⁸⁶ They however left the making of a decision on this matter to North.⁸⁷ We separate this suggestion of the Committee of Investigation from the rest of their recommendations because it met with a different fate.⁸⁸ North desisted from restoring the Uliyam. He thought that it was grating to the feelings" of the Muslims "as it is certainly oppressive and disgraceful". There is no evidence that the Chicos was collected in North's period. He does not seem to have distinguished this form of the personal tax from the Uliyam and it seems to have met the same oblivion. We shall consider this problem more closely when we come to examine North's land policy in Jaffnapatam and the other Tamil districts.

85 Comm.of Inv.to Hobart,12 Nov.1798,Comm.of Inv.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

88 North to Court of Directors,5 Mar.1799

With the arrival of Governor North the tenurial system of the pre-Andrews days was resurrected. This is the import of the Proclamation of 3 July 1798 whose contents we have already examined.

At this stage another problem forces itself upon our attention. Both Bertolacci⁸⁹ and Codrington⁹⁰ maintain that after the Andrews' reforms the gardens in the one tenth paying category escaped making payment. They seem to derive their view from Wood's Report on the Revenues of Ceylon in 1811. It is clear that there was no intention on the part of government to exempt these lands from paying dues. The Proclamation of 3 July 1798 remains silent on the matter. This Proclamation could be expected to express this change if such was the policy of the government. North also makes no statement to this effect. We are forced to conclude that if these gardens escaped taxation it certainly was not the intention of the government that they should do so.

As early as 5 January 1799 Governor North felt that the restoration of services had become difficult by virtue of the impact of Andrews' reforms.⁹¹ In these remarks we also glimpse in embryonic form the ideas which were to bulk largely in his later land reforms. He speaks of the need to register land in order to end the obscurity which befogged the varying contributions due from the various lands.⁹² He advocates that the

89 Bertolacci p 89

90 Codrington p 41

91 North to Wellesley, 5 Jan. 1799, Rev. Dept.

92 Ibid.

ownership of land should rest on an individual rather than a communal basis.⁹³ On this subject he said "This operation I am convinced ought to follow and not to precede the Increase of Commercial Spirit in the Country when the relative values of time and money will begin to be understood and become an object of calculation".⁹⁴ Again, "That mode of undivided Possession is moreover much engrafted in the Customs and Habits of Life that a change of it, however advantageous to Industry may have moral consequences which no Politician can appreciate and no riches repay".⁹⁵ We stress these remarks in order to demolish the image of North that arises from the strictures of Governor Maitland, his successor in office.⁹⁶ North was no doctrinaire Don Quixote rampaging among the land tenures of Ceylon. Nor was he to employ the imagery of Maitland,⁹⁷ an anachronistic Adam Smith reading out the virtues of a commercialised economy from the pages of "Wealth of Nations" to a mass of bewildered and witless feudal serfs.

Almost a year later Governor North offered to holders of service lands the option of relieving themselves from the obligation to service by paying one tenth of the produce. Lascoryns were enabled to escape service obligation by surrendering their accommodessans. No one was forced to make this change.⁹⁸ Landholders were given the choice of adopting it.

It is significant that the Mudaliyars and other headmen were

93 Ibid

94 Ibid

95 Ibid

96 De Silva p 347.

97 Ibid

98 North to Court of Directors, 30 Jan. 1800.

left out of this scheme. They, it seems, could not contract out of service by choice. Probably because the scheme was at an experimental stage.

By 3 May 1800, North had devised a larger scheme for changing the tenurial system with the headmen included within its scope. These reforms were to continue to be of a voluntary nature. At first the Proclamation was to take effect on 1 November 1800.⁹⁹ It was then put off to 1 May 1801.¹⁰⁰ Finally the date was set for 1 May 1802.¹⁰¹ The collection of the paddy dues was rented for a three year period. The reforms we are considering at the moment were closely joined to measures changing the amount of the paddy dues. It is probable that the implementation of all these reforms was put off for 1 May 1802 when the period of the paddy rents would end. With this decision came a vital change in the character of the reforms. They were to lose their voluntary nature and become compulsory.¹⁰²

In his letter of 5 October 1801 to a Hobart now dignified with the office of the President of the Board of Trade, North outlined his reasons for revoking service tenures. The people were less attached to the service tenure system than he at first had thought. Its efficiency suffered from being suspended for two years by Andrews' reforms. It encouraged the continuance of communal ownership and furnished the headmen with an opportunity to abuse their powers.

These reforms were to be put into effect as we have seen

98 North to Court of Directors, 30 Jan. 1800.

99 Proclamation 3 Sept. 1801, Public Dept.

100 Ibid

101 Ibid

102 Ibid

on 1 May 1802. Their implementation, therefore, falls in a period outside the scope of our research. We shall content ourselves with outlining these reforms in their various aspects, and considering the system that functioned in the interim period

The first question that arises is the amount of produce demanded by the state under the new dispensation. Service-tenure lands would have to pay a quarter of their produce when lowland, one tenth when highland. These were the terms of the Proclamation of 3 May 1800. It went on to define other tenures: "excepting where the said land be subject to the payment of Ande or any proportion amounting to or exceeding one fourth part the payment of which shall continue as heretofore". The meaning of this proviso was that while Ande lands continued on their old basis Ottu land where they comprised lowland would be faced with an enhanced levy. The Proclamation of 3 September 1801 changed these terms. Former service lands would be obliged to pay one tenth when highland, but when lowland they would be subjected to a levy of one fifth of the produce. This was less than the first demand. Other tenures when they were Malapala, Nellapala, Ratninde or Ande would have to part with a quarter of their produce.

Hamilton, Agent of Revenue for the Colombo districts, was quick to point out the inequitable implications of these proposals. ¹⁰³ Ottu lands would be subjected to new burdens in the form of the one quarter tax while the Ande Lands would be

103 Hamilton to Board of Rev. & Comm. 19 April 1802, 1 May 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

relieved from half their former payments. This would make for an invidious difference. North tried to defend his policy. The Proclamation 3 October 1801 would only affect lands within the service-tenure system. The payments due from lands outside the service-tenure system would be collected as before. ¹⁰⁴ It is difficult to see how North's argument meets the criticisms made by Hamilton. Hamilton's charge was that Ottu lands within the service tenure system would be inequitably burdened. Nothing that North says controverts that charge.

It must be noted that coconut gardens and other lands which had achieved a de facto nindagam status were to be placed within the ambit of these reforms. Whatever fate was to attend the efforts of the Government to collect taxes from these lands it certainly was not its intention to exempt them.

Another object of the reforms was to abolish accommodessans ¹⁰⁵ North in his letter to Hobart of the 5 October 1801 outlined these changes in greater detail. The Mudaliyars would receive C/ 42 Rds each per month with an additional allowance of 37 Rds to be used in maintaining eight Lascoryns and a Cangaan. A Muhandiram would receive as his salary 25 Rds a month with 8 Rds for the upkeep of two Lascoryns. Not all Mudaliyars and Muhandirams were to be employed. North took the view that the number of headmen in Dutch times had been unduly swelled. Redundant Mudaliyars would be indemnified with a pension of 25 Rds every month for the duration of their lives

104 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 1 May 1802, Rev. and Comm. Dept.
105 Proclamation 3 Sept. 1801, Public Dept.

while their counterparts among the Muhandirams would receive 15 Rds for a similar period. It is striking that the Mohottiar, the Arratges and the Vidaans were omitted from these calculations. The Mohottiar were translators. The Arratges were subordinate commanders of the Lascoryns acting under the Muhandirams. It is possible that it was North's intention to suppress these posts. The Vidaans were the administrative officers of the villages. It is very unlikely that the Government could have dispensed with their services. What seems more likely is that the effect of abolishing accommodessans upon these three classes of headmen had not been worked out by North at the time of his writing to Hobart.

It would be a fitting prologue to the discussion of the rest of North's reforms of service-tenure to consider at this stage the extent to which the Government made use of service-tenure labour. Describing the nature of personal services to Hobart the Committee of Investigation put down those performed by the Lascoryns and the Coolies as the most important.¹⁰⁶

About the Lascoryns more later. About the labourers they said "They were employed in cutting and removing timber, transferring provisions or stores, removing the Company's goods, clearing the jungles, digging canals, forming roads and (latterly) in planting and enclosing the cinnamon gardens - in short in the performance of every kind of labour within their own districts when ordered for the Public Service". This

106 Comm.of Inv.to Hobart, 6 Feb.1798, Comm.of Inv.

enumeration encourages the view that the Government would have been able to have these services performed without paying for them. The evidence of the records tells a different story.

The records are riddled with instances of coolies being paid money. They received money for transporting various commodities. We cite here a few examples. Ammunition from Colombo to Negombo. ¹⁰⁷ Medicine chests from Galle to Colombo. ¹⁰⁸ Timber in Padda-boats. ¹⁰⁹

Money was again the reward of the labourers when they were employed in the work of building: reconstructing the ravelin on the front of the Principal Bastion at Fort Ostenburgh in Trincomallee, ¹¹⁰ assembling the materials for bungalows for the Bengal troops at Trincomallee, dismantling these buildings after their use by the troops, ¹¹¹ repair of the bridge leading to Slave Island, ¹¹² building two guard houses at Galle, ¹¹³ building the Governor's Garden House. ¹¹⁴ These are a few illustrations from this class.

The unloading and storing of rice from the ships carrying this cargo from Bengal was paid for in money. This happened in the case of the ships Budree; Fateh Salem; Soliman; Shaw; ¹¹⁵ Caroline; Hydrossie; and the Samdamie.

Coolies forming part of the escort in General Macdouwall's Embassy to the Court of Kandy were paid in money. ¹¹⁶

- ¹⁰⁷ Mercer to Marriott, 29 July 1801, 4 Aug. 1801, Military Board.
¹⁰⁸ Dalrymple to Macpherson, 26 Dec. 1800, 30 Dec. 1800, Military Board.
¹⁰⁹ Gregory to Darrell, 10 Oct. 1800, 11 Nov. 1800, Military Board.
¹¹⁰ 10 Aug. 1801, Military Board.
¹¹¹ Ibid.
¹¹² Forrest to Wright, 30 Sept. 1800, 30 Sept. 1800, Military Board.
¹¹³ Hunter to Madge, 1 May 1800, 6 May 1800, Military Board.
¹¹⁴ Forrest to Wright, 14 Oct. 1799, 15 Oct. 1799, Military Board.
¹¹⁵ 1 May 1801, Military Board.
¹¹⁶ General Orders 8 Mar. 1800, Military Board.

The argument can be advanced that these coolies were paid money in addition to their accommodessans. If this were true they would still remain service-tenure labour. It is not true. The coolies performing the jobs we have just considered were sometime placed in two categories - Those with accommodessans and those without accommodessans.¹¹⁷ The former class was paid less than the latter, which was clearly outside the service-tenure system. This practice also disposes of another argument adverse to our findings. When coolies without accommodessans performed the same jobs as those within them it cannot be said that it was because their type of labour lay outside service-tenure. One other argument can embarrass us. The payment of money to labourers could have insinuated itself into the records because of the many checks which surrounded the making of money payments. They could well be exceptions elevated into prominence by the financial stringency of the Government. There is, however, an effective answer to this argument. Whenever the Government admonishes its officials to be less eager to hire labour because of its overriding anxiety to cut down expenses it exhorts them to make use of the store lascars.¹¹⁸ Store lascars were paid employees of the Government.¹¹⁹ In their financial distress the Government turned to the salvation of the store lascars and not service-tenure labour. What is more, when the store lascars were

117 Forrest to Kennedy, 1 Jan. 1801, 13 Jan. 1801, Military Board.
 118 Darrell to Wright, 11 Nov. 1800, 11 Nov. 1800, Military Board.
 119 General Orders, 19 Sept. 1799, Military Board.

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inadequate the Government reverted to hiring labour.

Other craftsmen who received a remuneration of money were
 Smiths, Hammermen, Bellows Boys,¹²¹ Bricklayers, Carpenters,¹²²
 Sawyers (probably those who sawed wood), Sweepers, Lamplighters,¹²³
 Doolie Bearers,¹²⁴ Thatchers,¹²⁵ Painters,¹²⁶ and Coopers.
 Bellows Boys, Hammermen, Lamplighters, Painters and Coopers
 could conceivably have been practitioners of skills unknown
 to the indigenous service-tenure system. The other services
 should have been available within it.

To gain a balanced view of this problem it would be
 profitable to look at it from another angle. What services
 were derived by the Government from the service-tenure system?

One important sphere in which labour of this type was used
 was in the cinnamon department. The Salagama caste¹²⁷ were
 employed in collecting cinnamon with remuneration in the form of
 accommodessans.¹²⁸ The Dutch had organized the members of this
 caste for this purpose on a separate footing from the other
 castes.¹²⁹ According to the Committee of Investigation¹³⁰
 the Lascoryns were those "who occupied the necessary posts along
 the limits of their district, watched its roads, guarded the
 coasts, assisted in maintaining the peace of the country under
 the authority of the Mudaliyars and in time of war assembled

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- 120 Blair to Macpherson, 12 Jan. 1802, 12 Jan. 1802, Military Board.
 121 Arbuthnot to Macpherson, 4 Jan. 1802, 12 Jan. 1802, Military Board.
 122 Forrest to Wright, 14 Oct. 1799, 15 Oct. 1799, Military Board.
 123 Blair to Macpherson, 12 Jan. 1802, 12 Jan. 1802, Military Board.
 124 Vilant to Marriott, 7 July 1801, 14 July 1801, Military Board.
 125 20 Nov. 1800, Military Board.
 126 Darrell to Wright, 30 Sept. 1800, 30 Sept. 1800, Military Board.
 127 Referred to as Chalias in the records.
 128 Minute by the Governor, 15 May 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 129 Collected Revenues, De Neuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 130 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart, 6 Feb. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

armed for its defence". In our period these Lascoryns were employed by the Mudaliyars and Muhandirams to assist them in their functions. They were generally paid with accomodessans. It should not be supposed that their military functions were very wide. Serving in Ceylon at this time were the Nineteenth Foot of the Nineteenth Yorkshire Regiment, the Fiftyfirst Regiment or the 2nd Yorkshire Regiment, the Sixtyfifth Regiment and for some time the Eightieth Regiment. North had also formed a Malay Regiment, and the Ceylon Native infantry had also taken shape. Soldierly duties would have fallen more readily on the shoulders of these organized units than on the more amorphous body of Lascoryns. Labour from the service-tenures was also used for the catching of elephants. This occupation was known as kraaling. A watch on stray elephants whenever necessary was also organized on this basis.

These were the only spheres in which labour from the service-tenures was organized in a systematic way. There are references in the records to a sporadic use of service-labour. It is instructive to glance at these cases because they demonstrate the diffidence of the Government. We find Honner, the Commandant at Matara, saying, "I beg leave to represent that these are Native Armourers at Matara who have accommodations

131 North to Hobart, 5 Oct. 1801, Public Dept.

132 North to Court of Directors, 30 Jan. 1800.

133 Collected Papers on the History of the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon 1798-1805 L.J.B. Turner p 242.

134 Turner p 243

135 " p 244

136 North to Court of Directors, 31 Dec. 1801.

137 " " " " " 10 Aug. 1800.

138 Hamilton to North, 14 Nov. 1801, 15 Nov. 1801, Rev. Dept.

139 Resolution 17 June 1800, Rev. Dept.

for doing the garrison duty and when called on must serve for
 one sack of paddy per month".¹⁴⁰ Then comes the significant
 sentence, "At present there is no order for employing them".¹⁴¹
 So these rights had been in abeyance until the vigilance of
 Honner brought them to the notice of the Government. The
 principal carpenter at Colombo is vexed at the difficulty of
 transporting timber.¹⁴² In reporting his complaint the official
 remarks: "I am told the Houstup Mudeliaar Madenaik is in
 possession of a grant of ground which he holds from the late
 Dutch company upon condition of assisting in supplying timber
 etc. for the Public Works of the place". The implication of
 this remark surely is that until that time this service had
 not been made use of by the Government. Jewell, Resident at
 Batticoloa makes an interesting communication to his superiors
 in Colombo.¹⁴³ "I have before neglected to remark that the
 fishermen are under an obligation to give Government a certain
 number of days work in the year, I believe twelve, to bring the
 grain from the Godowns in the country to the stores. Pray Sir,
 ask his Excellency if he wishes that to be continued". The
 force of the phrases "I have before neglected to remark", "I
 believe" and "if he wishes that to be continued" proclaims the
 precarious nature of this service. Again when discussing the
 improving of navigability in the Kaymelle Canal the Board of
 Revenue and Commerce remarks "The Board imagines that this

140 Honner to Wright, 17 Sept. 1800, 23 Sept. 1800, Military Board.

141 Ibid.

142 Green to Macpherson, 30 May 1801, 2 June 1801, Military Board.

143 Jewell to Boyd, 7 May 1801, 23 May 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

expense may be diminished by employing the service of from 200 to 300 of such of the coolies as enjoy accommodessans".¹⁴⁴ The Board of Revenue and Commerce is not usually given to using words like "imagines". This word once more exposes the uncertainty of the Government in the realm of service-tenure. We can multiply such instances. We must also hasten to say that there are other instances where the Government uses service-labour and when its voice is freer from doubt. They are, however, not of a systematic nature and partake more of the character of the proverbial solitary swallow. They in nowise imperil our conclusion which is that in this period the British Government more often than not paid for labour with money.

Such a conclusion demands an explanation. What North said¹⁴⁵ at the outset of his period of office is worthy of repetition. "I have no doubt that although the restoration of the Neynde Paravenie Lands will be highly popular the exacting of the personal service by which they are held will meet with difficulties and objections unfelt and unthought of before their late suppression". This was not the misgiving of a fledgling Governor new to office and as yet uninitiated into the complexities of land tenure. Experience reinforced his early scepticism. In 1801 he gave as a reason for revoking the service tenures the reluctance of the people to resume the fetters of service obligation after Andrews' reforms had

¹⁴⁴ Hamilton to Board of Rev.& Comm. 7 June 1801, 19 June 1801, Board of Rev.& Comm.

¹⁴⁵ North to Wellesley, 5 Jan. 1799, Rev. Dept.

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removed them. Such a state of affairs would have compelled the Government to try to attract labour with the incentive of money.

There was another important factor. The Government was encumbered with an ignorance as to which lands were service lands and which were not. We have already caught a glimpse of this predicament of theirs in the diffident language in which they couched their claim to services. We must for the moment defer a closer examination of this aspect of their policy. We shall find the Government often and from the very beginning confessing to such ignorance. This would once again have led them to employ labour by paying for it with money.

So far we have looked at the attitude of the British Government to employing service-labour. What change in this attitude did North's reforms introduce? The Proclamations of 3 May 1800 and 3 September 1801 abolished service-tenure. The right to land would accrue from the payment of a share of the produce. Labour whenever used would be paid with money. The ownership of land was not in the future to carry with it the burden of service-labour.

There is one aspect of the abolition of service-labour which has not received the attention which is its due. Those who had given their labour in the past for a requittal in the form of ownership of land would still be compelled to give their labour to the state. The reforms did not confer on them a right

146 North to Court of Directors, 5 Oct. 1801.

to withhold their labour or to offer it to employers other than the state. The only change in their lot was that their efforts would be rewarded with money and not with land. Whenever the people entertained contrary ideas the Government hastened to disabuse them. Gibson, Agent of Revenue and Commerce at Matara inquired whether the Mudaliyars enjoyed the right to subject recalcitrant individuals to a chastisement of twenty-five strokes from a Rattan "as I am totally unable without their assistance to procure coolies to send Government to Galle".¹⁴⁷ Such a right was conferred upon the Mudaliyars.¹⁴⁸ "Those who disobeyed Government orders", those "who refused to appear" and those "who deserted" would be punished.¹⁴⁹ Smitsz, Agent of Revenue and Commerce at Galle, was enjoined to communicate to the Lascoryns and Cinnamon peelers within his jurisdiction that their obligation to service stood upon the old footing.¹⁵⁰ In the new order service would be paid with money. It nevertheless would be compulsory.

We have examined North's reforms so far in the setting of the Sinhalese provinces. Let us now look at the Jaffna districts and the rest of the Tamil Provinces. We have seen that North abandoned the Uliyam and let the Chicos also fall into desuetude. By these means the difference between the Jaffna districts and the Sinhalese districts was increased. So was the difference

147 Gibson to Arbuthnot, 28 May 1802, 1 June 1802, Public Dept.

148 1 June 1802, Advertisement, Public Dept.

149 Ibid.

150 Resolution 11 May 1802, Public Dept; Board of Rev. & Comm. to Hamilton, 8 Oct. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

with those other Tamil districts where service-tenure existed.

In November 1798 Barbut, the Collector at Jaffnapatam, drew North's attention to the very moderate nature of the land tax in Jaffna. It amounted to three fanams on every twenty "ladses". Such an area could yield fifty to eighty parras of paddy worth six to nine fanams each parra.¹⁵¹ Major Agnew had also made the same observation.¹⁵² In April 1800 North advised Barbut to abolish the land tax in Jaffnapatam and introduce instead a tythe on wet and dry grain "if it can be accomplished without serious opposition".¹⁵³ De Silva believes that this change was introduced. He also suggests that the Government did not collect the tree tax and the house tax on the basis that the withdrawal of these was the quid pro quo for the new tax. There is no evidence to support either conclusion. The records remain silent. They do not speak of an inquiry for information which could be expected to have preceded the new tax or of an increase in revenue or of any of the popular opposition which was apprehended by North and which would have been a not unnatural sequel. We are forced, therefore, to conclude that this tax did not mature beyond the first tentative suggestion of North and that the taxes of Jaffnapatam continued to be comprised of the Land Tax in an unaltered form, the House Tax, the Tree Tax and the paddy tythe in the four provinces.

Where there was service-tenure in the other Tamil provinces

151 Barbut to North, 8 Nov. 1798, 12 Nov. 1798, Public Dept.

152 Agnew to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

153 North to Barbut, 1 April 1800, Public Dept.

North's revocation of it would have made an impact. Former service lands would pay a tax of one tenth or one fifth depending on whether they were highland or lowland. Labour would be remunerated with money.

In Batticoloa a special reform was introduced. A Vidaan was to receive one twentieth part of the paddy dues from eight provinces, an acting Vidaan one fortieth part and a Podie ¹⁵⁴ one fifth of the paddy share of his province. In a letter to the Court of Directors of 18 February 1801, North refers to this salary scheme as an accomplished fact. There is no mention of Mudaliyars. It is probable that the Podie was the local variant of this official.

As we shall see in the chapter on Agriculture, one of the measures adopted by North to increase agricultural productivity was to convert the salaries of the headmen to a share of the paddy produce. This motive explains the measure we are considering at the moment. To understand its restriction to Batticoloa we must look elsewhere. According to North communal ownership was a potent obstacle to the development of agriculture. It was also his view that this baneful phenomenon was confined to the Sinhalese areas. It is not surprising, therefore, that his ventures to develop agriculture should be attempted in a non-Sinhalese area like Batticoloa.

North's land reforms which will be examined from this stage onward concern the Tamil Provinces and the Sinhalese provinces

alike. The majority of them are also reforms that did not have to await 1 May 1802 for their consummation. The first of them that we shall take up is registration. In Dutch times registration of title to land could be effected by several institutions. There were the Weeskamers, Landraads and other Courts of Justice. The Thombos were special registers of titles to land. They were the most important form of registration. The deeds of a notary also enjoyed some validity. In the Andrews period these institutions were not used. This is the implication to be gathered from the recommendation of the Committee of Investigation and Alexander's plea for the restoration of the Thombos.

The Court of Equity appointed by General de Meuron was entrusted with the registration of title to land. Those with dubious titles to lands could have them safeguarded by a ratification from the Court. This Court did not succeed in putting registration on a satisfactory basis. This is another implication of the complaints of the Committee of Investigation and Alexander which we have previously considered.

With North the Thombos of the Dutch were recognised. "A tax of 5 per cent on the sale or transfer of property in lands, houses and other immovables" which was a levy of the Dutch was

155 Proclamation, 20 Feb. 1800, Public Dept.

156 Farmed Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

157 Proclamation 20 Feb. 1800, Public Dept.

158 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart, 16 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

159 Alexander to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

160 De Meuron to Harris, 21 Mar. 1798, 3 April 1798, 2319, Madras Rev. Proc.

161 Resolution 28 Jan. 1800, Public Dept.

also renewed.¹⁶² This tax would have secured registration in an indirect way. There was also the Court of Equity until North abolished it in 1798.¹⁶³ North had little regard for the Dutch Thombos. He complained of the "numerous irregularities" they contained "their great inaccuracy" and "the great facility with which forged extracts" could be taken from them.¹⁶⁴

In February 1799, North devised a scheme for registering "the number of the possessions and the people belonging to them". There were to be two copies of such registers. One was to be in the keeping of the Mudaliyar of the Korale and the other in that of the Collector. The Landraads would hear disputes about these registers.¹⁶⁵ This attempt does not seem to have come to much. If it did there would have been no reason for North's later attempts to establish an efficient system of registration. North established an Extraordinary Commission at Matara to enquire into the state of property regulations at the time the Thombos was destroyed.¹⁶⁶ By 2 July 1801¹⁶⁷ it had not completed its work and was dissolved to make way for the new scheme embodied in the Proclamation of 20 February 1800.

Before considering this scheme we should have a look at North's infant survey department.¹⁶⁸ It had for its main aims the settling of the boundaries of private property and the

162 Ibid.

163 North to Court of Directors, 25 Feb. 1799.

164 " " " " " 30 Aug. 1800.

165 North to Collectors of Colombo and Galle, 2 Feb. 1799, Rev. Dept.

166 These Thombos had been destroyed by the Dutch in the war with the English in 1795.

167 Resolution 2 July 1801, Public Dept.

168 Proclamation 16 June 1800, Public Dept.

preventing of encroachment upon Government ground. It was also invested with the wider ambition of improving agriculture and commerce. A Surveyor-General was appointed at Colombo with assistant surveyors at Negombo, Matara, Trincomallee and Jaffna. Surveys could be asked for either by the Landraads or by individuals.

With the cooperation of the Survey Department North made another attempt at an efficient registration system.¹⁶⁹ The function of registering was allocated to the Landraads and the Civil Courts. In areas where they had concurrent jurisdiction the Civil Courts alone would perform this task. From the 1 January 1806 the Thombos would not be evidence of title to land. In the five years intervening between this date and the date of the Proclamation they would continue to be valid. The new registers would have precedence over deeds drawn up by notaries. Deeds made by Collectors and Assistant Collectors in the past were to be valid. So also were those given by Courts of Justice, Landraads and Weeskamera. Everybody acquiring title to land would have to prove it in the Courts within six months. No title would be valid unless accompanied by a map from the Survey Department at the rate of half a Rix-dollar for every English mile. Properties exceeding the value of 25 Rds. would need evaluation by commissioners. Stamps at the rate of 1 Rd. for properties of the value of 100 Rds. would have to be used. Where the property was less than 25 Rds. in value a prodeo

169 Proclamation 20 Feb.1800,Public Dept.

stamp would suffice. The sale, transfer, donation, devise or inheritance of immovables would require new registration and a new survey. In the case of mortgages of property already registered no fresh evaluation or registration would be necessary. Sale by execution or by an authorized auctioneer also would be free from these processes. Joinville complains that the granting of title deed before the survey enabled would-be proprietors to escape paying for the latter.¹⁷⁰ We can gather from this statement that the new scheme was put into effect. It did not, however, meet with much success. After two years experience North admitted failure. He gave as causes of this unhappy result the paucity of surveyors, the uncertain nature of tenurial rights and the reluctance of the people to have their titles examined.¹⁷¹

The introduction of individual ownership of land was a much cherished object with North. He was writing about it as early as 5 January 1799.¹⁷² One of his objections to the Thombos was that they encouraged communal ownership.¹⁷³ The hope of ending communal ownership was one of his reasons for revoking the service-tenures.¹⁷⁴ He declared that the "establishment of private property" was "the great object of all my institutions".¹⁷⁵ As we shall see in the chapter on Agriculture North considered communal ownership as a major obstacle to the development of

170 Joinville to Boyd, 15 Mar. 1801, 18 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept.

171 North to Hobart, 10 Sept. 1802, Public Dept.

172 North to Wellesley, 5 Jan. 1799, Rev. Dept.

173 Proclamation 20 Feb. 1800, Public Dept.

174 Proclamation 3 Sept. 1801, Public Dept.

175 North to Hobart, 5 Oct. 1801, Public Dept.

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 agriculture. His advocacy of single ownership would have been reinforced by this consideration. North sought to ensure private ownership by incorporating into the Proclamation of 3 May 1800 the clause that if lands in undivided tenure were not divided they would be visited with a tax of one fifth of their produce. This provision had to await the 1 May 1802 for its fulfillment. There were two other methods by which he intended to secure his ends. Land could be registered only in the form of single proprietorship.¹⁷⁷ Again grants of land would only be made to single proprietors.¹⁷⁸ As we have seen the schemes for registering land were in the main failures. To whatever extent land was registered it would have entailed private ownership. The records of the Revenue Department and the Commerce Department recite many instances of Ratmaherre land grants. It is very likely that these lands were given to individual owners.

In the beginning North's attitude to the mortgaging of land was ambivalent. He wanted "to prevent all future extortions".¹⁷⁹ So he decreed that the rate of interest on mortgages already made should be reduced to 12 per cent. Interest on future mortgages should be restricted to 8 per cent.¹⁸⁰ The Proclamation of 12 March 1800 sought to change the law. North was passing over from restricting mortgaging to supporting it. The interest rate on sums of 500 Rds. or more would be 8 per cent. On those

176 North to Board of Rev.& Comm.19 June 1801,6 July 1801,Board of Rev.& Comm.

177 Proclamation 20 Feb.1800,Public Dept.

178 North to Jewell,6 Mar.1801,Rev.Dept.

179 North to Court of Directors,30 Jan.1800.

180 Ibid.

of 200 Rds. or less it was to be 12 per cent. Twelve per cent thus becomes a permissible rate for new mortgages. Higher rates of interest in both cases were to be regarded as pro tante repayments of capital. The Proclamation of 19 August 1800 went further. The rate of interest on sums above the value of 200 Rds. was to be raised from 8 per cent to 12 per cent. Speaking of the earlier rate he said "such a return is not equal to the value of the use of money within these settlements". The mortgaging and alienation of lands was developing in this period. North's policy was aiding this tendency. After the revocation of service-tenures on 1 May 1802 service lands came to be included within this process. The problem grew to serious proportions in later times and a law was needed to safeguard service lands from alienation. This, however, is a matter which falls outside our period.

In making grants of lands the Dutch practice was to exempt donees of lowlands from taxation for three years and afterwards to demand one tenth of their produce. Donees of highlands were required to grow fruit-bearing trees on one third of their land on account of the Government. They were given a period of three years in which to do this.

Grants of lands are not recorded in Andrews' period. Nor are they in that of the Committee of Investigation. General de Meuron urged that individuals be granted "as much land as they

181 Regulation No 8, 1809.

182 Mcdouall to Champagne, 10 June 1799, 11 June 1799, Rev. Dept.

can cultivate". ¹⁸³ This recommendation was bequeathed to North.

In order to "spread the spirit of industry and agriculture" widely North decreed that waste lands be granted free of tax for two years. After that they would be faced with a demand for one tenth of their produce. ¹⁸⁴ Lowlands and highlands were lumped together without distinction in this category of wasteland. This was law from 26 February 1799. The chapter on Agriculture will disclose that North hoped by the grant of new lands to escape the baneful communal ownership. The grant of waste lands which were in this sense new lands is thus closely connected with North's agricultural policy. By 10 June 1799 there was more change. Lowlands and highlands comprised in land grants were to be held free of tax for five years with an obligation to pay ¹⁸⁵ one tenth of their produce from that time onwards. A difference between lowlands and highlands has emerged. The Proclamation of 3 May 1800 introduced a limit to the size of land grants. They would be four ammunams when lowground and eight ammunams when highground. Such lands could be held free of tax for five years. After that the highlands would have to pay one tenth and the lowlands one quarter. We should notice that the demand made from lowlands of this sort was higher than the one fifth demanded from the lowlands which had belonged to the service-tenure system. The frequency with which changes were made in these regulations betokens the Government's ignorance of land tenures. This is a problem which will be discussed more

183 Farmed Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

184 North to Court of Directors, 26 Feb. 1799.

185 McDouall to Champagne, 10 June 1799, 11 June 1799, Rev. Dept.

fully later. Land grants are a recurring theme of the records of the Revenue and Commerce Departments. Candidates for such grants would present petitions to the Agents of Revenue of their districts. These petitions would either be rejected by the Agent of Revenue or with his approval be presented to the Governor for ratification. This shows that although the terms of these land grants were embodied in the Proclamation of 3 May 1800 they were put into effect immediately and independently of it.¹⁸⁶

Did the Government resume possession of private lands? This is the next question that we must ask. The Government threatened with forfeiture unenterprising cultivators who allowed their land to languish in an uncultivated state.¹⁸⁷ Those faced with this catastrophe possessed good titles to their lands. This did not make any difference. In this matter the Government was not disposed to treat them with special favour. There were, however, methods from which the Government balked. Gibson, Agent of Revenue and Commerce for Matara proposed that renters entitled to receive Government dues should be mulcted of a portion of them if landowners within their jurisdiction kept land uncultivated.¹⁸⁸ The Government demurred against this proposals.¹⁸⁹

There is one more aspect of North's land reforms to be considered. During the year 1801 when there was talk of the Crown taking over from the company the governing of Ceylon, North

186 North to Jewell, 6 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept.

187 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 29 June 1801, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

Board of Rev. & Comm. to Smitsz, 11 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

" " " " " " Johnstone, 28 Sept. 1801, Board of Rev. and Comm.

188 Gibson to Board of Rev. & Comm. 6 July 1801, 9 July 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

189 Ibid.

was reminded by Dundas and Hobart that Europeans should not be allowed to hold land outside Colombo for more than seven years. North gave warning of the difficulties such a policy would meet. There were Dutch and Portuguese settlers with land. There were also the offspring of union between Dutch and the Portuguese and the indigenous races. They were known as Burghers. They were also owners of land. At first he promised to buy the lands of all three classes of owners. We find that later he has changed his mind. North wrote to Smitsz that "no person was obliged to register himself as a European who was not born in Europe or America or subject to some Prince or state in those parts of the world". Such an interpretation of the word European would let the Burghers escape from its confines. Second generation Dutch and Portuguese would also escape. First generation Dutch and Portuguese settlers could exempt themselves by renouncing their allegiance to the country of their birth.

We have examined the land policy of North and his predecessors from a number of aspects. Our story would, however, be incomplete if we do not give attention to a problem of demarcating the service lands and also of correctly placing non-service lands in their various categories. The records are permeated with this uncertainty and we can hear its voice from early times. Talking of service-lands Alexander says "but in many cases the very nature of the services upon which they were granted is not known". When recommending the restoration of

190 North to Hobart, 5 Oct. 1801, Public Dept; Extract of a letter from Dundas to North, North to Wellesley 6 Oct. 1801, 20 Nov. 1801, No. 7 Bengal Ship. and Comm. Cons.

191 North to Hobart 5 Oct. 1801, North to Hobart 13 Dec. 1801 Public Dept.

192 North to Smitsz 6 June 1802, Public Dept.

193 Alexander to North 17 Oct. 1798, 17 Oct. 1798, Rev. Dept.

Thombos the same official urges "but I trust the Committee will fully agree with me in the great necessity of adopting something of the kind for the security of private property and ascertaining accurately the value of the landed revenue of government".¹⁹⁴

North did not put any faith in the Thombos. So this problem was perpetuated. What is important is not whether the Thombos were accurate or not. What is important is that the British Government thought they were not and, therefore, deprived themselves of their assistance. In his first attempt to register lands North said "The precise extent and value of the lands will be examined afterwards by survey. My present object is to have the number of those Possessions and of the Persons belonging to them distinctly defined that the nature and duration of their labour and the frequency of its recurrence may be rendered certain and unalterable and no longer subject to the interest or caprice of their immediate superiors."¹⁹⁵ Even after the Proclamations of 3 May 1800 and 3 September 1801 North admitted to ignorance. In discussing legal reforms he spoke of the "inconvenient and uncertain tenure of their lands".¹⁹⁶ He turned to various institutions for succour - the inferior tribunals¹⁹⁷ and the Sub-Committees of Superintendence.¹⁹⁸ From these he looked for information. The Survey Department was also expected to rescue him. This was the *raison d'etre* of all his schemes for registration. The failure of every one of them ensured the

194 Alexander to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

195 North to Collectors of Colombo and Galle 2 Feb. 1799. Rev. Dept.

196 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.

197 Ibid.

198 These were auxiliaries of the committee *inter alia* administering charity.

permanence of this problem.

So deeply ingrained a drawback would have had consequences. We choose to be cautious in this matter. There is not enough evidence to establish these results beyond the shadow of doubt. There is enough for speculation. The first of these probable results is the conversion of service-lands into non-service lands. Greenhill, Superintendent of the Cinnamon Department, declares that the land titles of some of the Salagama Caste will not bear too close a scrutiny.¹⁹⁹ Orr, Resident at Mahagampattu, makes a significant statement. "I was told that during the Dutch Government four hundred and seventy portions of land called accommodessans were granted to as many persons for the express purpose of keeping in repair the banks of this tank; that these regulations, accommodessans and their respective proprietors still exist but since the accession of the English to the sovereignty of Ceylon they have been unattended to and the holders of the ground continue to retain their lands without fulfilling their part of the contract".²⁰⁰ This evidence supports the probability that service-lands became non-service lands. It is not enough to be conclusive.

One probable result we have already considered. This is that lack of knowledge of the service-tenure lands drove the Government to hire labour with money.

Another probable result is that the Government could not prevent the Mudaliyars and other head-men from making use of

199 Greenhill to North, 2 Nov. 1798, 3 Jan. 1799, Comm. Dept.
200 A description of Ceylon J. Cordiner p 85.

service-labour for their own purposes. As we have seen one of North's reasons for instituting registration was this: "but above all things to fix it in such a manner that it will no longer depend on the arbitrary pleasure of the Mudaliyars"²⁰¹.

We find in the Proceedings of the Military this statement"...

The extent to which tenants of certain lands were expected to perform labour. But to what extent or under what stipulations I have not yet learned for the Mudaliyars and Head-Moormen take every means in their power which is certainly ample, to conceal information that might deprive them of some of the opportunities which they now have of constantly employing for their private emolument the people paid with land by the Public for Public Services"²⁰².

Greenhill finds in his department "an infinite number of low-caste people performing at present no other service than those of the different head-men mostly without any pay or subsistence whatever."²⁰³ These are a few illustrations which do not exhaust this type of suspicion by the Government. Together they establish that the Government held this belief. They do not, however, prove that the Mudaliyars abused their power. Here we must once again fall back on probability. The Mudaliyars ought to have had the knowledge which the British officials lacked. The people could deceive the ignorant British official. Much greater ingenuity would have been needed to escape the clutches of the Mudaliyars. It must have required great self-abnegation on the part of these officials to avoid abusing this

²⁰¹ North to Court of Directors 26 Feb.1799.

²⁰² Dickson to Kennedy 10 April 1799, 15 April 1799, Military Board

²⁰³ Greenhill to North 5 Nov.1799, 8 Nov.1799, Comm.Dept.

power when they could have done so with impunity. It would demand from us a credulity of similar proportions to believe that they did not do so.

It will be profitable to compare the service-tenure system with the system of renting. In the former land was burdened with an obligation to service. This was a form of taxation. As Lord Hobart said ²⁰⁴ everybody was taxed "in the object of his profession". The latter was also, as we have seen in the ²⁰⁵ chapter on renting, in essence a form of taxation.

The two systems were, however, sharply different from each other. The renting system need have had no connexion with land. The service-tenure system was grounded upon the ownership of land. The service-tenure system was on a contractual basis - land for service. The renting system had a different ethos. The Government offered no compensation for taxation. We have seen the renting system advancing. The service-tenure system was declining. The growth of the one would have gone some way to cause the decay of the other. One belonged to the old society - the other to the new.

Our story is now complete. Non-service lands had outgrown service-lands when the British came to Ceylon. The attempt to consummate this process undertaken by North, therefore, does not seem quixotic. The administration also found the labour services attached to service-tenure eluding them. Therefore their desire to end the service-tenure system was not strange.

204 Chapter II p 66

205 Chapter I p 64

North cried out for the birth of a system of private property. The instruments he chose were registration and the eradication of communal ownership. Here he was going too fast and too soon. Social consciousness at this time in Ceylon was not suited to this change. The Headmen were also not disposed to assist him. They tried to turn the system of service-tenure to their own use. They could have been the mid-wives of the new system. This they refused to do. So North's scheme was still-born.

CHAPTER THREE

Agriculture

The term stepchild could well supply an alternative title to this chapter. Agriculture could be called the stepchild of our period because the Government showed little interest in it compared with their other policies. The need of ransacking the records in order to ascertain the Government's agricultural policy also emphasizes its insignificant nature. In the pre-North period the predominant view of the Government officials was that as a source of revenue it was unworthy of much attention. North, however, showed a greater interest in agriculture. Nevertheless when we reflect that his agricultural policy as such was grounded upon other policies destined to meet with little success we find no reason to abandon our metaphor.

By agriculture we mean the cultivation of crops mainly of the nature of grains by the inhabitants for their own subsistence. Alexander, expressing his views about the problems facing the British administration when the Committee of Investigation was ending its labours, made two proposals which concerned agriculture. His first suggested that the period for which the collection of paddy dues was farmed should be extended to three years so that the renter could have enough time in which to try to increase productivity.¹ His second pointed out that the termination of these rents, occurring as they did during harvest time, gave rise

1 Alexander to Comm.of Inv.10 Nov.1798,10 Nov.1798,Comm.of Inv.

to quarrels between the renter and his successor. He suggested that the termination of the rents should be made to coincide with the ending of the year.² As we shall see North adopted the first of these proposals. Apart from Alexander's proposals the officials of the pre-North period did not give their minds to improving agriculture.

The reason for this state of affairs can be elicited from whatever remarks were made on the subject by the officials of the period. Hobart's testimony was that unlike conditions "upon the coast" in Ceylon the revenue to be gathered from the cultivation of grain was negligible. In his own quaint words "it is seconding to almost every other article of taxation".³ The Committee of Investigation took the same view: "In most other countries to whose customs our general Asiatic system of Revenue owes its origins the crop of grains forms the basis on which the Revenue of the state is chiefly calculated; Here the case is widely different".⁴ They went on to say that the "territorial revenue"⁵ "can form no criterion of the value of Ceylon". De Meuron observed that in Dutch times the production of rice was so inadequate even for the consumption of the inhabitants that it had to be imported from abroad.⁶ Alexander, while remarking on the meagreness of the agricultural revenue, attributed it to the indifference of the Dutch Government. It is true that the remarks we have cited do not establish that agriculture was deliberately neglected by the British Government. They highlight, however, the

2 Ibid.

3 Hobart to Comm.of Inv.9 June 1797, 14 Aug. 1797, Comm.of Inv.

4 Comm.of Inv.to Hobart 6 Feb.1798, No.12, 13 April 1798, Bengal

5 Ibid.

Pol.Cons.

6 Farmed Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm.of Inv.

view of the Government that the cultivation of grain was a negligible source of revenue. This attitude can account for the British Government's neglect of agriculture to be observed in the pre-North period.

There is a significant change in the nature of the remarks about agriculture expressed by the officials of the North period. Davy Robertson in his memorandum on Ceylon's natural and commercial products attributed the responsibility for the paucity of land revenue to the lack of encouragement given by the Government, the indolence of the Sinhalese and the "over mightiness" of the Vellale⁷ caste. It is important to note that Robertson's statement implicitly includes the British administration among the culprits responsible for the neglect of agriculture. He seems to be also inclined to the view that measures could be taken to increase the revenue from agricultural sources. Dundas felt that until agriculture was improved and a "better state of subsistence" brought about, British rule in Ceylon would be on a precarious footing. He counselled a change of policy on the part of the British Government taking the form of a greater encouragement of agricultural rather than commercial production.⁸ North told the Court of Directors that he was using every means to encourage and increase the number of cultivators and impress them with the goodwill of the Government.⁹ It is left to be seen by considering North's policy in detail how it measured up in practice to the promise contained in these remarks.

North regarded "the tenure of property by families in

7 Robertson's memorandum Ceylon volume 54.

8 Douglas Papers by S.G. Perera p 37.

9 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct.1799.

undivided moeity" as "one of the principal obstacles to the increase of Agricultural Industry among the Cynghalese".¹⁰ According to this view the establishment of private ownership of land was an indispensable pre-requisite for a successful agricultural policy. As we have seen in the chapter on "land" North resorted to several methods to achieve his objective. The Proclamation of 3 May 1800 threatened lands held in undivided tenure with a higher tax. As we know, the implementation of the measure was postponed for 1 May 1802. Therefore during our period this device remained ineffectual. It was also decreed that titles to land could only be registered in the form of single proprietorship.¹¹ As we have already witnessed, North's several attempts to register titles to land met with failure.¹² Grants of lands were also to be made to single proprietors.¹³ This measure also did not achieve much success. We shall deal with it more fully soon. The attempt to create private ownership in land was, therefore, a failure on every side. Clearly North set much store on the realisation of this aim.

Grants of waste land was another method by which North hoped "to spread the spirit of industry and agriculture"¹⁴ - (By industry on this occasion he could only have meant the quality of diligence.) As we have just seen these grants were only made on the basis of single ownership. Such land grants were exempted from all taxes for a period of two years in order to encourage cultivation.¹⁵

10 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan.1800.
 11 Proclamation 20 Feb.1800,Public Dept.
 12 Chapter II pp 101 ff.
 13 North to Jewell 6 Mar.1801,Rev.Dept.
 14 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb.1799.
 15 Ibid.

Lands remaining uncultivated after this period would revert to Government.¹⁶ Clearly the Government, with the aid of these measures, was trying to ensure the cultivation of these lands. As we learnt in the chapter on "land" a certain amount of land grants of this sort were made in our period.¹⁷ However, the number of these land grants as set down in the records is not much. In comparison with the area of the land already under cultivation they are unimportant. During our period the increase of cultivation by means of land grants did not attain to much success. They have, however, an aspect which deserves to be highlighted. Waste lands by their nature fell outside the sphere of lands already under cultivation. It seems that by concentrating upon them North was trying to avoid the bane of family ownership which according to him fettered agriculture on the older lands.

We discovered in our chapter on commercial products that Tolfrey wished to convert the Government forests into timber preserves.¹⁸ North on the other hand hoped to see the cultivation of timber flourish on private lands. He regarded the Government forests as a source for land grants. In this way jungle land would also be put to a more profitable use.¹⁹ The land grants spoken of here would in all probability have been the same as the land grants we have just considered in the earlier paragraph. We separate them in order to demonstrate North's enthusiasm for agriculture even to the point of sacrificing the development of a commercial product provided that he could begin anew and so

16 Ibid.

17 Chapter II p 107

18 Chapter IV p 205

19 North to Wellesley 6 July 1800, No. 167, 18 Dec. 1800, Bengal Pol. & Sec. Cons

evade the obnoxious system of family ownership.

Before we turn to special aspects we should examine North's attitude to the cultivation of dry grain as part of his general agricultural policy. By common acceptance dry grains refer to all grains other than paddy which were cultivated in Ceylon. North appointed a commission consisting of Barbut, Carr and Thomas Young to inquire into conditions in the Wannia²⁰ (The Wannia is an area in the north of Ceylon within what is known as the dry zone). One of the proposals made by this commission was that the cultivation of dry grains should be encouraged in the Wannia²¹ districts. They remarked on the reluctance of the inhabitants of the area to grow this sort of grain and suggested as means of overcoming it the offer of premiums and the exhortation of the inhabitants by the collector.²² While on a journey through Tangalle Orr observed that kurakkan could be grown with success in the²³ area. There is no evidence that North bestirred himself to give effect to these suggestions. Apart from the neglected proposals of the Commissioners of the Wannia and William Orr there was no special enthusiasm shown by the British administration to promote the cultivation of dry grains.

It is time to examine the Government's policy in relation to the methods of cultivation. One of the instructions given by North to the Commissioners of the Wannia was to explore the prospects²⁴ for improving the tanks in those districts. The commissioners

20 Commissioners of Wannia to North 3 Mar.1800,15 Mar.1800,Rev. Dept.
 21 " " " " " 13 April 1800,5 May 1800,Public Dept.
 22 Ibid.
 23 A Description of Ceylon by J.Cordiner p 7.
 24 North to Commissioners of the Wannia,25 Sept.1799,Public Dept.

reported that a large number of the people of the area had been driven to emigrate from it because of the dilapidated state of the tanks.²⁵ In order to induce the people to return the commissioners had taken the initiative of promising to repair the tanks.²⁶ They also suggested that people from South India and from the more densely populated parts of Ceylon should be encouraged to settle there.²⁷ They visited "the great tank of Candelay". They believed that it could supply the "low country" of the Wannia with water if the area was more amply populated.²⁸ The rest of the tanks they divided into three categories, those in repair and inhabited by people, those out of repair but still inhabited by people, and those out of repair and also uninhabited. They calculated that the restoration of the tanks would cost the Government 11,992 Rix dollars.²⁹ There is no evidence that a sum of money as large as 11,992 Rds. was expended for the repair of the tanks. The explanation for this omission can be found in the next step taken by the Government to improve irrigation. Captain Cotgrave was put in charge of a group of civil engineers who had been employed by the Dutch for the purpose of repairing tanks.³⁰ The first task he was enjoined to perform was the repair of the tanks in the Wannia districts.³¹ Cotgrave taxed Barbut the official in charge of the Jaffnapatam districts for information "respecting the tanks which are to be repaired".³² Barbut took the view that new tanks

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- 25 Commissioners of Wannia to North 13 April 1800, 5 May 1800,
 26 Ibid. Public Dept.
 27 North to Commissioners of Wannia, 25 Sept. 1799, Public Dept.
 28 Commissioners of Wannia to North, 3 Mar. 1800, 15 Mar. 1800, Rev.
 29 North to Commissioners of Wannia, 25 Sept. 1799, Public Dept. Dept.
 30 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801,
 31 Ibid.
 32 Barbut to Boyd 27 Mar. 1801, 29 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept.

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should be constructed from Wertilvoe to Kokelay. It is recorded that eighteen tanks were repaired in the Pammegammo district of the Wannia by Jacob Vos, who was a member of the Civil Architects Department as the new organization of civil engineers came to be called. The obscurity encumbering the names of these tanks suggests that they did not fall into the category of the larger and better known tanks of Ceylon but belonged rather to the multitude of small tanks which dot the **Dry Zone** even to this day. It is clear that the work of the engineers took the form of repairing already existing tanks. There is mention of only one new tank - at Kokelay - and even here the records suggest that the work of construction was only in its early stages during our period.

During our period there is no evidence that the proposal of the Commissioners of the Wannia that the lands surrounding the tanks of the Wannia district should be peopled with new inhabitants was put into effect. A similar proposal relating to the vicinity of the Kantalai tank was made by Joinville, who while acting as Superintendent of the cinnamon plantations seems to have found time to ponder on the means of improving agriculture in the Wannia. It also seems to have met the same fate as the proposal of the Commissioners of the Wannia. We can reasonably expect the implementation of these proposals to have led to administrative action on such a large scale as to have left its imprint on the records. The fact that there is a lack of such evidence in the

33 Ibid.

34 Gahagan to Board of Rev. & Comm. 27 Aug. 1801, 3 Sept. 1801, Board

35 Ibid. of Rev. & Com

36 Joinville to Boyd 5 Oct. 1800, 5 Oct. 1800, Public Dept.

records drives us to the conclusion that these proposals were not put into effect. If the scheme for populating the sparse lands of the Wannia district had taken effect the land grants in accordance with the intent of the Government would only have been made on the basis of single proprietorship. In this way North could have avoided the social relationship of communal ownership of land.

It is important to try to explain why the opportunity was not readily taken. The records furnish us with no explanation. We are driven to supply one ourselves. It is very probable that mere governmental injunction would not have induced people from the more densely populated areas to migrate to the Wannia districts. Such a step would have been taken by the inhabitants if there had been a surplus of population in their own districts and conditions of life had become intolerable. There is no evidence of such a state of affairs in these areas. That the Government was not unaware of this aspect of the problem becomes clear from a statement made by Hamilton. Referring to the project to convert the marsh lands of the Maturajawela into rich paddy growing land he intimated that in the Prince of Wales Island "there are a number of Chinese at a loss for employment" who could be recruited as cultivators for the

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Maturajawela. Attempts were to be made to recruit these Chinese only in the event of the failure to attract settlers from South

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India. He went on to say that these measures would enable the Government to avoid causing inconvenience to the inhabitants of

"this country which is already too thinly peopled".³⁹ We shall deal

37 Hamilton to Board of Rev. & Comm. 19 Feb. 1802, 23 Feb. 1802, Rev. &

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

with the Maturajawela scheme later. Here it is sufficient to remark that Hamilton's statement confirms the hypothesis we have offered for the failure of the Government to populate the desolate Wannia districts.

The Wannia as we know it today is comprised mainly of Tamil people. There is evidence of other irrigation works undertaken in non-Sinhalese areas. Jewell employed labourers to raise stones from the bed of the Batticoloa river "for the dam of the Calnar"⁴⁰. On another occasion he said that he was giving attention to the repair of the dam at Veeradigar and three other tanks.⁴¹

Johnstone, Agent of Revenue and Commerce of the Chilauw districts, writes of having cajoled the proprietors of the lands surrounding the Ranawile tank, "one of the largest and best situated in the country", to undertake its repair with the promise of a Government loan of 300 rupees.⁴² Featuring amongst the many chores that William Orr was asked to perform in the Mahagampattu⁴³ was an inquiry into the state of the Badgigherry tank. Even those projects need not fall within the Sinhalese areas. North defined the Sinhalese country "as the provinces which lie between the river Chilauw and the river Walawe".⁴⁴ It can be argued that North confined his irrigation activity to the non-Sinhalese areas merely because of the communal ownership of property which according to him encumbered the Sinhalese areas. As we shall see, whenever there were pressing agricultural problems in the

40 Jewell to Board of Rev. & Comm. 1 May 1801, 7 May 1801, Board of
 41 " " " " " " 1 Oct. 1801, 23 Oct. 1801, Rev. & Comm.
 42 Johnstone to Board of Rev. & Comm. 13 Jan. 1802, 21 Jan. 1802 Rev.
 43 Instructions to Orr, 11 Aug. 1800, Public Dept. & Comm. Dept.
 44 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.

Sinhalese areas North did bring to bear all the resources of the Government in order to overcome them. There is no reason to believe that if cultivation in the Sinhalese areas had been seriously afflicted by the lack of water he would not have come to its assistance. Generous Nature in the form of the South-West Monsoon assured a plentiful supply of rain for the Sinhalese areas. It is, therefore, not surprising that irrigation work should feature more prominently in the arid mainly non-Sinhalese area known as the Dry Zone.

On the other hand the parlous state of the irrigation tanks does not seem to have been peculiar to the Wannia districts. The evident concentration on irrigation repair in this area, therefore can only be explained on the basis that North once again saw an opportunity of evading communal ownership.

We should now continue our inquiry into the attempts made by the Government to improve the methods of cultivation. North extended the term of the paddy rents to three years in the Galle, Colombo and Batticaloa districts.⁴⁵ As we have seen this was a proposal made by Alexander. North's motive was the same as that of Alexander "to interest the renter in the permanent amelioration of the soil."

He intended to commute the salaries of the "native headmen" in the Batticaloa area into a share of the paddy tythe. Accordingly one fifth of the paddy tythe was allocated to the podie, an administrative official peculiar to the area, and one twentieth to the land-vidaan.⁴⁶ North told Jewell that he hoped in this way

45 North to Court of Directors 5 Mar. 1799; North to Hobart 5 Oct. 1801, Public Dept.

46 North to Jewell 6 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept.

to use the influence of the Chiefs to increase agricultural productivity.⁴⁷ Whatever the success of the venture it is important to note that its scope was restricted to the Batticaloa districts.

North advised Jewell to inculcate in the inhabitants of the Batticaloa district the use of manure in their fields.⁴⁸ Jewell set about trying to do this. He convened a meeting of the headmen of his districts in order to disseminate the practice through them.⁴⁹ After his encounter with them, however, he thought that they were too attached to the old methods to try new ones.⁵⁰

Marshall, the Agent of Revenue and Commerce at Trincomallee, presumably acting on his own initiative tried to introduce the use of spades and hoes within the territory placed under his care.⁵¹ He remained, however, sceptical about the success of the venture.⁵² It is important to note that both these ventures were inaugurated in non-Sinhalese areas.

We ought also to examine the attitude of the Government to Chena cultivation. As we learnt in the chapter on land, Chena cultivation took the form of burning a clearing in the forest and making it support a culture of grains for a short period. At the expiration of this period the clearing was once more abandoned to the jungle. Jewell thought that Chena cultivation was the recourse "of people of idle habits".⁵³ The Government itself took a no less censorious view of Chena cultivation as such. It was "an idle and

47 Ibid.
 48 Ibid.
 49 Jewell to Board of Rev. & Comm. 1 May 1801, 7 May 1801, Board of
 50 Ibid. Rev. & Comm.
 51 Marshall to North 21 June 1801, 26 June 1801, Rev. & Comm. Dept.
 52 Ibid.
 53 Jewell to Board of Rev. & Comm. 1 May 1801, 15 May 1801, Board of
 Rev. & Comm.

destructive mode of procuring crops".⁵⁴ Nevertheless Chena cultivation was not forbidden. Jewell was told to contain his antipathy and make the grants as before.⁵⁵ Tolfrey, with his view of the forest lands as ideal timber preserves,⁵⁶ prescribed the prohibition of Chena cultivation on them. North by refusing to incorporate this clause in his proclamation on timber gave a sanction of a sort to Chena cultivation.⁵⁷ When cattle disease reduced the paddy crop the Board of Revenue and Commerce saw Chena cultivation as a means by which the cultivator could recoup his losses.⁵⁸

Now it is necessary to consider some special problems which confronted the Government. These problems were invested with a special nature either because they were abnormal occurrences or because they were restricted to special areas. The first problem of the class to be considered by us will be the cattle disease called murrain. One aspect of this problem is the extent to which cattle was supplied to the garrison soldiers for use as beef at the time when the cattle resources of the peasant were seriously depleted by the disease. Therefore, it would not be altogether inapposite as a preliminary investigation to observe the extent to which, even before the outbreak of the cattle disease, the garrison soldiers were supplied with cattle although it caused hardship to the cultivator.

Apparently the Madras Government contemplated the possibility

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- 54 23 Nov. 1801, Rev. & Comm. Dept.
 55 Board of Rev. & Comm. to Jewell 5 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 56 Tolfrey's memorial on wood 20 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 57 Proclamation 28 June 1800, Public Dept.
 58 Board of Rev. & Comm. to Jewell 5 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

of breeding a separate stock of cattle for slaughter purposes. Andrews' comment on the project was that it would take years before there were enough cattle to supply the troops.⁶⁰ He recommended, therefore, the use of fish and swine as substitutes to beef, hoping in that way to reduce the demand for slaughter cattle.⁶¹ These remarks signify that although the resources in the country were inadequate cattle was being supplied for slaughter purposes to the garrison.

The problem continued to manifest itself after North's accession to office. George Garrow raised his voice in protest because the districts of Trincomallee and Batticoloa were being denuded of cattle to gratify the appetites of the soldiers at Trincomallee.⁶² North did take some trouble to have some of the cattle needed by the garrison collected in South India. These attempts, however, do not seem to have come to much. North's request for 500 cattle from the Government of Madras did not meet with success. When Barbut informed North that the collecting of cattle in South India was running into difficulties North's reply was that it was inadvisable "that anything like compulsory means should be used to procure them or even that any extraordinary expense should be incurred".⁶³

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We first hear of the cattle disease on 8 May 1800. North was driven by the outbreak of the disease to write to the Government of Madras for a supply of 3,000 cows from the districts

59 Andrews to Webbe 21 Mar. 1797, 31 Mar. 1797, 1674-1675, Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc.
 60 Ibid.
 61 Ibid.
 62 Garrow to North 14 July 1799, 11 Sept. 1799, Public Dept.
 63 Boyd to Barbut 31 Dec. 1799, Secret Dept.
 64 Governor-in-Council Fort St. George to North 26 April 1800, 5 May 1800, Public Dept.

of Tanjore and Coimbatore. On this occasion Lord Clive the Governor of the Madras Presidency came readily to the aid of the Ceylon Government. At the outset 1,500 cattle were sent from Madras. From then on regular supplies of cattle were sent to Ceylon from Tanjore, Ramnad, Dindigal and Coimbatore throughout the period of 1 January to 30 April 1801. The Bengal Government sent the Ceylon Government 100 casks of salt beef.

Most of the cattle sent from the Madras Presidency seems to have been used to feed the garrison. We are led to this conclusion because there is evidence of only one supply of cattle from the Collector of Dindigal being distributed to the peasantry. Even on this occasion the cattle was sold and then also chiefly "to villagers, proprietors or renters of land".

During the period of the cattle disease the Government continued to collect cattle in Ceylon for the use of the troops. On 6 December 1800 a 100 head of cattle was sent from Mullaitivu to Trincomallee. On 22 December 1800 orders were given to the Commissary of grains and provisions and to the Collector to supply cattle to His Majesty's 88th Regiment then stationed at Galle. North instructed Jewell to supply the garrison at Trincomallee with all the cattle he could. If further evidence were needed of this aspect of the Government's policy there is the reply of the Government to a letter of Smitsz, the Agent of Revenue and Commerce of the Galle and Matara districts. Smitsz complained of attempts

65 Lushington to North 3 Jan. 1801, 13 Jan. 1801, Public Dept.
 66 Wolf to Board of Rev. & Comm. 4 May 1801, 19 June 1801, Board of
 67 66 Wolf to Board of Rev. & Comm. 4 May 1801, 19 June 1801, Board of
 68 67 20 Nov. 1800, Bengal Sec. & Pol. Cons. Rev. & Cor
 69 68 Resolution 13 Jan. 1801, Rev. Dept.
 70 69 Ibid.
 71 70 North to Lieut. Short, 6 Dec. 1800, Public Dept.
 72 71 North to Boyd 22 Dec. 1800, Secret Dept.
 72 North to Jewell 6 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept.

made by a "certain Chitty" to purchase cattle for the use of the soldiers from his disease-stricken districts. ⁷³ The Government replied that although no Chitty was authorized to do so Christoffel Andries, the butcher employed by the Commissary General, had ⁷⁴ permission to purchase cattle "wherever he can find them".

Although the needs of the garrison soldier counted for more with the Government than the needs of the peasant efforts were made to combat the cattle disease and help the cultivator. Great pains were taken to discover medical remedies for the cattle disease. When Gregory heard of a cure for the disease he offered a reward of 100 Rds. to the person who would intimate to him its ⁷⁵ secret. When Stutzer, a Swede apparently qualified to be a doctor of medicine, reported to North of a cure for the disease North asked him to compose an article on the subject which could ⁷⁶ be translated into the several languages of the country. He also instructed the medical overseers to keep handy with them a quantity of the medicine and to see to its free distribution to needy ⁷⁷ peasants. They were also asked to disseminate the knowledge of the cure among the peasantry by means of written documents ⁷⁸ embodying the ingredients of the cure. (The medical overseers were administrative employees of the smallpox hospitals of whom we shall learn more later.) As the Wannia, according to Dr. Stutzer, was the source of the infection a Mr. Dick, an official ⁷⁹ of the Medical Department, was sent there to make investigations.

North himself recommended the practice of firing cattle which,

⁷³ Smitsz to Arbuthnot 16 Dec.1801,17 Dec.1801,Rev.& Comm.Dept.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Gregory to Boyd 8 Oct.1800,12 Oct,1800,Public Dept.

⁷⁶ North to Stutzer 20 Nov.1800,Public Dept.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Christie to Dick 25 Nov.1800,30 Nov.1800,Public Dept.

according to him, had been successfully used on similar occasions
 in Europe.⁸⁰ As an outcome of these various inquiries three cures
 were used. One was a mixture of cummin seed, onions and aromatic
 herbs. This was the cure advocated by Dr. Stutzer. The second
 was compounded of gunpowder, soot and salt. The method of firing
 cattle was also used.⁸¹ It is not necessary to estimate the suc-
 -cess of these remedies. It is more important to notice the
 efforts made by the Government to eradicate the cattle disease.

Other measures of a medical nature were also tried. The
 inhabitants were enjoined to bury their dead cattle. The injunct-
 -ion was reinforced by the imposition of a fine of five Rds. on
 persons who neglected to do so.⁸² Owners of cattle who did not keep
 them tied up were also threatened with a fine.⁸³ Medicines were
 to be offered to the people of the Kandyan kingdom.⁸⁴ As it was
 suspected that cattle from the Kingdom of Kandy were possible
 carriers of the disease a proclamation was issued forbidding their
 entry into British territories.⁸⁵ Cattle from the Kandyan kingdom
 were allowed to enter only if they were subjected to examination
 at enclosures specially built for this purpose.⁸⁶ Although the
 Medical Superintendent, Dr. Thomas Christie, advised the segregat-
 -ion of all sick cattle, there is no evidence that such a measure
 involving, as it would have done, considerable administrative
 activity was put into effect. There is evidence of such an

80 Ibid.
 81 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb.1801.
 82 North to Gregory 1 Dec.1800, Rev. Dept.
 83 Proclamation 28 April 1801, Public Dept.
 84 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb.1801.
 85 Proclamation 6 May 1801, Public Dept.
 86 Ibid.

enclosure at Mahagampattu but that could have been one set up to
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 check the entry of cattle from the Kandyan country.

One of the measures taken to alleviate the lot of the peasant
 was to suspend the tax on Ghee in the districts of Manaar and
 88
 Puttalam. This assistance was restricted to these two districts.
 Probably the production of Ghee had reached significant proportions
 only in these areas. This is the only explanation we can find for
 its limited scope.

There was an elaborate scheme devised to enable cattle to be
 hired from areas not affected by the disease for use in the
 disease-ridden areas. Through the agency of the Mudaliyars cattle
 from the Pasdum and Wallalawitte Korales were to be shepherded to
 the Cutcherry at Colombo. From there they would be hired out to
 needful inhabitants at the rate of nine fanams per day for each of
 them. This money was to be paid by those who hired them. If any
 of the cattle were to die while in the service of their temporary
 users their owners would be indemnified to the extent of 10 Rds.
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 for each animal. We hear of the same scheme being discussed in
 connexion with the Morrua Korale. It seems, therefore, that the
 plan was not confined to the Colombo districts, but included parts
 of the Galle districts. There is no evidence to say that the
 scheme was put into effect. Taking into account the earnestness
 with which the Government wrestled with the cattle disease it
 would not be wrong to conclude that the plan was implemented. The
 operation of such a scheme is not to be witnessed in the rest of

87 Board of Rev. & Comm. to Orr 13 July 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 88 Advertisement 16 Oct. 1800, Public Dept.
 89 Board of Rev. & Comm. to Hamilton 27 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 " " " " North 23 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

of Ceylon. Probably in other parts the areas free from the disease were not so conveniently juxtaposed with the disease-stricken areas as to facilitate the easy transport of cattle from the former to the latter.

North's cattle policy was not confined to measures aimed at eradicating the disease. He also nursed ideas for improving the breed of the Ceylon cattle. Presumably as a result of a letter written by North the Government of the Madras Presidency promised to send bulls from the Origole and Guntoor provinces to Ceylon. They also advised North to solicit the Bombay Government for cattle from the Gujerat province. The Ceylon Government also bound itself to pay all persons importing cattle fit to be used for breeding purposes into Ceylon the sum of 2 Rds. per animal. We learn of the presence of Gujerati bulls in Ceylon from the arrangement made by the Board of Revenue and Commerce to hire them out for the use of the inhabitants.

The cattle disease had also the side-effect of causing an alteration in the law concerning the possession of wild buffaloes in the district of Chilauw. The custom was for the person catching a wild buffalo to keep it in his custody for three months. If during this period it was not claimed by anybody as his or her property it would be sold by public auction. Half the proceeds of the sale went to the captor of the buffalo. Ten per cent was taken by the patty Muhandiram whose duty it was to see that captors of wild buffalo did not conceal them as their own property. The rest

90 Governor-in-Council Fort St. George to North, 26 April 1800,

91 Ibid. 8 May 1800. Public Dept.

92 Proclamation 2 Feb. 1801, Public Dept.

93 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 8 Feb. 1802, 9 Feb. 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

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presumably went to the Government. On one occasion Johnstone, the Agent of Revenue and Commerce for the Chilauw district, reported that 42 buffaloes had been sold in this way. Later on he complained that the practice had developed in his districts for people to claim the wild buffaloes as their own lost property. As a result hunting of the buffalo, which was a welcome substitute for cattle in the disease-stricken areas, was discouraged. As a corrective he proposed that wild buffaloes over the age of twelve months without their owner's name upon them should be considered forfeit to the Government. It is not known whether the Government, as the new owners of the buffaloes, put them up for auction sale. Presumably the old practice which we have outlined continued to govern all instances concerning the capture of buffaloes to which the new law did not apply. When Johnston reported the sale of 42 wild buffaloes he mentioned that the price they fetched together was 275 Rds. This means that each buffalo would have cost its purchaser a little less than 7 Rds. From what we have observed of prices in the course of analyzing the history of this period it is difficult to imagine that the sum of 7 Rds. could have been easily paid by the mass of the rural inhabitants. It is more likely that the buffaloes went into the possession of richer people. In this way the Government's hope of easing the lot of the cultivator, which had been aggravated by the cattle-disease, would have been frustrated. The fact that this measure was confined to Chilauw can only be explained on the grounds that the attempt of

94 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 10 Mar. 1802, 15 Mar. 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

95 Johnston to Board of Rev. & Comm. 11 Sept. 1801, 11 Sept. 1801,

96 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 10 Mar. 1802, Board of Rev. & Comm.

fictitious owners to usurp possession of the captive buffaloes became a serious problem only there.

The next problem we shall consider is the extent to which the Government pursued a policy of supplying seed grain to the peasants to enable them to cultivate their fields. Marshall, the Agent of Revenue and Commerce for Trincomallee, urged the Government to allow the inhabitants of the District of Collualumpullah to keep back the Government share of the paddy so that they would be able to cultivate more "paddy ground" for the ensuing year. According to Marshall the inhabitants of the area had entreated him to be the advocate of their cause. They offered to buy the paddy amounting to the Government share at the bazaar price. The Board of Revenue and Commerce agreed to the request.

The problem assumes a different form in Batticoloa. Jewell appeals to the Board of Revenue and Commerce to make an advance of seed grain to the cultivators in his area. The reason he gave for his plea was that without such aid the inhabitants would face ruin. The previous year 1,500 amunams of paddy had been given in this way and on this occasion he requested 2,000 amunams. He undertook the responsibility of "entering into the engagements" with the cultivator to have the loan paid back together with the usual exaction of one tenth which constituted the Government share. Once again the Board of Revenue and Commerce agreed. In this instance Jewell was not induced by a petition to represent the needs of the cultivators, but did so because he had become aware of their

97 Marshall to Board of Rev. & Comm. 15 Oct. 1801, 23 Oct. 1801, Board
 98 Ibid. of Rev. & Com.
 99 Ibid.
 100 Jewell to Board of Rev. & Comm. 1 Oct. 1801, 23 Oct. 1801, Board of
 101 Ibid. 102 Ibid. 103 Ibid. Rev. & Comm.

distress. Also a special advance of seed grain was made by the Government presumably from their own resources instead of permitting the peasant to keep back the Government share. These differences distinguish the manner in which the cultivator was helped on this occasion from the earlier instance.

The Board of Revenue and Commerce also instructed Johnstone to distribute to the inhabitants "who may be in want of it" the paddy being collected on account of "the late renter Philip Colaas" on the terms "of the Government being repaid from the ensuing crop the quantity advanced with the addition of one fifth more..."¹⁰⁴ The paddy being collected by the Government was the paddy due to Philip Colaas as part of his rent-farm. They were collecting it after his death to meet the debts he owed to the Government. It is interesting to remark that on this occasion the Government indemnifies itself for its efforts by taking one fifth more than the amount of paddy it gave to the cultivator.

The Board of Revenue and Commerce also enjoined the officials of the Jaffna districts not to cause distress to the inhabitants of Mulaitivu in their efforts to recover the seed grain lent by the Government to them.

All these examples demonstrate that there was no preconcerted and consistent plan on the part of the Government for supplying seed grain to the cultivator. The arrangements made varied from place to place. The Government seems to have been induced to take whatever action it did take by the complaints of the inhabitants

of particular areas fortified as they were by the advocacy of the agents of revenue and commerce.

Trincomallee, Batticaloa, Mullaitivu and Chilauw fall within the region defined by North as being non-Sinhalese. On the surface it seems as if the supplying of seed grain was restricted to the people of those areas because of their non-Sinhalese character. We are inclined to reject this view. From what we have seen the Government did come to the aid of the Sinhalese cultivator when he was in distress. It would be fair to assume, therefore, that had the Sinhalese cultivator been distressed by the lack of seed grain the Government would have helped him. It is likely that the lack of seed grain was more acutely felt by the cultivators suffering from the dereliction of the irrigation tanks.

One agricultural project of a local character contemplated by the Government was the reclamation of the marsh of Muturujawela for use as paddy land. The Muturajawela was a marsh of about 3,000 to 5,000 acres in the vicinity of Colombo. The idea originated with Hamilton while he was Agent of Revenue and Commerce for the Colombo districts. He proposed the recruitment of 500 to 1,000 tank diggers from the coast who could be induced by "good treatment" to settle down as cultivators of the future paddy field. Failing these people he suggested enlisting cultivators from among the Chinese on the Prince of Wales Island many of whom, according to report, were suffering from lack of employment there. North approved the idea and promised to apply to the Madras Government and that on Prince of Wales Island for would-be tank diggers and

105 Hamilton to Board of Rev.& Comm. 17 June 1801, 19 June 1801,
 106 Ibid.
 107 Ibid.

cultivators. No substantial amount of recruits seems to have arrived from these areas in response to the overtures of the Ceylon Government. Then Hamilton moderated his scheme. He suggested drawing recruits from the population at Jaffna and in the last resort hiring cultivators from the Colombo district for work on the project. ¹⁰⁸ North's reply was that he had conveyed the first request to the Madras Government. His reaction to the second set of suggestions made by Hamilton was to repeat his request to the Madras Government for 2,000 diggers. ¹⁰⁹ During our period this scheme did not progress beyond these initial ideas and suggestions. It remained a paper project. Nevertheless it illustrates how the Government when it needed suitable cultivators turned to racial groups other than the Sinhalese. It was only as a last resort that Hamilton turned to the Colombo districts where the Sinhalese, in all likelihood, would have figured among the recruits. It is true that Hamilton's reason for disregarding the Sinhalese was because they were, in his eyes, less skilled than the inhabitants of the Coast in the arts of cultivation. It is not, however too far-fetched to think that when North supported the scheme he did so because it accorded with his policy of avoiding the communal ownership practised by the Sinhalese.

In the South-Western parts of Ceylon the flooding of the rivers caused damage "to the Country and Crops". The Board of Revenue and Commerce formulated a scheme whereby standards or measures would be erected near the mouths of all rivers. ¹¹⁰ These were to be given

108 Hamilton to Board of Rev. & Comm. 24 Nov. 1801, 25 Nov. 1801, Board of
 109 Ibid.
 110 Board of Rev. & Comm. to Hamilton 6 Oct. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

into the charge of the Mudaliyars. ¹¹¹ It would be their duty with the assistance of a number of workmen to open the mouths of the rivers when the water rose above a point marked on the measuring boards. ¹¹² When inquiries were made from Hamilton pursuant to this scheme he answered that flooding occurred only at the mouths of the rivers which fell into the sea at Colombo, Kalutara and Panadura. ¹¹³ The flooding of the river at Panadura caused little inconvenience to the inhabitants and it was only the mouths of the two other rivers that needed to be opened. ¹¹⁴ Serious flooding occurred at a later time in the Galle and Matara districts. ¹¹⁵ On that occasion Smitsz, the Agent of Revenue and Commerce of the area, mentioned that the mouth of the Ginganga where it fell into the ocean at Gindura had been opened. ¹¹⁶ He included, however, a formidable list of rivers and streams in the area which needed to be opened if the object of controlling the flood water was to be realized. ¹¹⁷ These facts warrant the conclusion that the scheme for checking the flood waters had been begun, but was a long way from completion at the end of our period. It is necessary to remark that this furnishes another instance of the Government coming to the rescue of the Sinhalese cultivator when disaster hit them in the shape of mutinous flood waters.

Our account of North's agricultural policy has now come to a close. From all that we have seen it never became a great success. He took the view that communal ownership was peculiar to the Sinhalese and had to be eradicated before agriculture could develop

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

113 Hamilton to Board of Rev. & Comm. 24 Nov. 1801, 25 Nov. 1801, Board

114 Ibid.

115 Smitsz to Arbuthnot 27 April 1802, 29 April 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

116 Ibid. 117 Ibid.

among them. Our impression of the social practices of other indigenous racial groups of that time and even of today leads us to the view that North was wrong to limit the practice of communal ownership to the Sinhalese. The large family group involving several collateral relationships is a feature of all indigenous racial groups in Ceylon today. There is no evidence to suggest that this condition did not prevail among these groups during our period as well. Such a state of affairs would inevitably have given rise to a system of communal ownership. North's ignorance of these matters should not shock us much when we recall the lack of knowledge which bedevilled the British Government in the realm of land tenures. Nevertheless North remained wedded to this belief and it is the key to his agricultural policy.

North tried to end the practice of communal ownership and set up in its place a system of single ownership. While social relations on the old lands were being changed he hoped to promote agriculture with land grants based on the new system. As we have seen these efforts were not very successful. In the non-Sinhalese areas he bent the energies of the State to repair the old irrigation tanks even going to the extent of creating a special department for the purpose. It was in these areas that he tried out his experiments for increasing production, in the form of enlisting the self-interest of the headmen and to a lesser extent the encouragement of the use of manure. These efforts also did not encounter much success. Here he was probably baulked by the derelict state of the irrigation tanks which his infant department

was not able to overcome during our period. He also used all the resources of his administration to come to the rescue of the cultivator whenever any serious distress afflicted him. In doing this he made not the slightest distinction between the Sinhalese and non-Sinhalese. In all these things North's administration stands in marked contrast with that of his predecessors.

From this view point perhaps the metaphor of the stepchild used at the beginning of the chapter does not do justice to North. Perhaps it would be better to change it. We could say that Agriculture was the Cinderella of British policies and that North was her Prince Charming. We would draw the picture accurately if we observe that recalcitrant circumstances in the shape of the practice of communal ownership and the derelict state of the irrigation tanks in the non-Sinhalese areas prevented the grand ball from taking place and that she remained on the level of a kitchen maid among her more favoured sisters.

CHAPTER FOUR
Commercial Products

The aim of this chapter is to examine the policy pursued by the British Administration in relation to the cultivation of commercial products. By commercial products we mean in the main plants which were grown not so much for consumption by the inhabitants of Ceylon as for sale outside it. In more modern times the terms food crops and cash crops have been used to distinguish these two types of plants. We could have adopted the term cash crop if our inquiry did not include within its scope such objects as elephants, horses, pearls, chanks and cloth. Each product will be considered separately according to its importance, which will be determined by whether the proposals of the Government were put into effect and also whether success attended their efforts.

From this point of view we should begin with cotton. North was introduced to the idea of growing cotton by the Committee of Investigation. They suggested making the women receiving charity grants pay for their support by spinning cotton yarn.¹ A trial should be made with thirty "of the most able and industrious among the Pensioners".² It was also their opinion that the cotton needed for the project could be grown "in these settlements".³

North charged the Board of Revenue and Commerce with the responsibility of taking measures for "encouraging it especially in the Districts of Trincomallee and Batticoloa".⁴ The Board of Revenue and Commerce for their part asked the Agents of Revenue

1 Resolution 21 May 1801, Comm. of Supt.

2 Ibid.

3 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 12 Oct. 1801, 14 Oct. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

4 Ibid.

and Commerce to make enquiries in their districts. Barbut,⁵
 Smitsz,⁶ Hamilton⁷ and Jewell⁸ stated their several views about
 the amount of cotton under cultivation in their areas, the obstacles
 to its success and the measures needed to combat them.

As a result of these deliberations the Board of Revenue and
 Commerce brought forth the proposal that a plantation of cotton
 should be made in the Jaffna district under the superintendence of
 an overseer.⁹ North adopted this proposal appointing William Orr
 to the post.¹⁰ This was at a place called Carcelles, according
 to the Reverend Cordiner "eleven miles distant from Talaimannar".¹¹
 We hear from Barbut of his having visited "the cotton plantations
 at Carcelles" and having been "pleased with their progress".¹² On
 a later occasion Barbut was ordered to sell a cargo of rice from
 Captain Sorrell's ship to the labourers at "the cotton cultivation
 at Carcelles".¹³ These statements prove that the cotton plantation
 at Carcelles had materialized beyond the cogitation of its
 legislators into something palpable.

North was seized with more grandiose ambitions. He was
 impatient with "the slow return of Bazaar sales".¹⁴ and wanted
 to have the cotton yarn spun by his pensioners sold in Indian

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- 5 Barbut to Board of Rev. & Comm. 11 Nov. 1801, 18 Nov. 1801, Board of
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 6 Smitsz to Board of Rev. & Comm. 24 Oct. 1801, 28 Oct. 1801, Board of
 Rev. & Comm.
 7 Orr to Board of Rev. & Comm. 26 Nov. 1801, 30 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev.
 & Comm.
 8 Jewell to Dormieux, 20 Aug. 1801, 23 Aug. 1801, Comm. of Supt.
 9 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 2 Feb. 1802, 5 Feb. 1802, Rev. & Comm.
 Dept.
 10 Ibid.
 11 A Description of Ceylon Rev. James Cordiner p 33.
 12 Barbut to Arbuthnot, 23 June 1802, 30 June 1802, Public Dept.
 13 Resolution 6 April 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.
 14 Casamayer to North, 12 May 1802, 22 May 1802, Public Dept.

markets. He persuaded John Casamayer Resident at Tinnevelly to
 investigate the market.¹⁵ John Casamayer sent back rough
 estimates of prices¹⁶ and some attempt was made to sell Ceylon
 cotton yarn to the weavers in the Tinnevelly district.¹⁷ It did
 not meet with success.¹⁸ It seems that the weavers of the area
 were not eager to buy Ceylon yarn. Success in the venture would
 have added encouragement to the growth of cotton in Ceylon.

Barbut and Smitsz in their reports to the Board of Reveenue
 suggested the "paying of well judged premiums" to encourage the
 cultivation of cotton.¹⁹ This proposal was not adopted. This was
 probably on account of the expense it would have caused. Smitsz's
 proposal to enlist the services of weavers from the coast for the
 role of instructors in "the exercise of making cloths (sic)" was
 also disregarded.²⁰ It seems to have been the intention of the
 Government to sell the cotton yarn rather than use it for making
 cloth.

The cultivation of cotton was not introduced into Ceylon by
 North.²¹ We learn from Barbut²² and Jewell that cotton was grown
 and sold in Kandy. Barbut goes on to speak of a Dutch venture to
 grow cotton. It failed according to him because of "the ignorance
 and aversion of the inhabitants to undertake a new branch of
 cultivation". The officials who wrote replies to the Board of

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- 15 Resolution 12 April 1802, Public Dept.
 16 Casamayer to North 12 May 1802, 22 May 1802, Public Dept.
 17 Ibid.
 18 Casamayer to North 10 June 1802, 10 June 1802, Public Dept.
 19 Smitsz to Board of Rev. & Comm. 24 Oct. 1801, 28 Oct. 1801, Board of
 Rev. & Comm.; Barbut to Board of Rev. & Comm. 11 Nov. 1801, 18 Nov.
 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 20 Ibid.
 21 Barbut to Board of Rev. & Comm. 11 Nov. 1801, 18 Nov. 1801, Board
 of Rev. & Comm.
 22 Jewell to Comm. of Supt. 20 Aug. 1801, 23 Aug. 1801, Comm. of Supt.

Revenue and Commerce referred to a cultivation of cotton albeit slight and unsuccessful in all their areas.

It is not our business to assess the success of the Carcelles venture. According to Cordiner it was abandoned because it was financially a loss and because the Government in England did not approve of it.²³ At this point we must take our leave of this subject without appraising the truth of these statements.

Cloth was another sphere in which good intentions were matched by results. The enthusiasm shown by the Government, at least in the later period, to protect Ceylon cloth manufacture was translated into helpful protective duties.

Cloth was manufactured at Jaffnapatam and Manaar.²⁴ In Dutch times cloth imported into Ceylon was subjected to a tax varying from 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the current price.²⁵ The consensus of opinion about the Dutch export tax upon Jaffna and Manaar cloth puts it at 16 per cent.²⁶ We have seen in the chapter on "Trade" the sweeping away of import and export duties on 25 June 1796. The export duty on Jaffna and Manaar cloth, however, seems to have survived. North makes it plain that such a tax existed when he complained of Jaffna cloth evading its duty under the pretence of being cloth from India.²⁷ Lord Hobart's observations help to explain the persistence of the tax. When the revision of the Dutch export duty on cloth was being considered he suggested that the Government should "connect the encouragement of

23 Cordiner p 33.

24 Collected Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

25 Ibid; Hobart to Comm. of Inv. 9 June 1797, 4 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

26 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct. 1799; McDouall to North 21 Feb. 1799, 24 Feb. 1799, Rev. Dept.

27 North to Wellesley 16 Nov. 1798, Rev. Dept.

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our own manufactures with the consideration of the tax".

The Committee of Investigation, however, took a different view of the matter. According to Mcdouall they decided that the duty on Ceylon cloth "should be reduced to an equality or little lower than the duty fixed on foreign cloths." Mcdouall goes on to say that instructions with this import were sent to Barbut.²⁹ According to him the export duty on Jaffna cloth was then lowered to 5 per cent. It was on this basis that Mcdouall urged North to reduce the export duty at Manaar to the Jaffna level because "the weavers in the District of Manaar labour under a proportionate disadvantage".³⁰ North agreed.³¹ It is wrong of De Silva to attribute to North the initiative for lowering the duties on Ceylon made cloth.³² It is true that in a statement made to the Court of Directors North put the duty on Jaffna cloth as seven and a half per cent.³³ If this statement, however, is considered in conjunction with Mcdouall's observations and a subsequent communication to the Court of Directors it becomes clear that the estimate of the Jaffna cloth duty as seven and a half per cent was a clerical error. In this second statement North said, "I have already informed your Honourable Court of my having imposed a duty of seven and a half per cent on all cloths imported. It became, therefore, an act of justice to lower the duty on cloths the manufacture of Jaffna and Manaar from sixteen per cent which they paid in Dutch times to five per cent..."³⁴ North does not in this

28 Hobart to Comm.of Inv.9 June 1797,4 Aug.1797,Comm.of Inv.

29 Mcdouall to North 21 Feb.1799,26 Feb.1799,Rev.Dept.

30 Ibid.

31 Boyd to Mcdouall 11 Mar.1799,Rev.Dept.

32 Ceylon Under the British Occupation C. R. de Silva p 522.

33 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb.1799.

34 " " " " " " 5 Oct.1799.

remark indubitably arrogate to himself the initiative for reducing the Manaar cloth duty along with that of Jaffna to five per cent. His account could fit in with the set of facts outlined by McDouall.

North's motives in endorsing the action of his officials can be deduced from his remarks. He did not like to be inequitable towards the indigenous cloth manufacture. He also wanted to enable it to withstand competition from South India. He was anxious to protect the indigenous industry. Nevertheless he does not seem to have desired to develop it. This becomes apparent when we recall his efforts to sell the cotton yarn spun by his pensioners to the Tinnevely weavers. It would have been more in keeping with a desire to develop the cloth manufacture in Ceylon to have sold that cotton yarn to the Ceylon weavers.

Coir figures next in our scale of importance. There was a measure of Government support given to coir manufacture even though it took the negative form of abstaining from imposing export duties. Coir was a fibre made from the coconut fruit. In the pre-North period little attention was paid to it. Hobart asked the Committee of Investigation to consider the best manner of regulating its supply. ³⁵ The Committee of Investigation at the end of its deliberations confessed that as to coir as to salt they had not given enough thought. ³⁶ Later on the Madras Government took to importing the Ceylon Government for coir. At first they wanted a ³⁷ supply of coir cables and cordage. Then they asked for an annual

35 Hobart to Comm.of Inv.9 June 1797,4 Aug.1797,Comm.of Inv.

36 Agnew to Comm.of Inv.10 Nov.1798,10 Nov.1798,Comm.of Inv.;
Comm.of Inv.to Harris 15 June 1798,Comm.of Inv.

37 Buchan sec.to Fort St George Govt.to Boyd 28 June 1800,16 July 1800,Public Dept.

supply of loose Ceylon coir. It was their opinion that Ceylon coir was "superior from the mode of manufacturing it on the Island than what is generally prepared here although composed of the same materials".³⁸ The Secret Committee of the Court of Directors wanted to know the amount of coir which their Indian settlements could supply. Since war with Russia threatened the supply of hemp which England received from that country the Court of Directors was keen to fill the gap with coir from their own dominions.³⁹

North placed the collection of coir in the hands of Gibson, the Master Attendant at Galle.⁴⁰ A committee was appointed to assist him in the labour of valuing the quality of coir to be bought by the Government from the inhabitants. The vendors were to be paid with rice. The remuneration would vary according to the quality of the coir.⁴¹

North also directed the Board of Revenue and Commerce to make inquiries "about how much coir could be supplied annually".⁴² Their labours on the subject taught the Board of Revenue and Commerce that Colombo could supply 800 candies of coir of 500-lbs each and Galle 1,500 candies, they being "the only districts that produce coir in any considerable quantity". They took a pessimistic view of the future of coir manufacture. Its association "with a low caste of people" infected many with "a prejudice against the employment".⁴³ "If the people" could "be brought to use any wheel

38 Buchan to Boyd 2 Sept.1801,23 Oct.1801,Rev.& Comm.Dept.

39 Crommelin sec.to Fort William Govt.to Boyd 15 May 1801,23 June 1801,Public Dept; Board's draft of Secret letters to India 10 Oct.1800,6 Nov.1800.

40 Boyd to Gibson 16 July 1800,Public Dept.

41 Ibid.

42 Board of Rev.& Comm.to North 29 Aug.1801,Board of Rev.& Comm.

43 Ibid.

or machine" its prospects would improve.

North did not impose an export duty on coir. He also did not make it a state monopoly. It could have been exported by individuals and with the opportunity provided by the demand in the Madras Presidency it is likely that its export grew in this period. We learn from North that this was indeed so. He placed it among the articles whose increase in export evoked his enthusiastic acclaim.⁴⁵ He remains silent about the reason why coir passed free from tax. It is hardly likely that his mind was innocent of the knowledge that such a freedom would have encouraged its export.

North was not bent upon developing coir manufacture at whatever cost. He let pass unheeded the proposal of the Board of Revenue and Commerce to inculcate in the practitioners of the craft the use of small machines. This cannot be put down to anything else than the lack of interest. He also did not try to pull down the barriers of caste. This would have been more of a Herculean labour. Indeed, as we shall see later, it was more his bent to preserve and use the caste-system.

Next come the pearl fisheries. We would have allocated to them the first place in our scale of importance if the Government in the pre-North phase had looked upon them as a regular source of income and if, in the later period, North's great expectations had not been so dismally disappointed.

That "the Pearl Fishery must be looked upon as a casual and not a permanent revenue"⁴⁶ was Hobart's view. It is our intention

44 Ibid.

45 North to Court of Directors, 18 Feb. 1801.

46 Hobart to Comm. of Inv. 9 June 1797, 4 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

to see whether this statement fairly sums up the policy pursued in the pre-North period. Jervis, a Madras official soon to be appointed as an Assistant Superintendent of Revenue in Ceylon, was chosen as renter of the 1796 pearl fishery owing to his having been the highest bidder.⁴⁷ Soon he resigned from the farm. The reasons he gave were firstly that Alexander was appointed as Superintendent of the pearl fishery when he, Jervis, could have performed the function, secondly that the Government had not provided him with the necessary boats and thirdly that the Malabar officials whom he had brought with him had not been chosen by Alexander to fill the available administrative posts.⁴⁸ Andrews, taking back the pearl fishery farm from Jervis, ordered Alexander to sell the right to fish separately on each day of the pearl fishery.⁴⁹ This did not convert it into amani fishing as De Silva would have us believe.⁵⁰ When amani fishing was done in 1801 all the fishing was done by the Government without any renting whatsoever. The 1797 pearl fishery was wholly farmed out to one renter - Vydelinga Chetty.⁵¹ The same person rented the whole pearl fishery of 1798.⁵²

By comparing these three pearl fisheries with what was done in 1799 and 1801 when the Government brought things more under their control we can see how much was left in the hands of the renters in the period of 1796, 1797 and 1798. The sand where the fished oysters were deposited was searched so that the pearls of

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- 47 Andrews to Hobart 5 April 1796, 15 April 1796, 1181-1187 Madras
 48 Ibid. Rev.Proc.
 49 Andrews to Alexander 19 Mar. 1796, 15 April 1796, 1190-1193 Madras
 50 De Silva p 502. Rev.Proc.
 51 Webbe to Andrews 19 Dec. 1796 4101-4102, Madras Rev.Proc.
 52 Resolution 15 Dec. 1797, 4088-4089, Madras Rev.Proc.

small sizes would not escape discovery. This was known as the sifting rent. According to Barbut in Dutch times it had been a perquisite of "particular casts".⁵³ It was farmed in the period⁵⁴ under consideration. From the fact that the two items are accounted separately in Andrews' balance sheet it may be deduced that the renter of this farm was different from Vydelinga Chetty. It was also farmed in 1799,⁵⁵ and in 1801.⁵⁶ In 1801, when the Government fished the pearl banks by themselves, they apportioned a quarter of the catch from every boat according to custom among the divers and their assistants, the Munduks and the Tindals. The Pilots and the Adepanaars who were the "heads of villagers" in the district of Manaar were allowed the perquisite of fishing⁵⁷ with several boats on their own account. The absence of any reference to these customs in the period under consideration drives us to presume that their observance was left entirely in the hands of the renter. Shark charmers who were called upon to perform the office of driving away sharks with their spells and without whose ministrations the divers could not be persuaded to dive were also in this period presumably paid by the renter. In the later period they were paid by the Government.⁵⁸ The Government does not seem to have taken the steps which they did⁵⁹ in 1799 to ensure an adequate supply of rice at Arippe. The

53 Barbut to Webbe 23 Oct.1795,8Dec.1795,4777, Madras Mil.Pol.Proc.

54 Andrews to Comm.of Inv.10 Nov.1798,10 Nov.1798,Comm.of Inv.

55 North to Wellesley 27 May 1801,No.19,14 Aug.1801,Bengal Pol.&

56 Ibid. Sec.Cons.

57 Memorial on the Pearl Fishery by Joinville 24 April 1801,
Public Dept.

58 North to Wellesley 27 May 1801,No.19,14 Aug.1801,Bengal Pol.&
Sec.Cons.

59 North to Pearl Fishery Commissioners 4 Feb.1799,Rev.Dept.

supplying of other articles of food was also rented in this period.⁶⁰
 In this case as well the renter seems to have been different from
 the pearl fishery renter. This arrangement was repeated in 1799⁶¹
 and 1801.⁶² In 1799 on the advice of the Pearl Fishery Commission-
 -ers North passed regulations forbidding the throwing overboard
 of used shells and the diving beyond a point marked by flags
 fixed in rafts.⁶³ The object of the first measure was "to prevent
 the Banks from being choked by the enormous increase and
 proportion of empty shells" and that of the second was to protect
 the banks which were not going to be fished because their oysters
 were too young.⁶⁴ None of these measures seem to have been
 adopted in the pre-North period. The Pearl Fishery Commissioners
 also proposed, as a security measure, the patrolling of the pearl
 fishery waters by two Bombay cruisers during the off season.
 We infer that nothing of this sort was done in the pre-North
 period from the fact that Andrews made the same proposal in his
 last letter to the Committee of Investigation.⁶⁵ This was at the
 end of the 1798 pearl fishery. The failure of the Government to
 implement these measures tends to show its indifference. The
 Pearl Fishery Commissioners of 1799 were also invested with a
 measure of judicial authority. Alexander, who as Superintendent
 of the pearl fishery was their counterpart in the early years,

60 Andrews to Comm.of Inv.10 Nov.1798,10 Nov.1798,Comm.of Inv.

61 Report of Macdowall Committee of Inquiry on Pearl Fishery,
 11 Dec.1799,North MSS.

62 North to Wellesley 27 May 1801,No.19,14 Aug.1801,Bengal Pol.&

63 Turnour to North 10 Nov.1798,21 Nov.1798,Rev.Dept. Sec.Cons.

64 Ibid.

65 Andrews to Comm.of Inv.10 Nov.1798,10 Nov.1798,Comm.of Inv.

does not seem to have been endowed with similar powers. It appears therefore, that much of the pearl fishery administration in this period was in the renter's hand.

There are a few kindred matters in which the examination of Government policy can be continued. Andrews made a trial fishing of the pearl banks at Chilauw in 1796.⁶⁶ The experiment was interrupted by bad weather. Nonetheless, in his view, it justified large-scale fishing. He collected 70,000 oysters saleable at six Porto Novo Pagodas per 1,000 "which will more than defray the expenses of the trial".⁶⁷ He expressed the intention of fishing these banks on a large-scale at the end of the fishery at Manaar.⁶⁸ It was never done. This can only be put down to an indifference engendered by the official opinion of the pearl fishery as "casual revenue".

The Nawab of the Carnatic and the Rajah of Tanjore claimed a share of the pearl fishery.⁶⁹ After much wrangling both claims were conceded. The Nawab of the Carnatic was awarded Pagodas 54,892 - 26 - 65 for 1797 and the Rajah of Tanjore one sixteenth share for three years.⁷⁰ The instructions given by the Court of Directors to North lay bare the intention of the British Government in this matter,⁷¹ "no intention can exist to deprive either of those princes of the exercise of any right which they unequivocally possessed when the island of Ceylon was in the possession

66 Andrews to Hobart 4 Feb. 1797, Madras Rev. Proc.

67 Ibid.

68 Madras Rev. letter to Court of Directors 27 Mar. 1799 Paras 62-67.

69 Nawab of the Carnatic to Hobart 25 Feb. 1796, 3 Mar. 1796, 471 Madras Rev. Proc.

70 Andrews to Webbe 27 April 1796, 13 May 1796, 1618-1619, Madras Rev. Proc.

71 Instructions of the Court of Directors to North, 16 Sept. 1798, North MSS.

of the Dutch".

The claims of the two Indian princes were to be commuted into money. This was emphasized from the very beginning. It was also emphasized that neither of them were to be allowed to fish boats at the pearl fishery on their own account. All boats at the pearl fishery were to be under the exclusive control of the renter.⁷²

There is nothing in what we have examined of Government policy to contradict Hobart's view of the pearl fishery as "casual revenue". We know that Hobart looked upon the pearl fishery of 1797 as a success.⁷³ This was also the view taken by Andrews of the fisheries of 1797 and 1798.⁷⁴ By success both referred to the amount of money which had accrued to the Government when the farm was rented. It is significant that Hobart's remarks about the success of the pearl fishery are comprised in the same statement in which he estimates the pearl fishery as "casual revenue". The notion of success probably arose readily because of the view of the pearl fishery as "casual revenue".

North's attitude to the pearl fishery was completely different. He rested all his hopes for relief from his straitened financial circumstances upon it. The pearl was as it were the talisman from which he expected succour in his distress. A few months after his arrival he was writing to the Court of Directors that he was "procuring from all quarters information" and that "by possible savings in the management of the fishery and by the real capability

72 Webbe to Andrews 16 Dec.1797,4095-4095, Madras Rev.Proc.

73 Hobart to Comm.of Inv.9 June 1797,4 Aug.1797,Comm.of Inv.

74 Andrews to Comm.of Inv.10 Nov.1798,10 Nov.1798,Comm.of Inv.

of production in the Banks (that) source of wealth will become ⁷⁵
 more constant and more important than has hitherto been imagined."
 Later he told them of the part assigned to the pearl fishery in
 his financial schemes. He hoped that it would enable him to
 counteract the drain of specie from the island. ⁷⁶ After the failure
 of the fishery of 1799 he informed the Governor General that he
 owed "the present emptiness" of his treasury to the "maladministrat-
 -ion of these fisheries". ⁷⁷ The "maladministration" he has in mind
 is the peculation which he alleged was committed by the Pearl
 Fishery Commissioners. ⁷⁸ On the eve of the fishery of 1801 he
 was indulging in hopes "that it will prove an abundant source of
 permanent revenue collected with short labour produced by little
 capital and totally unoppressive to the People". ⁷⁹ The failure of
 this fishery also did not rob him of all hope. A letter written
 to the Governor General lamenting the disappointment of his hopes
 concludes on the optimistic note that "the experience of the late
 fishery has thrown such lights on that important concern as
 will prevent any similar disappointment in Future". ⁸⁰

We have already had a preview of the manner in which North
 organized the pearl fishery of 1799. He appointed George Turnour
 and Hugh Cleghorn to examine the pearl banks. At the end of their
 investigation they made several proposals to North - a bye-law to

75	North to Court of Directors	26 October	1798.	1798, Court of Dir.
76	" " " " "	5 "	1799.	
77	North to Wellesley	15 Feb. 1800, 31 July	1800, No. 1, Bengal Pol. & Sec. Cons.	
78	North to Secret Committee of Court of Directors	26 Aug. 1801,	Sec. Dept.	
79	North to Wellesley	15 Feb. 1800, No. 1, 31 July	1800, Bengal Pol. & Sec. Cons.	
80	" " "	27 May 1801, No. 19, 14 Aug. 1801,	Bengal Pol. & Sec. Cons.	

prevent used shells being thrown overboard, the forbidding of diving beyond certain fixed points and two Bombay cruisers to patrol the pearl fishery waters during the off-season. ⁸¹ These ⁸² were approved by North and very probably put into effect. They also proposed that the pilot and his assistants should be commanded to live at Arippo and a person appointed on a permanent basis to examine and report on the condition of the banks. There is no evidence that these proposals although dignified by North's consent were put into effect. North also went to great pains to assure adequate supplies of rice to the "concourse" attracted to Arripo by the pearl fishery. ⁸³ It was one of those few occasions on which he fixed the price of the rice to be sold by the Govern-⁸⁴ -ment. Cleghorn, Turnour and Mcdouall were chosen as Pearl Fishery Commissioners to conduct the pearl fishery. ⁸⁵ It was decided not to farm the whole fishery to one renter. The farm of the pearl fishery would take the form of putting up the boats for ⁸⁶ auction on each separate day.

If North had thought that these arrangement would assure the smooth success of the fishery he was reckoning without his hosts. His Government was forced by the renters into several relations with them. The "principle bidders" by combining among themselves ⁸⁷ kept the bidding low. Vydelinga Chetty was accused by Mootiah

Chetty of having defrauded the Government when he had been the

81 Turnour to North 10 Nov.1798,21 Nov.1798,Rev.Dept.

82 Ibid.

83 North to Pearl Fishery Commissioners 4 Feb.1799,Rev.Dept.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.

87 Pearl Fishery Commissioners to North 13 Mar.1799,16 Mar.1799,
Rev.Dept.

sole pearl fishery renter.⁸⁸ North was disinclined to prosecute Vydelinga Chetty for fear of deterring "all the monied people who may have been implicated in similar Intrigues from coming under the safeguard of the Public Invitation to venture their money boldly."⁸⁹ The Pearl Fishery Commissioners agreed with North.⁹⁰ They recommended using the threat of the charge to detach Vydelinga Chetty from the other merchants.⁹¹ Taking the initiative into their own hands they came to an understanding with Vydelinga Chetty by which he undertook to buy at least one hundred boats and "refrain from all connection with the party leagued against the Government".⁹² Before long Vydelinga Chetty repudiated the agreement.⁹³

The next measure resorted to by the Government to break the combination was to employ the boats "as they arrived to fish on the publick (sic) account".⁹⁴ We learn that this measure did not meet with any more success than the earlier one from the fact that combination by the merchants survives as a cause for the failure of the pearl fishery.⁹⁵ The pearl fishery of 1801 was fished wholly in amani. Among the causes offered in explanation of its failure is one which will help us to understand the failure of the partial attempt to fish in amani in 1799. The absence of merchants entailing in turn the absence of speculation would have caused the oysters brought up by the divers and the pearls themselves, to have little value. Applying this reasoning to the circumstances of

88 North to Cleghorn 16 Feb. 1799, Rev. Dept.

89 Ibid.

90 Pearl Fishery Commissioners to North, 13 Mar. 1799, 16 Mar. 1799, Rev. Dept.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

1799 the organized hostility of the bidders would have nullified the fishing efforts of the Government.

Dependence upon the merchants is again highlighted by the refusal of the Pearl Commissioners to allow the assets of the speculators at Arripo to be seized for debts contracted elsewhere. Lieut. Colonel Torrens, presumably an English Officer serving in Madras, had his request for impounding the assets of two "soucars" of the districts of Trichnopoly and Nagore on account of debts owing to him turned down because the Pearl Fishery Commissioners could not presume to arbitrate on the validity of the debts and "Public Interest would suffer if the Persons of such as came to the Fishery are to be exposed to similar arrests".⁹⁶

Basing themselves on the calculation that four thousand oysters was "the daily produce of a boat" the Government entered into an agreement with the purchasers of boats that whenever that number was not empleted by a days fishing a proportioned re-⁹⁷mission would be made. The Pearl Fishery Commissioners went back upon this agreement. They alleged that the renters with the connivance of the humbler administrative officials, bribed already by them, made out false returns of the amount of oysters gathered each day in their boats.⁹⁸ Therefore, the Commissioners regarded oysters fished by Government boats as the norm and assessed the remissions due to the merchants accordingly.⁹⁹ North censured this action of the Commissioners which amounted in his eyes to "a violation of a general and public agreement".¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Cleghorn to Champagne 10 April 1799, 13 April 1799, Public Dept.

⁹⁷ North to Wellesley 30 April 1799, North MSS.

⁹⁸ Ibid. ⁹⁹ Ibid. ¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

The Supreme Government of India forbade the export of gold coin from India by speculators intent on participating in the Ceylon pearl fishery. They regarded this effect of the pearl fishery amounting in the past to "much inconvenience" as a serious evil at a time when they were engaged in war with Tipu Sultan of Mysore. They devised a scheme which would have avoided that result. The speculators were to be equipped with drafts from the British Carnatic Bank at Madras. The Pearl Fishery Commissioners at the conclusion of their negotiations were required to mark on these drafts the amount of money owed by the Ceylon Government. This would be paid to the speculators in cash on their return to India and the sum debited from the Government of Ceylon's account with the Government of Madras. Despite all these elaborate arrangements gold coins seem to have been brought by the speculators and accepted by the Pearl Fishery Commissioners. They made a statement to this effect: "We have as yet received in gold only two thousand Pagodas. But it is impossible for us to judge of the quantity that may be received till the sale is complete". That the gold coins mentioned here were not a misnomer for paper drafts is proved by the rest of the statement asking for a soldiers' escort for treasure which might be sent to Colombo. At the end of the pearl fishery the Commissioners could not pay the speculators the money due to them. Therefore they drew up bills payable to the Madras Government. This seems to have been a measure forced upon them by their lack of cash. It also seems to have been different from the

101 Gov-General-in-Council Fort St. George to North 5 Jan. 1799,
 102 Ibid. 15 Jan. 1799, Rev. Dept.
 103 Pearl Fishery Commissioners to North, 2 Feb. 1799, 5 Feb. 1799,
 Rev. Dept.

plan mooted by the Supreme Government. Their awareness of the make-shift nature of the arrangement becomes clear from one of their remarks, "The creditors are rather clamorous and much allowance is to be made them when they are obliged to receive Bills payable at a distant time and place for cash which they fairly deposited".¹⁰⁴ This statement bears incontrovertible witness to the fact that cash was received at the pearl fishery. The Pearl Fishery Commissioners appear to have openly disregarded the financial devices of the Supreme Government. In a spirit of indifference they seem to have let the Madras Government know that they did so. There is also no hint of their having retreated from their original position in the statements made by them. The Government of India seems to have been forced by the actions of the Pearl Fishery Commissioners to recognize a fait accompli. As for North he must have known from the early letters of the Pearl Fishery Commissioners that money was being received at the pearl fishery. If he had castigated his officials at that stage this activity of theirs would, in all likelihood, have ceased. As we shall see presently he raised several charges of fraud against the Pearl Fishery Commissioners. Among these the charges of having disobeyed the instructions of the Supreme Government in this matter is conspicuously absent. North seems to have connived, with his officials to receive cash at the pearl fishery. Our aim in making this examination was not to subject North to a posthumous charge of insubordination. We are concerned only to illustrate the

104 Pearl Fishery Commissioners to North 22 April 1799, 26 April 1799, Rev. Dept.

earnestness with which he tried to make the pearl fishery operations successful, even to the extent of flouting the express wishes of the Supreme Government.

Both the Pearl Fishery Commissioners and North regarded the pearl fishery of 1799 as a failure. For his part North attributed it to malpractices committed in earlier fisheries. The banks had been exhausted with the result that the oysters remained in isolated clusters making it difficult to say from the surface where they were. ¹⁰⁵ The villain of the piece for the Pearl Fishery Commissioners was the "combination of the great capitalists" ¹⁰⁶ which managed to keep down the sums offered for the boats. It is our view that this explanation should be given greater weight than the others put forward. The topography of the pearl banks should have become known in the examination conducted by Cleghorn and Turnour before the actual fishing. If there had not been enough oysters to justify a pearl fishery the whole operation should have been called off. All the evidence we have considered points to the speculators as North's frustrators rather than the misdeeds of his predecessors. As we shall see in 1801 he was again to feel their power even when their presence was withdrawn.

North's fury fell on the Pearl Fishery Commissioners. On a suspicion that fraud was committed he set up a commission of enquiry. It was headed by General Hay Macdougall, the Commander ¹⁰⁷ of the forces at that time. The Commission of Inquiry found the

105 North to Wellesley 30 April 1799, Rev. Dept.

106 Pearl Fishery Commissioners to North, 13 Mar. 1799, 16 Mar. 1799, Rev. Dept.

107 North to Pearl Fishery Inquiry Committee, 15 Nov. 1799, Sec. Dept.

108

Pearl Fishery Commissioners guilty of speculation. Armed with this verdict North suspended McDouall, Cleghorn and Turnour from office. We considered this topic in order, once again, to stress North's real concern for the success of the pearl fishery.

North decided to conduct the fishery of 1801 completely in amani. The reasons he gave for this step were that proper sanitary arrangements could not be entrusted to the speculators, the wish of "the boat people" and divers that the Government should conduct the fishery, the greater capital resources of the Government, its greater power to prevent pilfering and its concern to protect the banks.

An examination of the pearl banks by William Boyd, Secretary to the Government, preceded their actual fishing. He expressed the opinion that the banks, because the oysters were too young, were not in a suitable state for fishing. The Pilot Rodrigo, supported by the Adepenaars (chiefs of villages in this area) and the pattengattys (chiefs of the fisher caste), took the view that a successful fishery could be made. Basing himself upon their opinion North ordered a fishery to take place.

Elaborate measures were taken to ensure that there would be no thieving of pearls by the vast army of labourers employed in cleaning the oysters. A building for a Superintendent was erected at the centre for cleaning operations. The first floor would

108 Report of Pearl Fishery Inquiry Committee 11 Dec. 1799, 12 Dec. 1799, Sec. Dept.
 109 North to Wellesley 19 Nov. 1800 No. 1, 30 Sept. 1801, Bengal Pol. & Sec. Cons.
 110 Memorial by Boyd, North to Wellesley 11 May 1801, No. 16, 14 Aug. 1801, Bengal Pol. & Sec. Cm

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

113 Minute by Governor 8 Dec. 1800, Public Dept.

114

consist of his office and the second of his dwelling. It was hoped that this would give him the advantage of keeping an eye on operations over the whole area.

Twelve other enclosures were built. Each one of these was given over to the many sided operations of a pearl fishery - washing the oysters, sorting the differing types, drying the flesh of the pearl, reducing the refuse to sand in order to detect straggling pearls, beating the broken shells for the same purpose and so on. ¹¹⁵ One of the objects of these measures was to safe-guard public health. The decomposing oyster produced an intolerable stench. The speculators when they frequented the pearl fishery would insist on dismembering the oysters near their ¹¹⁶ houses. By conducting the operation of cleaning the oyster away from private dwellings it was hoped to put an end to such an obnoxious state of affairs. North presided over the pearl ¹¹⁷ fishery in person. Despite all these precautions this pearl fishery was also a failure. By failure it was meant that not enough money was gained from it.

This time North made the pilot Rodrigo his scapegoat. He ¹¹⁸ instituted another inquiry. It was made by another extra-judicial tribunal. The verdict of the tribunal was that Rodrigo had coerced the adepenaars and the patenatyns to say that the banks

114 Ibid.

115 Memorial by Boyd, North to Wellesley, 11 May 1801, No. 16, 14 Aug. 1801, Bengal Pol. & Sec. Cons.

116 North to Court of Directors 24 April 1801.

117 " " " " " 18 Feb. 1801.

118 Minute by Governor, North to Wellesley, 11 May 1801, No. 15, 14 Aug. 1801, Bengal Pol. & Sec. Cons.

could be fished for thirty days by 120 boats when they really believed that it could only be fished by that number of boats for fifteen days.¹¹⁹ Boyd's statements offer other explanations. According to his research which he said was confirmed by the experience of fishermen the banks often changed their nature. Sometimes they would be covered with oysters and sometimes with sand.¹²⁰ Another explanation is to be found in the suggestions he made for the successful organizing of the next fishery. He argued that it was the bidding of the speculators which increased the value of the oysters and the pearls. Total amani fishing involving as it did the complete absence of the speculators would oblige the divers to sell their oysters cheap. In this way the price of the pearls would also fall low.¹²¹

Of all these explanations the one which adduces the unsatisfactory nature of the pearl banks seems on this occasion to have the greatest weight. Boyd twice offered testimony to this effect. The original counsel of the intimidated adepenaars and the patengatyns also had the same import. However, the absence of the speculators would have had the effect of depriving whatever oysters were fished of their normal value. This is emphasized by the fact that the pearls collected from this fishery were sold in two lots in India - the first one to Lawson, an official of the Madras Government, and the second one between Colt, Baker and Company and Latour and Company.¹²² So North's talisman was powerless to help him. The enemies that deprived him of its assistance

119 Ibid.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

consisted of intractable natural elements and astute speculators.

We give the next ranking to the spices. The Government gave effective support to the cultivation of betelnut. There was hardly any support given to coffee, pepper and cardamums and even with regard to the famous cinnamon the enthusiasm of the Government was lukewarm. We shall, however, treat the spices together because of their natural affinity to one another.

Attention should be directed in the very beginning to a directive given by the Home Government about spices. "The advantages in prospect of transplanting into the Company's territories the several spices produced in the countries captured from the Dutch are so obvious that we make no doubt of the subject having already engaged your attention. But if in the variety of other matters this should have escaped your attention we direct that you immediately take the necessary measures for introducing the most valuable spices into Bengal, Madras, Sumatra and the Province of Malabar acquainting us with your proceedings herein and the progressive success of your experiments". The first we hear of these instructions being put into effect is in a letter written by Greenhill, Superintendent of the cinnamon plantations at the time. He confesses his inability to supply the Government of Bengal with the articles of cardamums, pepper and coffee required by it before December and goes on to say: "However from a conviction that it is with view of ascertaining the quality and

123 Draft of letter proposed by Secret Committee of the East India Company to be sent to the Government of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, East India House 17 Aug.1796, approved by the Board 18 Aug.1796 and signed on 26 Aug.1796 by D.Scott, H. Inglis and J. Manship.

value of the articles alluded to that the Government of Bengal
are desirous of being furnished with a supply from hence..."¹²⁴

This shows that Greenhill was not told why these spices were
needed by the Government of Bengal. It also shows that in ~~Greenhill's~~
Greenhill's opinion the Bengal Government only wanted specimens
of these articles.

On board the Greenwich Greenhill sent to Bengal fifty bags
and ten boxes of cinnamon, ten candies of coir "proper for cables"
and two boxes of cardamum plants "the best of each sort produced
in the world".¹²⁵ All that is disclosed by Greenhill about the
reason for the despatch of these articles is that they were "in
compliance with your lordship's command signified to me in Mr.
Secretary Webbe's letter under date the 22 May and 24 July last".¹²⁶
He sent another consignment by the Burnaby consisting of 159 cwts.
24 lbs. Ceylon coffee; 49 cwts. 2 qtrs. 6 lbs. Ceylon pepper and
46 cwts. 3 qtrs. 4 lbs. coir "for and on account of the Supreme
Government of Bengal".¹²⁷ It is difficult to represent these
articles as consignments intended for consumption or for sale.
There is nothing in the import of the letters from which that
can be established.

It is with cinnamon that the attempt to reproduce it in
India advanced furthest. 16,000 plants of cinnamon were sent to a
plantation in Tinnevelly in the Madras Presidency. Specimens¹²⁸

124 Extract of a letter from the Commercial Resident of Ceylon,
Falconar to Barlow 9 Sept.1797, No.5, 6 Oct.1797, Bengal Pub.Cons.

125 Extract of a letter from the Commercial Resident, Webbe to
Barlow 16 Dec.1797, No.2, 5 Jan.1798, Bengal Comm.& Ship.Cons.

126 Ibid.

127 Ibid.

128 Commercial letter from Madras to Court of Directors 16 Oct.1797
Paras 47-53

of the cinnamon plant were sent to various other parts of the same
 Presidency.¹²⁹ The Bombay Government believed that at some time a
 species of cinnamon similar to that in Ceylon grew in different
 parts of the Malabar Coast. They solicited the good offices of
 the Madras Government in recruiting some Sinhalese trained in the
 art of curing cinnamon for the purpose of growing it in Bombay.¹³⁰
 The Government of Ceylon complied with this demand.¹³¹

What happened in North's period? At the request of the
 Government of Bengal North agreed to send "200 factory maunds of
 Ceylon coffee"¹³² Later on 189 bags of Ceylon coffee were shipped
 to Bengal on board the Dundee.¹³³ Once again the records are barren
 of the reason why the coffee was needed by Bengal. The Bengal
 Government may have been continuing the experiment of growing
 Ceylon coffee within its own domains. On the other hand this
 coffee might have been wanted only for consumption. There is no
 account of cinnamon plants being sent to India in this period.
 North stressed that the resources of Ceylon should not be re-
 -garded as those of a temporary possession. He advocated,
 therefore, "the preservation and improvement of the cinnamon".¹³⁴
 The letter of the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors
 embodying its request which we have observed was approved by the
 Board of Trade. It is, therefore, unlikely to have represented
 an attempt by the Court of Directors to discriminate in favour of

129 Commercial letter from Madras to Court of Directors 15 Oct.1798

130 Ibid. paras 91-92

131 Greenhill to Hobart 28 Nov.1797,15 Dec.1797,3932, Madras Pub.Cons

132 Boyd to Crommelin 28 June 1797, No.7, 24 July 1800, Bengal Pub.Cons

133 " " " 30 Sept.1801, No.10 29 Oct.1801, " " "

134 Considerations on cinnamon by North, North MSS.

its own possessions against those of the Crown. A likelier explanation is that the Home Government was uncertain of whether it would retain Ceylon or not at a putative peace settlement with the French. This uncertainty strong at the beginning of the occupation of Ceylon must have diminished in North's period although he continued to be anxious. With its decline would have disappeared its concomitant - the policy of reproducing Ceylonese spice plants in India.

We should now consider the other aspects of the Government's policy in relation to the spices. Coffee, pepper and cardamums were generally regarded together by the Government and it is proposed to treat them in the same way. Greenhill thought that the cultivation of these plants could be developed in the Maritime Provinces and he urged "that every encouragement should be held out to the natives to stimulate and excite them"¹³⁵. His own plans took the form of allowing would-be growers of coffee and pepper¹³⁶ one third of the crop. He believed Ceylon coffee to be very little inferior "to that of Mocha",¹³⁷ and thought that it could capture a "European market".¹³⁸ The Madras Government resolved to defer the matter until the Committee of Investigation had concluded its deliberations.¹³⁹ That body however did not give its attention to coffee and pepper and so the proposal of Greenhill passed into oblivion. On an earlier occasion Greenhill had suggested the

¹³⁵ Extract of a letter from Commercial Resident of Ceylon, Falconar to Barlow 9 Sept. 1797, No. 5, 6 Oct. 1797, Bengal Pub. Cons.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

reducing of the duties on pepper and coffee in order to promote their cultivation.¹⁴⁰ Hobart did not comment upon the suggestion in his replies to Greenhill. This too seems to have passed unheeded. Greenhill did not include cardamums in this category. This could be due to the relative meagreness of its cultivation. We learn from Major Davy Robertson, the Fiscal of Colombo, who, while sojourning in England, presented to Dundas and North's brother-in-law, Lord Glenbervie, a memorandum compiled by him on commercial and natural products in Ceylon that cardamums did not flourish during Dutch times.¹⁴¹ Cardamums do not figure in the list of spices whose mounting export was greeted enthusiastically by North. Unlike pepper, coffee, and betelnut there is also no evidence of government owned cardamum gardens.

Robertson in his memorandum proposed that "as the coffee raised in Ceylon is thought to be better than that brought from the West Indies" it should be encouraged. Of pepper he said it grew in every part and that its cultivation was attended with little expense. He proposed encouraging its cultivation by paying two fanams for each pound.¹⁴² There is no evidence that these ideas were implemented. The general attitude of the Home Government we shall defer considering for the moment. North made no proposal to promote the cultivation of coffee and pepper. He did not even take up the proposals made by Greenhill and Robertson. It seems all the more strange in view of his oft expressed delight at the growth in their export. This matter we shall examine more fully

140 Ibid.

141 D. Robertson's memorandum, Ceylon volume 54.

142 Ibid.

later, along with the attitude of the Home Government.

Hamilton, one time Agent of Revenue and Commerce of the Colombo district, suggested the selling of the "small cinnamon gardens" coffee, pepper and betelnut gardens. According to him these were Government-owned gardens. Neither in his letter nor in the subsequent ones addressed by others on the same subject is there a clear explanation of the nature of the tenure of these gardens. According to Robertson the Dutch coffee gardens were mainly in Negombo, Kotte and the Hewagam Korle. He also tells us that the Dutch paid one and a half fanams for a pound of coffee. We know from De Meuron that there was a type of cinnamon garden during Dutch times in which the cultivator was recompensed for the burden of having to grow cinnamon by being assured of a fixed price. It seems likely that these coffee gardens were of a similar type. Both Robertson and De Meuron say that the Dutch paid a fixed price for pepper. It is likely that the pepper was also bought from gardens enjoined to produce it. The coffee and pepper growing gardens we come across in British times have every appearance of being continuations of the Dutch gardens. Whatever their tenure Hamilton thought they should be sold "because they are almost entirely useless to Government". Johnston, Agent of Revenue and Commerce for the district of Chilaw, makes clear that the uselessness of the gardens was caused by "their being entirely neglected since the arrival of the English".

143 Hamilton to Board of Rev.& Comm. 20 June 1801, 23 June 1801,

144 Ibid. Board of Rev.& Comm.

145 Robertson's memorandum, Ceylon volume 54.

146 Collected Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

147 Ibid.

148 Johnstone to Board of Rev.& Comm. 28 Nov. 1801, 30 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev.& Comm.

confines his stricture to "three gardens of pepper and three of coffee" in his district it is likely that it was the same reason which drove the Government to sell other gardens of this sort in other areas. North approved Hamilton's suggestion. ¹⁴⁹ Johnstone seems to have been advising the sale of derelict coffee and pepper gardens in his area in accordance with the decision. ¹⁵⁰ When the Board of Revenue and Commerce recommended that two other coffee and two other pepper gardens "should be cleared and cultivated on account of Government" they were not reversing the policy of the Government. They gave this advice because these gardens "if now ¹⁵¹ sold will not produce their value". As we have seen in the chapter on land, selling of land did not initiate a new type of tenure. Before and after the sale the incumbent of the land gave a share of his produce to the State. In the case of these gardens, apart from the probable result that the share taken by the Government after sale was less, it is very likely that on sale the stipulation to grow coffee and pepper was withdrawn. Such a result would have retarded the cultivation of coffee and pepper.

The Commanders of the soldiers participating in the capture of Ceylon were allowed to acquire some Dutch property consisting mainly of consignments of spices which had come into their hands in the course of the fighting. Later on these were sold by the captors to the East India Company. The Bengal Board of Trade gave their opinion about the prospects for the sale of these commodities in

149 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 19 June 1801, 6 July 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 150 Johnstone to Board of Rev. & Comm. 28 Nov. 1801, 30 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 151 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 15 Feb. 1802, 16 Feb. 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

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 Europe. Although it did not know how the coffee would sell in Europe its sale was recommended on the grounds that it was an experiment worth making.¹⁵³ Its view of the cardamums was that "if they produce as much as the Bombay cardamums sold in April 1796 about 2shs. 3d. per lb. they will give a profit".¹⁵⁴ The pepper would fare as well as Anjengo pepper. (This was a reference to pepper grown in India). These commodities were despatched to England by John Bebb, the official of the Bengal Government chosen to handle the business.¹⁵⁵ No inquiries were pursued by the Ceylon Government to see whether these sales met with success. There was also no further attempt made to sell such spices in Europe in the period of the East India Company's administration of Ceylon. In 1803 J.F. Conradie, "a very wealthy and industrious" Dutchman resident in Ceylon despatched "two parcels" of Ceylon coffee and cardamums to David Scott and Company in London.¹⁵⁶ Arbuthnot at that time Secretary to the Government wrote to North's brother-in-law, Lord Glenbervie about this consignment inviting him as "a friend and Patron of Ceylon to make enquiry as to the character which its produce has obtained in the great market".¹⁵⁷

The betelnut having experienced a different history from the spices of the foregoing category should be considered separately. The encouragement of its production did not have Greenhill's support. He did not offer its cultivator the incentive of

retaining one third of the produce. He also did not advocate the

152 Bengal Board of Trade to Shore 10 June 1796, No.1, 17 June 1796,
 153 Ibid. Bengal Pol.Cons

154 Ibid.

155 Bebb to Webbe 9 June 1797, 9 June 1797, 1974 & 1975, Madras Pub.

156 Arbuthnot to Glenbervie 26 April 1803, North MSS. Cons.

157 Ibid.

reduction of its export duty. This could have been because betelnut, unlike coffee, pepper and cardamums, was grown on a larger scale in the Maritime Provinces than in the Kandyan kingdom. Greenhill could have taken the view that its growth was already sufficiently developed. Robertson, who said a word about almost every commercial product in his memorandum, does not mention betelnut. That North already taken measures to promote the cultivation of betelnut in the Maritime Provinces is the most likely reason for the silence of Robertson.

Having already lowered the export duty on betelnut to seven and a half Rds. per amunam North offered its cultivator in the Maritime Provinces the advantage of paying a lower duty of five
158 Rds. He made it clear to the Court of Directors that his motive was "to encourage as much as possible the growth of betelnut" in the Maritime Provinces, "our territories" as he called them.¹⁵⁹ It is North's concern to encourage betelnut growth that makes it difficult to understand why he sold the Government owned betelnut gardens. As we have seen they were included with the coffee and
160 pepper gardens ordered to be sold. It seems to have been a case of the right hand not knowing what the left was doing.

This may not, however, be completely true. As we have learnt from our examination of land tenure policy it was difficult for the Government to identify lands held by service tenure and to determine precisely the varying rights of their holders. It would not be surprising to find the Government being pursued by the same

158 Advertisement 12 Mar. 1799, Rev. Dept.

159 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1799.

160 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 19 June 1801, 6 July 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm

bogey in the private betelnut gardens particularly if, as we have been told, the cultivation of betelnut in them was being neglected. We shall hear this confession from the Government in relation to private cinnamon gardens. It would be closer to the truth, therefore, to say that with regard to the betelnut North's right hand was forced to ignore what his left was doing.

The same obscurity of tenures might have played its part in forcing the Government to sell the coffee and pepper gardens. There is, however, one question which remains to bedevil us. Why did not North, as he did in the case of betelnut, encourage the production of coffee, pepper and cardamums by reducing their export duties? The records are barren of any express explanation of this feature. We are, therefore, forced to speculate. Coffee, pepper and cardamums, unlike betelnut, were grown mainly in the Kandyan Kingdom. There was also a drain of specie to the Kingdom of Kandy. It is probable that North, harassed as he was by financial worries, did not want to place the Kingdom of Kandy in too good a position and also worsen his own.

Before we can go on to the cinnamon policy proper there are two errors in parlance about the early cinnamon administration which should be corrected. De Silva says that during the pre-North period the cinnamon administration was placed in the charge of Greenhill and two European assistants and that the service of the Mudaliyars was not enlisted. ¹⁶¹ This is not true. From the very beginning Greenhill used the cinnamon department established by the Dutch with its hierarchy of Head Mudaliyar, Mudaliyars, Vidanes

and Arratjes.¹⁶² It is true he reduced the number of cinnamon peelers.¹⁶³ The Madras Government, while approving of this measure, went on to say that "they should certainly be continued for the present in the enjoyment of all the advantage derived from the Dutch Government".¹⁶⁴ The assistance of these hierarchical chiefs continued to be sought and received in the cinnamon department long after Andrews' general measure relieving the Mudaliyars and their subordinates from administrative functions was put into effect.¹⁶⁵ There is no evidence that this state of affairs changed in the cinnamon department. "All the advantage derived from the Dutch Government" of which the Madras Government spoke would certainly have included the right of the Mudaliyars to hold land in return for their services. There are a couple of statements made by Greenhill to confirm this view. Speaking about an intended survey of the cinnamon plantations he said, "I conceive the surveys will be a very material step towards obtaining other extremely necessary information viz. the villages, number and privileges of the cinnamon peeler cast...."¹⁶⁶ Greenhill's remark about the dubious land titles of the Mudaliyars which we have already met in the chapter on land was also made in this connexion.¹⁶⁷ So it seems that the cinnamon department was exempted not only from the policy of removing the Mudaliyars from the administration but also from the policy of abolishing service-tenures practiced in this period.

162 Greenhill to Hobart 6 Jan.1798, No.11, 13 April 1798, Bengal Pol.

163 Webbe to Greenhill. 4 June 1796, 2325, Madras Pub.Proc. Cons.

164 Ibid.

165 Greenhill to Hobart 6 Jan.1798, No.11, 13 April 1798, Bengal Pol.

166 Ibid. Cons.

167 Greenhill to North 2 Nov.1798, 3 Jan.1799, Comm.Dept.

De Silva also conveys the impression that cinnamon was converted into a State monopoly by the Committee of Investigation. This once again is not true. Cinnamon was regarded and operated as a monopoly from the very beginning of British rule in Ceylon.

There is another matter, on this occasion cast in doubt by Greenhill, which should be elucidated. Greenhill once stated that he collected cinnamon from five public Dutch gardens in Negombo, Colombo, Barbaryn (Kalutara) Galle and Matara. These gardens were cultivated by the Dutch Government on a basis different from the private gardens. If this is true then North, in whose time there were only four public cinnamon gardens, seems to have abandoned one Dutch garden. The weight of the evidence is against such a view. There is no evidence in North's time of the jettisoning of a large Government cinnamon garden. As we shall soon see, Greenhill also gathered cinnamon from private cinnamon gardens. It seems probable that with a multitude of sources to account for Greenhill carelessly put the number of public Dutch gardens as five instead of four.

Greenhill complained about the fall in the productivity of cinnamon. He expressed the fear that for the year 1798 the stipulated quota of cinnamon would not be collected. The amount of cinnamon collected in that year was 4,639 bales. It had been 5,421 bales in 1797 and 5,496 in 1796. There was a gradual

168 De Silva p 419

169 Advertisement 25 June 1796, 16 Oct. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

170 Greenhill to Hobart 21 Sept. 1796, 3589-3597, 7 Oct. 1796, Madras Pub.

171 Collected Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv. Cons.

172 Greenhill to Hobart 6 Jan. 1798, 20 Jan. 1798, 144, Madras Pub. Cons.

173 Greenhill to Court of Directors 20 April 1798, 18 May 1798, 1290, Madras Pub. Cons.

174 Greenhill to Webbe 25 June 1797, 13 July 1798, 2102-2119, Madras Pub. Cons.

decline in the first two years which evidently became aggravated in 1798. Greenhill then sounded the alarm. We shall meet with the problem of falling productivity in North's period and place it in its proper setting.

Greenhill also collected cinnamon from the Kandyan Kingdom and the private gardens. According to De Meuron, the private gardens were composed of two sorts - one being public land granted to individuals on condition that they were planted with cinnamon and the other lands belonging to individuals on which some cinnamon was

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grown. Greenhill confessed to difficulty in identifying these cinnamon gardens especially when the cultivation of cinnamon was

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neglected in them. The devices of maps and surveys were

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recommended by him as remedies for this deficiency. He also

advised that owners of private cinnamon gardens who persisted in keeping them in a state of neglect should be asked to exchange

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them "for others of similar dimensions now uncultivated". We

should not regard the difficulty of making the owners of these

gardens grow cinnamon as being unconnected with the problem of

identifying these gardens and determining their tenure precisely.

One effective cause preventing the Government from forcing holders

of cinnamon gardens to grow cinnamon on them would have been the

difficulty in knowing who were obliged to do so. We have already

noticed the difficulty of the British Administration in determining

175 Collected Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

176 Greenhill to Hobart 6 Jan. 1798, No. 11, 13 April 1798, Bengal Pol.

177 Ibid.

Cons.

178 Ibid.

181 Proposed

182 Greenhill

183 Greenhill

tenures relating to all land. It is, therefore, not surprising that the same problem manifested itself in the case of cinnamon. It is important to note that Greenhill did not recommend the sale of the cinnamon gardens. This was a way out of the difficulty adopted by North.

The other bugbear that harassed Greenhill was the contraband trade in cinnamon. He rejected the view that it was especially connected with the private gardens. Cinnamon, according to him, was so closely associated with a caste and one "deemed derogatory" that smuggling was likely to have been performed by the members of that caste and so be related to public and private gardens alike. He pinpointed the coast around Galle and Matara as ~~the~~ most vulnerable areas because there "no natural barrier" impeded "the designs of evil and intriguing men" and because it was frequented by boats from the Maldive Islands. The Committee of Investigation issued a proclamation threatening "every ship, vessel or boat" carrying more than twenty pounds of cinnamon with the punishment of having its cargo confiscated.

Greenhill planned a survey of all cinnamon growing lands. There is no evidence that this survey was completed or even undertaken. He also entertained the idea of stationing assistants "industrious and trustworthy" in four putative districts into which he divided the island. Nothing substantial materialised from it.

Probably these proposals met with slight attention because they were

179 Greenhill to North 2 Nov.1798, 3 Jan.1799, Comm.Dept.

180 Ibid.

181 Proposed Government Advertisement, 15 June 1798, Comm.of Inv.

182 Greenhill to Hobart 6 Jan.1798, No.11, 13 April 1798, Bengal Pol

183 Greenhill to North, 2 Nov.1798, 3 Jan.1799, Comm.Dept.

made by Greenhill at the end of his term of office as Superintendent of the cinnamon plantations. It would have been left to North to put them into effect, but as we shall see he had other ideas.

The Committee of Investigation, apart from its attempt to crush the contraband trade, did nothing more about cinnamon than to listen to homiletic sermons about its importance from Lord Hobart. "The preservation of the cinnamon gardens is obviously a consideration of the first magnitude that it is scarcely necessary to say more upon the subject than that every possible attention should be paid to them"¹⁸⁴. Again Hobart said, "The Cinnamon Trade is a matter of too much importance to pass entirely unnoticed - but I shall briefly observe that I am fully persuaded it ought to remain in the hands of Government, with that view the Gardens must be constantly attended to and the requisite repairs made or the annual supply will soon depend upon the King of Candia"¹⁸⁵. It must be remembered that in this period Greenhill continued to manage the Cinnamon department.

When the Board of Revenue and Commerce first proposed to North that all the private cinnamon gardens should be sold he was disinclined to do so.¹⁸⁶ He thought that such action should be delayed until the Government possessed "more data" about the gardens.¹⁸⁷ Soon the Board of Revenue and Commerce reiterated its suggestion, fortified by the report of Joinville, Superintendent of the cinnamon plantations at the time. North then ordered the

¹⁸⁴ Hobart to Comm. of Inv. 9 June 1797, 4 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

¹⁸⁵ Extract from the Minutes of Consultation in the Political Dept. Fort St. George 16 Feb. 1798, 15 Mar. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

¹⁸⁶ North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 19 June 1801, 6 July 1801, Board of

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. Rev. & Comm.

sale of all the cinnamon gardens with the exception of those at
 Maradana, Ekala, Morattuwe and Kadirane. ¹⁸⁸ These were the names
 given to the public gardens. He also gave instructions to have the
 cinnamon in the private gardens destroyed and its cultivation by
 individuals forbidden. ¹⁸⁹ The reasons behind this decision are not
 very clear. We have heard from Greenhill of the cultivation of
 cinnamon being neglected by the owners of the private cinnamon
 gardens. North, in his first response to the Board of Revenue and
 Commerce, spoke of the need to "possess more data". It is very
 likely, having regard to the difficulties generally encountered by
 the British Administration in the realm of land tenures, that the
 "data" eluding North were the identity of the cinnamon gardens and
 the varying rights of their holders. In giving his approval to the
 suggestion of the Board of Revenue and Commerce, North enjoined the
 destruction of cinnamon plants on private grounds and the
 prohibition of its cultivation altogether. These measures could
 only have been intended to reinforce the monopoly of cinnamon and
 counteract against the contraband trade. All these motives would
 have gone to determine the decision to sell the private cinnamon
 gardens. This order does not seem to have been immediately put into
 complete effect. We find it repeated on 4 June 1802. ¹⁹⁰ Two reasons
 can account for the delay. The difficulty in identifying the
 cinnamon gardens would have made difficult the enforcement of the
 order to sell them. The likelihood that the sale of the private
 cinnamon gardens was only intermittently performed until June 1802

188 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 6 Oct. 1801, 8 Oct. 1801, Board of Rev.
 189 Ibid. & Comm.

190 Resolution 4 June 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

should not surprise us when we consider that the general revocation of service-tenures was scheduled to take place on 1 May 1802.

North's reforms relating directly to the public gardens should be considered in the context of the oft expressed hope of selling most of them. At the beginning North was considering the giving up of Kadirane. (This was the garden in Negombo)¹⁹¹ He expressed a desire to keep the other gardens - Maradana, Ekala and Morattuwe. His mind, however, was not altogether made up. He hoped, after the fate of Ceylon had been decided to give up all the gardens and form one at a distance of 15 or 20 miles from Colombo on the banks of the Mutwal River.¹⁹² One reason was that that place could be better safeguarded from the depredations of smugglers.¹⁹³ Another reason which seems to have influenced him was apparently that by this process the public gardens to be sold could "without the smallest inconvenience be restored to agriculture and sold for the benefit of Government".¹⁹⁴ Soon he was again talking of giving up the existing public gardens. He hoped to sell Kadirane in two years and when the cinnamon planted in Maradana had attained to five years he intended to give up Ekala and Morattuwe and "perhaps even (hav) that of the Marendahn reduced in size or removed to some other place less necessary for the supply of the increasing population of Colombo".¹⁹⁵ Then there was a variation in the theme. He was influenced by Joinville to contemplate the keeping of Kadirane instead of Madadana and the forming of a new garden in the interior.¹⁹⁶

191 Considerations on cinnamon, North to Greenhill, 20 Dec. 1799, Comm.

192 Ibid.

193 Ibid.

194 Ibid.

195 Ibid.

196 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.

The reasons North gave for his new outlook were that the sale of "the vast garden" of Maradana "would not only counterbalance the expence attending the cultivation and fencing in of Kadirane but that "there would also follow the invaluable advantage of increasing and securing the supply of Colombo in all articles of necessary consumption".¹⁹⁷ By 5 October 1801 North was back to his old ideas. He believed that in five years time the two gardens of Maradana and Kadirane would be able to supply twice the annual consumption of the world and after that a great part of the Marendahn as well as the other reserved gardens could be restored to cultivation".¹⁹⁸ The development of agriculture, the supply of necessaries to Colombo, the crushing of the contraband trade and the cutting down of expenditure seems to have weighed with North in determining him to dispose of the public gardens. In the background was a weightier factor. The Company's warehouses in Europe were overstocked. This accounts not only for the desire to reduce the size of the public gardens but also for the haphazard manner in which it was considered. A fuller examination of this aspect will be deferred until later. It is important to note that although North spoke repeatedly of selling most of the public gardens not one was actually sold. He just dallied with the idea. Nevertheless it helps to explain the high degree of variability in the Government's cinnamon policy.

There were private holdings within the Maradana garden. At first the Government confined itself to demanding a surrender of

197 Ibid.

198 North to Hobart 5 Oct.1801,Public Dept.

lands occupied without permission after the establishment of British
 rule. A proclamation was issued to that effect.¹⁹⁹ The Committee
 appointed to consider the matter proposed that the private holdings
 permitted to exist should be restricted to "limits and dimensions"²⁰⁰
 for which their owners could "produce absolute titles". The
 Government evidently tried to put this proclamation into effect
 for we have another Proclamation threatening those who did not
 produce their titles to the Committee with the destruction of their
 houses and the confiscation of their property.²⁰¹ It declared the
 Government's "great astonishment" that despite its earlier
 proclamation titles to land had not been produced.²⁰² If the fact
 that this proclamation was repeated twice is evidence of the
 earnestness of the Government that it was not repeated a third
 time must be taken as evidence of its success.

When Smitsz, the Agent of Revenue and Commerce for the Galle
 and Matara districts, reported to the Board of Revenue and Commerce
 that certain cinnamon growing areas in the Kadirane garden had been
 unlawfully converted into grain growing ones, he was ordered to
 seize the crops upon them and have them restored to their original
 character.²⁰³ We can conclude from this step that the Board of
 Revenue and Commerce was extending its policy of putting an end to
 encroachments from the Maradana Garden to that of Kadirane. There
 is no evidence of similar measures being taken in the other two
 gardens. This could be due to the Government's uncertainty about

¹⁹⁹ Proclamation 18 Nov. 1799, Comm. Dept.

²⁰⁰ Committee to settle the Cinnamon Gardens to North 3 Jan. 1800,
 21 Jan. 1800, Comm. Dept.

²⁰¹ Proclamation 18 Nov. 1799, Comm. Dept.

²⁰² " 20 Jan. 1800, "

²⁰³ Board of Rev. & Comm. to Smitsz 20 July 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

keeping them. It was made clear that private holdings in the Kadirane garden supported by good titles were to be respected.

A committee consisting of Greenhill, Gregory, Joinville, J.D. Alexander and Sutherland proposed the purchase even of lands with good title within the Maradana garden. North approving the suggestion offered to the holders of lands with good titles the attraction of exchanging them for lands situated elsewhere, but endowed with a twentyfive per cent richer productive capacity. Holders of Kann-his parvenny and Ratmaherre tenures were to be compensated with lands equal in value. Later North changed his mind. There was to be "no change for the present in the constitution or tenures by which private persons possess property in the Marendahn". Title-deeds deposited with the Government were ordered to be returned to their owners. North confessed to the Court of Directors that he made this change of plans because he had become converted to Joinville's idea of giving up the Maradana garden, concentrating on the Kadirane garden and forming a new garden in the interior. As we have seen this scheme was one of the many mooted for reducing the number of public gardens. Be that as it may, De Silva's statement that all private holdings within the Maradana garden were sold does not fit in with the facts.

This is the appropriate place to consider a miscellany of proposals for improving the public gardens. Some of these proposals concern all the public gardens. Others relate to one or

204 North to Committee to settle the Cinnamon Gardens 5 Sept.1800,
205 Ibid. Public Dept

206 Joinville to Arbuthnot 30 Sept.1801,30 Sept.1801,Public Dept.

207 Ibid.

208 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb.1801.

209 De Silva p 418.

two of them. A Proclamation was issued forbidding owners of the private holdings within the cinnamon gardens to keep cattle, sheep, goats or swine.²¹⁰ It threatened refractory owners with the confiscation of their properties and the seizure and shooting of their animals.²¹¹ The aim of the Proclamation was to prevent straying animals from causing damage to the cinnamon plants as they were wont to do.²¹² According to Greenhill the buffaloes, cows and goats "were the most noxious to the cinnamon plants and shrubs".²¹³ Although the Proclamation declared all the public cinnamon gardens to be within its ambit it seems unlikely that the measure was carried into effect in the Maradana garden. Greenhill once remarked that the resumption of private land within the Marandana garden would threaten Colombo's milk supply.²¹⁴ In spite of the distress which Greenhill apprehended for the citizens of Colombo he advocated the resumption of private holdings within the Maradana garden by Government.²¹⁵ It is more than likely, however, that North, when he adduced the need to ensure Colombo's supply of consumer articles²¹⁶ as his reason for contemplating the surrender of the Maradana garden, had uppermost in his mind the threat to its milk supply. If this reasoning is tenable it is right to conclude that the measure to dispossess the owners of private grounds within the Maradana of their cattle had not in this period been put completely into effect.

The Proclamation by mentioning the other public gardens by

210 Proclamation 15 Nov. 1799, Comm. Dept.

211 Ibid.

212 Ibid.

213 Greenhill to Champagne 21 May 1799, 24 May 1799, Comm. Dept.

214 Ibid.

215 Ibid.

216 Considerations on cinnamon, North to Greenhill, 20 Dec. 1799, Comm. Dept.; North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.

name makes it clear that the cinnamon plants in these places suffered as well from depredation by cattle. We should conclude from the earnestness of its language that in their case the Proclamation was put into effect.

North gave thought to the problem of checking the contraband trade. He contemplated the stationing of a European Superintendent in each garden.²¹⁷ In his eyes one of the disadvantages in the Morattuwe and Ekala gardens was that they both had one of their sides exposed to the sea. This made them prone to the incursions²¹⁸ of smugglers. North's scheme which we have already encountered for giving up all the public gardens and setting up one at a distance of fifteen or twenty miles from Colombo on the banks of the river Mutwal was determined by a desire to achieve a greater²¹⁹ invulnerability against smugglers.

These thoughts of North never matured into anything tangible. The scheme for appointing a European Superintendent for each garden was not put into practice. As we have seen when it came to giving up one or more of the public gardens North continued to vacillate. The project for establishing one garden in the interior also remained unrealized in this period.

There was, however, one concrete achievement. A dyke was built²²⁰ around the Maradana garden. A similar dyke was built around the Kadirane garden.²²¹ By implication North's remarks about the

uselessness of building such dykes around the other two gardens on

217 Consideration on cinnamon North to Greenhill 20 Dec.1799,Comm.
218 Ibid. Dept.

219 Ibid.

220 Ibid.

221 North to Hobart 5 Oct.1801,Public Dept.

account of their accessibility by sea show that his motive in building the dykes was to seek protection from smugglers. Joinville the Superintendent of the cinnamon plantations reported that the dyke at Maradana was being destroyed to make "a free passage for passengers".²²² He proposed that the damaging of the dykes should be forbidden "on pain of severe punishment".²²³ North, however, does not seem to have put the suggestion into effect.

Overhanging creepers and the underwood were cleared around the cinnamon plants in the Maradana garden because "they strangle and distort the tender branches of the cinnamon tree".²²⁴ North was favourably impressed by the appearance of that part of the Maradana garden in which the operation was carried out.²²⁵ It seems, however, to have been confined to the Maradana and even there to a part of it.

Joinville also proposed prohibiting the cutting down of trees other than cinnamon in the Maradana garden on the grounds that the cinnamon trees were injured by the fall of the branches of those trees when they were being cut.²²⁶ This proposal also seems to have passed unheeded.

North had a plan for reducing the expenditure of the cinnamon department. His proposals took the form of a head of the cinnamon department attended on by a Mudaliyar, a Muhandiram anda Mohiottiar accompanied by two Ranchus of Lascoryns. In the Maradana garden there would be a European Superintendent, an Interpreter Mudaliyar,²²⁷ four Muhandirams, eight Kanganies and forty-eight Lascoryns.

222 Joinville's report on the Marendahn 19 Oct.1799, 19 Oct.1799, Comm.

223 Ibid. Dept.

224 Considerations on cinnamon North to Greenhill 20 Dec.1799, Comm.

225 Ibid. Dept.

226 Joinville's report on the Marendahn 19 Oct.1799, 19 Oct.1799, Comm.

227 Considerations on cinnamon North to Greenhill, Dept.

20 Dec.1799, Comm. Dept.

North intended to have similar establishments in the other gardens,
²²⁸
 but on a smaller scale. They were all to be paid with salaries
 of money. This plan was also not implemented in our period. As
 things were, members of the Salagama caste were required to perform
 the function of collecting the cinnamon in return for holding
 service-tenure lands. The failure to put this plan into effect was
 probably only an administrative delay accounted for by the fact that
 the revocation of the service-tenures was scheduled to take effect
 only on 1 May 1802.

There is another aspect of North's cinnamon policy to be
 considered. He hoped to be relieved of dependence upon Kandyan
 cinnamon and promised the Court of Directors such a felicitous state
 of affairs in their cinnamon department that he would not need "one
 pound weight" of Kandyan cinnamon "after the expiration of the next
²²⁹
 two years". North's fancies, however, far outpaced the sombre facts
 of cinnamon production. Soon he was confessing "that the gardens
 although of immense extent are scarcely able to produce the five
²³⁰
 thousand bales required" and that next year they certainly will
 not produce that quantity". He was referring to the years 1798 and
 1799. Again he told the Court of Directors that "the cinnamon
 gardens throughout these settlements are entirely exhausted and
²³¹
 incapable of producing 5,000 Bales of that spice". Such a state of
²³²
 affairs forced North to have recourse to the Kandyan cinnamon.

228 Ibid.

229 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb.1799.

230 Considerations on cinnamon North to Greenhill 20 Dec.1799, Comm.

231 North to Court of Directors 30 Aug.1800.

Dept.

232 North to Wellesley 22 Oct.1800, Sec.Dept.

The Government's cinnamon policy leaves a strong impression of a lack of vigour on its part verging even on indifference. The vacillation of the Government in deciding which of the public gardens were to be given up explains in some measure the haphazard manner in which improvements were attempted in those gardens. It does not, however, account for the general lack of earnestness. The secret lay in the East India Company's warehouses in England. They were overstocked with cinnamon.

233

North discussed the problem with Greenhill. He agreed with him that the European market was overstocked. He also mooted the suggestion that in view of these facts the Bengal Government should send its ships for the Ceylon cinnamon investment once a year and not twice a year as it had been doing. ²³⁴ Soon he was writing in this vein to the Supreme Government in Bengal, arguing that "a great quantity of cinnamon" had already been sent to England. ²³⁵ He also canvassed his view with the Court of Directors "from a conviction strengthened by general report that there still remained a large quantity of cinnamon in your storehouses unused". ²³⁶ If the Court of Directors did not endorse North's suggestion they also did not challenge his impression that there was a surplus of cinnamon.

In the next year the Court of Directors ceased to send ships to collect Ceylon cinnamon. ²³⁷ According to the Bengal Government the Court of Directors were driven to that step because of "the quantity of cinnamon then in their warehouses". ²³⁸ Then North suspended, for

233 North to Greenhill 11 Sept.1799,Comm.Dept.

234 Ibid.

235 North to Alured Clarke 21 Aug.1799,No.1,19 Sept.1799,Bengal Comm

236 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct.1799. & Ship.Cons.

237 Court of Directors to North 25 Sept.1800.

238 Extract of a letter from Bengal 3 Dec.1801,18 Jan.1802,Rev.& Comm Dept.

239

the year 1801, the collection of cinnamon. According to the new constitutional arrangement which made Ceylon a Crown Colony she was required to sell 400,000 lbs of cinnamon annually to the East India Company. Confronted with these terms North confessed that he had not only suspended the collection of cinnamon for the year 1801, but had also not taken steps to have the 1802 investment collected. The lack of pressure from England for collecting the investment regularly is the most cogent explanation of the Ceylon Government's lack of initiative with regard to cinnamon.

There is another aspect of the cinnamon policy which qualifies the indifference of the Government. As early as 20 December 1799 North entertained the idea of selling Ceylon cinnamon in India, Persia, and Aradia and to "country Arab Ships". We gather that the Court of Directors approved the plan from a remark made by North to the effect that there were orders of the Court of Directors "for increasing the vent and consumption of the valuable spice in Asia". The Board of Revenue and Commerce recommended the establishment of licenced shops at Colombo, Galle, Trincomallee and Jaffnapatam to sell cinnamon at the rate of 2Rds per pound. Commanders of vessels would be sold cinnamon to an amount not exceeding 10 lbs. at the rate of 5 Rds. per lb. North embodied these suggestions in a proclamation with slight alterations. He preferred "proper persons" entrusted with the function of sale to the setting up of licenced shops. The price of the cinnamon to be sold to the Commanders of

239 North to Clive 8 Oct.1801,Rev.& Comm.Dept.

240 Ibid.

241 Considerations on cinnamon North to Greenhill 20 Dec.1799,Comm.

242 North to Court of Directors 19 Dec.1801,Public Dept Dept.

243 Board of Rev.& Comm. to North 28 Aug.1801,29 Aug.1801,Board of Rev.& Comm

244

ships was also reduced to 3 Rds. per lb.

Cinnamon was also sold in India. Messrs. Colt, Baker and Company offered to buy 100 to 150 bales of cinnamon provided nothing more was sold to anybody else that year. The Government of Ceylon agreed to the condition. Afterwards the same company wanted to buy 30,000 lbs of cinnamon at one and three quarter dollars per pound on condition that they would be the sole purchaser. On this occasion the Government of Ceylon balked at the stipulation. They argued that the proviso amounted to a restrictive fetter and that the price offered by the company was too low. The Supreme Government, however, took the side of the company and it would seem that the deal went through.

North also urged the Government of Madras to waive the collection of duties on the cinnamon bought by Messrs. Colt, Baker and Company. This was in connexion with the first sale of that Company. The Madras Government does not seem to have agreed to the proposal and nothing came of it.

The Madras Government poured cold water on the enthusiasm of North. According to them the market for cinnamon Eastward was poor. There was an abundance of cassia in China. At Manilla Lenconia would be a strong competitor to cinnamon. Above all the Madras merchants who had bought Ceylon cinnamon found the speculation unprofitable.

244 Proclamation 1 Dec. 1801, Public Dept.

245 Maxwell to Boyd 22 Mar. 1800, 24 Mar. 1800, Public Dept.

246 Ibid.

247 North to Vice-President-in-Council, Fort William, 21 Dec. 1800,

Public Dept

248 Gov. General-in-Council to North 29 Mar. 1802, 31 Mar. 1802, Rev. &

249 North to Clive 3 April 1800, Public Dept. Comm. Dept.

250 Keble to Arbuthnot 13 Mar. 1802, 23 Mar. 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

North also wanted to send 500 bales of cinnamon to the Government of Bengal in the hope that the greater trading opportunities at Calcutta would assure a better prospect for its sale.²⁵¹ The Supreme Government advised North to send consignments of cinnamon to the other Presidencies as well.²⁵² In the chapter on "Trade" we have also seen North trying to sell cinnamon in the Prince of Wales Island through the medium of Joseph Steffany, Captain of the Government brig, Tartar.

The question arising to challenge us now is whether these Eastern markets compensated cinnamon production in Ceylon for the loss, albeit temporary, of English markets. It can be decided by comparing the amount sold in the Eastern markets in any given year with the amount of cinnamon sent annually to England. The amount of cinnamon sent every year to England was usually 5,000 bales. As North's aim was to capture a market for cinnamon outside Ceylon it is unlikely that much cinnamon was sent to Colombo, Galle, Trincomallee and Jaffna. As we have seen, the amount to be sold to a Commander of a ship at its highest was 10 lbs. In 1800, 100 to 150 bales of cinnamon were sold to the Messrs. Colt, Baker and Company. In 1801 30,000 lbs of cinnamon was presumably sold to the same company. We are happily informed by Greenhill that a bale of cinnamon was equal to 87 lbs English weight.²⁵³ The 30,000 lbs of cinnamon sold to Messrs. Colt, Baker and Company would have amounted, therefore, roughly to 340 bales. Even if we assume that North despatched to the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay the 500

251 North to Court of Directors 19 Dec.1801.
 252 Gov-General-in-Council to North 29 Mar.1802,31 Mar.1802,Rev.& Comm.Dept.
 253 Greenhill to North 12 Aug.1799,11 Sept.1799,Comm.Dept.

bales that he had sent to Bengal the total amount of cinnamon sold in all these ways falls far short of the quantity sent to England. Therefore, the lack of pressure to increase production remains the dominant feature of the Government's cinnamon policy in this period. It is true that by the new constitutional arrangement taking effect at the end of 1801 Ceylon was bound to furnish 400,000 lbs of cinnamon annually to the Madras Government on behalf of the East India Company. It seems, therefore, that the condition we have observed was of a temporary nature. It furnishes, however, the key to North's policy in our period.

Our next object of enquiry is elephant hunting. As we shall see the holding of organized hunts and the effecting of small improvements in the kraals constitute the Government's achievements with regard to it. Elephant hunting would not seem to justify a high rating. We are, however, now entering on a sphere in which effective achievement on the part of the Government begins to wane and it is the last "commercial product" with regard to which tangible improvements were made.

According to Barbut, in Dutch times "a certain class of people" presumably a caste, was obliged to catch elephants for the Dutch Government. He also said that the Dutch Government purchased ten or twelve elephants every year. ²⁵⁴ The testimony of Andrews is that under the Dutch the vanians who were administrative officials in an area known as the Vannia undertook to catch elephants as part ²⁵⁵ of the functions of their office in return for money payments.

254 Barbut to Hobart 23 Oct.1795,8 Dec.1795,4774, Madras Mil.& Pol.Proc.

255 Andrews to Webbe 27 Feb.1798,9 Mar.1798,837-838, Madras Rev.Proc.

Whatever the state of affairs had been under the Dutch Government in the period before North's accession to office there is no trace of organized elephant hunts or of elephants being caught and sold on a smaller scale. The only two statements which can be found were made by Barbut and Andrews and these as we have seen refer to Dutch conditions.

An elephant hunt called kraal in the parlance of that time was held in 1799 in the Vannia.²⁵⁶ Another hunt was held in 1801 in the district of Negombo.²⁵⁷ North's letter to the Court of Directors bearing the date 30 August 1800 suggests that an elephant hunt was held in that year. Its venue is undisclosed. It is probable that it took place in one of the afore-mentioned places.

North wrote to the Court of Directors about improvements he had made in the conducting of elephant hunts. Many of the elephants perished on being driven into the kraal. In his opinion²⁵⁸ one reason for this was the lack of sufficient water. He said that he had accordingly given orders that more water should be placed at the disposal of the elephants.²⁵⁹ Another cause adduced by him was the lack of sufficient space within the small kraals. As a remedial measure he had ordered the construction of more small kraals.²⁶⁰ There was also a want of decoy elephants. He confessed that that deficiency could not be remedied until the end of the year. Although North made these claims in his letter to the Court of Directors there is no trace of them in his

²⁵⁶ Garrow to Cleghorn 28 June 1799, 28 June 1799, Rev. Dept.

²⁵⁷ Boyd to Barbut 28 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept.

²⁵⁸ North to Court of Directors 30 Aug. 1800.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

correspondence with his administrative officials. To expect such a statement as a proof that these orders were actually carried into effect is not to adopt an exaggeratedly strict attitude. The expenditure of money was usually jealously guarded. On the other side of the scale are North's keenness to have elephant hunts, his own presence at some of them where a verbal order with these results might have been made to the proper official and the fact that the expenditure caused would not have been very heavy. Therefore it seems more probable that these improvements were made.

North also cherished the idea of forming a permanent establishment to hunt elephants. According to him under the Dutch Government the organizing of an elephant kraal was undertaken by the inhabitants of the villages in whose vicinity wild elephants were at large. ²⁶¹ Such a function was considered to fall within the scope of their obligatory services known as ²⁶² Rajakariya. This operation was probably distinguished by the largeness of its size from the other ways in which elephants as we have seen were caught in Dutch times. It was according to this Dutch method that large-scale elephant hunting was organized in North's time. North, however, did not consider it ²⁶³ satisfactory. Kraals as they were operated exhausted the ²⁶⁴ "labour of the whole province". A permanent establishment would end such waste. "Much useless effort" ²⁶⁵ would be spared and "nearly all the elephants taken alive". The inhabitants harass

261 Governors minute 9 June 1800, Rev. Dept.

262 Ibid.

263 North to Court of Directors 30 Aug. 1800.

264 Ibid.

265 Ibid.

-ed by the ravages caused to their crop by predatory elephants²⁶⁶
 would gratuitously supplement the efforts of the huntsmen.
 These were North's hopes. He confessed, however, to the Court
 of Directors that his plans were held up by the need for "mature
 reflection" and "much more information". A later letter to the
 Court of Directors discloses that these deficiencies continued to
 be unremedied. He said he would need more time "to concert²⁶⁷
 proper measures for that purpose and put them into execution.
 Our period ends without it witnessing such an establishment.
 Other departments with a specialized nature such as the Post Office
 and the Civil Engineers department were organized in the same
 period.²⁶⁸ Therefore it could not have been the novelty of the
 idea which delayed its realization. The cause should more
 properly be sought in the decline of North's enthusiasm. Nonethe-
 -less it would be right to conclude that in the sphere of
 elephant hunting some of North's ideas were translated into fact.

We should turn now to consider certain new ventures attempted
 by the Government. John Orr, garrison surgeon at Colombo, report-
 -ed the discovery "of what he supposes to be the valuable drug²⁶⁹
 known by the name of Colombo root". North directed the Board²⁷⁰
 of Revenue and Commerce to inquire into that claim. If the
 research should prove successful North also gave instructions
 that the sale of the root was to be made a monopoly of the
 Government.²⁷¹ A committee consisting of Samuel Tolfrey, Thomas
 Christie and Joinville was set up for this purpose by the Board

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.

²⁶⁸ Kennedy to McDouall 23 Jan. 1799, 23 Jan. 1799, Public Dept.

²⁶⁹ North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 7 Dec. 1801, 9 Dec. 1801, Board of

²⁷⁰ Ibid. ²⁷¹ Ibid.

272

of Revenue and Commerce. Their labours proved, however, that the root discovered by Orr was not the Colombo root and that his enthusiasm had been groundless.

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At the outset of the North regime Davy Robertson announced the discovery of quick silver at Kotte. He asked permission to make further investigations. Although North consented to the request more research soon established that facts did not support the claim made by Robertson.

274

North recommended to the Board of Revenue and Commerce the introduction of the breeding of cochineal "into the provinces which lie to the northward of Chilauw". Nothing more is heard of this plant in our period and its fate is shrouded in obscurity.

275

Inquiries were set afoot at the close of our period to ascertain the practicability of organizing the production of two other commercial products. The Superintendent of the cinnamon plantations was instructed to report on whether cinnamon oil could be produced from "waste" and broken cinnamon and oil of camphor from the cinnamon roots. Joinville, the Superintendent of the cinnamon plantations, made a report to the effect that cinnamon oil could be made. At the end of our period the investigation was at an incomplete stage. Nothing more is heard about the project for making camphor oil.

276

The agent for Revenue and Commerce at Chilauw drew the attention of the Board of Revenue and Commerce to the large-scale

272 Resolution 9 Dec. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 273 Tolfrey, Christie and Joinville to Board of Rev. & Comm, 14 Dec. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 274 Robertson to North 13 Oct. 1798, 14 Oct. 1798, Public Dept.
 275 " " " 2 Nov. 1798, 2 Nov. 1798, " "
 276 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 23 Mar. 1802, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 277 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 9 Nov. 1801, " " " "

278

growth of indigo in the districts under his charge. Joinville was called upon to make investigations. While this research was in progress North wrote to Hobart in England in order to know whether indigo would find a market there. There were no further developments regarding this project during our period.

279

We have considered all these projects at some length because they demonstrate North's readiness to seize upon the proposals and make inquiries about them. The relationship they bear to the rest of North's policies with regard to commercial products will be examined later. At the moment what should be noted is his desire to find English markets for them.

Our next concern is with commercial products on whose behalf the Government was prolix with proposals and suggestions, but achieved little results. Words stand divorced from deeds. According to the implication of De Meuron's statement, in Dutch times salt was first collected in Government stores and then retailed to renters. The evidence we have gathered suggests a different state of affairs in the earliest period of British rule. There were salt pans owned by individuals. In Colombo, Negombo and Kalutara the collection of salt seems to have been entrusted to renters. In other areas such as the big Lewaya on the South East Coast and at Batticaloa the inhabitants seem to have been allowed to carry away a heap of salt on condition of making up

278 Joinville to Board of Rev. & Comm. 29 Mar. 1802, 5 April 1802,
279 Ibid. Rev. & Comm. Dept.
280 Farmed Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
281 Comm. of Inv. to Harris 15 June 1798, 29 June 1798, 2221, Madras
Rev. Proc.
282 De Meuron to Harris 21 Mar. 1797, 3 April 1798, 2319, Madras Mil.
& Pol. Proc.

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another heap for the Government. In this period also a
 considerable quantity of salt was imported into Ceylon. De
 Meuron in fact feared at one stage that the amount of salt being
 imported would cause a glut on the market and pose embarrassing
 problems for its renter.

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The Committee of Investigation made many proposals for
 regulating the supply of salt. The basis of their scheme was a
 Government monopoly to be established presumably over the import
 of salt into the country and its production within it. They
 suggested the appointment of a European Superintendent to direct
 the manufacture of salt at the centres of Puttalam, Kalpitiya and
 Chilaw. The Lewaya on the south-east coast was to be organized
 similarly, but on a separate basis under another European
 Superintendent. The Committee of Investigation did not attach
 to the Mahagampattu the same importance that North, as we shall
 see later, tried to give it. It would also be necessary to
 appropriate the individual salt pans by paying "a sort of quit
 rent". These proposals remained unimplemented in the period of
 the Committee of Investigation.

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With the arrival of North the history of salt production
 took a different turn. His first step was to adopt the proposal
 of the Committee of Investigation forbidding the import of salt
 with the exception of salt brought as ballast by doneys and other

283 Gregory to Champagne 17 June 1799, 19 June 1799, Rev. Dept.;
 Jewell to Board of Rev. & Comm. 1 Aug. 1801, 17 Aug. 1801, Board of
 Rev. & Comm.

284 Hobart to Comm. of Inv. 9 June 1797, 4 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

285 De Meuron to Harris 21 Mar. 1799, 3 April 1798, 2319, Madras Mil. &
 Pol. Proc.

286 Comm. of Inv. to Harris 15 June 1798, 29 June 1798, 2221, Madras
 Rev. Proc.

287 Ibid. 288 Ibid. 289 Ibid.

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small vessels. There is evidence that captains of vessels who bore European names such as Captain Brand and Captain Germain were permitted to import into Ceylon the salt which they had used as ballast on their ships. The question arising now is whether the provisional clause in the Government Advertisement was made a loophole for importing the salt into Ceylon which the body of the Advertisement had been intended to stop. On one voyage Captain Brand sold 544 parras of salt. On a similar occasion Captain Germain sold 770 parras of salt. These are only illustrations of the amount of salt sold on such occasions. There are other instances of such sales. On the other hand the salt brought into Ceylon in this way was not on a large-scale or on a regular basis. Gregory, Collector of the Colombo district, giving the only testimony available on this matter said: "there will not be sufficient in store to deliver to him by the good effects the restriction on the Import of Coast salt seems to have had which is now rarely brought..." This statement was made in reference to D.G. Fridel's request for salt which we have already noticed. It bears witness to the drying up of the import trade in salt. It also conveys the impression that there was a time after the Government ban when the amount of salt imported was greater than when the comment was made. Such a view fits in with the facts as we have met them. That the import trade in salt was flourishing in pre-North times we have learned from De Meuron.

It is probable that when the Government Advertisement of 13

290 Advertisement 13 Nov.1798, Rev.Dept.

291 North to Andrews 30 Nov.1799, Rev.Dept.

292 Ibid.

293 Gregory to North 21 Dec.1799, 21 Dec.1799, Rev.Dept.

November 1798 announced the death-knell to the import trade that salt continued to make its way for some time into Ceylon albeit in smaller proportions as ballast used in ships. In this way we can also find an explanation for the disappearance from the later records of sales of salt used as ballast.

Was there a Government monopoly imposed over salt produced internally? It is useful to make this inquiry in order to appraise whatever Government initiative there may have been for production of salt. The retail sale of salt was farmed out to renters in Colombo, Negombo, Kalutara, Chilauw and Puttalam.²⁹⁴ Wherever there were individually owned salt pans in these areas it seems that their owners had come to agreements with the renters to sell them the salt.²⁹⁵ Although there is no direct evidence to this effect it is very likely that in these agreements the renters would have tried to appropriate for themselves the exclusive right to the retail sale of salt. Such a step would have been to their advantage and such agreements were not unknown in this period. We have already met one of this kind in the case of arrack in the chapter on renting. If the agreements partook of this nature they would have tended to create a monopolistic state of affairs in these areas.

There was no renters' control over the salt in the Mahagam-²⁹⁶-pattu in the Batticoloa. As is well known the salt Lewaya in the Mahagampattu (Hambantota today) is the largest in Ceylon.

294 Gregory to Board of Rev.& Comm.27 Aug.1801,19 Nov.1801,Board
295 Ibid. of Rev.& Comm.

296 Gregory to Boyd 25 Feb.1800,28 Feb.1800,Rev.Dept.; Jewell to Board of Rev.& Comm.1 Aug.1801,17 Aug.1801,Board of Rev.& Comm.

The practice in these two areas was for the inhabitants to make up a heap of salt for themselves and leave behind another heap for the Government as a measure of recompense.²⁹⁷ These conditions would have prevented the establishment of a monopoly in these areas

Another obstacle to the setting up of a monopoly was the privileges accorded to members of the Salagama caste. They could appropriate a heap of salt for themselves without being obliged even to make a heap for the Government.²⁹⁸ As we shall see in the chapter on "Social Groups" this privilege was withdrawn from the Salagama caste at the end of our period. While it remained it would have derogated from whatever monopolistic conditions prevailed in the renters' districts.

North did pay attention to the need to improve conditions of salt production in the Mahagampattu. He sent William Orr on a tour of the south eastern Lewaya.²⁹⁹ Orr's terms of reference were to examine each Lewaya and salt pool "separately and attentively", to find out at what season of the year or temperature the salt falls take place and to attempt to discover methods of accelerating or retarding these events.³⁰⁰ At the end of his tour of the area between Tangalle and Batticaloa Orr presented a special report on the salt pans. North agreed with Orr that artificial forks should be formed in the Lewayas to assist in a better formation of salt. He also agreed to procure hide-boots for the feet of those going to collect it.³⁰¹ As a result of the

297 Ibid.

298 Gregory to Champagne 17 June 1799, 19 June 1799, Rev. Dept.

299 Instruction to Orr, 11 Aug. 1800, Public Dept.

300 Ibid.

301 North to Orr, 17 Aug. 1800, Public Dept.

exchange of opinions between Orr and North more proposals were made. Land in the Mahagampattu area would be given to grantees on the condition of their delivering salt to the Government. In the first three years the Government would pay for the salt. In the next three years these payments would be reduced by half. The Government also would assist the transport of salt from the pans to centres of sale by providing buffaloes and other animals of burden.

Although Orr was appointed as Resident at Mahagampattu the grandiose scheme outlined in these proposals never took effect. We learn this from the arrangements proposed by the Board of Revenue and Commerce when the next "fall of salt" took place in the Mahagampattu. They asked the Resident at Mahagampattu and the respective Agents of Revenue and Commerce at Galle and Batticaloa to permit the inhabitants of their areas "to heap up salt on the conditions of delivering the half of the salt heaped up by them to Government and on paying the usual toll". The "usual toll" refers to the duty of five stuivers imposed on salt transported by sea from the Mahagampattu district. These instructions reconstitute the old arrangements. There is no trace in them of the proposals outlined in North's plan. We could take the view that Orr was taking time to implement North's plan if we do not meet him in a new administrative capacity at the end of our period. He was appointed as Superintendent of the cotton

302 North to Orr 17 Aug.1800,Public Dept.

303 Board of Rev.& Comm. to Orr 24 Aug.1801,Board of Rev.& Comm.

304 Joinville to Board of Rev.& Comm.18 Dec.1801,21 Dec.1801,
Board of Rev.& Comm.

plantation at Carcelles. We have seen him at this new post when discussing the Government's policy towards cotton. With the removal of Orr from Mahagampattu to faraway Manaar North's scheme seems to have been shelved.

No explanation can be found in the records for the passing into oblivion of North's plan for improving the production of salt at Mahagampattu. We are, therefore, thrown back upon conjecture. It is probable that the inhabitants in the neighbourhood of Mahagampattu, who as things were, enjoyed the right to appropriate a heap of salt, had not the economic resources to assume ownership over large tracts of the salt pans. There would also have been the need to transport the salt from Mahagampattu at least to more urban centres such as Galle and Matara. From this venture speculators richer than the inhabitants around Mahagampattu would have been deterred by the fact that numbers of the Salagama caste already had the right to carry the salt even within the renters' confines. North's scheme for better salt production at the Mahagampattu did not vouchsafe such a privilege to the grantees of land. On the other hand, lack of Government enthusiasm would account for the fact that North's plan disappeared from the records without leaving so much as a trace of its subsequent fate. North himself lamented repeatedly the inadequacy of the Government's salt policy in his letters to the Court of Directors. On the first occasion he said, "Concerning the article of salt I have not yet ventured to adopt any specific plan".³⁰⁵ Later he said that he lacked sufficient information to formulate a general policy.³⁰⁶ This shortcoming

305 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan.1800.

306 " " " " " 30 Aug.1800.

" " " " " 18 Feb.1801.

remained to bedevil him right to the end of our period.

When we turn to the Government's policy towards the cultivation of timber we meet with a similar lack of achievement. In Dutch times there was a considerable export of timber to Tuticorin and Pulicat.³⁰⁷ Ceylon timber was also used for the construction of local buildings and the repair of sailing vessels.³⁰⁸ It was forbidden to cut certain woods like the kiate.³⁰⁹ It seems, however, that most of the woods were eligible for hewing.

In the pre-North phase of British rule little attention was paid to the protection of Ceylon timber. According to North "havoc and destruction" was caused to the forest in those years "by the want of regulation on that subject".³¹⁰ It is likely that the export trade in Ceylon wood to South India observed to exist in Dutch times continued in this period. It probably accounts for the onslaught on Ceylon forests lamented by North.

There was another significant element in the Government policy of this period. At the request of the Government of Madras Barbut³¹¹ despatched 300,000 Palmeira nuts to that Presidency. The reason given by the Madras Government for their action was a desire to cultivate the Palmeira tree on a large-scale within their domain. As we shall soon see the export of Palmeira wood bulked large among Ceylon's timber exports. It would seem that the Government of Madras was extending to Palmeira wood the policy urged upon them by the Court of Directors of reproducing in India the cultivation of

307 Collected Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

308 Ibid.

309 Smitsz to Board of Rev. & Comm. 15 Aug. 1801, 24 Aug. 1801, Rev. & Comm.

310 Considerations on the woods by North, North MSS.

311 Barbut to Webbe 21 Aug. 1798, 25 Aug. 1798, 2546, Madras Rev. Proc.

many of Ceylon's spices.

The first step taken by North was to forbid "the cutting or removing of timber in any of the forest belonging to the Govern-³¹²ment without the Collector's permission". Although the proclamation was at first limited to Colombo it would seem that³¹³ later it was introduced to the rest of Ceylon.

As we have already seen in our chapter on "Trade" pressure from "merchants" induced North to permit the export of every sort of palmeira wood to the coast. It was argued that they were "very³¹⁴ much wanted in Madras", An export duty of twenty-five per cent³¹⁵ on value was imposed upon them.

We have also encountered in the chapter on "Trade" North's general plan for the export of timber. We have seen too that the device of collecting the export duties at the place where the wood was cut made it unlikely that the wood would be exported except in cases where an external market for wood already existed. The demand for palmeira in the Madras Presidency was such a case. What we should note now is that the permission to cut timber for export would, in effect, have revoked North's earlier ban on the cutting of wood. It would have reduced whatever protection to the forests of Ceylon had been accorded by that measure.

Tolfrey, a member of the Board of Revenue and Commerce, to whom had fallen the task of formulating a timber policy, regarded the Government's forests as timber preserves. He made several proposals with this in mind. No grants of forest land should be

³¹² Proclamation 28 Nov. 1798, Public Dept.

³¹³ Young to North 30 April 1799, 30 April 1799, Rev. Dept.

³¹⁴ Resolution 17 June 1800, Rev. Dept.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

made to individuals. No chenas were also to be permitted within the limits of forests. The right to fell timber in grants of land to be made to individuals should rest with the Government and where such grants had already been made the timber within them should be deemed the property of the Government. As can be seen Tolfrey's timber policy did not confine itself to Government forests, but included private property as timber preserves.

It is significant that these clauses were not incorporated within North's proclamation. North did not think that the forests should be left as timber preserves. Their nature as "unenclosed country" exposed the timber on them to the ravages of elephants. He also hoped to see these lands brought under the plough. For these reasons he did not regard the forests as suitable timber preserves. In this way the Government's agricultural policy superseded the needs of timber cultivation. This attitude to the public forests also demonstrates how different North's new policy was from the old one which forbade the cutting of any timber on Government forests.

North centred his hopes for the cultivation of timber on private holdings. It was decreed that the owners of private property would require a licence to export timber. The possession of forty trees of the "sort deemed valuable" would entitle a proprietor to such a licence. Apart from formulating these conditions nothing was done to ensure that private owners would

316 Tolfrey's memorial 20 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

317 Proclamation 28 June 1800, Public Dept.

318 Considerations on the woods by North, North MSS.

319 Ibid.

320 Ibid.

321 Proclamation 28 June 1800, Public Dept.

grow timber on their lands. Their readiness to export wood would be determined by the availability of markets. It would have been naive of North to have expected the mere imposition of export duties to have won external markets for Ceylon timber. The collection of the export duties at the place where the timber was cut would have made it more difficult for North to realize his aims - if indeed he had them. To keep track of the movements of the timber, especially when it changed hands after the original purchase, would have required a far more powerful administrative machinery than the infant British Government possessed at the time. The impression grows upon us that the imposts, although nominally export duties and probably intended to be so at the beginning, came to acquire a different character. Certain other features of the timber policy fortify us in this view. Nowhere does the proclamation say that timber not intended for export would escape taxation. There is not even a hint to that effect. In the chapter on "Trade" we noted that North did not act on the advice of Tolfrey that markets in Europe should be explored by sending specimens of Ceylon timber to the Court of Directors and that merchants from South India should be encouraged to buy timber by advertising its sale in that place. In essence the export duties seem to have been taxes on the sale of timber.

Market conditions of supply and demand would have determined whether these duties were advantageous or disadvantageous to the owners of private lands with timber growing on them. The duties would have made the timber dearer in value. Economic processes are such that if supply had exceeded demand the duties would have

became a disadvantage to the sellers. If on the other hand demand had outpaced supply the sellers would have benefitted. That North did not examine these implications of his timber policy demonstrates his lack of seriousness about it.

The same aspect is emphasized by the fate attending other measures proposed by his officials. It was one of Tolfrey's proposals that "ten slips or seeds" should be sown by the purchaser for every tree cut down. ³²² Neither this proposal nor anything else with a similar purport was included in the proclamation. Hamilton, who at one time gave his mind to the problem of timber cultivation, proposed that some of the "numerous young plants" growing in Government plantations should be given to private proprietors to be grown on their lands on the footing that the fully grown tree would be considered their property "to be disposed of as they think fit". ³²³ The suggestion passed unheeded as did another by the same official. According to him the sapu wood was of a "peculiarly excellent quality". He advocated that special encouragement should be given to its cultivation particularly because "the articles of export in this country are so few and trifling". ³²⁴ About Ceylon timber North once said, "the vanity and beauty of the woods of Ceylon point out that article as one of the most capable of yielding an increase to the Income of Government". ³²⁵ Beauty there may have been in the woods of Ceylon, but the quality of vanity seems to have been more germane to North's policy than to those woods.

322 Tolfrey's memorial 20 Nov.1801, Board of Rev.& Comm.

323 Hamilton to Board of Rev.& Comm.20 June 1801,29 June 1801,Rev. & Comm.Dept.

324 Ibid.

325 North to Wellesley 20 Aug.1801,No.17,22 Oct.1801,Bengal Pub. Cons.

It is left for us to consider commercial products in whose interest the Government displayed scarcely any enthusiasm at all. At the beginning of British rule Alexander Strachan a lieutenant in the cavalry sent to the Madras Government a register of sixty broad mare which he had selected from the horse stud farm on the Island of Delft. (These are islands situated close to the Jaffna peninsula.) It would seem that the Dutch had organized on these islands a farm for breeding horses for stud. The Madras Government placed the farm under the care of Lieutenant Strachan with instructions to send the horses for use in the Presidency. As the Madras Government in this period bore the expenditure caused by the Ceylon establishment it did not credit the account of the Ceylon Government in monetary form for the gain it made. Later the superintendence of the Islands of Delft and the Two Brothers was placed under Major Barbut.³²⁶ To the Court of Directors the Madras Government expressed the hope that "under Major Barbut's directors this establishment may eventually prove a reliable nursery for recruiting your native cavalry".³²⁷

Still later the Madras Government, because of the "late acquisition of territory better calculated for the breeding of horses" wanted to abandon its stud farm in Ceylon.³²⁸ Then Barbut offered to take over the establishment himself and sell the horses to the Madras Government on two conditions - a lease to him of the Islands of Delft and the Two Brothers for fifteen years and a guarantee that in the event of Ceylon being ceded to the Dutch

326 Barbut to Hobart 8 Sept.1797, 12 Sept.1797, 5443-5444, Madras Mil & Pol.Proc
 327 Madras Military letter to the Court of Directors 17 Oct.1797, Paras 140-149
 328 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct.1799.

at the end of the war a place for the stud farm would be found in
the Madras Presidency. ³²⁹ The Madras Government agreed to these
terms. ³³⁰ This was really an arrangement between the Madras
Government and Barbut in his private capacity. Whatever profits
could be made from the venture would accrue to Barbut. There is
no evidence that Barbut paid a remuneration to the Government of
Ceylon for his right to hold the land. According to the earlier
arrangement, when he was Superintendent of the stud farm, he
received a fee of 100 pagodas per month. ³³¹ Apart from foregoing
that salary by virtue of the new arrangement Barbut does not seem
to have made any monetary payment to the Government of Ceylon.
The only consideration he seems to have given for the lease is to
offer to perform what was in all probability an arduous job. There
was no financial gain made by the Ceylon Government from the
venture. There was also no attempt to explore the commercial
prospects of horse breeding. The Ceylon Government's attitude
was to consider the stud farm a special concern of the Madras
Government. This view was expressed by North when he told the
Court of Directors that "as the success of the Establishment
regarded the Government of Fort St. George much more than my own
I referred all that related to it entirely to that Government". ³³²

Madder was a kind of grass which was used as a red dye. ³³³

According to the Reverend Cordiner it was exported to the Coast
of Coramandel. ³³⁴ Under the Dutch it was collected by a special

329 Barbut to North 15 Nov.1799,24 Jan.1800,Public Dept.

330 Gov-in-Council Fort St. George to North 13 Feb.1800,22 Mar.1800
Public Dept.

331 Resolution 12 Sept.1797,5445,Madras Mil.& Pol.Proc.

332 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb.1801.

333 A description of Ceylon by James Cordiner p 7.

334 Ibid.

335

caste and delivered into the Company's stores. With the establishment of British rule the collection of the choya root was farmed out to a renter. ³³⁶ No other attempt was made to promote the cultivation of the plant. Robertson bears witness to the indifference of the British Government when he said: "The Choya root or the madder has not been much attended to by the British". ³³⁷

The cultivation of the coconut tree did not meet with special attention from the Government. On the initiative of Johnston, the Agent of Revenue and Commerce at Chilaw, the Board of Revenue and Commerce permitted the cultivation of 1,300 coconut trees in two pieces of waste ground in that district. Johnstone had pointed out that the land was "particularly calculated from the nature ³³⁸ of the soil for the culture of the coconut trees". Apart from this solitary instance the coconut tree does not make its appearance in the records to bear witness to the Government's zeal for its development.

There was a small plantation of sugar cane at Kalutara. It ³³⁹ was a private venture belonging to J. F. Conradie, a Dutchman. The Government took no measures to grow sugar cane. A probable reason was the competition to be expected from the coconut and the Palmyrah trees. According to Bertolacci the inhabitants were given to extracting sugar from these sources. ³⁴⁰

Chanks were a kind of sea-shell which were used for making bracelets for women. It was gathered from the bed of the sea by

335 Collected Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.
 336 Andrews to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.
 337 D. Robertson's memorandum Ceylon Volume 54.
 338 Johnstone to Marshall 8 Oct. 1801, 12 Oct. 1801, Board of Rev. &
 339 Conradie to North 1 Feb. 1802, 2 Feb. 1802, Public Dept. Comm.
 340 Bertolacci p 233.

diving. The chank fishery was farmed out to a renter. Beyond that the Government made no noteworthy efforts to make it prosper. That it occupied a lowly place in the Government's revenue calculations is demonstrated by the fact that its divers were sometimes summoned away to impending pearl fisheries at Manaar and Tuticorin in South India even when a chank fishery was in progress.

The effect of Government policy with regard to two other commercial products was to place them at a disadvantage, in the case of one to other commercial products in Ceylon, in the case of the other to its counterpart in India. The first of these products which we shall consider is tobacco. The Board of Revenue of the Madras Government wanted to test the possibility of selling Ceylon tobacco within their presidency. For this purpose they obtained from Ceylon five candies of the first sort of tobacco and fifty candies of the second sort. Baker the official entrusted with the responsibility of making the investigation found the prospects for Ceylon tobacco unfavourable. The inhabitants, according to him, did not want to buy it and the shopkeepers "found it left upon their hands". His comment on the second sort of tobacco was that it was "very inferior" and that a "loss must arise in consequence".

We find this a surprising verdict. As we notice in the chapter on "Trade" a petition was presented by a group of Nagore

341 Gahagan to Boyd 25 Aug.1800,3 Sept.1800,Rev.Dept.
 342 Lushington to North 3 Dec.1800,30 Dec.1800,Public Dept.
 343 Madras Board of Rev.to Hobart 11 Aug.1797,4921, Madras Board of
 344 Baker to Lushington 11 Dec.1797,11 Dec.1797,7636, (Rev.Proc.
 Madras Board of Rev.Proc.
 345 Ibid.

merchants against the tobacco export duty which the British Government resuscitated on 1 January 1799 after having withdrawn it on 25 June 1796. Defending the tobacco tax Barbut argued that Nagore, Portonovo and Travancore merchants made enormous profits from the sale of Ceylon tobacco.³⁴⁶ Several statements made by Government officials make it clear that the tobacco was sold by these merchants in three markets - the Malay market, the Travancore market and the Colombo and Point de Galle market.³⁴⁷ Throughout our period Travancore remained an important market for Ceylon tobacco. It is by virtue of these facts that we look askance at the verdict of the Madras Board of Revenue. It is probable that proper inquiries were not made at the centres where Ceylon tobacco was actually sold. Such a failure, however, must convict the Madras officials of extreme negligence. Our own feeling is that the attempt of the Madras Government to sell the tobacco as a Government enterprise was wrecked by some of its officials probably because of the danger implicit in such a venture to private merchants already engaged in selling tobacco. There is, however, no direct evidence to establish this charge.

The next attempt to promote the growth of tobacco was made by Jewell, the Agent of Revenue and Commerce at Batticaloa. He proposed that the tax of one tenth of tobacco exacted from tobacco growers should be revoked in order to encourage its growth.³⁴⁸

The Board of Revenue and Commerce amended the suggestion to a

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- 346 Barbut to Alexander 11 Oct.1798, 20 Oct.1798, Comm.of Inv.
 347 Barbut to Cleghorn 13 Jan.1799, 18 Jan.1799, Rev.Dept.; Barbut to Alexander 11 Oct.1798, 20 Oct.1798, Comm.of Inv.
 348 Board of Rev.& Comm. to North 27 Feb.1802, 28 Feb.1802, Rev.& Comm.Dept,

reward of 100 Rds. to the grower of the largest amount of tobacco. North's reaction was to approve the decision of the Board of Revenue provided its application was restricted to Batticaloa. He emphasized, however, that only good quality tobacco was to be encouraged and that the cultivation of tobacco was not to be carried on "to such extent as to prejudice any other species of cultivation".³⁵⁰ In this manner Jewell's proposals, which had for its object the release of the tobacco grower from his obligation to vouchsafe to the Government one tenth of his produce, was whittled down to a gratuitous exhortation to grow better tobacco.

Arrack is the other product which suffered from the policy adopted by the Government. As we learned from the chapter on "Renting" its sale was farmed out to renters. Arrack farms were introduced into more areas than there had been under the Dutch Government. This action only meant that the sale of arrack came to be taxed in a greater number of areas. It did not develop arrack production in new areas. The Government did not take any measure to increase the production of arrack.

The situation was made worse by a step taken by the Bengal Government. The Bengal Board of Trade proposed that new markets should be found "for the produce of the Company's distillery in in Bengal" in the company's settlements in India, the Island of Ceylon and the Island of St. Helena.³⁵¹ As a result of the proposal the Ceylon Government was called upon to take Bengal rum for the

349 Ibid.

350 Resolution 4 Mar. 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

351 Bengal Board of Trade to Wellesley 11 Feb. 1800, No. 8, 14 Feb. 1800
Bengal Comm. & Ship Cons.

use of the troops in Ceylon. While agreeing to do so the Ceylon Government pointed out that so far Ceylon arrack, which was of a good quality, had been supplied to the troops.³⁵² The only good it could see in the measure was the possibility that the arrack diverted from the soldiers would go to increase Ceylon's arrack exports. This would have depended on market conditions, whether the external demand for Ceylon's arrack exceeded its supply. The Bengal Government did not give a thought to the problem. The Ceylon Government's hope that the export of arrack might be increased was based on nothing more than conjecture. The zeal with which the Bengal Government was searching for markets for its rum would have boded ill for whatever chances the Ceylon arrack had of increasing its hold on the external markets.

Before formulating a final verdict on the policy of the British Government with regard to commercial products it is appropriate to consider the attitude of the Court of Directors. When North assumed office they instructed him inter alia to see whether any other commercial product besides cinnamon could be made a state monopoly.³⁵³ North received an additional payment of 1,500 Star Pagodas with his first salary "for the investigations of natural productions".³⁵⁴ The Court expected Barry Gordon and George Lusignan who accompanied North from England "to be employed in investigating the natural productions of the Island".³⁵⁵

As we have seen in the course of this chapter, inquiries were

352 Boyd to Crommelin 30 April 1800, No. 2, 17 July 1800, Bengal Comm.

353 Court of Directors to North 5 May 1798. & Ship Cons.

354 North to Andrews 5 Nov. 1798, Rev. Dept.

355 Court of Directors to North 10 Sept. 1800

set on foot into the means of improving production in the case of cotton, and coir on an island scale and in the case of salt within the Mahagampattu. There is no evidence that a general investigation of this sort was ever attempted in our period in accordance with the wishes of the Court of Directors. The closest we come to anything in the nature of a general report was the memorandum on Ceylon's natural and commercial products presented to Lord Glenbervie and Lord Dundas by Davy Robertson in the course of a visit to England. It was not, however, the outcome of a general inquiry and could hardly have fulfilled the orders of the Court of Directors. We learn from the Court of Directors that as late as 10 September 1800 Gordon and Lusignan had not been allocated specific salaries by North. We also meet these gentlemen for the first time at other administrative posts the former as a judicial functionary and the latter as Agent for Revenue and Commerce of the Jaffna districts in the year 1802. It does not seem as if they had been pursuing the investigation of Ceylon's commercial resources with any commendable zeal or that their failure to do so had brought upon their heads the wrath of their superiors.

In the beginning North tried to account for this delay in making a report on commercial products. About Trincomallee where he was sojourning on his way from Madras to Colombo he said "And this part of the country is the least known and the least cultivated of our possessions. I am happy to have an opportunity of judging it by my own observations having as I have already informed your Honourable Court conceived great doubts of the

356 Ibid.

357

authority of any Dutch documents". In another letter he re-
 -gretted that the information he was laying before the Court of
 Directors "must necessarily be unsatisfactory and incomplete as
 it proceeds on some of the most important topics from Discoveries
 but lately made not yet sufficiently examined as to the extent of
 advantage which may arise from them to your future resources".
 Again he said "I am not at present much more prepared and it must
 be a work of considerable labour and of some time to discover the
 real resources of the country from the mystery and corruption with
 which that part of the Government was carried on in the Dutch
 time and from the State of Insurrection which prevailed during a
 great part of the administration of Mr. Andrews rendering it
 impossible to acquire knowledge of the true state of the country".

Shortly after this North's attitude underwent a remarkable
 change. His remarks about Ceylon's commercial products began to
 reach almost a state of ecstasy. "The commerce of the island" he
 began to say "in all articles is flourishing in the highest degree
 which its small capital and limited cultivation will permit".

A little later, speaking about Ceylon, he said "Its commerce,
 industry and civilization are in a state of progressive improve-
 -ment with the hope of which I did not venture to flatter myself
 a year ago". He continued to write in this vein "...the country
 has marched forward to industry, opulence, civilization with a
 rapidity which has far exceeded expectations and gives me reason

357	North	to	Court	of	Directors	16	June	1799.
358	"	"	"	"	"	5	Oct.	1799.
359	Ibid.	"	"	"	"			
360	North	to	Court	of	Directors	30	Jan.	1800.
361	"	"	"	"	"	5	April	1800.

to hope that a much shorter time than I formerly calculated will bring the Resources of this island to their highest point of produce....".³⁶² He followed this up with an expression of confidence "in the future prosperity and opulence of these settlements".³⁶³

It is up to us to account for the ambivalence shown in these statements. The reasons provided by him for his delay in investigating the commercial resources of Ceylon were the unreliability of the Dutch records and the revolt of 1797. We have already seen North's distrust of Dutch records in the realm of land tenure forcing him to attempt, although with little success, the registration of titles to land. We have also observed that in that sphere the Mudaliyars were making use of the ignorance of the Government to convert the system of Rajakariya to their own advantage. In the sphere of commercial resources, however, the Mudaliyars would have stood to gain little by suppressing information about them. We have also seen in our survey of the varying fortunes attending each important commercial product that the Government officials were not altogether devoid of knowledge. What is more, attempts to collect more information were made with regard to coir, cotton, cinnamon, pearl fishing, salt, and timber. In the cases of pearl fishing, coir and cotton production these investigations did meet with a measure of success. There does not seem to have been any effective reason why an inquiry into Ceylon's commercial products could not have taken place.

On several occasions North remarked that the export of betel-

362 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.

363 " " " " " 22 April 1801.

-nut, coffee, pepper, coir, tobacco and arrack was flourishing. It is probable that trade in these articles, taking advantage of the more stable political conditions of the North period, had begun to expand. The Dutch Government, after the treaty of 1766, had placed the trade of the Kingdom of Kandy under restrictions. Since these restrictions were withdrawn by the British Government it is probable that that trade also was adding its quota to the volume of Ceylon's export trade. These facts might have made an inquiry into new sources of commercial wealth seem less important.

One question remains to puzzle us. Why did not North consider the possibility of making monopolies of any of these products - coir, betel-nut, coffee, pepper, tobacco and arrack? It was North's intention, in case the plant discovered by Orr, the garrison surgeon, proved to be the Colombo root, to make a Government monopoly of its sale. It turned out that the plant was not the Colombo root and so the rest of North's plan remained unfulfilled. It shows, however, that such a scheme was not absent from North's mind. There is no explanation to be found in the records. The only surmise we can offer is that the sale of the articles we have considered, unlike the putative Colombo root, was in the hands of traders, North probably did not want to take measures which would have alienated them. In that way the isolation of his Government, which was very real at the time, would have been increased. The establishment of monopolies while it would have enriched the Company's coffers in London would have

364 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan 1800, 30 Aug. 1800, 18 Feb. 1801
 365 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 7 Dec. 1801, 9 Dec. 1801, Board of
 Rev. & Comm.

had for North the less satisfactory result of depriving him of precious revenue which he gained in the form of export duties.

North was not guided by a general plan in his attitude to commercial products. His reluctance to carry out a general inquiry heightened this shortcoming. His whole approach was pragmatic. He based all his hopes on the pearl fishery. In this way he showed more than a little of a gambler's disposition to stake all upon one throw. His positive contributions reduce themselves to encouraging the production of betelnut in the Maritime Provinces, to helping in the export of coir by refraining from imposing an export duty, to enabling Jaffna and Manaar cloth by means of a lower export duty to compete better with cloth imported from South India, to establishing a cotton plantation at Carcelles and to improving the conditions in the elephant kraals. He also showed a keenness to develop new products.

An important feature of Government policy in the pre-North period was a desire to cultivate Ceylon spice plants within Indian territories. In this period the pearl fishery ventures were successful and cinnamon continued to be collected roughly to the extent required by the Court of Directors. Besides these, however, there was much less interest shown in the development of commercial resources at this time than there was in North's period.

Taking things as they were the scale of value given by us roughly represents the importance that came to be acquired by each of the commercial products in our period.

If, as Baldeus said,³⁶⁶ cinnamon had been "the Helen or the

bride" in the contest for Ceylon she had come to lose something of her attraction by the time we make an acquaintance with her. It would be truer to speak of her as a queen in an Asian harem and even then as one who, on account of her fading charms, was already beginning to lose her place in her master's favour to her rivals.

CHAPTER FIVE

Trade

One of the first difficulties which confronts us in this chapter is in the choice of a title for it. We have chosen the title "Trade". The first question which we shall consider is the extent to which "duties" were intended to promote trade. This will take the form of an examination of export-import duties, tolls at the ferries and the land passes, duties on trade with the independent kingdom of Kandy and the bazaar taxes. Other questions examined will be the Indian trade, the China trade, the discrimination if any against goods carried on non-British vessels and the prohibition of Ceylonese trade west of the Cape of Good Hope together with its permission eastward. One other theme intrudes itself into this chapter. This is the question of whether the Government imposed any control on private traders. It could be argued that this is a matter which is not strictly connected with trade. We take the view, however, that a relationship with traders is involved even in a discussion on duties. We feel, therefore, that this is the proper place for its discussion.

We begin our inquiry with the export and import duties. During Dutch times there was a general import duty of fifteen per cent on value.¹ Cinnamon, betel-nut, pepper, coffee and cardamums were state monopolies.² As we shall learn, the Committee of Investigation proposed a duty of eight Rds. per leaguer of arrack. In proposing this tax they did not suggest that they were making a

1 Stuart to Hobart 1 April 1796, 26 April 1796, 1703 Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc.

2 Collected revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

break with Dutch practice. It is likely, therefore, that the same amount constituted the export duty on arrack in Dutch times. Since the Committee of Investigation recommended the same export duties on palmeira and palmeira lath as in Dutch times it is likely that the duty of twenty-five per cent on value imposed by North on these commodities ³ was the export duty placed upon them by the Dutch. In the case of tobacco we know definitely that the export duty of seven and a half Rds. per candy was the same as it had been under the Dutch Government. ⁴

The first action of the British Government was to suspend all export and import duties except those on arrack and opium. This step was taken on the initiative of Stuart. ⁵ The only explanation we can find for this action is made by Andrews. It was to ensure the supply of provisions to the troops. ⁶ There is no intention expressed here of liberating trade from restriction.

On 17 November 1795, Andrews reversed this decision. He resurrected the duties. ⁷ His reason was that the "merchants having made vast exports and imports of articles" ⁸ had converted to their advantage a measure intended by Stuart to benefit the troops. Clearly Andrews' wish was to appropriate for the Government part of the profits of the merchants even at the risk of reducing trade.

Before long Stuart was once more making representations to the Government of Madras. This time he argued that in his view and in the view of the merchants "who have lately come to this place from Madras" the duty of fifteen per cent on "articles imported"

³ Resolution 17 June 1800, Rev. Dent.
⁴ Comm. of Inv. to Barbut 28 July 1798, Comm. of Inv.
⁵ Stuart to Hobart 1 Oct. 1795, 6 Oct. 1795, 3496, Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc.
⁶ ³ Resolution 17 June 1800, Rev. Dent.
⁷ ⁴ Comm. of Inv. to Barbut 28 July 1798, Comm. of I^s Mil. & Pol. Proc.
⁸ ⁵ Stuart to Hobart 1 Oct. 1795, 6 Oct. 1795, 3496,

was too high.⁹ Nonetheless the Madras Government reaffirmed its resolve to continue the export and import duties.¹⁰ Its only concession was to allow the inhabitants of Ceylon to "trade to any of the Company's Ports under this Presidency upon terms as favourable to them as to the British subjects".¹¹ These terms were not defined.

Soon Andrews also began to sing a different tune and join the ranks of those petitioning for a reduction of import duties. His argument was that the high rate of import duties, "next to a prohibition" in character, had the effect of concentrating the trade of the island in a few hands.¹² He suggested the reduction of the import duties to five per cent with an additional impost of two and a half per cent upon all goods not imported from an English port and a draw back of two and a half per cent "upon such articles as may have already paid duty to the British Government".¹³ This proposal was accepted by the Government of Madras.¹⁴ Two points may be noted here. First, the export duties were to continue in being. This is the implication of this decision. Secondly, the goods imported to Ceylon in this period were mainly from South India. This question will be discussed more fully later. Here we may say that these measures while intended to promote trade would also have had the effect of specially benefitting Indian trade.

The next move was made by Stuart. He pressed for the removal of all duties, export and import. His main argument was that the

9 Stuart to Hobart 1 April 1796, 26 April 1796, 1703, Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc.

10 W.C. Jackson sec. to Fort St. George Govt. to Stuart 26 April 1796

11 Ibid. 1726-1733, Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc.

12 Andrews to Hobart 22 April 1796, 6 May 1796, 1554-1559, Madras Rev. Proc.

13 Ibid.

14 Resolution 6 May 1796, 1559, Madras Rev. Proc.

balance of trade was unfavourable to Ceylon. There was a consequent drain of specie. The British Government had made matters worse by abandoning the Dutch practice of supplying "the colony with Rice, Cloth, Articles from Europe". The only hope lay in expanding the export trade. He also suggested that while cinnamon was continued on its old footing of a state monopoly export duties should be imposed on coffee, betel-nut and pepper.¹⁵ These proposals were adopted by the Government of Madras.¹⁶ This decision was clearly intended to promote trade. It is important to note that the emphasis has shifted from the import trade to the export trade. We shall test the genuineness of this patronage of the export trade when we consider the other noteworthy aspect of this new policy. This was in the sphere of coffee, betel-nut and pepper.

With the Dutch the export of these articles was a state monopoly.¹⁷ The new dispensation would have had the effect of throwing this trade into the hands of private traders. The Madras Government charged Andrews with the task of determining the amount of these duties.¹⁸ He suggested a duty of seven per cent on pepper and five per cent on coffee and cardamums.¹⁹ All these proposals were approved by the Madras Government.²⁰ It seems the initiative for imposing a duty on cardamums arose from Andrews himself. It was not included in the original proposals made by Stuart nor in the instructions given to Andrews by the Madras Government. The sanction of Madras was probably given because of the natural association of cardamums with the other spices. There is no

15 Stuart to Hobart 7 June 1796, 28 June 1796, 192-201, Madras Sec. Proc.

16 Governor-in-Council Fort St George, 25 June 1796, 10 Oct. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

17 Collected Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

18 Governor-in-Council Fort St George, 25 June 1796, 10 Oct. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

19 Andrews to Webbe 15 July 1796, 29 July 1796, 2582 & 2583, Madras Rev. Proc.

20 Ibid.

evidence of the amount of the betel-nut duty. That a duty was laid on this article is certain. It is included in a list made by Andrews of articles subjected to export duties.²¹ The Committee of Investigation also referred to it when they proposed a betel-nut tax.²²

The amount of this duty is not important for our purposes. What is important is the motive of the British Government in imposing this duty along with the other duties on coffee, pepper and cardamums. As it is now here stated it is difficult to ascertain it precisely. Taking into consideration, however, Stuart's reasons for abolishing the other export and import duties it is hardly likely that their retention in these cases had for its motive the expansion of trade.

There is an explanation suggested by North. On the subject of Kandyan timber he says: "The abolition of the monopolies which existed in the Dutch time and the opening of a free and flourishing trade in our ports for all the principal production of Candy...."²³ The abolition of monopolies spoken of could only be the ending of the Dutch monopoly system over coffee, pepper and betel-nut. This statement shows that the purpose of ending the Dutch system of monopolies was to give relief to these exports from the Kingdom of Kandy. At the same time by imposing taxes on these commodities the British Government probably hoped to make up at the expence of Kandy some of the revenue lost by the general relaxation of duties.

This state of affairs lasted until the inquiry made by the Committee of Investigation. They came to the conclusion that the

21 Andrews to Hobart 2 Nov.1797,17 Nov.1797,3950 & 3951, Madras Rev. Proc.
 22 Proposed Government Advertisement 15 June 1798, Comm.of Inv.
 23 North to Wellesley 6 July 1800, Sec.Dept.

import and export trade had not grown since the abolition of the duties. They therefore proposed their restoration. Their specific proposals were a duty of eight Rds. per leaguer of arrack, the same duties on palmeira and palmeira lath as in Dutch times, a duty of ten Rds. per ammunam of betel-nut "including the present duty", a duty of seven and a half per cent on all cloth and a duty of seven Rds. on tobacco of the first sort and a proportionate rate "on all Tobacco of inferior quality".²⁴ This tariff was intended to come into effect on 15 June, 1798.²⁵ When the news of Governor North's appointment reached India it was decided to leave²⁶ the ratification of these duties to him.

One feature of these proposals demands comment. All these duties with the exception of that on cloth are export duties. We know that there was in Dutch times a general import duty of fifteen per cent. We also know that in the first month of British rule there was a general import duty of five per cent. We hear nothing about these taxes from the Committee of Investigation, and so we may assume that they were allowed to lapse. There is a marked disproportion between the import and export duties. The conclusion is inescapable that the import trade was a more favoured trade than the export trade.

On the whole North adopted the proposals relating to duties made by the Committee of Investigation. One alteration was that they were to come into effect on the 1 January 1799.²⁷ The other alteration was in connexion with the tobacco duty. This duty had a chequered history and therefore it should be considered separately

²⁴ Proposed Government Advertisement 15 June 1798, Comm. of Inv.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁷ Advertisement 13 Nov. 1798, Rev. Dept.

The Committee of Investigation suggested a tax of seven Rds. ²⁸
per candy. North adopted a tax of seven and a half Rds. per candy.
The amount of seven Rds. proposed by the Committee of Investigation
could be taken as a clerical error if the same figure did not recur
in their instructions to Robert Alexander. ²⁹ The explanation for
this difference probably lies in the instructions given by the
Committee of Investigation to Barbut, Collector of Revenue and
Jaffna. He was asked to settle the rates for tobacco of inferior
quality "agreeably to the different gradations established under
the Dutch Government". ³⁰ It is possible that both he and Alexander
who was also set the same task, ³¹ on investigating Dutch practice
discovered that the Dutch rate for tobacco of the first quality
was seven and a half Rds. and not seven Rds. It is thus possible
that North changed the rate upon their advice.

A petition against the tobacco tax proposed by the Committee
of Investigation was presented by a group of Nagore merchants. ³²
North reaffirmed the tobacco tax. Nonetheless he agreed that "this
duty now levied appears higher than by this statement the trade
will bear". As a concession to the petitioners he directed that
the duty should be collected in copper for the current year. ³³
Although North maintained the tobacco tax he kept in mind the fact
that it was too high. Motives of promoting trade were not
altogether absent in him.

It is to be noted that the rate of the duty did not vary
according to the quality of the tobacco as had been suggested by

28	North to Comm. of Inv.	20 Oct. 1798,	24 Oct. 1798,	Comm. of Inv.
29	Barbut to Alexander	13 July 1798,	28 July 1798,	" " "
30	Comm. of Inv. to Barbut	28 July 1798,	Comm. of Inv.	" " "
31	Barbut to Alexander	13 July 1798,	28 July 1798,	" " "
32	Webbe to Comm. of Inv.	15 Sept. 1798,	30 Oct. 1798,	" " "
33	North to Comm. of Inv.	20 Oct. 1798,	24 Oct. 1798,	" " "

the Committee of Investigation. The rate was also uniform regardless of the market to which the tobacco was being sent. But on this point there was soon a change, when the Government decided that the tax of seven and a half Rds. was to fall only on tobacco exported to Travancore and one Porto Novo Pagoda on tobacco to Colombo.³⁴ North took this step on the advice of Colonel Barbut.³⁵ There was even then no mention of the various qualities of tobacco. This matter seems to have been completely dropped.

It was widely believed that these tobacco taxes constituted a twenty-five per cent duty. Robert Alexander thought so.³⁶ So did Colonel Barbut.³⁷ Mootiah Chetty the renter of the tobacco tax, however, petitioned North for the right to levy a twenty-five per cent duty and not seven and a half Rds. per candy. In the event of failure he threatened to resign from the rent-farm.³⁸ North stood firm by the seven and a half Rd. duty.³⁹ This confusion probably arose from the fact that the seven and a half Rd. tax had amounted at one time to a twenty-five per cent duty. This condition was probably changed later by a rise in the market price of tobacco.

By the Proclamation of 9 June 1800, a general duty of twenty-five per cent on value was imposed on tobacco. This decision put an end to the practice of varying the duties according to the market.⁴⁰ From what we have already seen this would very likely have been an increase on the seven and a half Rds. tax and if the petitioner Mootiah Chetty is to be believed it would have been a

³⁴ North to Barbut 18 Jan. 1799, Rev. Dept.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Barbut to Alexander 11 Oct. 1798, 20 Oct. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Webbe to Comm. of Inv. 15 Sept. 1798, 30 Oct. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

³⁹ North to Barbut 18 Jan. 1799, Rev. Dept.

⁴⁰ Board of Rev. & Comm. to Gahagan 17 Aug. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

substantial one as well. This would hardly have had the effect of increasing the export trade in tobacco. The motive behind this measure was not expressed. It is hardly likely to have been one of developing the trade.

The tobacco tax was imposed only upon Jaffna tobacco. The tobacco exported from other parts was free.⁴¹ This was probably due to the fact that relatively little tobacco was exported from these areas. By the Proclamation of 9 June, 1800 the tobacco tax of Jaffna was extended to the rest of Ceylon. The earlier state of affairs encouraged the home (i.e. Jaffna) consumption of Jaffna tobacco and the export of tobacco from the other parts. These were⁴² the reasons North gave for his action. North's intentions seem to have been two-fold. On the one hand he was helping to increase the export of tobacco from Jaffna. On the other he was redressing the balance between Jaffna and the other tobacco growing parts.

By a Proclamation of a few days later North decreed that tobacco exported from one part of Ceylon to another should be duty free.⁴³ This action would have had the effect of encouraging the internal consumption of tobacco at the expense of its exports outside Ceylon. It is at odds with North's earlier reasoning.

The decision to collect one quarter of the tobacco exported instead of the twenty-five per cent duty was the next change of policy.⁴⁴ This was to take effect from 1 August 1802. Once again the reason for this decision is not given. Administrative convenience is the most likely motive. A twenty-five per cent duty would have varied with the market price and might have been

41 Proclamation 9 June 1800, Public Dept.
 42 North to Barbut 1 April 1801, Public Dept.
 43 Proclamation 12 July 1800, Public Dept.
 44 Proclamation 12 June 1802, " "

difficult to assess. It is unlikely that this new form of the tax created a substantial difference in its amount.

We should now turn to the other changes in the export and import duties made by North. The first change he made was in the betel-nut export duty. His reason was that the existing tax on betel-nut was "about eighty per cent" and "likely to check" the export trade; therefore, he reduced the tax to seven and a half Rds. per ammunam.⁴⁵ Betel-nut grown within the British dominions was required to pay only five Rds.⁴⁶ Here North was putting Kandyan betel-nut at a disadvantage. His intention was to encourage its growth in the Maritime Provinces.

North forbade the export of coconuts, copra and coconut-oil on the ground that "the prices of various articles of provisions" had risen to an "exorbitant rate" and that there was a scarcity of rice.⁴⁷ He made an exception in favour of dhonies.*⁴⁸ The scarcity of rice grew less acute. It was also pointed out that the ban if continued would have the effect of driving away the coast merchants.⁴⁹ On these grounds the ban was lifted.⁵⁰ As the dhonies were permitted to carry coconuts the merchants under consideration here must have been those employing European vessels. Be that as it may, North was moved by a desire to help trade.

North reduced the duty on Jaffna and Manaar cloth to five per cent.⁵¹ His motive was to encourage the production of cloth in these areas.⁵² Cloth was imported mainly from India. This step

⁴⁵ North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1799.

⁴⁶ Advertisement 12 Mar. 1799, Rev. Dept.

⁴⁷ Proclamation 18 Dec. 1798, Public Dept.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ McDouall to Champagne 26 April 1799, 29 April 1799, Rev. Dept.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ North to Court of Directors 5 Oct. 1799

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Hobart to Comm. of Inv. 9 June 1797, 4 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
* small indigenous trading vessels.

could therefore be taken as a slight encouragement to the export trade at the expence of the import trade.

At first North forbade any export of timber. He thought that unrestrained cutting of wood had caused havoc to the woods of Ceylon.⁵⁴ Colonel Barbut, however, having represented that the merchants were clamorous to carry "company's assortment" of palmeiras to the coast North permitted the export of this sort of wood.⁵⁵ A duty of twenty-five per cent on value was imposed. This action was also dictated by a desire not to interrupt trade.⁵⁶

North formulated a general plan for timber cutting.⁵⁶ He wished to encourage the export of timber especially the "finer sorts of wood".⁵⁷ He divided the trees into three categories. On the first class he imposed a duty of hundred per cent, fifty per cent on the second and twenty-five per cent on the third.⁵⁸ These were thought of as export duties.⁵⁹ Tolfrey proposed that these duties should be collected at the place where the wood was cut rather than at the sea-ports.⁶⁰ By adopting this suggestion North unwittingly changed the character of these duties.⁶¹ There was nothing to ensure the export of the wood. This would depend on whether there was a market for wood beyond Ceylon. The only sort of timber for which there was such a demand was palmeira. This we have already seen. As North himself remarked kitoul would be more "sought after" on the island than exported.⁶² This is also likely to have been the fate of del, koss and ankende used for

54 Young to North 30 Dec. 1800, Rev. Dept.

55 Resolution 17 June 1800, Rev. Dept.

56 Proclamation 28 June 1800, Public Dept.

57 North's considerations on timber 20 Aug. 1801, No. 16, 22 Oct. 1801
Bengal Pub. Cons.

58 Proclamation 28 June 1800, Public Dept.

59 Tolfrey's memorial 20 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

60 Ibid.

61 Proclamation 28 June 1800, Public Dept.

62 Ibid.

charcoal. Tolfrey proposed that notice of the sale of timber
 should be given to merchants from various parts of India. He also
 proposed that a "handsome specimen" of each sort of "finer woods"
 be sent to the Court of Directors in order to test the likelihood
 of markets in Europe. North took no pains to do either of these
 things. This shows that he was concerned with their character
 as revenue taxes rather than export duties. We ought to regard
 them as such despite their superficial resemblance to export duties.

At the end of our period the Board of Revenue and Commerce
 was considering a general overhaul of the tariff system. The
 general principles they suggested as a basis for a new system were
 a distinction between British ships and the ships of other nations
 and a uniform system of taxation at all ports. The idea seems to
 have emanated from North. His motives, however, are obscure.
 There is a hint of a desire to have a tariff system corresponding
 to the one at Madras. This is disclosed in the request of the
 Board of Revenue and Commerce for information about the Madras
 tariff system. They also wanted to know the East India Company's
 regulations on trade between America and India. This was prompt-
 -ed by the arrival, pace Board of Revenue and Commerce, of the
 first American ship. In the view of the Board of Revenue and
 Commerce it was probable that "many other foreign vessels" would
 come in the future. Therefore North probably thought that "a
 spring cleaning" of the tariff system was due. We hear no more

63 Tolfrey's memorial 20 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

64 Ibid.

65 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 28 May 1802, 28 May 1802, Board of Rev. &

66 Resolution 19 May 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

67 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 28 May 1802, 28 May 1802, Board of Rev. & Comm.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 14 May 1802, 19 May 1802, Rev. & Comm.

71 Ibid.

about these duties during our period.

Looking back on the whole question we see that in the period before 25 June 1796 the Government, although driven to many changes considered export and import duties generally and paid attention to their connexion with trade. This was also the attitude of the Committee of Investigation. Things were different with North. He examined export and import duties individually and was not predominantly guided by considerations of trade.

The import duties were less than the export duties throughout our whole period. Salt,⁷² cloth,⁷³ arrack⁷⁴ and rice⁷⁵ were imported from India. With the exception of cloth none of these commodities were taxed. This remained a characteristic of government policy during our whole period. This aspect will be considered at greater length in connexion with the general policy relating to Indian trade.

It is opportune now to consider a different type of export and import duties. Jewell refers to coconuts taken from Trincomallee to Batticoloa being subjected to an export duty at the first place and an import duty at the second.⁷⁶ In a General Abstract of sea-customs at Kalpitiya, Puttalam, Manaar, Colombo and Vertiltivoe made by the Board of Revenue and Commerce certain duties make their appearance for the first time. There is a twenty-five per cent export duty on coconuts, gingelly oil and margosa oil. There is a fifteen percent export duty on each of the following articles - "greenfruit of sorts", mats, windows,

72 Hobart to Comm. of Inv. 9 June 1797, 4 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
 73 Ibid.
 74 Boyd to Crommelin 30 April 1800, No 2 17 July 1800, Bengal Comm.
 75 North to Wellesley 20 Aug. 1801, No. 17, 22 Oct. 1801, & Ship Cons
 76 Jewell to Board of Rev. & Comm. 1 June 1801, 11 June 1801, Bengal Pub. Cons.
 Board of Rev. & Comm.

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firewood, "planks and woods" and salt fish. The import duties were five per cent on curry stuffs and five per cent on tiles.

78

The nature of these duties is obscure. We are led to the belief that these duties were imposed upon the trade from one part of Ceylon to another. There is a helpful statement of the Committee of Investigation. It says "amongst the variety of smaller taxes formerly levied on the exports of palmeiras, timber, coconuts and copperas, oil, jaggery etc. it may be found adviseable to re-

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-establish several, the produce of the others would not balance the inconvenience to which they would subject the commerce of the island". The phrase "smaller taxes" and "the inconvenience to which they would subject the commerce of the island" suggest duties on the coastal trade. Some of the taxes we have already met are mentioned in this statement. The others could be included in the abbreviation "etc". This view of them is supported by the Dutch practice recited by De Meuron. He speaks of a duty on country tobacco imported from Chilaw, Kaymal and the Seven Korles. In conjunction with this tax he refers to others without however giving their place of origin. Nonetheless their nature suggests that they belong to the coastal trade. They are karawadu (dried fish), butter, salt fish, jaggery, onions, earthenware pots and pans and "all sorts of building materials such as chunam, roof and ridge tiles, building and floor bricks".

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The origin of these duties in British times is also obscure. As relics from Dutch times they were probably continued in the

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- 77 Gahagan to Board of Rev. & Comm. 1 Oct. 1801, 12 Oct. 1801, Board of
 78 Ibid. Rev. & Comm.
 79 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart 6 Feb. 1798, Comm. of Inv.
 80 Conditions of the Alfandigo farm, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

first phase of British rule. The title "sea-customs" in Andrews' balance sheet of Revenue and Expenditure probably included these duties.⁸¹ It is very likely that they disappeared in the general withdrawal of duties on 25 June 1796. This impression is given by the statement of the Committee of Investigation we have considered. Apart from a vague proposal they did not restore them. Although neither North nor any of his officials gives any idea of when these taxes were re-imposed it is most likely that it was done in their period. Significantly the evidence of the existence of these taxes occurs in this period.

Another vexing question is the motive behind these taxes. As we can gather from their statement the Committee of Investigation in advising the abandonment of some of these taxes had in mind the "convenience" of the "Island's commerce". If these taxes were restored by North they are another demonstration of his view of export and import duties more as a means of collecting revenue than as instruments for promoting trade.

We turn now to the subject of internal tolls. Ferry collections are mentioned in Andrews' balance sheet of revenue and expenditure at Manaar, Colombo, Galle, Kalpitiya and Puttalam.⁸² This statement related specially to the pre-North period. The decision taken on 25 June 1796 to abolish export and import duties was not intended to affect the internal tolls. There is nothing to suggest that these collections were stopped at any period. North introduced this sort of tolls at the following rivers: Bentotte,⁸³ Gindorah⁸⁴ and Cocklay.⁸⁵ Collections were also begun at the canal at

81 Andrews to Comm.of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm.of Inv.
 82 Ibid.
 83 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 25 Sept. 1801, 26 Sept. 1801, Rev. Dept.
 84 Ibid.
 85 Lusignan to Arbutnot 9 April 1802, 9 April 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

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Negombo and the canal between Colombo and Kalutara.

87

The list of tolls at the rivers Bentotte and Gindorah gives an insight into the nature of these collections. The majority seem to be on articles of food and the others on household

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articles. Each one is taxed separately. Generally the dues at the River Bentotte are higher than those at Gindorah. This was probably because they fetched higher prices in this area.

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The list of tolls at the canals of Negombo and Colombo and the new list for the ferry "at Pass Naklegam on the River Mutwal"

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belong to a later date. They show a new tendency. The duties are no longer collected on each article. They are levied on the vehicle conveying them, e.g., Padda boat, "loaded Bullock or Buffalo", cart, carriage and bandy (this was probably an indigenous version of a carriage). The motives behind these tolls are not easy to discover. They were regarded probably as sources of revenue without much attention being paid to the encouragement of trade. This impression is given in Johnstone's advocacy of tolls for the Negombo canal on the grounds that a great trade was escaping taxation.

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All the references to land customs in the records point to a connexion with the Kandyan trade. "The land customs are those of the Mullaitivu District and rented out last year for...and consist of the tenth of all articles passing to and from the Candy country..!"

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This is a statement by Thomas Young, collector in this area.

86 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North, 14 May 1802, 21 May 1802, Rev. & Comm.

87 Ibid. Dept.

88 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North, 25 Sept. 1801, 26 Sept. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

89 " " " " " " " " 14 May 1802, 21 May 1802, Rev. & Comm.

90 Tolls at Pass Naklegam, 21 May 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

91 Johnstone to Board of Rev. & Comm. 5 Sept. 1801, 7 Sept. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

92 Young to Board of Rev. & Comm. 18 May 1801, 18 May 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

Earlier during the cattle disease he had argued that "The striking off of the Duties levied at the passes into the Wanny Districts would be the means of getting a supply of cattle from the Candia Country".⁹³ Both De Silva⁹⁴ and Bertolacci⁹⁵ speak of the land duties. They do not suggest their connexion with the Kandyan trade. We prefer the import of the records. It makes more sense. If there had been tolls between one district and another there should have been more references to them in the records. The paucity of references points to them as phenomena at the periphery of the British Maritime Province and even of their rule. An inter-provincial tariff system would have created many social economic and administrative problems. There is no evidence of such problems. This view of the land customs makes it necessary to consider them in the context of the Kandyan trade.

We have witnessed in the pre Committee of Investigation phase a desire to encourage the Kandyan trade taking the form of the ending of the Dutch monopoly system over coffee, pepper, cardamums and betel-nuts. There was however no relaxation of frontier duties. Indeed in Jervis's instructions to Colonel Barbut to exempt three of four hundred Bullock loads of grain being sent by the King of Kandy it was made clear that the duties on "private merchandize"⁹⁶ were to stand as before.

Lord Hobart advised the Committee of Investigation to promote trade with the Kingdom of Kandy by bartering rice, salt, and cloth⁹⁷ for cinnamon, pepper and betel-nut. There is nothing to suggest

93 Young to North 24 Oct.1799,4 Nov.1799,Rev.Dept.

94 Ceylon under the British Occupation De Silva p 518

95 A view of the Agricultural,Commercial and Financial Interest of Ceylon A. Bertolacci p 347.

96 Jervis to Barbut 30 Dec.1795,12 Feb.1796,438, Madras Rev.Proc.

97 Hobart to Comm.of Inv.9 June 1797,4 Aug.1797,Comm.of Inv.

that the Committee of Investigation acted upon this advice. They did not organize any system of barter nor did they take any other step to increase the trade with Kandy. The Court of Directors wanted North to assess the proportion of the Kandyan trade and to see what goods of British and Indian manufacture could be sold there. ⁹⁸ North prepared a list of articles of British manufacture which could be sold to the "inhabitants in general". ⁹⁹ This was comprised of copper, lead, iron, brass, weighing scales, padlocks, nails, kettles, paints and paint-brushes, oils of various kinds like linseed-oil, ropes and tools of different sorts like pick-axes and saws. Even if we take this as an answer to the Court of Directors two points should be noted. North has in mind "inhabitants in general" and not the Kandy market specially. It is also limited to English goods and says nothing of the Indian goods which could be sold in Kandy.

North's attitude should be examined more closely in relation to each important article of the Kandy trade. Hamilton when he was Collector of the Colombo districts proposed that "the privilege ¹⁰⁰ of passing duty free should be withdrawn from Kandyan timber". ¹⁰¹ Tolfrey in his memorial on timber took the same stand. North disagreed. He thought that "by giving a value to a new production of their country which without our granting the power of exportation can have no value at all" the dependence of the Kingdom of Kandy upon British power would be increased. ¹⁰²

Whenever North needed cinnamon from Kandy to supplement his collection in the Maritime Provinces he sent cinnamon peelers into

⁹⁸ Court of Directors to North 5 May 1798.

⁹⁹ Greenhill to North 22 Sept. 1799, Comm. Dept.

¹⁰⁰ Hamilton to Board of Rev. & Comm. 20 June 1801, 23 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Com

¹⁰¹ Tolfrey's memorial 20 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

¹⁰² North to Wellesley 6 July 1800, Secret Dept.

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the Kandyan districts. At this time there was no arrangement with the King of Kandy which would have enabled him to collect the cinnamon without buying it. This particular trade however could not have assumed big proportions. North turned to Kandyan cinnamon only on the occasions when his own was not sufficient. His declared objective was to produce all the cinnamon he needed in the gardens within the British dominions.

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With regard to salt, the Kandyans were allowed freer access to salt than the people of the Maritime Provinces. Whenever salt formed in the lewayas (salt pans) which belonged to the government the "subjects of the British Government" could appropriate it only on condition of giving half of their "heap" to the government or

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renter. The Kandyans could carry away salt "without paying the above duty to the renter".

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When salt pans were owned privately the salt was sold to the Kandyans. This happened at Colombo,

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Kalutara, Negombo, Chilauw and Kalpitiya. As is well known the main salt pans of Ceylon are at Hambantotte. Therefore the former practice would have been more common than the latter. The privilege accorded the Kandyans can only be explained by the desire noted before to increase their dependence.

In the case of coffee North made no attempt to increase the trade by reducing the tolls at the land passes as he might have done. As we shall hear again later, coffee, pepper and cardamums were imported mainly from the Kandyan kingdom.

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- 103 North to Wellesley 27 Aug. 1800, Secret Dept.
 104 Considerations on cinnamon by North 23 Dec. 1799, No. 9, 12 June 1800, Bengal Pol. & Sec. Cms.
 105 Gregory to Champagne 17 June 1799, 19 June 1799, Rev. Dept.
 106 Ibid.
 107 Gregory to Board of Rev. & Comm. 19 Nov. 1801, 27 Nov. 1801, Rev. & Comm. Dept.
 108 Greenhill to Hobart 27 April 1796, 13 May 1796, 2078, Madras Pub. Cons.

As we saw North reduced the betel-nut duty at the coastal ports to seven and a half Rds. He attenuated whatever advantages the Kandyan trade could have derived from this measure by reducing the duty on betelnut grown within the Maritime Provinces to five per cent.¹⁰⁹ There is no evidence that he reduced the duties on betel-nut at the Kandyan frontiers.

We see this same attitude in the case of cardamums. There was no willingness to lower frontier tolls in order to increase trade. North was trying to supply cotton to those receiving charitable allowances in order that they, by working it into cloth could give the state some recompense for their support.¹¹⁰ He knew that cotton could be had from Kandy and that it was being sold "on the Candian frontier". He was informed of this by Jewell Agent of Revenue at Batticoloa.¹¹¹ He made no effort however to encourage this supply from Kandy. On the contrary he gave instructions to have cotton grown wherever possible in the British dominions.¹¹²

This indifference is demonstrated once again in regard to his need for pepper. Pepper was needed as "stowage" for the cinnamon investment.¹¹³ It was generally got from India.¹¹⁴ There was no attempt to encourage the sale of Kandyan pepper. Once again there was no lowering of frontier duties. Later there were isolated attempts to collect the pepper in Ceylon but even these seem confined to the collection of pepper in the Maritime Provinces.¹¹⁵

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that North was not

109 Advertisement 12 Mar. 1799, Rev. Dept.
 110 Resolution 21 May 1801, Comm. of Supt.
 111 Jewell to Comm. of Supt. 23 Aug. 1801, Comm. of Supt.
 112 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 12 Oct. 1801, 14 Oct. 1801, Board of
 113 Greenhill to Champagne 3 July 1799, 4 July 1799, Comm. Dept. Rev. & Comm
 114 Gov. General in Council to Gov-in-Council Fort St. George No. 21,
 12 Sept. 1796, Bengal Pol. Cons.
 115 North to Board of Rev. & Comm. 12 Oct. 1801, 14 Oct. 1801, Board of
 Rev. & Comm

eager to promote trade with the Kingdom of Kandy. There are remarks made by him from which we could find some explanation. In advocating freedom from duties for timber North said, "the abolition of the monopolies which existed in the Dutch time and the opening of a free and flourishing trade in our ports for all the principal productions of Candy has already engaged the chief persons of the kingdom in commercial speculations which must render them interested in and in some sort dependent upon the security and goodwill of our government".¹¹⁶ In a letter to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, North again said that the increasing trade with the British dominions in which all the principal persons of Kandy were engaged will make them averse to any rupture with the British Government.¹¹⁷ North apparently believed that the trade with Kandy was sufficiently developed. He was also looking at it primarily from a political angle. There is another important feature of North's policy. When he regarded it from an economic viewpoint he found disquieting results. The trade with Kandy had grown big enough to drain from the Maritime Provinces the copper which had been thrown into circulation.¹¹⁸ With these views it is not surprising that North was not seized with an enthusiasm to increase the trade with Kandy.

It is strange that North did not take more effort to follow the instructions of the Court of Directors. The sale of British and Indian manufactures to the Kandyan market would have lessened the drain of specie from the Maritime Provinces. That he failed to do so once again demonstrates the ascendancy of the political

¹¹⁶ North to Wellesley 6 July 1800, Secret Dept.

¹¹⁷ North to Secret Committee of Court of Directors 26 Aug. 1801,

¹¹⁸ North to Court of Directors 30 Jan. 1800. Secret Dept.

aspect of the problem in his thinking.

The authorities at home continued to exhort North to send reports of the extent of trade with the Kingdom of Kandy and how it could be improved.¹¹⁹ That these instructions were reiterated almost to the end of this period is again evidence of North's unwillingness to promote the Kandy trade. It is also proof that he had not satisfied the Court of Directors' request for information about British and Indian goods saleable in the Kandyan market.

A bazaar was a collection of shops selling goods within a defined area. Taxes were imposed on the goods on sale. It is our intention to examine the policy behind these taxes. The first government statement on this subject was an injunction by Colonel Stuart forbidding any duties being laid on "articles of provisions and of household consumption brought from the country for sale in the Public bazaar".¹²⁰ This measure was clearly intended to free trade in the bazaars from some duties. It would be wrong to regard this proclamation in the way De Silva does¹²¹ as a move to put an end to the commandants' practice of taking collection for themselves from the bazaar traders. This as we shall see was attempted later by North. There is not even a hint of this in Stuart's proclamation.

If the intention of this proclamation was to relieve the whole bazaar trade from dues there is no evidence of its being put into effect. In Andrews' balance sheet bazaar customs are often mentioned¹²² as sources of revenue for the year 1796 - 97. The later regulations related to bazaar taxes suggest no break with an earlier freedom

119 Dundas to North, 10 Sept. 1801, Public Dept.

120 29 May 1796, Jaffna Diary.

121 De Silva p 520.

122 Andrews to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

123
 from taxes. If on the other hand the Proclamation was insisting on a tax free status for country produce it was only aiming to do what the Dutch had already done and later British Administration would try to do. This we shall see presently.

The next mention of bazaar taxes is made by General Doyle. He required from cloth boutique and rice boutique alike a duty of two stuivers and half a fanam per day. "Burghers and inhabitants" selling goods within their homes were exempt from all duties. Inhabitants from "the interior parts of the country" bringing "fruits, poultry and other provisions" were also similarly relieved.

124
 There were two important differences from the Dutch conditions described by De Meuron. In Dutch times every "maradoc" of 300 betel or tobacco leaves was subjected to a tax at the bazaar.
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 Doyle's regulations makes them free of this tax because they had been organized into separate farms. In our chapter on "Renting" we have noticed the setting up of rent-farms for tobacco and betel-nut in the early British period. Rural inhabitants bringing "dairy produce" type articles in Dutch times had to pay to the "widow" who had the "privileges of the bazaar" one and a half stuivers. They were freed from this exaction by Doyles regulation.

The very organization of a bazaar would have helped trade. It would have assured a definite place and time for the buyer and seller. It would also have gained them as is suggested in De Meuron's memoirs a measure of police protection.

- 123 Doyle's Regulations, 18 July 1798, 24 Oct. 1798, Public Dept.;
 Terms and conditions for the sale of the Bazaars on the
 Gaffers Gate and the Sea Gate 1 May 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.
 124 Doyle's Regulations, 18 July 1798, 24 Oct. 1798, Public Dept.
 125 Farmed Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

It would also be true to say that by relieving the rural inhabitants bringing the country produce from even the slight exaction imposed upon them by the Dutch the British Government displayed an intention to develop this trade. The exemption of sales within private houses could also be taken as an encouragement of this type of trade. The taxes that were collected should however be regarded only as a means of increasing the revenue.

North forbade Commandants to take any sort of perquisites from the bazaar traders. He promised to recompense the discomfited military officials with an increase in their pay.¹²⁶ This step would have relieved traders and in this way helped trade.

He raised the tax on cloth to four stuivers and lowered that on rice to two stuivers per day.¹²⁷ This was clearly intended to encourage the sale of rice. The new imposition on cloth on the other hand ought to be regarded purely as a revenue raising measure. The other regulations remained as they were with Doyle. The list of country produce rendered immune from tax seems however to have grown. It came to consist of the following: fowls, butter, milk, ghee, greens, coconuts, oil, eggs, fruit, country potatoes and firewood.¹²⁸

The buildings in Kaffersfield and the one at the Water Gate (both presumably in Colombo) were recommended by the Military Board "to be used as Bazaars which will be conducive to the convenience of the garrison".¹²⁹ This proposal was adopted.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ North to Court of Directors 5 Mar. 1799.

¹²⁷ Terms and conditions for the sale of the Bazaars on the Gaffers Gate and the Sea Gate 1 May 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Resolution 22 Oct. 1799, Mil. Board.

¹³⁰ Terms and conditions for the sale of the Bazaars on the Gaffers Gate and the Sea Gate 1 May 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

Sales to the "bazaar of the Escort" of General Macdowall's embassy to Kandy were encouraged by declaring them free of all duties.¹³¹ On the other hand it is significant that the proposal made by Hamilton "for the establishment of Fairs and periodical markets in different parts of the country" was not taken up seriously by North.¹³²

Generally North does not seem to have been keen to develop local trade through the form of bazaars. He was disposed to encourage them only as sources of supply of provisions to the garrison troops and for special purposes like the embassy to Kandy. The sale of rice was also, as we shall see, something special.

So much for internal tolls. We now enter the realm of the Government's relations with private traders. The first problem we shall consider in this connexion is that of fixed prices. We hear of fixed prices in Dutch times. When retailing of salt was farmed the prices at which the farmer bought from the Government stores and sold to the public were fixed.¹³³ There was a fixed price of two stuivers per pound for the "Choya root or madder" delivered into the government store.¹³⁴ Similarly there was a fixed price for the coir brought by the Dutch Government.¹³⁵

Andrews tells us that the Dutch had fixed prices for arrack and coconut,¹³⁶ and Colonel Barbut confesses to being troubled by the fact of the prices for elephants falling below the limit set by the Dutch Government.¹³⁷ The Dutch also paid a fixed price for the

131 Advertisement 10 Mar. 1800, Public Dept.

132 Hamilton to Board of Rev. & Comm. 19 June 1801, 22 June 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

133 Farmed Revenues De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

134 Ibid.

135 Smitz to Board of Rev. & Comm. 1 July 1801, 2 July 1801, Board of

136 Andrews to Doyle 4 April 1797, No. 7, 16 Oct. 1797, Bengal Pol. Con.

137 Barbut to Boyd 22 July 1799, 30 July 1799, Rev. Dept.

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pepper, coffee and cardamums collected for export. It is not possible to postulate what Dutch conditions were from British sources without being assailed by doubt. For instance, it is difficult to elicit the reasons underlying this Dutch practice. It is also difficult to assess its extent. It is nevertheless significant that whatever references there are point in the direction of fixed prices.

The inquiry we make in this section is whether the British Government followed this policy. It is best for this purpose to consider each of the major articles sold separately.

The Dutch fixed the price of retail arrack and set out its amount in the Kaule. ¹³⁹ We are sure that the British continued this practice in the later period. ¹⁴⁰ We are bereft of renters cowles for the early British period and cannot speak with certainty of these times. The Cowles of the later period however do not ¹⁴¹ hint at a break from tradition. The renter was threatened with ¹⁴² punishment if he sold below the fixed price. The reasons for this measure are not expressed. This clause is contained in the Dutch cowles. It is more than likely that the British Government were repeating it in a mechanical way.

The Military Board recommended that the "rate of coconut oil for the Western Division be fixed at five fanams per measure and ¹⁴³ for the Eastern Division at eight fanams per measure. North

138 Collected Revenues, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

139 Conditions of the Arrack Farm in Colombo, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

140 North to Macdowall 30 Oct. 1801, 3 Nov. 1801, Mil. Board; Board of Rev. & Comm. to North, 2 June 1801, 3 June 1801, Rev. & Comm. Dept.; Board of Rev. & Comm. to Hamilton 11 Dec. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

141 Ibid.

142 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 2 June 1801, 3 June 1801, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

143 Forrest to Kerr 18 Dec. 1800, 22 Dec. 1800, Mil. Board.

approved of this measure but not without the reservation that in the event of these prices fluctuating as they were wont to do the allowances of the Barrack Master should be increased.¹⁴⁴ Clearly the Government was not bent upon maintaining the fixed prices. There is also nothing to suggest that this was a general rule. It seems intended only to regulate the purchases of the Barrack Master. It is also to be remarked that on available evidence a similar attempt was not made by North's predecessors - Stuart, Doyle, De Meuron and the Committee of Investigation.

North fixed the price for the cinnamon to be sold eastward of Ceylon. This as we shall see in the chapter on "Commercial Products" was the cinnamon left in North's hands owing to a glut in the Company's warehouses in England. The object of the restriction of prices was not to let it become so high as to act as an incentive to stealing from the public gardens.¹⁴⁵ There was not much cinnamon sold Eastward in our period and it is not possible to check the consistency of the fixed price. The whole problem of the surplus cinnamon arose in the period of North. There is therefore no question of ascertaining his predecessors' attitudes.

The Committee of Investigation proposed that the privately owned salt pans should be taken over by the Government and salt sold from government stores at a fixed price.¹⁴⁶ North did not act upon this suggestion. De Meuron in a letter to Hobart says that the selling price of the salt imported from the coast was fixed at

¹⁴⁴ Blair to Macpherson 12 Jan. 1802, 12 Jan. 1802, Mil. Board.

¹⁴⁵ North to Court of Directors 22 April 1801.

¹⁴⁶ Comm. of Inv. to Harris 15 June 1798, 29 June 1798, 2221, Madras Rev. Proc.

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"twenty Rix Dollars per last of 75 Parrahs". This was at a time before the Committee of Investigation made its proposals. It shows that there was an attempt to fix the price of salt in the early period. The success of this venture cannot be ascertained due to the lack of evidence.

North forbade the import of salt into Ceylon except that used as ballast by the sailing vessels. ¹⁴⁸ The Government stipulated that it would buy whatever salt was imported through this means at 10 Rds. per last and sell it at twenty Rds. ¹⁴⁹ These same prices recur again and therefore it is reasonable to conclude that the Government maintained these prices. ¹⁵⁰ As we shall see more and more the idea of fixed prices was as it were in the air. This is the only explanation we can offer for the origin of this particular price of which none is shown in the records.

No attempt was made to regulate the price of the salt sold from the Ceylon salt pans. It seems that the Government was even unaware of its amount. We have William Orr, superintendent at Mahagampattu, resorting to the curious device of organizing a mock auction sale in order to sell the Government share of salt in an advantageous manner. ¹⁵¹

As a basis for organizing the supply of coir Major Agnew ¹⁵² proposed buying it from chosen individuals at a fixed price. The arrangement made by North was different. Those supplying coir to Gibson in whose charge he placed its collection were to be paid

¹⁴⁷ De Meuron to Harris 21 Mar. 1798, 3 April 1798, 2319, Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc.

¹⁴⁸ Advertisement 13 Nov. 1798, Rev. Dept.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Boyd to Blair 16 Jan. 1801, 20 Jan. 1801, Mil. Board.

¹⁵¹ Orr to Board of Rev. & Comm. 22 Sept. 1801, 24 Sept. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

Orr to Wilson 12 Sept. 1801, 24 Sept. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

¹⁵² Agnew to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

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with rice.

On several occasions North tried to fix the price at which Government rice was sold. Rice was ordered to be sold to the labourers of the cotton plantation at Carcelles, ¹⁵⁴ at eighteen fanams per parrah. The price of Government rice in the pearl fishery at Manaar was fixed at forty fanams per parrah. ¹⁵⁵ Paulus Chetty and Christophel Norris appointed to sell the rice from the Abercrombie were instructed to do so at the rate of twentyone and ¹⁵⁶ a half fanams per parrah. As we shall see the Government did attempt, although in a desultory way, to prevent the price of rice from rising high by replenishing the market with supplies of rice from its own stores. This attitude probably explains these attempts to fix prices. However, they were not attended with success. We are driven to this conclusion by the variance in the prices of rice sold which are accessible in the records and are given without the slightest reference to price fixing. These ¹⁵⁷ prices range from four Rds. per bag to fourteen Rds.

North directed the Pearl Fishery Commissioners at Manaar to buy rice "at the rate of 10 Arcot Rupees per bag delivered at ¹⁵⁸ Arripo". Probably this attempt was related to the special occasion of a pearl fishery. If North had larger ambitions we know that they met with failure. The records once again bristle with fluctuating prices. They range from five and a half Rds. per ¹⁵⁹ bag to nine and a quarter Rds.

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- 153 Boyd to Gibson 16 July 1800, Public Dept.
 154 Resolution 6 April 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.
 155 North to Pearl Fishery Commissioners 4 Feb. 1799, Rev. Dept.
 156 Boyd to Blair 15 Feb. 1800, 4 Mar. 1800, Mil. Board.
 157 Boyd to Macpherson 12 Jan. 1801, 13 Jan. 1801, Mil. Board.; Barend de Waas to Macpherson 9 Feb. 1801, 10 Feb. 1801, Mil. Board.
 158 North to Pearl Fishery Commissioners 4 Feb. 1799, Rev. Dept.
 159 Fraser to Macpherson 16 Mar. 1802, 16 Mar. 1802, Mil. Board.

North did not try to stabilize the general price of rice through a norm chosen by him. The only one who made this attempt was De Meuron. He issued a proclamation forbidding the sale of rice higher than a stipulated amount. ¹⁶⁰ This was once again probably related to the attempts to assure a plentiful supply of rice for the inhabitants. In view of the fluctuation in prices already seen it is unlikely that this enterprise met with much success. None of the others - (Stuart, Doyle and the Committee of Investigation) bestirred themselves in any one of these spheres - either to fix the price at which it was sold or to impose a general price on the sale of rice.

We have so far considered the articles of commerce on which there was some attempt to impose fixed prices. To redress the balance we should take a quick glance at the fluctuations of prices in commercial articles outside this category.

The price of wholesale arrack was unfettered. It ranged from sixty-seven Rds. per leaguer ¹⁶¹ to 140 Rds. ¹⁶² The price of choya root restricted by the Dutch was left to be determined by the vagaries of rent-farming. ¹⁶³ The statement of Reeder, the surgeon of H.M. 51st Regiment disclosing the variability of the price of sugar brought forth no adverse comment from the authorities. ¹⁶⁴ We hear the Commandant of Trincomallee anxiously exclaiming of the "most sudden fluctuations" in the "articles of Fish and Green". ¹⁶⁵ Edward Darrell, Commissary for grains and

160 Proclamation 18 July 1798, ²⁴ Oct. 1798, Public Dept.

161 Blair to Kerr 15 Dec. 1800, ¹⁶ Dec. 1800, Mil. Board.

162 De Meuron to Harris 3 May 1798, ¹⁵ May 1798, 3146 Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc

163 Andrews to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, ¹⁰ Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

164 Reeder to Macpherson 20 Jan. 1801, Mil. Board.

165 North to Macdowall 10 Dec. 1800, ⁶ Jan. 1801, Mil. Board.

provisions, tells us that "the price of charcoal is always various"¹⁶⁶
 We find Atkinson, an earlier Commissary for grains and provisions
 complaining that the "curry stuffs" available in Ceylon sell at
 an "exorbitant rate"¹⁶⁷ and the Military Board being moved by
 "the extreme uncertainty of the Price of Pottery Ware, Matts (sic)
 Brooms etc." to refrain from imposing "a General rate for those
 articles".¹⁶⁸

There is also no evidence of fixed prices in the case of the
 following articles - precious stones, chanks, betel-leaf, betel-
 -nut and tobacco.

It is important to remark the sense of high prices prevailing
 among the officials. Gibson, Agent of Revenue and Commerce at
 Matara writes of "very exorbitant prices for the articles" in the
 bazaar,¹⁶⁹ Greenhill of "exclusive of the exorbitant prices of the
 different articles of provision",¹⁷⁰ North of "the excessive
 dearness of Provisions here at Trincomallee",¹⁷¹ and Hammond Deputy
 Commissary of grains and provisions, that "You imagine that some
 of the articles is purchased at an expensive rate".¹⁷²

There were also statements to the effect that a rise in prices
 had occurred in British times. North made this general observation,
 albeit attributing it to "general prosperity".¹⁷³ Andrews' remark
 of this nature was in connexion with arrack and coconuts,¹⁷⁴ and
 that of Robertson about betel-nut.¹⁷⁵

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- 166 Darrell to Macpherson 21 Dec.1800, 23 Dec.1800, Mil. Board.
 167 Atkinson to Stuart 26 Aug.1796, 3 Oct.1796, No.16 Bengal Pol. &
 Sec. Cons
 168 Blair to Macpherson 12 Jan.1802, 12 Jan.1802, Mil. Board.
 169 Gibson to Board of Rev. & Comm. 2 Oct.1801, 5 Oct.1801, Board of
 170 Greenhill to Webbe 12 Mar.1796, Madras Sec. Proc. Rev. & Comm
 171 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan.1800.
 172 Hammond to Macpherson 19 Oct.1801, Mil. Board.
 173 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb.1801.
 174 Andrews to Doyle 4 April 1797, No.37, 16 Oct.1797, Bengal Pol. Cons
 175 Robertson's memorandum Ceylon Vol.54.

It is time to summarise the policy of the Government on this matter. Prices were fixed and maintained consistently in the cases of retail arrack and salt imported as ballast. There was a clear intention to fix the prices of cinnamon to be sold eastwards. The fate of this venture remains unknown. The attempt to fix a price for the rice sold and bought by the Government was a feeble one and apparently soon abandoned. The prices of all other commercial articles were not fixed. We can safely conclude that there was no general policy of fixing prices.

We are disposed to take the view that in this way the British Government jettisoned a Dutch policy. We have already confessed that the origins and scope of the Dutch policy of fixing prices cannot be accurately assessed. Our evidence however has shown that in the cases of coir, choya root, coconuts, elephants, coffee, pepper, cardamums and retail salt the British Government withdrew the restrictions kept by the Dutch. Moreover the sense of high prices evinced by the British officials could not have risen without some criterion. Comparisons might have been made either with the price level in the Madras Presidency or with that in Dutch times. The latter possibility is corroborated by the statements of North, Andrews and Robertson alleging a rise of prices in British times.

We turn now to consider the measures taken by the Government to alleviate the shortage of rice. When there was a shortage of rice in the town of Galle in 1796 Stuart said "it is not the custom of our Government to find rice for the Inhabitants only for

the troops".¹⁷⁶ Referring again to a more widespread scarcity of rice he spoke of the need for "inducements" to be held out to "merchants to import rice" in order to avoid "serious distress to the inhabitants".¹⁷⁷

The inferences emerging from these statements are firstly that the Government went to the succour of the "inhabitants" on the occasions when there was a scarcity of rice and not when the price was exorbitant. Secondly, the need of the troops was given priority to that of the inhabitants. Thirdly, the Government looked to the private traders for the amelioration of the situation.

Neither Doyle nor Andrews made any statement on this subject. This could be very well due to the ending of the scarcity which had worried Stuart.

De Meuron had a different attitude from the others to the problem. Once when the supply of rice was not so abundant and the price of it rose so suddenly that it alarmed the inhabitants he had Government paddy sold "in small quantities which produced the desired effect of reducing its price and baffling the premeditated designs of the merchants".¹⁷⁸ On another occasion he warned that if due to inadequate supplies being sent from India the Government was driven to make public purchases "its Price will be immoderately high and that in the bazaar will rise exclusively as no other means will be left to stop the Rapacity of the Retailers".¹⁷⁹

176 Andrews to Webbe 21 Mar. 1797, 31 Mar. 1797, 1674-1675, Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc.
 177 Stuart to Hobart 7 June 1796, 28 June 1796, 192-201, Madras Sec. Proc.
 178 De Meuron to Harris 3 May 1798, 15 May 1798, 3146, Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc.
 179 " " " " 11 April 1798, 24 April 1798, 2838, Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc.

Later he told the Madras Government that it was only his action of selling Government rice which prevented its price rising "as high as was meditated by the vendors when it was known that the cinnamon ships brought none for the settlement".¹⁸⁰ De Meuron's language betrays an attitude of hostility to the private traders. Phrases like "and baffling the premeditated designs of the merchants" "to stop the Rapacity of the Retailers" and "as high as was meditated by the vendors" are impregnated with this sense. He does not look upon them as saviours in Stuart's manner. He expects them to make use of the situation for their own advantage.

De Meuron was not dealing with a scarcity of rice. Unlike the language of Stuart there is nothing which gives this impression. De Meuron intervened to combat high prices. There is no statement of his regarding a scarcity of rice. This is not to say that such a situation would have found him indifferent. It only goes to show that there was no scarcity of rice during his period of office.

The proceedings of the Committee of Investigation are devoid of any reference to this subject. This could be due to the adequacy of rice supplies during this period. De Meuron was a member of the Committee of Investigation and therefore it is also likely that prices were not unduly high at this time.

North was disposed to entrust the supplying of rice to private traders. When in 1798 he besought rice from the Governor General in order to "throw a quantity into the Bazaar" he assured him that he did not want "to interfere with private traders as the market shall always be left to the common fluctuation of trade until the

price of this necessary of life becomes oppressive". Later we
 find him counselling Colonel Barbut to give "relief to the poor"
 from a stock of government rice without interfering "materially
 with the fair speculation of individuals".

He also took the view that private traders did import
 adequate supplies of rice and could be expected to continue doing
 so. The reason he gave for reducing his request for rice from the
 Government of Bengal to 30,000 bags from 60,000 was that "These
 settlements" were being "so abundantly supplied with Rice by
 private trade". When he was driven by the cattle disease to ask
 for more rice from the Government of Bengal he stressed that if it
 had not been for the cattle disease he would have trusted himself
 entirely to private trade to supply the island.

Ceylon received a supply of rice annually from Bengal. In
 the main this was used to feed the troops and the cinnamon peelers.
 When there was a scarcity of rice at Trincomallee North directed
 the Commandant, Colonel Ramsay, to sell Government rice to the
 inhabitants, and Jewell, the Agent of Revenue at Batticoloa, was
 told to make use of a surplus of rice in his hands to combat any
 "apprehended scarcity". When a cattle disease ravaged Ceylon
 roundabout 1801 North pressed the Government of Bengal for extra
 supplies of rice with which to assist the distressed inhabitants.

181 North to Wellesley 22 Nov. 1798, Comm. Dept.

182 Barbut to North 15 Nov. 1799, 22 Nov. 1799, Public Dept.

183 North to Court of Directors 30 Aug. 1800.

184 North to Wellesley 20 Aug. 1801, No. 17, 22 Oct. 1801, Bengal Public
 Cons.

185 North to Allured Clarke 21 Aug. 1799, No. 1, 19 Sept. 1799, Bengal
 Cons.

186 North to Wellesley 22 Nov. 1798, Comm. Dept. Comm. & Ship. Cons.

187 Boyd to Ramsay 19 Mar. 1799, Mil. Dept.

188 North to Jewell 6 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept.

189 North to Wellesley 20 Aug. 1801, No. 17, 22 Oct. 1801, Bengal Public
 Cons.

On three occasions North intervened to check high prices.
 This was in Jaffna,¹⁹⁰ Colombo¹⁹¹ and Negombo.¹⁹² He was not always
 eager to do so. John Ford's complaint¹⁹³ of the high price of rice
 at Manaar and one from Jewell on the same subject went unheeded.¹⁹⁴
 The first set of instances belong roughly to the same period. The
 hardship of which they speak was therefore probably of a more
 widespread and substantial character. The two other instances
 seem to be isolated and disorders not formidable enough to over-
 -come North's reluctance to interfere with private trade.

There is a perceptible difference in the attitude to private
 trade on the part of North and Stuart on the one hand and De
 Meuron on the other. An explanation is to be found in the back-
 -ground of De Meuron. As we have seen the Dutch imposed restrict-
 -ions on private trade in the form of fixed prices. It is likely
 that De Meuron, nurtured in that ethos, was more intolerant of
 private traders than were the two English officials.

Marshall, Agent of Revenue and Commerce at Trincomallee, sets
 us off on another inquiry. Decrying the selling of rice by public
 outcry he says "To sell paddy by outcry distresses the poorer
 kinds of inhabitants. The monied men monopolize the whole as the
 poor have it not in their power to become purchasers of paddy put
 up to sale by fifty to one hundred parras at a time the mode now
 adopted".¹⁹⁵ The question is whether the Government rice supplies
 used in order to combat total scarcity and counteract high prices

190 Resolution 22 Nov. 1799, Public Dept.

191 North to Atkinson 21 Jan. 1799, Public Dept.

192 " " " 30 Jan. 1799, " "

193 Ford to Barbut 12 Mar. 1800, 10 April 1800, Rev. Dept.

194 Jewell to North 4 Feb. 1802, 25 Feb. 1802, Public Dept.

195 Marshall to Board of Rev. & Comm. 15 Oct. 1801, 23 Oct. 1801, Board
 of Rev. & Comm.

fell into the hands of "monied men" without reaching the "poor". We have a clue to the unit of sale adopted by De Meuron in his directive to have the "Company paddy sold daily in small quantities". When we recall his general attitude in this matter it seems likely that there was an emphasis on "small quantities" in all his attempts to reduce the price of rice and that the quantities were small enough to be bought by the "poor". There is more evidence of North's attitude. Colonel Ramsay, Commandant at Trincomallee, whom we have already met in this connexion, was ordered to sell the Government rice in "small portions" at a price which would re-imburse the Government for its expenses. ¹⁹⁶ When we reach the instructions to Atkinson these small portions become more tangible. He was required to sell rice from the Government godown in "no ¹⁹⁷ great or less quantity than one Parra sold to each family". This venture was regarded as a failure because the distress of the poorer inhabitants remained unalleviated. As a remedial measure Mr. Paulo Casie Chetty was appointed to sell the Government rice and he was instructed to distribute it in measures (these were smaller units than Parras) at the price of six stuivers per ¹⁹⁸ measure. As regards these sales there is therefore, no substance in the charge made by Marshall.

It is true of another type of sale. These were sales of rice and paddy by auction. They were probably unconnected with the measures taken by the Government to alleviate rice shortage. They seem intended merely to dispose of surplus Government stock. The available lists of such sales were large. When the rice is

¹⁹⁶ Boyd to Ramsay 19 Mar. 1799, Mil. Dept.
¹⁹⁷ North to Atkinson 21 Jan. 1799, Public Dept.
¹⁹⁸ " " " 30 Jan. 1799, " "

measured in parrahs the auction lots range from 1,000 to 9,464 parrahs and 26 measures. 3,000 parrahs and 4,000 parrahs are the common figures. ¹⁹⁹ When it is in bags the single lot falls as low as two and climbs as high as forty. The normal lot varies from eight to fifteen bags. ²⁰⁰ When the measure takes the shape of marcalls and seers the lots rise from fifty to 266 marcalls. The norm is between 200 and 220 marcalls. ²⁰¹ Christopolo Norris and Paulus Nonis Chetty were appointed to sell the rice unloaded from the ship Abercrombie in quotas of fifty bags. ²⁰² The size of these lots suggests that their purchasers were wealthy men. This is not to say that all were in this category. Those who bought the smallest lot like two bags were probably poorer people. It seems very likely that they were middlemen or retailers as De Meuron called them. Once again it is the size of the lots that lead us to this conclusion. The size seems to be too big for more personal consumption especially when one individual buys more than one lot.

The next topic is strictly speaking a digression. The auction sales lists are filled with the names of the purchasers. We intend to use them to gain a view of two characteristics of these middlemen - their wealthiness and their nationality. A rough measure for wealthiness is to be found in the number of lots of each article bought by a purchaser and the frequency with which his name appears in lists of other articles.

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- 199 Barbut to Board of Rev.& Comm. 26 Nov. 1801, 4 Dec. 1801, Board of Rev.& Comm.
- 200 Blair to Macpherson 18 April 1801, 24 April 1801, Mil. Board;
Hammond to Blair 6 Dec. 1801, 15 Dec. 1801, Mil. Board;
Public Auction at Galle 15 Aug. 1801, Mil. Board.
- 201 Hammond to Blair 15 Oct. 1801, 27 Oct. 1801, Mil. Board.
- 202 Boyd to Blair 15 Feb. 1799, 4 Mar. 1799, Mil. Board.

It will be better for this purpose to include in our survey auction sales lists of other articles besides rice. They are garlick, sugar, pepper, lentils, ghee, mustard, tamarind, tobacco, chillies, biscuits, dust rice and damaged rice. Once again these articles probably were a surplus stock of the Government. This is the only explanation we can find for their sale.

The large size of the single lots is again striking. The normal lot was two bags in the case of garlick, ²⁰³ three bags or one cask in the case of sugar, ²⁰⁴ two bags in the case of lentils, ²⁰⁵ one bag in the cases of turmerick, ²⁰⁶ pepper and mustard, five bags for damaged rice, ²⁰⁷ five bags for tamarind, ²⁰⁸ five bags for chillies, ²⁰⁹ ten bags for dust rice, ²¹⁰ five dobber for ghee, ²¹¹ four bales for tobacco ²¹² and thirty pounds for biscuits. ²¹³

Returning to our present inquiry we find that among the sixty-nine buyers from Colombo there were twenty-eight Muslims, ten Tamils, ten Englishmen, seven Sinhalese, six Burghers, five Dutchmen and three Persians. The wealthy middlemen in this number were Christoffel Andries, Sinne Tamby Chetty, Danage (Persian), Agamadoe Marikar, Verdappah Chetty, Mira Lebbe, Haniffa Marikar and Sergeant Burns.

In Galle from a number of fiftyeight buyers there were twentyseven Muslims, seventeen Englishmen, seven Tamils, four Burghers, one Dutchman, one Persian and one Sinhalese. By the

203 Blair to Wright 28 July 1800, 5 Aug. 1800, Mil. Board.

204 Ibid.

205 Ibid.

206 Ibid.

207 Ibid.

208 Ibid.

209 Ibid.

210 Ibid.

211 Ibid.

212 Ibid.

213 Blair to Marriott 31 Aug. 1801, 1 Sept. 1801. Mil. Board

criteria we have used there is no outstanding purchaser among them.

In the Jaffna lists there were eight Tamils, five Dutchmen, two Burghers and one Englishman. Taumoderam Pulle emerges as a middleman of means.

In the Mullaitivu lists there were twenty-five names: twenty-one of these belong to Tamils and four to Dutchmen. There is no noteworthy person among them.

The preponderance of Muslim names in Colombo and Galle, where the Sinhalese population far exceeds the Muslims, is impressive. This phenomenon should not altogether surprise us, accustomed as we have been when studying renting, to the phenomenon of Muslims swelling the ranks of the renters.

This is the appropriate place to discuss some other problems which although arising locally, illustrate the Government's attitude to trade. George Garrow, Agent of Revenue and Commerce at Trincomallee, complained that the inhabitants of his districts were in the unhappy position of either emigrating or parting with their grain to travelling merchants for little value. This predicament was forced upon them by the merchants selling cloth at an enormous price for grain without giving it a proper value. He forbade this trade on his own authority. He ordered his subordinates "to keep a strict watch that the Lubby merchants do not go into the country to purchase grain from the inhabitants, a practice attended with ruin to the country. The inhabitants must keep their seed grain". North revoked this order on the grounds that Garrow had acted without authority.

²¹⁴ Garrow to North 1 Aug.1799, 11 Sept.1799, Rev.Dept.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ North to Garrow 8 Aug.1799, 11 Sept.1799, Rev.Dept.

Ford, the Commandant at Manaar shows that he did not want to protect the seed grain of the peasant at the cost of impeding trade. It also shows that it was not a problem limited to Trincomallee. Ford, having been counselled by the members of the Landraad, joined by other inhabitants of the place, to put an end to the unfair expropriation of peasants' seed grain, pressed the matter upon North's attention. He argued that the behaviour of the merchants besides increasing the price of rice raised a threat of famine. ²¹⁷ North was unmoved by this entreaty. He rejected the pleas. ²¹⁸ Although he did not give his reasons they could hardly have been any other than that of ensuring the smooth flow of trade.

Garrow, wrangling with North on this issue, maintained that the merchants had "been long in the habit of going through the country, not his alone but in every district" dispossessing the peasants of their grain. ²¹⁹ North, although he dismissed Garrow's arguments, did not dispute this version of the problem given by him. We are, therefore, inclined not to look upon this problem as special to Trincomallee or to Garrow's tenure of office. Garrow, by his espousal of the peasant's cause, seems to have forced it to the forefront.

Two comments should be made on this issue. North did take pains to supply seed grain to the peasant. We shall examine his policy in this respect more closely in our chapter on "Agriculture". Although he was ready to do so he would not let trade be impeded.

Garrow's reference to the "Lubby merchants" hints at the preponderance of the Muslims among the travelling merchants.

217 Ford to Barbut 12 Mar. 1800, 10 April 1800, Rev. Dept.

218 Resolution 10 April 1800, Rev. Dept.

219 Garrow to North 1 Aug. 1799, 11 Sept. 1799, Rev. Dept.

Having in mind the important position occupied by the Muslims among the renters and the middlemen we are not disposed to disregard this evidence.

We shall now take up the question of the Indian trade. According to both North and Huskisson "European articles" reached Ceylon not directly but "by a circuitous route" from India. North said that "the circuitous route by which they are acquired here makes it impossible for the Dutch and the natives and difficult for the English to procure". Huskisson expressed himself more strongly "The articles sold" at "exorbitant prices" "were too often the refuse of the Indian market". North wanted the Court of Directors to send on their ships sailing to India a cargo of "European articles" for Ceylon.

Probably as a result of this pressure the Court of Directors decided to direct one ship from their India bound fleet to touch at Colombo. A cargo of fifteen bales of cloth was specially consigned to Ceylon. The evidence is that these were government stores. The Court of Directors itself testifies to this character of these goods. Directing the Henry Dundas to Colombo the Court of Directors stated that it was for the purpose of conveying government stores for the Island of Ceylon.

There was talk of sending commercial articles. Huskisson advised North not to confine the indent of articles required from

220 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan.1800; Huskisson to North 18 April 1801, North MSS.

221 Ibid.

222 Ibid.

223 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan.1800.

224 Court of Directors Secret letter to Madras 29 Sept.1801; Commercial letter from Court of Directors to Bengal 8 April.

225 Commercial letter from Court of Directors to Bengal 5 Mar.1801

226 Commercial letter from Court of Directors to Bengal 8 April 1801

England "to what may be strictly necessary for the Public Service" but to make it embrace every article saleable to the European servants "either civil or military of government".²²⁷ The Court of Directors told the Board of Control that when the new political arrangements came into effect they would be ready to concert with the proper officers of state measures for supplying Ceylon "with such European articles as they may stand in need of".²²⁸ This statement shows that European articles were not supplied to Ceylon directly from England during our period.

The role that North played in this matter should be stressed. The initiative for attempting to have Ceylon supplied directly from England arose from him. We cannot but suppose that European articles were imported by way of India before his period. His predecessors, however, do not seem to have paid the slightest heed to this problem.

We have already sensed the disproportion between the import duties and the export duties. Arrack, salt and rice were imported into Ceylon free from taxation. The "European articles" we have just encountered must be added to this category. Atkinson, when he was Commissary of grains and provisions, was informed by "the principal merchants"²²⁹ that curry stuffs were imported from India. Therefore, even if we take the view that salt was imported in small quantities and that rice was allowed to enter free in order to rescue the inhabitants of Ceylon from its shortage, the free entry of a considerable amount of commodities remains unaccounted for.

We cannot adopt the view offered by Bertolacci²³⁰ that import

²²⁷ Huskisson to North 18 April 1801, North MSS.

²²⁸ Court of Directors to Board of Control 10 Feb. 1801.

²²⁹ Atkinson to Stuart 26 Aug. 1796, No. 16, 3 Oct. 1796, Bengal Sec. &

²³⁰ Bertolacci p 341.

duties were deliberately kept light in order to relieve the consumers in Ceylon. Nowhere in the records is there a statement which even in a slight way suggests this explanation. The British officials as they appear in their records were not given to thinking of consumers in contradistinction to producers.

The only explanation we can offer comes to us from a remark of North. Addressing the Governor General after his arrival in Ceylon on the new taxes proposed by the Committee of Investigation he becomes apologetic about the tax on Indian cloth. He says: "The consumption of Bengal muslins is so very considerable here and so entirely confined to the highest class of society that I may venture to assure your Lordship in Council that the Regulations will not affect in any degree the commerce of your peculiar Presidency". We could have expected a defence of the tobacco tax. The merchants of Nagore petitioned against it. There were no protests from traders against the cloth tax. Nonetheless North chose to apologise about it. This betrays a sensitivity about Indian interests and a tendency to regard Ceylon as part of India.

This one-sidedness is illustrated again in the way commercial ventures in Ceylon were advertised in India. The pearl fishery of 1798 was advertised in the Bengal papers. It was decided to advertise the pearl fishery of 1799 at Cuddalore, Nagore and Ramnad. News of it was also to be put about in Bengal and Bombay. The new taxes proposed by the Committee of Investigation were to be advertised in the "public prints" at Madras, Bombay and

231 North to Wellesley 16 Nov. 1798, No. 7, 21 Jan. 1799, Bengal Pub. Cons.
 232 Falconer to Barlow 27 Oct. 1797, 3565, Madras Rev. Proc.
 233 Resolution 16 Nov. 1798, 3505, Madras Rev. Proc.
 234 North to Cleghorn 27 Nov. 1798, Rev. Dept.

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Bengal. These are examples of this practice. There was no corresponding publication of Indian commercial ventures in Ceylon. We could have at least expected news of the pearl fishery at Tuticorin.

In levying import duties the Dutch Government differentiated Dutch ships from the ships of other nations. Goods brought from Holland on Company ships with their duties paid in Holland were admitted into Ceylon duty free. European wine and beers were made an exception and a duty of three per cent demanded from them. In contrast a "full duty" of fifteen per cent was imposed on all liquors imported on "English, French, Danish or other foreign vessels".²³⁶ In our period, save in the case of China goods, no distinction of this nature was made between British ships and the ships of other nations. From this we should not conclude that the British Government was pursuing a sort of free trade policy. We have seen the Board of Revenue and Commerce moved by the arrival of the first American ship to propose discriminatory duties against the ships of other nations. From the point of view of time this occurs outside our period. Nevertheless the readiness to impose discriminatory duties implied that there was no previous policy of free trade - or at least, there was no talk of departing from a tradition of free trade. The probable explanation lies in the Napoleonic Wars of this period. It is likely that they reduced the number of European vessels sailing to Asian countries. The first American ship could well have been the only visitor during this period

As we remarked there was a difference with China goods. A

235 Proposed Government Advertisement 15 June 1798. Comm. of Inv.
236 Conditions of the Allandigo farm, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

237

proclamation of 28 July 1800 declared that the "merchandize of China" excepting for nankeens and silk had been imported duty free. The proclamation went on to impose a duty of five Rds. on every 100 Rds. worth of goods imported "on a vessel of a subject of his Majesty or of the Honourable East India Company" and a duty of seven and a half Rds. on goods brought by the ships of other nations. Only two and a half Rds. were to be levied on the same amount of China goods imported on a British vessel from a British port. The motive for the proclamation apparently was the absence of adequate duties on China goods. This absence could have been caused by an oversight to which it is not surprising that new officials in a new administration were prone. We are fortified in this view by the fact that the Dutch Government had collected a duty of seven and a half per cent on China goods imported from China or Batavia "with Companys or other vessels under Dutch colours" and fifteen per cent on China goods imported "with foreign vessels". It is also possible that the oversight was brought to the attention of the Government by an increase in the import of China goods. The tenor of the proclamation also discloses a desire to attract the China trade to British ports and British ships. More than this we cannot say. There is no other reference to the question. The origins and scope of this policy do not become completely clear. This could be because it was only an echo of a policy pursued more seriously by the British in their other dominions in Asia.

There remains the question of trade to the Westward and

237 Proclamation 28 July 1800, Public Dept.

238 Conditions of the Alfandigo farm, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

and Eastward of the Cape of Good Hope. Ceylonese were forbidden²³⁹ to charter private ships to carry goods to England. As permission had to be sought for freight room even on Company's ships a general ban seems to have operated on the trade of individuals with England. D. J. Fretsz, a private merchant, applied for and received permission to send "a quantity of Surat and Tuticorin cloth" to England. The Bengal Government made it clear that the privilege depended on whether there would be "spare tonnage sufficient for the purpose on the ships which may be sent to Ceylon²⁴⁰ this season to convey the Investment of spices to England". Two parcels of coffee and cardamums were consigned to Messrs David²⁴¹ Scott and Company in London by J. F. Conradie. He was also a private merchant. The manner of transport allowed him is not stated. The Government of Bengal allowed private traders to export their goods to England on private ships. This was because of a fear of a deficiency in the Company's investment and the shortage²⁴² of company ships. It is tempting to think that this freedom was extended to private traders in Ceylon and that Conradie exported his goods on a private ship. This does not seem to be true. There is no indication that a private ship was used. Moreover the relaxation of its rule by the Bengal Government was made in 1800 and if spread to Ceylon should have included Fretsz's venture in its scope.

The trade to the Cape of Good Hope itself should be considered separately. Conradie's request for permission to export a

239 Gov. General-in-Council No. 2, 9 Oct. 1800, Bengal Comm. & Ship. Cons.

240 Ibid.

241 Arbuthnot to Glenbervie 26 April 1803, North MSS.

242 Letter to Secret Committee of Court of Directors from Bengal,
6 May 1801.

consignment of cloth to the Cape of Good Hope as a recompense for some Cape of Good Hope products sent by Messrs Fehrzen and ²⁴³ Company in 1794 was turned down by North. A request by the same person to send the "produce of Ceylon" to the Cape of Good Hope in return for a small supply of wines and provisions received "this year from thence" met with a better response from North. He referred the matter to the arbitrament of the Governor General in India buttressed by his own supporting argument that such an exchange would be to "the relief and satisfaction of both" settlements and would not "interfere with the Hon'ble Company's Trade". ²⁴⁴ A likely explanation of the different attitudes adopted by North is to be found in the difference in time. The unsuccessful request was to honour a contract made in 1794. The long delay before the request was made may have induced North to disregard the matter.

It is difficult to ascertain the response of the Supreme Government of Bengal. We cannot trace any letter from them either rejecting or approving North's request. We can only conclude that in the face of the apparent lack of enthusiasm in Bengal North let the matter drop.

Things become different when we move Eastward. We learn from the Nagore merchants petitioning against the tobacco tax that Ceylon tobacco was exported to Travancore, to Pulo Penang on the ²⁴⁵ Prince of Wales Island and to Sumatra. North waxed enthusiastic about the growth of the export trade in betel-nut, coffee and

243 Conradie to North 29 Nov. 1798, 5 Dec. 1798, Public Dept.

244 North to Wellesley 5 Dec. 1798, Public Dept.

245 Webbe to Comm. of Inv. 15 Sept. 1798, 3 Oct. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

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pepper. In every likelihood this trade went to Eastern markets. There does not seem any prohibition put on the trade of Ceylonese in this direction.

North sold two consignments of cinnamon to Messrs Colt,
247 Baker and Company. This was from the surplus caused by the overstocking of the company's warehouses in England. Some cinnamon was also given to the Captain of the government brig
248 Tartar for sale in Prince of Wales Island. North's aim was in this way to explore markets for cinnamon in the East. We cannot but conclude from the lack of further attempts to sell cinnamon that the earlier ventures were not successful. Apart from this there was no initiative on the part of the Government to sell Ceylon's products in the Eastern markets. North did express a wish to sell European articles, tobacco salt and other commodities
249 in Prince of Wales Island. This never matured beyond a mere fancy.

In our long survey of the Government's trading policies we have met with a rich diversity of attitudes. North unlike his predecessors looked upon export and import duties as means of increasing revenue. It was in this same way that he regarded all the internal tolls. The reason for this is not far to seek. He had a nightmarish fear of being short of money with which to run the Government. His constant prayer to the Government of India
250 was for money. He seems to have been more reluctant than his predecessor to interfere with traders. This attitude although

246 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan. 1800.

247 Chapter IV p 191

248 North to Leith, Governor of Prince of Wales Island 28 May 1802

249 Ibid.

250 North to Wellesley 6 Oct. 1801, No. 7, 20 Nov. 1801, Bengal Comm. & ship. Cons.; North to Wellesley 15 Feb. 1800, No. 1, 31 July 1800, Bengal Pol. & Sec. Cons. Mil. Dept.

seemingly at odds with his view of "duties" probably also owes something to his financial anxiety. The amount of the duties collected depended on the amount of the trade. We have caught a glimpse of the preponderance of the Muslims among these traders. This was probably the source of his special attitude to Muslims.

CHAPTER SIX

Social Groups

If there is one thing which sharply distinguishes the eighteenth century from that of the twentieth it is the different attitude to social groups. Nobody will be able to read the records of our period without feeling the awareness both in the rulers and the ruled of differences dividing one social group from another. It is only along the lines of these differences that we can return to the eighteenth century and recapture the spirit of the pride and the prejudice which animated both the rulers and the ruled of that time. The social groups studied in this chapter will consist of racial groups, religious groups, caste groups and slaves.

The first question we shall discuss with regard to race is whether members of any racial group were preferred to others when recruitment was made to the administrative service. At the very outset we are confronted with a vexatious problem in the European section of the administration. It is very difficult to make out from the names of persons whether their bearers were Dutchmen or Burghers.¹ There is help, however, from other quarters to establish the likelihood that these persons were Dutchmen. Colonel Stuart administered the oath of loyalty to "Burghers and other European inhabitants". The civil, commercial and political servants of the Dutch Government along with its military officers were permitted to sign a parole of good conduct because "they may reasonably object to swearing fealty to his Majesty considering themselves as the subjects and servants of another state".² The nature of this

1. The Burghers were a community sprung from the union between European and indigenous persons.

2. Stuart to Hobart, 7 Oct. 1796, 25 Oct. 1796, 1034, Madras Sec. Proc.

action demonstrates the possibility that the majority of the Burghers at the time that the Dutch administration came to end were not included among its civil, commercial and political servants. North remarked that he had chosen "many Dutchmen" for the humbler posts in the administration on account of their local knowledge as well as that of the language". North also observed that one way of avoiding payment of the subsistence to which all former Dutch civil servants were entitled by the Articles of Capitulation⁴ was to select them for the administrative service.⁵ The Committee of Investigation recommended the employment of "deserving men" deprived by the events of war of means of support for posts in the sea-customs to which the "numerous avocations of the Superintendent of Revenue and his principal assistants" will not permit them to give proper attention.⁶ All these statements disclose a predilection on the part of the British Government to employ Dutchmen whenever they could in the administrative service. We feel justified therefore in making the assumption that persons bearing Dutch names were more likely to be Dutch than Burghers.

Equipped with this awareness we should take a closer look at the ranks of the administrators. Colonel Stuart, Commander of the Forces which occupied Ceylon was vested with a "discretionary authority as well as civil as Military on the Island of Ceylon".⁷ His successors to this post were General Doyle and Brigadier General de Meuron.⁹ The last named had been in the Dutch service.

3 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1799.
 4 Articles of Capitulation 16 Feb. 1796, 23 Feb. 1796, 903-912, Madras
 5 North to Court of Directors 5 Mar. 1799. Mil. & Pol. Proc.
 6 Proposed Government Advertisement 15 June 1798, Comm. of Inv.
 7 Ceylon Under the British Occupation C. R. De Silva p 190.
 8 De Silva p 197.
 9 Madras Military letter to Court of Directors 17 Oct. 1797.

The others were all Englishmen. Throughout this period the revenue administration was in the hands of Robert Andrews.¹⁰ His three assistants George Garrow, John Jervis and Robert Alexander functioned as collectors for the three revenue districts of Trincomallee, Jaffna and the Colombo and Galle districts respectively. All these persons were Englishmen drawn from the Company's service at Madras. From 9 June 1797 until the arrival of North the function of supervising revenue administration was entrusted to a Committee of Investigation consisting of Andrews and de Meuron, two persons whose acquaintance we have already made, and Agnew. The last was an Englishman holding the post of adjutant general in the military establishment in Ceylon.¹¹ The Committee of Investigation ceased to function with North's arrival.¹² North continued, however, throughout our period to govern through the collectors, albeit under the new designation of Agents of Revenue. Although the number of these officials increased and the persons of the incumbents changed as North came to be involved in a quarrel with the Madras officials nonetheless they were with one exception all Englishmen. The exception was Smitsz the Agent of Revenue for the Galle and Matara districts. He was clearly a Dutchman.¹³ Towards the end of our period North set up a Board of Revenue and Commerce to oversee the work of the Agents of Revenue and Commerce. At the beginning North's intention was to have it composed of the Secretary to Government, the Deputy Secretary, the Accountant General, and the Collectors of Batticoloa and Mullaitivu.¹⁴

- 10 Andrews to Hobart 10 Nov. 1795, 17 Nov. 1795, 438, Madras Mil. & Pol.
 11 Agnew to North 12 Oct. 1798, 13 Oct. 1798, Mil. Dept. Proc.
 12 Comm. of Inv. to Clive, 12 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.
 13 Smitsz to Board of Rev. & Comm. 13 May 1801, 15 May 1801, Board of
 14 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801. Rev. & Comm.

The holders of all these posts were Englishmen. The others
 proposed were Gahagan from the Madras civil service, H.A. Marshall
 who accompanied North from England and Alexander who had held
 the post of Assistant Superintendent under Andrews. They were
 also Englishmen.

We ought to take a quick glance at the nationality of the
 Commandants because, as we shall soon see, they exercised a
 measure of judicial authority. They were the military officials
 in charge of the troops stationed in various parts of the island.
 Of the eleven Commandants only Brigadier General de Meuron holding
 the post of Commandant at Colombo had been a military servant of the
 defunct Dutch Government. The others were all Englishmen employed
 in the Military service of the Madras Government.

We should now turn our attention to the composition of the
 judiciary. During the pre-North period the judicial organs were
 the Kaccheries of the collectors, Courts Martial and a Court of
 Equity. Courts Martial were held by the various commandants when
 cases fell within the jurisdiction of the Court. The collectors
 were invested with jurisdiction over civil and criminal cases. A
 Court of Equity was set up at Colombo to try petty civil cases.
 This court was composed of three Dutchmen.

North established a Fiscal Court empowered to make a circuit
 of the island. The President of the Fiscal Court was the

15 Ibid; 17 Jan.1798, Court Minutes 1797-98.

16 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct.1799.

17 17 Jan.1798, Court Minutes 1797-98.

18 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb.1801.

19 Agnew to North 12 Oct.1798, 13 Oct.1798, Mil.Dept.

20 North to Court of Directors 10 June 1799.

21 Ibid. 22 Ibid. 23 Ibid.

Commandant of the area in which the court was being held. Thomas Farrell, an Englishman, was appointed as the second and permanent member of the Court. The third member was chosen from among the "most respectable citizens" of the place in which the court was being held.²⁴ The jurisdiction of the Court was to try civil disputes not exceeding twenty-five Rds. and breaches of the peace comprising common assaults, trespasses and petty larceny.²⁵ North also set up a Supreme Court of Criminal jurisdiction, composed of the Governor, the Commander-in-chief and the collector of the districts in which the Court would hold its sittings while on circuit. The holders of all these posts were Englishmen. The other members were Colonel Champagne, Joseph Greenhill and James Dunkin.²⁶ Greenhill was drawn from the Madras civil service.²⁷ Champagne was an officer in the British Army serving as Commandant at Trincomallee.²⁸ Dunkin was presumably a lawyer from England as was also Thomas Farrell. The Supreme Court of criminal judicature was endowed with original and appellate jurisdiction.

In the civil branch of law North resurrected two institutions which functioned in Dutch times. One was the Civil Court and the other was the Landraad. The jurisdiction of the Civil Court, embracing every type of civil dispute, was confined to the main towns of Colombo, Galle and Jaffna. The Landraads exercised a similar jurisdiction outside the precincts of the towns.²⁹ There is a list of the names of the members of the Landraad of the district

24 North to Court of Directors 30 Aug.1800.

25 Proclamation 21 June 1800,Public Dept.

26 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct.1799.

27 Wellesley MSS 13867,14 Sept. and 30 Oct.1799.

28 Agnew to North 12 Oct.1798,13 Oct.1798,Military Dept.

29 Proclamation 23 Sept.1799,Public Dept.

of Colombo. The Vice-President was Johannes Tranchell. He was a
 30 Swede who served under the Dutch Government. The three persons
 designated as members of the court bear Dutch names. So do two
 31 Horn members. The Secretary and the two writers of the court also
 32 seem to be Dutchmen. Some of the names of the members of the
 Civil Court at Jaffna are available. J. Carnie who was the Vice-
 -President of the court was an Englishman from the Madras military
 service holding the office of Medical Superintendent for the Jaffna
 33 districts. The four other names mentioned seem to be those of
 34 Dutchmen. The names of the members of the Civil Court at Galle
 can also be gleaned. Its President was James Logan the Commandant
 of Galle. He was an Englishman attached to the Madras military
 35 service. The other four persons including the Vice-President
 36 seem to be Dutchmen. Although the names of members of these
 courts in the other areas are inaccessible, there is evidence to
 convey the impression of a preponderance of Dutch officials in
 both types of courts.

L. C. Gibson, the new Agent of Revenue and Commerce for the
 Matara districts when he became involved in a civil dispute with
 the Gangebade pattu paddy renter found himself forced to send the
 Board of Revenue and Commerce the proceedings of the case heard
 in the Civil Court at Galle in their Dutch originals because he

30 North to Glenbervie 2 Jan.1802, North MSS.

31 The distinction between these members and the ordinary
 members cannot be ascertained from the records.

32 Boyd to Tranchell President of the Landraad, 14 Mar.1799, Public
 33 Resolution 12 May 1800, Comm. of Supt. Dept.

34 President and members of the Landraad of Jaffna to North
 17 May 1802, 22 May 1802, Public Dept.

35 Agnew to North 12 Oct.1798, 13 Oct.1798, Mil. Dept.

36 President and members of Civil Court of Galle to Arbuthnot,
 23 Mar.1802, 28 Mar.1802, Public Dept

could not find a good translator. ³⁷ Orr, when he was a party in a civil dispute of a similar nature complained that he could not answer the defendant's statement because it was in Dutch. ³⁸ Speaking of the Landraads North once said "their proceedings being in Dutch are unintelligible to their Presidents and afterwards to the Courts of Appeal". ³⁹ On another occasion embracing both types of courts in his comments he observed that they would not become satisfactory "till we fill the Courts with Englishmen or at least with persons understanding English". ⁴⁰ We have cited here only a few of the many pieces of evidence attesting to the possibility that these courts were manned by Dutch officials.

For the purpose of hearing appeals from these two courts ~~there~~ were two new courts set up. One was the Lesser Court of Appeal and the other the Greater Court of Appeal. The first court consisted of the Governor, the Commander-in-Chief and the Chief Secretary and the second of the Governor, the Commander-in-Chief, ⁴¹ the Secretary of Government, Dunkin and Colonel Champagne. These were all English persons. The function of these Courts was to hear appeals from the inferior civil tribunals.

We now come to the more intractable problem of ascertaining the identity of the European clerical hands employed in the administration. They were usually known by the designation of ~~writers~~ writers. It is not possible to estimate the amount of these writers. There is evidence however to suggest that a considerable

- 37 Gibson to Board of Rev. & Comm. 19 May 1802, 10 June 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.
 38 Orr to Board of Rev. & Comm. 1 Dec. 1801, 2 Dec. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.
 39 North to Glenbervie 15 Sept. 1801, North MSS. & Comm.
 40 " " " 21 June 1801, " "
 41 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct. 1799.

number of them were Dutchmen. The only Englishmen who could have filled the office of writers were Madras officials, those who accompanied North from England and those who arrived on the Henry Dundas on 16 September 1801. As we have seen and shall see the Madras officials held various other posts. Of North's companions, Cleghorn,⁴² William Boyd,⁴³ Hamilton,⁴⁴ Joinville⁴⁵ and Barry⁴⁶ were appointed to posts other than those of writers. Of the remaining persons Bertolacci, who began as "Mr. Boyd's assistant", Henry Marshall, referred to as "the first clerk in the office", Sylvester Gordon and George Lusignan, who were "going out to work under Mr. Boyd",⁴⁷ could have performed duties tantamount to those of writers. Two of these persons however were soon transferred to other posts - Bertolacci to be Postmaster-General⁴⁸ and Lusignan to be Revenue assistant at Jaffnapatam.⁴⁹ From among those who came on the Henry Dundas Robert Arbuthnot,⁵⁰ George Arbuthnot, Tolfrey,⁵¹ Scott Hay and Wood received high posts in the administration. David Erskine and Melville Leslie who were the remaining members of this set might have begun their administrative careers as writers. The paucity of Englishmen who could have been writers demonstrates the presence of a great number of Dutchmen in these posts.

Many remarks highlighting the wide use of the Dutch language in the administration were made by government officials. North

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- 42 Dundas to North 15 July 1800, North MSS.
 43 17 Jan. 1798 Court Minutes 1797-98.
 44 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan. 1800.
 45 " " " " " " 26 Feb. 1801.
 46 North to Glenbervie 18 April 1802, North MSS.
 47 17 Jan. 1798 Court Minutes 1797-98.
 48 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan. 1800.
 49 North to Glenbervie 18 April 1802, North MSS.
 50 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct. 1801.
 51 North to Glenbervie, 17 Oct. 1801, North MSS.

asked the Madras Government to send him two writers to occupy the position "of third and fourth assistants in the public office here" because it was not "easy to find clerks who understand the English Language".⁵² He went on to say that it would be an advantage for these recruits if they possessed "a competent knowledge of the Dutch Language".⁵³ Dunbar Hunter while acting as commandant at Galle hoped that he would be allowed an interpreter because "the entire business of this place is being carried on in the Dutch Language".⁵⁴ On one occasion North observed that "The necessity also of carrying on the affairs of the Government in a foreign language and the difficulty of finding a sufficient number of persons at all acquainted with our own to keep the daily business from falling into arrear is by no means a trifling inconvenience".⁵⁵ The other allusions to the Dutch language cited by us make it clear that Dutch was the foreign language of which North was speaking.

Another indication of the vogue of the Dutch language was the translators' office placed in the charge of P. J. Dormieux. There were fifteen officials in this department with three assistants. They all bear Dutch names. Their function seems to have consisted of translating Dutch documents into English.⁵⁶

Continuing our survey of the administration in the Cinnamon Department, Joinville who accompanied North from England replaces Greenhill who was a member of the Madras civil service as head of this department.⁵⁷ The Assistant Superintendent of the department

52 Madras Public letter to Court of Directors 9 Aug. 1799, Paras 79-88

53 Ibid.

54 Hunter to North 14 Jan. 1799, 15 Jan. 1799, Mil. Dept.

55 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1799.

56 Deacons of Colombo to Macdowall 14 July 1800, 14 July 1800,

57 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1801

Comm. of Supt

was Dupre Alexander another recruit from the Madras civil service.

The business of the Master Attendants Department was presumably to supplyboats for the purpose of conveying passengers and cargo to the ships whichcalled at Ceylon ports and to charge anchorage fees from them if they remained in the harbours for more than 24 hours. There were three Masters Attendant at Colombo, Galle and Trinco-
59
-mallee and they were all Englishmen.

All the seventeen surveyors in the Surveyors' Department bore
60
Dutch names. It is likely that they were Dutchmen.

The twenty-six persons appointed to be postmasters in the Postal Department besides bearing Dutch names are specially
61
referred to as Europeans. The department was put under the
62
charge of Bertolacci who had arrived with North from England.

A corps of engineers was set up by North under Lieutenant
63
Cotgrave. He was an Englishman belonging to the Madras Engineers. A full list of Cotgrave's subordinates cannot be found. Of the two names we have been able to find, one, J. H. Dannmer, belongs to a person who is described as having held the same position under
64
the Dutch and the other, Captain Uhleenbeek seems to be that of
65
a Dutchman. North himself remarked that the group of civil engineers enlisted under Cotgrave had been employed by the Dutch
66
for the purpose of repairing tanks. It is, therefore, likely that they were also Dutchmen.

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- 58 Madras public letter to Court of Directors 9 Aug.1799,Paras
59 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb.1799. 79-88
60 List of surveyors 29 June 1802,Rev.& Comm.Dept.
61 Kennedy to Mcdouall 23 Jan.1799,23 Jan.1799,Public Dept.
62 Ibid.
63 North to Court of Directors 20 Sept.1800.
64 Forrest to Macpherson 2 Mar.1801,3 Mar.1801,Mil.Board.
65 Forrest to De Meuron 9 Jan.1799,10 Jan.1799,Mil.Dept.
66 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb.1801.

North set up a Committee of Superintendence to organize the distribution of charity. This is an aspect of Government policy which will be discussed more fully later. The twelve members of this body were all Englishmen.⁶⁷ Several sub-committees of Superintendence were set up in the local areas to assist in the work of the main body. At Jaffna the members of the sub-committee were all English officials.⁶⁸ At Galle however apart from Captain Honner the other three members bear Dutch names.⁶⁹ At Mullaitivu with the exception of Lusignan they all seem to be bearers of Dutch names.⁷⁰ At Chilauw there were four persons with Dutch names and two English officials.⁷¹ At Negombo there was the same number of officials and the same proportion between persons with Dutch names and English officials as at Chilauw.⁷² We are unable to find the names of the members of the sub-committee at Trincomallee. It is likely that there too all the bearers of Dutch names were Dutchmen.

Dr. Ewart, one of North's companions, was put in charge of the Medical establishment.⁷³ On his death, Christie, who was a surgeon belonging to the Madras military service took his place.⁷⁴ Orr and Carnie, who were appointed as Christie's assistants, were also from the Madras military service.⁷⁵ They were all Englishmen.

In each of the twelve small-pox hospitals which North intended

67	North to Comm.of Supt.	20 April 1800,	12 May 1800,	Comm.of Supt.
68	" " " "	" 2 Nov.1800,	10 Nov.1800,	" " "
69	" " " "	" 8 Dec.1800,	12 Jan,1801,	" " "
70	Resolution	9 April 1802.		
71	North to Comm.of Supt.	1 Nov.1801,	29 Nov.1801,	" " "
72	Resolution	6 Jan.1802,	Comm.of Supt.	
73	North to Court of Directors	25 May 1798.		
74	" " " "	" 30 Aug.1800.		
75	Ibid.			

to establish in order to combat the small-pox disease he proposed to instal a "European medical overseer".⁷⁶ One of these overseers bore the Dutch name of Schreuder.⁷⁷ It is likely that he was a Dutchman as was probably the case with the other eleven whose names remain inaccessible.

When the Malay Corps was formed it was placed under the charge of Captain Von Driberg. He was a Hanoverian officer who had been in the Dutch service.⁷⁸ Several persons with Dutch names were appointed to the positions of surgeon and assistant surgeon in this corps. They were Blaaze,⁷⁹ Bakerman,⁸⁰ de Woolff,⁸¹ Ludovic,⁸² Mathysz,⁸³ and Muller.⁸⁴ Neither the total number of such surgeons and assistant surgeons nor the names and number of the other officers in this corps can be ascertained. There is a statement of North saying that there was a "European officer" for each of the Malay companies.⁸⁵ Again North said that there were thirteen "European" commissioned officers in the Ceylon Native Infantry.⁸⁶ This was another military organization formed in this period. The use of the term European instead of that of Englishmen favours the view that these persons were Dutchmen.

We have already caught a glimpse of one of the reasons inducing the British Government to employ Dutchmen. It provided the

means for

81	Cleghorn to Macgregor	22 July 1799,	22 July 1799,	Mil. Dept.
76	Plan	82 Macdowall to North	6 Nov. 1799, 8 Nov. 1799,	Mil. Dept.
		83 North to Macdowall	6 Aug. 1800,	Mil. Dept.
77	Macdowall	84 General Orders	22 Oct. 1801,	Mil. Dept.
78	76 Plan	85 Macdowall to North	4 Mar. 1802, 6 Mar. 1802,	Mil. Dept.
79		86 Military Board to North	18 Feb. 1801, 20 Feb. 1801,	Mil. Dept.
80	77	Macdowall to North	4 Mar. 1802, 6 Mar. 1802,	Mil. Dept.
81	78	North to Court of Directors	26 Feb. 1799,	
82		Cleghorn to Macgregor	22 July 1799, 22 July 1799,	Mil. Dept.
83		Macdowall to North	6 Nov. 1799, 8 Nov. 1799,	Mil. Dept.
84		North to Macdowall	6 Aug. 1800,	Mil. Dept.
85		General Orders	22 Oct. 1801,	Mil. Dept.
86		Macdowall to North	4 Mar. 1802, 6 Mar. 1802,	Mil. Dept.
87		Military Board to North	18 Feb. 1801, 20 Feb. 1801,	Mil. Dept.
		North to Court of Directors	5 Mar. 1799,	

military employees of the former Dutch Government. As we have seen
 when discussing other topics ⁸⁸ the fear of a shortage of money
 dominated the plans of North. The vogue of the Dutch language
 whose influence we have sensed may also have played its part in
 compelling the Government to such a step. There was also a feeling
 that Europeans should be chosen for responsible posts. ⁸⁹ North
 gave expression to this attitude when he said "every small district
 has been for many years accustomed to the immediate Government of
 Europeans and the introduction of Black Agents has been found so
 fatal to our interests..." ⁹⁰

Why the British Government did not draw more heavily on the
 Company's resources in India for administrative servants is some-
 -thing which needs to be explained. During his period of office
 North instituted several new departments. There were the Medical
 Establishment, the Committees of Superintendence, the Engineers
 Corps, the Survey Department, the Postal Department and four new
 judicial bodies. The Dutch Landraads and the Civil Courts were
 also revived by him. He also formed the Malay Corps and the Ceylon
 Native Infantry. The fact that these institutions did not exist
 in the period of the Madras Administration would have meant less of
 a need to employ new administrative servants in that time. During
 the period of the Madras Administration there were three main
 departments - the Collectors' Kaccheries, the Cinnamon Department
 and the Master Attendants Department. The responsible posts in all
 these three institutions were held by Madras civil servants.

88 Chapter IV p 154 : Chapter V p 270

89 Considerations on cinnamon by North 20 Dec. 1799, Comm. Dept.;
 woods, North MSS.

90 North to Wellesley 17 Oct. 1800, No. 174, 18 Dec. 1800, Bengal Pol. &
 Sec. Cons. The latter part of this statement refers to the
 supersession of the Mudaliyars by Andrews and the use of the
 Amildars in their place.

Dutchmen could have been employed in these offices only in the capacity of writers. When recommending the employment of Dutch officials, the Committee of Investigation stated that the knowledge of the English language had not yet become "an object of importance to the inhabitants".⁹¹ In such a situation it was likely that a fair number of Dutch writers were employed in this period. Three Dutchmen were also made judges of the Court of Equity.⁹² The reason dictating this action on the part of the Madras officials was the need for interpreters of the Dutch law because of the important position occupied by that body of law in the property disputes of the time.⁹³

We have already encountered two of the reasons explaining North's choice of Dutch administrative servants - the prevalence of the Dutch language and the need to reduce the expenditure involved in paying pensions. There were other reasons. North, like the members of the Committee of Investigation, felt some concern about the plight to which former Dutch civil and military servants had been reduced by the fortunes of war. When the abolition of the Landraads scheduled to take effect in 1802 was going to throw out of employment the Dutchmen who had served in them North said "I cannot but feel in the strongest manner obligations which this Government has contracted to preserve them not only from want but from ridicule..." especially "as they accepted those situations against the persuasions and in spite of the threats of their countrymen".⁹⁴ North's mind also became affected with the

91 Proposed Government Advertisement, 15 June 1798, Comm. of Inv.

92 North to Court of Directors 10 June 1799.

93 Hobart to Comm. of Inv. 9 June 1797, 4 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

94 North to Hobart 5 Oct. 1801, Public Dept.

idea that the Madras civil servants in Ceylon at the time were conspiring against him. He spoke of "the systematic spirit of opposition and of hatred which has guided them in all their actions and which has made them turn every mark of confidence which I have shown them and every authority with which I have invested them into engines to discredit my person and to thwart my Government".⁹⁵ Such an attitude involved him in many bitter quarrels with the Madras officials. It is not necessary for us to resurrect these disputes. It is sufficient to note that with a view such as this North would have been averse to enlisting Madras civil servants as his collaborators. He also adopted the view that service in Ceylon held little attractions for the Madras civil servants. By serving in Ceylon a Madras civil servant "became separated from his connections and removed from those to whom he must look up as the ultimate rewarders of his merit". He would regard his stay in Ceylon "as a chasm in the active part of his life".⁹⁶ As we have seen, North after some time appointed almost all those who had accompanied him from England to responsible posts. According to Lord Glenbervie, by doing this he was going against the instructions given him by the Court of Directors which was to confine them to writers posts in his office.⁹⁷ Be that as it may, by such a course of action North reduced the opportunities for promotion available to candidates from the Madras civil service. When Dundas sent out a batch of new administrators to Ceylon to coincide with the new

95 North to Secret Committee of the Court of Directors 3 Jan. 1800.
8a Jan. 1800, 26 Aug. 1801, Secret Dept.

96 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan. 1800.

97 Douglas Papers by S. G. Perera p 190.

constituional arrangements due to take effect from the beginning
of 1802 North was very upset. We have already met the advance
guard of this party who arrived on the Henry Dundas. North wrote
to his brother-in-law in anguished tones "For heaven's sake do
not send me too many men of business and do not oblige me to dis-
miss the present servants of my Government who are exactly what
I wish and who are in dreadful consternation at the prevailing
reports". Having got rid of the more obnoxious of the Madras
civil servants he had probably come round to the view that the
administrative servants at his command were sufficient for his
needs. In such a frame of mind it is unlikely that he beseeched
the Madras Government to rescue him from the clutches of his
Dutch administrators. As a result it is also unlikely that either
the Government in England or its representatives in India realized
the extent to which the British Administration in Ceylon had come
to depend on the cooperation of the former employees of the
Dutch Government.

North's attitude to his Dutch employees however was not free
from ambivalence. When he was contemplating the formation of the
Board of Revenue and Commerce he deprecated the ease with which
persons "unavowed unknown and uneducated" had been able to enter the
Dutch East India Company's service and remarked that most of the
Dutch officials were dishonest, and on another occasion the
Court of Directors was told of "the inimical sentiments of the
Dutch inhabitants who are nearly to a man ruined by our occupation
of the island". Nonetheless these observations did not prevent

98 North to Glenbervie 15 Aug. 1801, North MSS.

99 Ibid.

100 Minute by the Governor 12 Oct. 1800, Rev. Dept.

101 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1799.

him from employing Dutch officials.

The extent to which these Dutch officials took the Oath of Loyalty to the British King is the one problem concerning them which remains to occupy our attention. Stuart exempted the servants of the defunct Dutch Government from taking the oath of allegiance. They were permitted to sign a parole of good conduct. The three members of the Court of Equity set up by de Meuron refused to take such an oath. As we have seen it was only the imperative need to have interpreters of the Dutch law which forced the Madras Administration to tolerate such refractoriness. At the beginning of his period of office North persuaded two Dutchmen to be criminal judges. He does not say whether they took the oath of allegiance. By referring to the fact that they were Stadholderians North seems to be offering his superiors evidence of their loyalty. When the Dutch civil judges refused to take the oath of loyalty, North by a "fiction of law" considered them "as meeting after an adjournment from the time of the Government of the United Provinces". He explained his conduct on the grounds that these arrangements were "temporary" and forced upon him because his orders "to re-establish Dutch jurisprudence" were "peremptory". When Carrington, chosen to fill the post of Chief Judge in Ceylon, expressed the opinion that the proceedings of the Court of Equity were illegal because its judges had not taken the oath of allegiance, North abolished that institution. From then onwards on several occasions he stressed the need for Dutchmen joining the

102 Stuart to Hobart, 7 Oct. 1796, 25 Oct. 1796, 1034, Madras Sec. Proc.

103 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1799.

104 North to Wellesley 3 Oct. 1798, Wellesley MSS 13866.

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

107 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1799.

administration to take "the oath of allegiance commonly called the Quebec Oath".¹⁰⁸ It was also his opinion that "the repugnance expressed by the servants of the late Dutch Government to take the oath of allegiance to His Majesty is now so much diminished".¹⁰⁹ It seems likely therefore, that from the time of Carrington's intervention Dutch officials serving the British Government did take the Oath of Loyalty. There was however a time from the arrival of North until Carrington gave his opinion when such an oath was not exacted. With one possible exception all the new government departments organized by North came into being after the abolition of the Court of Equity. The twenty-six Dutchmen recruited to be postmasters in the infant Postal Department constitute the putative exception. The records report their recruitment on 23 January 1799. North intimated the opinion of Carrington to the Court of Directors in a letter bearing the date 26 February 1799. It is, therefore, possible that these Dutch postmasters joined the Government without taking the oath of loyalty. It is also possible that whatever number of Dutch writers were employed in government service both during this period and the pre-North phase had not sworn the Oath of Loyalty. It is necessary however to remember that Stuart exacted a parole of good from all former employees of the Dutch Government. All the available evidence points to the fact that the Dutch clergymen continued to refuse to take the Oath of Loyalty. This, however, is a matter which we shall defer for discussion later.

As we shall see when we come to discuss the Government's

108 Sutherland to Jewell 8 Aug.1799, 11 Sept.1799, Public Dept.

109 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct.1799.

educational plans North established three separate schools in Colombo: "one for the Cingalese of high cast, another for the children of Burghers and the third for those of the principal Malabars of this neighbourhood". He hoped to recruit administrative assistants from these schools especially to play the part of translators. To whatever extent such recruits were enlisted it gave a privileged position to these three racial groups.

It is time to extend our inquiry into the indigenous section of the administration. It was the practice for the Mudaliyars of every Korale to make a report of all their work to two chiefs - the Mudaliyar of the Attepattu and the Maha-mudaliyar of the Governor's Gate. The former communicated these reports to the collector and the latter to the Governor. The Muhandirams who along with their lieutenants the Arratjes commanded the Lascoryns, were placed under the direct command of the Mudaliyar. So were the chiefs of the villages - the Vidaans. By government decree all these officers were selected from the Sinhalese Goigama caste. The counterparts of these Sinhalese officials in the Tamil Provinces were the Mudaliyars, the Maniagars, the Paravitticariyas and the Pattengatys. These appointments were also confined "to the superior casts of the inhabitants of the district". The implication of this remark is that these appointments were made only from members of the Tamil race. It is also probable that the duties of these officials were distributed in the same

- 110 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct. 1799.
 111 North to Wellesley 30 Sept. 1799, MSS 13867; North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.
 112 North to Court of Directors 5 Mar. 1799.
 113 Ibid.
 114 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart 16 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
 115 28 June 1796, Jaffna Diary.
 116 1 May 1799, Jaffna Diary.

way as in the Sinhalese provinces. The Muslims had chiefs for
 themselves in the Metropolis of Colombo and in the local areas. ¹¹⁸
 So did the Chetties. ¹¹⁹ Each of these groups seem to have had a
 separate administrative apparatus for itself which was probably
 organized in the same way as that of the Sinhalese. There was,
 however, one important difference between the Sinhalese and the
 Tamil on the one hand and the Muslims and the Chetties on the other.
 Whereas the Sinhalese and Tamils generally lived in two different
 geographical areas bounded on the one side by the Chilauw river
 and on the other by the river Walawe, ¹²⁰ the Muslims and Chetties
 lived throughout Ceylon scattered amidst the two major communities.
 In such a situation administrative work such as the building of a
 road or the repair of a bridge involving a physical area would have
 fallen within the jurisdiction of the Sinhalese and Tamil headmen
 rather than those of the Muslims and the Chetties. In this
 peculiar way idiosyncrasies of geography and demography took a hand
 in elevating the Sinhalese and Tamil headmen to a privileged position.

The renter as we have seen was a quasi administrator. Here
 economic factors intervened to upset the calculations of the leg-
 -islators. Although Hobart enjoined the selection of the Sinhalese
 as renters the wealth of the Muslims won for them a greater number
 of rent-farms. ¹²¹ In the Tamil areas however the Tamil renters far
 outnumbered the Muslims. ¹²²

The British Government formed indigenous military units on a

117 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart 16 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

118 Resolution 22 Nov. 1799, Public Dept.

119 Ibid.

120 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.

121 Chapter I p 46

122 Chapter III p 48 ff

racial basis. This is the next topic we shall consider. Stuart proposed the formation of a Malay Corps from among the Malay prisoners "who were being subsisted at Great expence".¹²³ This expenditure was incurred by virtue of the promise of the Articles of Capitulation to pay subsistence to Malay troops who had been in Dutch pay.¹²⁴ Although this idea originated with Stuart it came to fruition with North. In "the terror with which they are held by the natives" North discerned "very effectual means for subduing Insurrections".¹²⁵ If the Malays could be moulded into soldiers they would also become "less dangerous to the Police and more trustworthy".¹²⁶ According to him there were three categories of Malays - Princes, Robbers and Soldiers. He hoped to see the scourge of military discipline have the effect of transmuting the robbers into soldiers.¹²⁷ The Madras Government was ready to send North all the Malay troops within their domain.¹²⁸ Captain Ryan was despatched to Prince of Wales Island to enlist soldiers for the Malay Corps from among the Malays living there.¹²⁹ We need not occupy ourselves with tracing the formation of the Malay Corps through all its stages. Our concern is to analyse the motives of North in choosing the Malays as soldiers. While financial considerations induced Stuart to espy in the Malays a potential soldiery, North found the stuff that would make them good soldiers in their special racial attributes.

We find the same ideas at work in North when he came to form

123 Stuart to Hobart 1 April 1796, No.2, 20 May 1796, Bengal Pol.Cons.
 124 Articles of Capitulation 16 Feb.1796, 23 Feb.1796, 903-912, Madras
 125 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb.1799. Mil.& Pol.Proc.
 126 Ibid.
 127 North to Court of Directors 5 Mar.1799.
 128 Webbe to Cleghorn 20 Mar.1799, 4 April 1799, Mil.Dept.
 129 North to Leith Governor of Prince of Wales Island 28 May 1802, Mil.Dept.

the Ceylon Native Infantry. Broaching this subject to the Court of Directors he stated that "the Moor-men and the Malabars on the other side of the Island are a more military race than the Cingalese and moor-men on this side and I think are more likely to produce a supply of soldiers"¹³⁰. He intimated to the Supreme Government of India his hopes of being able to raise "some provincial corps here among the Lebbies or Muhammedan Inhabitants"¹³¹. On another occasion he spoke of the "remarkable manly hardy appearance" of the Muslims.¹³² North did not fail to see martial qualities in Tamils.¹³³ He also thought that the Sinhalese "contrary to the prevalent opinion of most military men" had shown "no want of activity and perseverance" during the rebellion of 1797.¹³⁴

Although North made remarks of this nature when we consider the manner in which the various indigenous military organizations were formed it becomes clear that he relied more on the Muslims than on the Tamils or Sinhalese for his soldiers. It was the Moor Battalion which was first formed.¹³⁵ When the Moor Battalion came to be incorporated with the Ceylon Native Infantry into the Battalion of the Ceylon Native Infantry all the indigenous officers' posts consisting of that of Subidar and Jemidar in the new organization came to be held by Muslims.¹³⁶ This development suggests the possibility that although the short-lived Ceylon Native Infantry was organized separately from the Moor Battalion it contained a considerable number of Muslims. Turner, the only

¹³⁰ North to Court of Directors 30 Aug. 1800.

¹³¹ North to Wellesley 1 July 1800, Wellesley MSS 13867.

¹³² Douglas Papers by S.G. Perera p 158.

¹³³ North to Wellesley 18 July 1800, Wellesley MSS 13867.

¹³⁴ Douglas Papers by S.G. Perera p 158.

¹³⁵ North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.

¹³⁶ Military Board to North 18 Feb. 1801, 20 Feb. 1801, Mil. Dept.

historian discussing the military organizations of the period
 137 supports this interpretation. There were other indigenous
 military units called Independent Companies. These were recruited
 locally at the various outstations. While the two companies of
 this sort raised at Manaar and Jaffna would probably have consisted
 mainly of Tamils it is necessary to note that all those appointed
 to recruit such companies in the Sinhalese areas were Muslims.
 138 Fukheer Mahommed and Mahommed Hussain were sent to Matara and
 139 Shaik Abdul Cader and Levena Marrikkar to Galle.

We should now begin to look at racial groups which at one
 time or other were subjected to special disabilities. The Uliyam
 was a tax imposed in lieu of service obligations by the Dutch
 140 Government on the Muslims and the Chetties. We have witnessed
 141 its abolition by the hand of Andrews. He took the view that it
 142 was an oppressive tax both to the Muslims and the Chetties. At
 the present we are more concerned about its subsequent fate. The
 143 Committee of Investigation recommended its restoration. They
 looked at the question purely from the viewpoint of finance. With
 its amount reduced from twelve to three Rix dollars they saw in it
 144 a useful source of revenue. Without taking a definite position
 145 Hobart veered towards the view that the tax should not be abandoned.
 North, however, steadfastly opposed its resuscitation. He spoke
 of "the difficulty not to say injustice of laying again on an
 industrious and respectable class of inhabitants a tax which must

137 Collected Papers on the History of the Maritime Provinces 1796-1805 Turner p 249.

138 Macdowall to North 9 Mar. 1802, 13 Mar. 1802, Mil. Dept.

139 Resolution 2 Aug. 1800, Mil. Dept.

140 Collected Revenue, De Meuron memoirs, Comm. of Inv.

141 Chapter II p 78 ff

142 Ibid

143 Comm. of Inv. 6 Feb. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

144 Ibid.

145 Hobart to Comm. of Inv. 9 June 1797, 4 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

be grating to their feelings as it is certainly oppressive and disgraceful".¹⁴⁶ He was referring to the Muslims.¹⁴⁷ Defending the continued suspension of the Uliyam North on a later occasion said that the Muslims by "their industry" paid "a much greater proportion of the public revenue than any other class of inhabitants of the same number".¹⁴⁸ The relationship of the Uliyam to the Chetties is an aspect ignored by North. Alone of the Committee of Investigation Alexander advocated the abolition of the Uliyam. He feared that its restoration would cause many South Indian traders to leave the country and begin operating through agents.¹⁴⁹ According to him it was also an inequitable burden on the Muslims who contributed much to the revenue of the country especially in the realm of fisheries.¹⁵⁰ He seems to give weight to the claims of both the Muslims and the Chetties for exemption from the tax. In England the pertinacious Douglas supported the restoration of the tax. He differed from the view of his brother-in-law that the tax would be regarded by the Muslims as something disgraceful.¹⁵¹ North contemplated the imposition of a new tax on the Muslim. According to him this tax of two and a half per cent on immoveables called zakat was something "which their religion obliges them to pay".¹⁵² Be that as it may, it remained unimplemented throughout our period.

Despite North's hopes to see the Malay robbers transformed into soldiers there seem to have been some among them who continued in a career of lawlessness. There were reports of Malays banding themselves together and roaming the countryside committing crimes.

¹⁴⁶ North to Court of Directors 5 Mar.1799.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ North to Hobart 19 Dec.1801, Public Dept.

¹⁴⁹ Alexander to Comm.of Inv.10 Nov.1798, 10 Nov.1798, Comm.of Inv.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Douglas Papers S.G.Perera p 195.

¹⁵² North to Hobart 19 Dec.1801, Public Dept.

In order to combat this situation a proclamation was issued requiring all Malays except the very young and the very old to register themselves. A special place in every area would be allotted by the regional military Commandants for their habitation. As an inducement to make them register themselves it was decided to pardon all the Malays who did so from all crimes committed by them other than the very heinous ones. ¹⁵³ It does not seem as if this law was put into effect. The checking of all habitations for would-be Malay citizens and the herding of them when found into specified places would have involved so much administrative work as to have left its imprint on the records. The fact that these records are so completely devoid of any further information on the matter especially in the face of the injunction requiring all information on the subject to be sent to the seat of government must mean that the scheme to register the Malays never became a tangible achievement.

All Europeans living in Colombo, Jaffnapatam, Manaar, Matara, Trincomallee, Kalutara, Batticoloa or their environs "who were not employed in the Military service of His Majesty or of the Honourable East India Company" had to register themselves. They were also forbidden to travel for more than two miles without a passport. The Proclamation embodying these laws was issued on ¹⁵⁴ 23 August 1796. ¹⁵⁵ It was renewed in 1802. Its renewal testifies to the earnestness of the Government about these laws and should be taken as a token of the fact that they were implemented. The

¹⁵³ Proclamation 13 Mar. 1799, Public Dept

¹⁵⁴ Stuart to Hobart 13 Aug. 1796, 23 Aug. 1796, 675-77, Madras Sec. Proc

¹⁵⁵ North to Glenbervie 26 Feb. 1802, North MSS.

law forbidding Europeans from owning land was brought to the attention of the Government only at the end of our period. This matter has already been discussed.¹⁵⁶ As is well known these regulations were observed by the East India Company wherever its power was established for the purpose of defending its privileges from the assault of interlopers.

As we have learnt Andrews replaced the Mudaliyars and their subordinates with administrative officials from South India referred to alternatively as the Aumildars or the "Malabar du-bashes". It is not our concern to ascertain the number of these officials, the scope of their powers or the manner in which they performed their duties. Our inquiry revolves round the question whether the order of the Madras Government forbidding the employment of this type of official was put into effect. That order emanated indubitably from the feeling that the alien racial character of these officials and the misdeeds committed by them had given offence to the Sinhalese people.¹⁵⁷ Gregory, the Collector of the Colombo and Galle districts disclosed to North that "the aumildar with many of the Malabar servants heretofore employed in this Cutcherry" took leave "to return to the Coast".¹⁵⁸ There is however much evidence to show that many of the South Indian officials were continued at their posts. There were four peshcars at the Colombo Kaccherri who received a higher pay than their Ceylonese counterparts because they were from South India.¹⁵⁹

The interpreter of the Collector Garrow was "an inhabitant of the

¹⁵⁶ Chapter II p 108.

¹⁵⁷ Hobart to Comm.of Inv. 31 May 1798, 15 June 1798, Comm.of Inv.

¹⁵⁸ Gregory to North 22 Jan. 1799, 23 Jan. 1799, Rev. Dept.

¹⁵⁹ Mcdouall to Champagne 17 July 1799, 17 July 1799, Rev. Dept.

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 Madras Coast of Sheva". Eleven of the fortyeight administrative servants mentioned in the collector's register at Jaffnapatam were South Indian officials. 161
 Among the writers and other administrative servants employed in the Military Paymaster's office at Colombo there were thirteen "Malabars" and a "gentoo" from Madras. 162
 Cecil Smith, Accountant and Auditor General to the Ceylon Government for a short time, when making a scrutiny of its finances remarked on the added expenditure caused by the employment of coastal peons instead of Ceylonese ones. 163
 The Pearl Fishery Commissioners were recommended to use "a small number of servants from the coast" in the many temporary administrative posts to which the holding of a pearl fishery gave rise. The Government explained its action on the grounds that the greater part of the persons coming to fishery" were "inhabitants of the continent" and 164
 that the Ceylonese had not yet learned how to conduct a fishery. Douglas recommends a rethinking on how far the order excluding all South Indian officials from employment "can or ought to be strictly or permanently adhered to" because of the close ethnical and cultural connexions between Tamils of the Northern Provinces and those of the Coast. 165
 The tenor of these remarks suggests an awareness on the part of Douglas that that order debarring South Indian officials was not carried completely into effect. The term Aumildar often crops up in the records. We hear of Aumildars at
 160 Garrow to North 30 July 1799, 11 Sept. 1799, Rev. Dept.
 161 9 Feb. 1799, Jaffna Diary.
 162 Military Board to North 18 Feb. 1801, 20 Feb. 1801, Mil. Dept.
 163 Cecil Smith to North 20 Feb. 1799, 8 Mar. 1799, Comm. Dept.
 164 North to Mcdouall 21 Jan. 1799, Rev. Dept.
 165 Douglas Papers by S.G. Perera p 140.

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 Manaar, in the Wannia, and at the pearl fishery and at
 Colombo. It could be argued that the office of Aumildar was
 continued after its South Indian incumbents had been dispatched
 back to India. The tendency to retain South Indian employees
 argues against such a conclusion. It seems, therefore, more likely
 that these Aumildars were representatives of the tribe of South
 Indian officials who came to Ceylon with Andrews. It is difficult
 to assess the number of South Indians who were retained and the
 number who were sent back to India. We have not enough evidence
 for such a task. All we can say is that while some returned to
 India a considerable number remained in Ceylon.

We have not far to seek for the failure on the part of the
 Government to put this policy into effect. It is probable as was
 suggested at the time of the pearl fishery that there were not
 enough Ceylonese trained in the sort of work that was done by the
 South Indian officials. The "intimate relations and intercourse"
 between the Tamils of the Northern Provinces and those of South
 India about which Douglas wrote would have also rendered the
 policy of exclusion a difficult one to enforce.

Having concluded our survey of the racial groups we should
 now inquire into the policy pursued by the Government towards the
 various religious groups. As we shall see the government's
 educational policy was too closely connected with its religious
 policy to justify a separate discussion of either of them.

According to Cordiner, whom North was to place in charge of all
 166 Strickland Kingston to Boyd 23 Dec.1799,10 Jan.1800,Mil.Dept.
 167 Report of the Pearl Fishery Inquiry Committee 11 Dec.1799,
 12 Dec.1799,Sec.Dept.
 168 Mcdouall to Champagne 17 July 1799,17 July 1799,Rev.Dept.

schools, in Dutch times there were two to four teachers in every school. Their exact number depended on the amount of students attending their school. Every teacher also had two assistants. There was a catechist for every ten schools whose duty it was every month to investigate their functioning. The task of supervising the whole organization fell to the clergyman of the area. He was obliged to visit all the schools within his diocese once a year.

It has been commonly assumed that the functioning of these schools fell into neglect during the period of the Madras Administration. The facts of the matter, however, present a different picture. The Articles of Capitulation promised to "the clergy and other ecclesiastical servants" the same pay which had been given them by their erstwhile Dutch employers, and what is more important to note, assured them that they were to be continued in their functions. The schoolmasters did not receive their pay directly from the Government. Their pay was made up of the fees which every couple had to pay in order to have their marriage registered. As all the officials concerned had the incentive of a regular pay to evoke their labour there was no reason why the school system should not have functioned properly during this time. There is more evidence with the same import. Jervis reported that in the provinces within his jurisdiction he had continued all the schoolmasters who had held that office under the Dutch Government. De Meuron when holding the office of

169 A Description of Ceylon by Rev. James Cordiner p 157.

170 Turner p 161; De Silva p 228.

171 Articles of Capitulation 16 Feb. 1796, 23 Feb. 1796, 903-912, Madras

172 North to Cordiner 25 Sept. 1796, Public Dept.

Mil. & Pol. Proc.

173 24 Oct. 1797, Jaffna Diary.

Commander of the Forces distributed the pay of parson Kanwerts who migrated to Batavia to all the schoolmasters. Cordiner when he made a tour of the schools in 1800 reported only six of the fifty schools visited by him as being in a state of disrepair.¹⁷⁴ Since there is no record of repair work having been done during the North period it is safe to attribute the satisfactory state of the other schools to the fact that they had been kept in use during the Madras Administration.

There were some reforms in this schools system attempted during North's time. The fees payable on marriage were abolished by North as a means of discouraging marital unions not formalized by law.¹⁷⁵ Schools were to be compensated for the loss of revenue caused by this measure by each receiving a government contribution of eight Rds.¹⁷⁶ Thanks to the zeal of the Reverend Phillipz some new schools of the sort we have been discussing were opened in the Nellavelly area. North hoped to appoint a person to translate the register of births and deaths kept in each school into English.¹⁷⁷ This was a measure which was not carried into effect in our period. Probably North's other set of schools whose evolution we shall trace later had not attained to such a state of development during our period as to produce the fifty translators.

It is in the North period that we find the evidence which highlights the use of these schools as instruments for propagating Christianity. One of the many functions performed by the school-master was to baptize children as members of the Christian faith.

174 Cordiner's Report on the schools 8 Feb. 1801, Public Dept.
 175 North to Rev. Meyer 17 Feb. 1800, Public Dept.
 176 North to Cordiner 25 Sept. 1799, Public Dept.
 177 Ibid.

North insisted that only those in a position to receive an education should be baptized. He excoriated the Dutch Administration for having profaned the sacrament by administering it to the "most notorious Pagans and their children without the smallest reason to expect any alteration in their mode of living or in their religious opinions".¹⁷⁸ These remarks show the extent to which North regarded these schools as places in which a baptized child would be taken farther along the road of Christianity. When inspections of schools were made by clergymen the students were usually tested in their knowledge of the bible. The Reverend Meyer while making such an inspection requested the schoolmaster to read the ten Commandments and the twelve articles of the creed. After that the children were examined about the contents of these texts. Their reading and writing were also tested.¹⁷⁹ The liturgy of the Church of England which was translated into "Malabar" by the Reverend Schroter was ordered to be used in all the schools.¹⁸⁰ The wide use of the Tamil language, especially in South India, would have given greater impetus to the translation of European languages into Tamil than in the case of the less used Sinhalese. It is this factor which probably accounts for the delay in making a Sinhalese translation. The Thanksgiving Prayer was also required to be used in the schools.¹⁸¹ Cordiner, choosing a person to be schoolmaster for the Kelaniya school, remarks of the candidates for that post that "they all profess to be Christians and the whole school is educated in that faith". Both the schoolmasters already employed

178 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.

179 Meyer to North 14 Oct. 1799, 14 Oct. 1799, Public Dept.

180 North to Wellesley 12 Feb. 1800, No. 16, 12 June 1800, Bengal Pol. &

181 Ibid.

according to him were "Christians by profession and men of good character".¹⁸² It would seem from these remarks, and there is nothing in the records to give a contrary impression, that all the schoolmasters at these institutions were Christians.

A far more intriguing question revolves round the form of Christianity taught at these schools - whether it was that of the Dutch Reformed Church or of the Church of England. There were no changes made in the personnel of the schoolmasters during the British period except when death or serious illness supervened to remove them. Jervis informed his superiors that in his areas he continued at their posts the same schoolmasters who had been chosen by the Dutch Government.¹⁸³ In all likelihood this was true of the schoolmasters in the other areas as well. Since their origin as teachers lay in the Dutch period it is likely that they were members of the Dutch Reformed Church. With the exception of Cordiner all the other inspections of schools were made by¹⁸⁴ clergymen of the Dutch Reformed Church - Reverend Meyer,¹⁸⁵ Reverend A.E. Van de Brock,¹⁸⁷ Reverend Phillippsz¹⁸⁶ and Reverend Schroter. All these factors incline us to the view that it was the Dutch Reformed Church version of Christianity which was being purveyed at these schools. This was probably one of the reasons impelling North to set up another set of schools. These we shall now consider.

North hoped to establish three "inferior" schools at Colombo - one for Burgher children, one for high-caste Sinhalese children and

182 Cordiner to North 18 Sept. 1799, 18 Sept. 1799, Public Dept.

183 24 Oct. 1797, Jaffna Diary.

184 Meyer to North 14 Oct. 1799, 14 Oct. 1799, Public Dept.

185 Cordiner's Report on the schools, 8 Feb. 1801, Public Dept.

186 North to Phillippsz 4 Jan. 1799, Public Dept.

187 Cordiner to North 25 Oct. 1799, 28 Oct. 1799, Public Dept.

another for Tamil children of a similar social standing. Another school would be established at Trincomallee for Tamil children of the same ilk on that side of the island. The children were to be received in these schools at the age of eight and educated there for a period of six years.¹⁸⁸ Those among the Sinhalese and Tamils who showed promise at this stage would be admitted along with all the Burghers to a higher school. While the Burghers were to be obliged to pay a fee for admission to the school the Sinhalese and Tamil children would continue to receive their education free.¹⁸⁹ In this school the students would commence "those studies which are common in the English seminaries". The course of instruction "would be preparatory for an European education".¹⁹⁰

The three inferior schools in Colombo were established in this period.¹⁹¹ In Cordiner's report, made after visiting all the schools in the island, there is no reference to an "inferior school" at Trincomallee.¹⁹² Moreover there is no mention of such a school in the records at all. We ought to conclude, therefore, that the institution at Trincomallee which North intended for the edification of the Tamil children in that quarter did not come into being in our period. The higher school at Colombo also seems to have remained an unfulfilled dream. Besides the fact that North promised the Court of Directors that that school would not be established until he received their views about it,¹⁹³ there was also a limitation imposed by the factor of time. The students

188 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct.1799.

189 Ibid.

190 Ibid.

191 North to Wellesley 30 Oct.1799, Wellesley MSS 13867.

192 Cordiner's Report on the schools 8 Feb.1801, Public Dept.

193 North to Court of Directors 5 Oct.1799.

at the inferior school in accordance with North's plans would have needed a period of six years before they were ready for admission to the higher school.

When we examine the curriculum of these schools we see once again the important place accorded to the teaching of Christianity. "The bible was the chief model of their compositions" according to Cordiner. He went on to say that it "furnishes them with an abundance of excellent expressions. These young men are well acquainted with the principles of Christianity and sincerely attached to its divine author"¹⁹⁴. When formulating his plans North had intimated to the Court of Directors his intention of sending a number of young men from the school to England "for the supply of the church"¹⁹⁵. He hoped that they would receive there "a learned education and episcopal ordination" and return to Ceylon as priests.¹⁹⁶ In the more detailed information about the teaching at the school given by Cordiner in his report there figure among the texts taught the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed.¹⁹⁷ It would seem that the form of Christianity propagated in these schools was that of the Church of England. With North's idea of training students from this school as priests in England it is hardly likely that the tenets of any other religious doctrine would have been allowed to influence them.

It seems that more attention was paid to the teaching of secular subjects in the inferior schools than in the provincial

¹⁹⁴ Cordiner p 161.

¹⁹⁵ North to Court of Directors, 5 Oct. 1799.

¹⁹⁶ " " " " " " " " 30 Jan. 1800.

¹⁹⁷ Cordiners Report on the schools 8 Feb. 1801, Public Dept.

schools. In a list of books mentioned by Cordiner as necessary for use in the schools apart from bibles and prayer books there were grammars, English dictionaries, Dutch and English dictionaries, childrens' "first books" childrens' "second books" letter writers' assistant books, introduction to Arithmetic, introduction to book-keeping, Harrisons British Classics and books of parsing

198 lessons. Moreover not all students from North's projected higher school were to be trained as priests. He hoped that some of them would be able to supply his need for translators. 199

Although the higher school was not established the fact that such ideas animated North's mind gives greater weight to the possibility that secular subjects were taught in these schools.

The subject that we shall now investigate is the relationship between the British Government and the Dutch Reformed Church. As we have seen the British Government at the outset of its rule undertook to continue the Dutch clergy in their functions and pay the same stipend that they had received from the Dutch Government. We have also noticed the important role played by these clergymen in the management of the provincial schools. North gave a new aspect to the relationship. He began to exhort these priests to perform their duties. He informed his officials that "We have permitted and directed the Reverend Schroter minister of the Gospel according to the Helvetic confessions to visit the schools and churches of your district therein to preach examine catechize and exercise all the duties attached to his sacred calling". 200

198 Cordiner to North 10 April 1801, 13 April 1801, Public Dept.

199 North to Wellesley 12 Feb. 1800, No. 16, 12 June 1800, Public Dept.

200 Mcdouall to Schroter 19 Nov. 1798, Public Dept.

Schroter on his return was enjoined to make a report on the schools
 "as the Governor is desirous by every means in his power to
 forward the objects of your mission".²⁰¹ The request of the
 Scholastic Assembly at Galle for permission from the Government
 for the clergymen of the Dutch reformed Church to visit "the
 church and schools" in their district was approved by North. He
 also assured them that the Collector would be directed to give
 them the same assistance for this task as they had received from
 the government in Dutch times.²⁰² On the grounds that the "state
 of the protestants" in Trincomallee was "desolate" North invited
 Reverend Stephen Cadensky to "take care of that church".²⁰³ He
 seems to have been a clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church.²⁰⁴
 Both the Scholastic Assembly at Galle²⁰⁵ and the Reverend Schroter²⁰⁶
 were invited on separate occasions to appoint proponents. These
 were indigenous persons selected in accordance with the practice
 of the Dutch Reformed Church to preach in specified areas.²⁰⁷ The
 choice of a clergyman by the Deacons had usually to be ratified
 by the Government. The Deacons of Colombo sought such a ratific-
 -ation in the case of B. A. Giffening.²⁰⁸ The records during the
 period of the Madras Administration are devoid of references of
 this sort to the religious work of the Dutch clergymen. We would
 be justified in eliciting from that omission the hypothesis that
 during that period the relationship between the Dutch Reformed
 Church and the British Government was less close than it came to

201 Ibid

202 North to Gentlemen of Scholastic Assembly at Galle 15 Jan. 1799

203 North to Cadensky 7 Dec. 1798, Public Dept. Public Dept.

204 Ibid.

205 North to Gentlemen of Scholastic Assembly at Galle 15 Jan. 1799

206 McDouall to Schroter 19 Nov. 1798, Public Dept. Public Dept.

207 "The Education Establishment of the Dutch in Ceylon"
 by J. D. Palm, J. R. A. S., C. B. 1846-47 pp 105-152.

208 Deacons of Colombo to North 1 April 1801, 6 April 1801, Pub. Dept.

be in the time of North. The Madras Administration, apart from maintaining the Dutch clergymen in their offices, does not seem to have bestirred itself to promote their activity.

When North pressed the Reverends Schroter, Meyer and Hillipsz²⁰⁹ to take the Oath of Loyalty to the British Crown they refused. The reason given by them for their refusal is a significant one. By such an action they would incur the displeasure of their constituents.²¹⁰ It seems that they were able successfully to resist North's importunity. North confessed to the Court of Directors that on account "of their obstinate refusal to pray for His Majesty I cannot allow them the exercise of any acknowledged authority in the country which is by no means necessary and well replaced by the native ministers".²¹¹ The truth of these claims will now be investigated.

The first intimation we have of the presence of the Church of England priests is in North's letter to the Court of Directors of 30 January 1800. Presumably this is a reference to the arrival of James Cordiner in Ceylon. He had by this time taken on the post of Superintendent of Schools.²¹² There were two "provisional preachers of the Gospel" chosen to assist Cordiner "in all such offices as the Church of England allows to be executed by persons not in Holy Orders".²¹³ The two preachers holding this rather unorthodox position were probably Paulus Jurie Ondaatje and Gabriel Jurie Ondaatje. Although these two were trained by Reverend Schroter,²¹⁴ the Church Assembly of the Dutch Reformed

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- 209 North to Cordiner 9 Oct. 1799, Public Dept.
 210 Cordiner to North 25 Oct. 1799, 28 Oct. 1799, Public Dept.
 211 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.
 212 " " " " 5 Oct. 1799.
 213 North to Wellesley 1 Mar. 1800, Public Dept.
 214 Church Assembly of Dutch Reformed Church to North 20 Jan. 1799
 15 Feb. 1800, Public Dept.

at Colombo refused to nominate them as priests. ²¹⁵ The attitude
 taken up by the Church Assembly was that the training of priests
 was a function which belonged to them collectively. ²¹⁶ There were
 many angry exchanges between North and the Church Assembly on this
 matter. North argued that the Church Assembly had "no authority
 whatsoever out of the precincts of the churches". ²¹⁷ For that
 reason he "did not consider their refusal as of any importance". ²¹⁸
 He made another statement which throws a lot of light on his
 attitude to the two Church organizations. The two priests have
 not, he told the Church Assembly, "violated any precept of
 Christianity nor indeed any canon of your Church for I am sure th
 that you are far too well-informed and too liberal to suppose that
 the yielding assistance to the Profession of a Church so similar
 to your own in its most essential doctrines as the Church of
 England can be considered as schismatical..." ²¹⁹ The upshot of the
 matter was that the two Ondaatjes continued to have the status of
 "provisional preachers of the Gospel". It would seem, therefore,
 that even the complete disaffiliation of these two persons from
 the Dutch Reformed Church was forced upon North only by the
 uncooperative attitude of that body. The two Ondaatjes and
 Cordiner are the only officiating members of the Church of England
 whom we have been able to discover in this period. That Cordiner
 was the only ecclesiastic in the Maritime Provinces in this time
 is a view supported by Turner. ²²⁰ The resources of the Church of
 England seem to have been very slender in this period and the claim

215 Ibid.

216 Ibid.

217 North to Cordiner 25 Sept. 1799, Public Dept.

218 Ibid.

219 North to Church Assembly of Dutch Reformed Church, 15 Feb. 1800,

220 Turner p 170.

implied by North in his letter to the Court of Directors which we have already encountered seems, therefore, a rather far-fetched one.²²¹ The British Administration was compelled to rely so heavily on the clerical resources of the Dutch Reformed Church because of the lack of a sufficient number of clergymen of their own religious persuasion. The bringing of clergymen from England was considered too expensive a venture.²²² An administration harassed by the lack of money would probably also have been tempted by the prospect of using as clergymen those to whom they were already obliged by the Articles of Capitulation to pay a salary.

We should now try to examine the other ways in which the members of the Dutch Reformed Church and those of the Church of England came to enjoy a privileged position. According to Cordiner in Dutch times "no native could be raised to the rank of mudaliyar or admitted into any employment under the states without subscribing to the Helvetic confession and professing to be a member of the Reformed Church".²²³ North, reinstated in office all the headmen who held those posts at the time when Andrews took the step of dismissing them.²²⁴ It is, therefore, very probable that these officials having received their appointments in the time of the Dutch Government were all members of the Dutch Reformed Church. Be that as it may North upheld the law that the headmen should be Christians. Speaking of the "principal native officers of the

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² North to Court of Directors 5 Mar.1799, Public Dept.

²²³ Cordiner p 155.

²²⁴ Gregory to Cleghorn 15 Oct.1799, 6 Nov.1799, Rev.Dept.

Government" he said "they are and must be Christians".²²⁵ As things stood in this matter the version of Christianity that North was encouraging was that of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Arising from "the earnest desire" of the Government "that the Christian religion should be continued and propagated as much as possible" all the headmen were ordered to help in adding to the number of children attending the provincial schools.²²⁶ At first the ambit of this Proclamation was restricted to Colombo. When Cordiner reported however that schoolmasters in other areas complained of a paucity of pupils and of a reluctance among parents to send their children to school²²⁷ the law was extended to these areas as well.²²⁸

All the officials of the two churches were paid by the Government. The Articles of Capitulation assured Government stipends for the clergy and other ecclesiastical servants of the Dutch Reformed Church.²²⁹ As Superintendent of Schools and Examiner of the Candidate for the office of Schoolmaster, Cordiner would have received a salary from Government. The "provisional preachers of the Gospel" were to receive salaries of from forty to sixty pounds a year.²³⁰ Clergymen conducting an inspection of schools were provided with coolies at state expence.²³¹

The Government spent money for the building of Churches.²³² North ordered a church to be erected at Batticoloa and told the Court of Directors that he would with their permission "raise some

225 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1799.

226 Proclamation 1 Dec. 1799, Public Dept.

227 Cordiner's Report on the schools 8 Feb. 1801, Public Dept.

228 Advertisement 4 Jan. 1802, Public Dept.

229 Articles of Capitulation, 15 Feb. 1796; 23 Feb. 1796, 903-912, Madras

230 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan. 1800.

231 29 Jan. 1801, Rev. Dept.

232 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.

more edifices in different places for the same purpose".²³³ After protracted delays the repair of the roof of the Church at Mantotte²³⁴ was undertaken by local officials.

It was set out in the law that the only marriages which could be registered were those between Christians. Cordiner was specifically informed that a marriage should not be registered unless²³⁵ this condition was fulfilled. Cordiner himself bears witness to this limitation. Talking of North's abolition of the fees payable on the occasion of marriage he says "The dues formerly paid on the marriages of native Christians were abolished being a tax unfavourable to the morale as well as the comfort of an indigent²³⁶ people". Cordiner's observation makes sense only when we take into consideration the fact that only Christians could make legal marriages.

The Government's relations with other religious groups is the next topic which should be explored. Garrow, in the course of a quarrel with Nicholas Roderikus, a Roman Catholic priest, furnishes us with evidence of some of the restrictions placed upon the Roman Catholic religion by the Dutch Government. A European Catholic couple would be deemed to have completed their marriage only if they went through a similar ceremony in a Protestant Church. A male member of the Dutch Reformed Church was allowed to marry a Roman Catholic woman only if the two parties bound themselves before notaries to bring up their offspring in the Protestant faith. When an indigenous Roman Catholic couple married they were obliged to

233 Ibid.

234 Barbut to Boyd 25 Oct. 1800, 28 Oct. 1800, Rev. Dept.; Turnour to Agnew 12 Nov. 1798, 21 Nov. 1798, Public Dept.

235 Arbuthnot to Meyer 21 Feb. 1802, Public Dept.

236 Cordiner p 160

237
 receive the prior consent of the Dutch resident of their district.
 We learn from other sources that Roman Catholic persons were
 238
 compelled to bury their dead in Protestant burial grounds. They
 were mulcted of more money by taxes payable for the coffins and
 239
 the graves of the dead. The marriage registration fee whose
 vicissitudes we have already charted was another contribution they
 240
 had to make.

Colonel Stuart with the establishment of British rule tried
 to alleviate the lot of the Roman Catholic. He allowed them to
 bury their dead separately in accordance with their religious
 241
 beliefs. He also issued a decree assuring "the priests of the
 Roman Catholick (sic) Churches" "of permission to exercise free
 242
 and uninterrupted the functions of their religion". The same
 statement forbade all the English officials "from interfering with
 them or hindering them from marrying persons professing the Roman
 Catholic religion in their own churches". As North remarked these
 promises "were such as might make an oppressed part of the community
 think themselves on the eve of deliverance and act as if they were
 243
 already liberated". The interpretation which the Government
 placed upon Stuart's remarks was soon to be tested by events. When
 some Catholic inhabitants of Jaffna petitioned against the high
 marriage fees they had to pay, Jervis replied that the fee of six
 fanams was collected only from Catholics who had "an estate in
 possession" and that "persons who procured their livelihood only

237 Garrow to North 15 Nov. 1798, 7 Dec. 1798, Public Dept.

238 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1799.

239 Roman Catholic Clergy to North 29 Nov. 1798, 29 Nov. 1798, Public

240 North to Garrow 8 Dec. 1798, Public Dept.

241 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1799. Dept.

242 3 Aug. 1796, Jaffna Diary.

243 North to Garrow 8 Dec. 1798, Public Dept.

by working were exempted from the tax altogether".²⁴⁴ General Doyle had already refused to exempt the Catholics from the payments they had to make for the coffins and graves of their dead.²⁴⁵ According to him the granting of relief from these taxes would have con-²⁴⁶stituted a violation of the Articles of Capitulation.

When Garrow complained to North of the refusal of Nicholas Roderikus to marry a Protestant and a Roman Catholic, North re-joined that a request of that sort would hardly be complied with²⁴⁷ by members of a religious organization bound not to do so. North also assured the Roman Catholic priests that they would be allowed to celebrate marriages and funerals "according to your rites and²⁴⁸ in places consecrated by yourselves". Such an attitude on the part of North would have amounted in some degree to the alteration of the Dutch laws. It would have enabled European Roman Catholics to marry in a Roman Catholic Church without having to repeat the ceremony in a Protestant one. A Roman Catholic priest would not be compelled to perform a marriage ceremony between a Roman Catholic and a Protestant which was purported by Garrow to have been the practice with the Dutch. It would also not have been necessary for indigenous Roman Catholic couples contemplating marriage to receive the consent of the Collector of their district. North's abolition of the marriage registration fee would also have had the effect of relieving the Roman Catholics from that exaction. He insisted, however, that they should continue to pay the other²⁴⁹ taxes - the tax for coffins and the tax for graves. He advised

244 20 Oct. 1797, Jaffna Diary.

245 Roman Catholic Clergy to North 29 Nov. 1798, 29 Nov. 1798, Public

246 Ibid.

247 North to Garrow 8 Dec. 1798, Public Dept.

248 North to Roman Catholic Clergy 29 Nov. 1798, Public Dept.

249 North to Garrow 8 Dec. 1798, Public Dept.

the Roman Catholic priests to collect a lump sum from the richer members of their church to an extent big enough to enable him to relieve their poorer members from having to make any contribution at all.²⁵⁰ Although he intimated that he was "in treaty with priests of that persuasion"²⁵¹ to achieve such a change nothing came of it during our period. It should be noted that these were taxes levied on all Ceylonese whatever were their religious beliefs.²⁵²

North rejected the counsels of Paulus Jurie Ondaatje²⁵³ to confine the granting of licences to Protestant schools.²⁵⁴ Where there were large communities of Roman Catholics they would be entitled to have schools.²⁵⁵ He confided to Hobart that several Roman Catholic schools were established in this period.²⁵⁶ As there is no mention of such schools among those visited by Cordiner we ought to conclude that if these institutions came into being during our period they were placed outside the periphery of schools receiving state grants.

Although in these several ways the position of the Roman Catholics was improved during the British period they continued to be deprived of all the other privileges which we have seen the Dutch Reformed Church and the embryonic Church of England to have possessed. On two occasions North makes it clear that he was in no way a supporter of Roman Catholicism. One of the arguments he used to persuade the Reverend Stephen Cadensky to betake himself to Trincomallee and minister to the spiritual needs of the Protestants

250 Ibid.

251 Ibid.

252 Ibid.

253 p

254 North to Cordiner 24 Jan.1800,Public Dept.

255 Ibid.

256 North to Hobart 19 Dec.1801,Public Dept.

there was that in their state of desolation they might be prone
 "to conversion to popery or even of relapse into Heathenism".²⁵⁷

While ventilating his views on the same subject to Garrow he informed him that he was choosing the "only effectual method of preventing the growth of popery at Trincomallee by engaging a Dutch clergyman to go to that place from Jaffna".²⁵⁸

North also adopted a special attitude to the Muslim religion. According to him "the conscientious obligation by which all Musselmen are bound to make the Koran their Rule of Civil life must render every kind of Toleration incomplete which subjects to them another".²⁵⁹ He hoped to establish "a well regulated medrissee or school" for the education of Muslims. The foregoing remarks show that the curriculum of such a school would have been shaped more in accordance with the tenets of Muhammedanism than that of Christianity. The expences of such an establishment would be met by the zecat, a new tax which he contemplated imposing on the Muslim.²⁶⁰ Neither Zecat nor Muslim school materialized into anything tangible in our period.

As the law of the Muslims was closely interwoven with their religion it would be proper to discuss the special legal arrangements envisaged for them at this point. It was North's intention to bring into Ceylon a mufti "to be consulted by" him "in all points of Musselman Law".²⁶¹ It would be also necessary to appoint half a dozen kazis (judges) to the different parts of Ceylon.²⁶² The need for expert guidance on Muslim law and the

257 Garrow to North 15 Nov.1798, 7 Dec.1798, Public Dept.

258 North to Garrow 8 Dec.1798, Public Dept.

259 North to Hobart 19 Dec.1801, Public Dept.

260 North to Court of Directors 30 Jan.1800.

261 " " " " " 5 Mar.1799.

262 Ibid.

absence of suitable persons in Ceylon to provide it were the reasons which led him to this view. ²⁶³ Our period witnesses the appointment of Sayed Omar as Kazi and his deposition for having committed a criminal offence. ²⁶⁴ The legal establishment for the Muslims did not develop beyond that point. Douglas withheld his remarks on this institution until more was done about it. The idea of recruiting Muslim legal experts from abroad evoked from him the comment that it would be better to confine their selection to the Muslims in Ceylon. ²⁶⁵ Along with the other Ceylonese the Muslims would have had to pay taxes for the coffins and the graves of their dead.

We should now trace the relationship of the Government with the Hindu and Buddhist religions in a number of miscellaneous matters. The Royal Instructions enjoined North not to permit any person "to keep a school without your (his) licence first had ¹ and obtained". ²⁶⁶ This stipulation was embodied by North in a proclamation issued by the Government. ²⁶⁷ Into that proclamation was also incorporated a feature unknown to the Royal Instructions. Prior permission from the Government in the form of a licence would be needed before a temple could be erected. We should examine the manner in which these laws were observed. A request to rebuild a Hindu temple in a garden within the four gravets of Galle was granted. ²⁶⁸ So was another request to build a temple on a piece of land in Colombo granted for that purpose by the Dutch Government. ²⁶⁹ On the other hand the building of a temple at

263 Ibid.

264 Proclamation 29 July 1800, Public Dept.

265 Douglas Papers by S.G.Perera p 164.

266 Royal Instructions 12 Oct. 1798, Political Dept.

267 North to Cordiner 24 Jan. 1800, Public Dept.

268 Resolution 2 Aug. 1800, Public Dept.

Kalutara was stopped by Government order on the grounds that it was being built on governmental land and without governmental permission.²⁷⁰ The grant of lands to certain "Pagodas at Tamblegam" were revoked because they had been made at the beginning of British rule without proper permission from the Government.²⁷¹ The attitude of the British Government seems to have been to uphold grants already made even where the source of permission was the erstwhile Dutch Government and to revoke those which were unsupported by any governmental authority whatsoever. There is no evidence in the records of requests to establish Buddhist or Hindu schools. The manner in which such requests would have been handled is, therefore a matter which must remain obscure.

In court cases oaths were usually administered to Buddhist witnesses by Buddhist priests in accordance with the customs of the Buddhist religion.²⁷² Cordiner gives an account of the elaborate ritual with which oaths were administered to Hindu witnesses in accordance with their religion.²⁷³ In this matter the susceptibilities of members of all religions were carefully respected. Buddhist priests wishing to go to the Kingdom of Kandy to be ordained by the High priest there were also permitted to do so.²⁷⁴

How the British Government came to adopt the role of a purveyor of Christianity is something which needs to be explained. Most of the laws which brought such a state of affairs into being seem to have originated with the Dutch Government. We know that this was the case with the requirement that all headmen should

²⁶⁹ Resolution 29 July 1800, Public Dept.

²⁷⁰ North to Gregory 28 June 1800, Public Dept.

²⁷¹ Commissioners of Wannia to North 13 April 1800, 5 May 1800,

²⁷² North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801. Public Dept.

²⁷³ Cordiner p 263.

²⁷⁴ North to Secret Committee of Court of Directors 26 Aug. 1801,

See Dept.

be Christians, with the payment of state salaries to clergymen and with the apportioning of an important role to clergymen and catechizers in the organization of the provincial schools. It is very likely that the inspiration for the other laws also came from the Dutch Government. Lord Valentia, an Englishman sojourning in Ceylon in the course of his travels through India, Ceylon, Egypt and the Red Sea had this to say on the matter: "If the plans introduced by the Dutch were quietly and steadily pursued there is good reason to believe that the whole Cingalese nation might in time be converted".²⁷⁵

No explanation, however, would be complete which does not give prominence to a curious belief held by many English officials. This was that the majority of inhabitants in Ceylon were Christians. North informed the Court of Directors that the majority of Ceylon-ese were Christians, with the preponderant position among them occupied by Christians of the Helvetic faith.²⁷⁶ It was Cordiner's view that "the state of religion in Ceylon is very different from that of any country on the continent of India. Here the ancient form of worship is almost totally forgotten; and the inhabitants live in uninstructed ignorance perfectly free both from prejudice and bigotry. They have so long wandered in darkness that they gladly follow the least glimmerings of light".²⁷⁷ Even the usually percipient Douglas believed that "a very great proportion of the inhabitants of our possessions in Ceylon who amount altogether as I image (tho' I acknowledge on but loose grounds of conjecture

²⁷⁵ Valentia Vol.1 p 308.

²⁷⁶ North to Court of Directors 5 Mar.1799.

²⁷⁷ Cordiner p 164

which ground I shall afterwards explain to about one million) are Christians...²⁷⁸ and the peripatetic Valentia observed that "the Cingalese have abandoned the strong prejudices which bind the Hindoos so closely to the Brahminical religion; and their attachment to casts is much more an affair of vanity than of religion. No incapacity or disgrace attends the profession of Christianity..."²⁷⁹

It should be remarked that the condition of Ceylon at that time if viewed mainly from the surface could have given rise to such an impression. Where privileges were plentiful for Christians the pretence of being Christian would also have been common. North took the view that a great many of the Christian multitude differed "very little from their heathen neighbours".²⁸⁰ Cordiner²⁸¹ complained that the headmen were Christians only in name. It is very likely that these officials in order to avoid the castigation of their Dutch and later British rulers encouraged in them the belief that the majority of Ceylon's inhabitants were those who had seen the light.

The attitude of the Court of Directors in this matter was very different. At the beginning of North's tenure of office they impressed on him that "the establishment of proper regulations in matters of ecclesiastical concern being an object of very great importance it will be your indispensable duty to take care that no arrangements in regard thereto is to be made but such as may give full satisfaction to the inhabitants in every point in which they had a right to any indulgence on that head and you are to permit

278 Douglas Papers by S.G.Perera p 16.

279 Valentia Vol.1 p 368.

280 North to Court of Directors 5 Mar.1799.

281 Cordiner's Report on the schools 8 Feb.1801,Public Dept.

liberty of conscience and the free exercise of religious worship to all persons who inhabit and frequent the settlement provided they be contented with a quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the same! 282

The same advice was embodied in the Royal Instructions given to North. 283 It was clearly not the intention of the Home Government to launch a crusade on behalf of Christianity in Ceylon. On the other hand North could have argued that his policy did not take away from the Hindoos and Buddhists any of the privileges possessed by them and that it was only a continuation of one pursued by his Dutch predecessors.

We should now turn our attention to the caste-system. As is commonly known a caste was generally comprised of people following the same occupation. It is our intention to show the extent to which the caste-system came to be interwoven into the fabric of the British Administration of the time. All the headmen were chosen from the Goigama caste. 284 According to North the Mudaliyars and the "principal native officers" of Government were drawn from the higher and the lascoryns and inferior officers from the lower ranks of that caste. 285 It seems very probable that in this matter the British Government was continuing another practice of its Dutch predecessor. It is also probable that by doing so both European administrations were deferring to social distinctions observed by the indigenous people of Ceylon. Hobart expressed himself in this vein when he said that the "same principle of subordination and respect to the superior cast (sic) operates and possibly with

282 Order of Court of Directors to North 16 Sept.1798.

283 Royal Instructions 12 Sept.1798, Pol. Dept.

284 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart 16 Aug.1797, Comm. of Inv.

285 North to Court of Directors 5 Mar.1799.

greater force on the island than on the continent".

It seems likely that the counterparts of these headmen in the Tamil Provinces were chosen from the ranks of the Vellale caste. The Committee of Investigation observed that in the Tamil areas "the native magistrates though under the same designation of Moodeliyars should be selected from the superior caste of the inhabitants of the District over whom their authority extends".²⁸⁷ The term "native magistrates" was used because at that time the Committee of Investigation intended that the Mudaliyars both in the Tamil and Sinhalese provinces should be invested with a measure of judicial power. In accordance with the practice prevailing in the Sinhalese areas it is probable that the subordinate assistants of the Tamil Mudaliyars were also recruited from the Vellale caste albeit from its lower rungs. The Muslim and Chetty communities²⁸⁸ had their own chiefs both in the metropolis and the local areas. On one occasion North advised Jewell the Agent of Revenue at Batticoloa to appoint respectable Muslims as headmen for that community.²⁸⁹ The desideratum of respectability would have ensured the appointment of men of the highest standing in the Muslim community. In the milieu prevailing in Ceylon at the time there is every likelihood that the headmen of the Chetties were also chosen from the highest castes among them.

The schoolmasters of the provincial schools besides helping in the baptizing of children were also the keepers of the births, deaths and marriage registers.²⁹⁰ It would, therefore, be apposite

286 Extract from the Minutes of Consultation in the Political Department, Fort St. George 16 Feb. 1798, 15 Mar. 1798, Comm. of Inv.
 287 Comm. of Inv. to Hobart 23 Sept. 1797, Comm. of Inv.
 288 p....
 289 North to Jewell 6 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept.
 290 Cordiner to North 25 Sept. 1799, 28 Sept. 1799, Public Dept.

to consider the caste-groups from which they were selected in association with the rest of the indigenous administration. Cordiner, during his tour of Government supported schools, observed that one of the four schoolmasters at Panadure school had not received his licence because he was "of the fishermen's caste and on that account the other masters wish to exclude him"²⁹¹. The import of this remark is that these schoolmasters generally belonged to a caste superior to that of the fishermen. As matters stood in the indigenous society of the time the superior caste in question was very probably the Goigama caste. If the provincial schoolmasters were selected in this way in the Sinhalese areas it is likely that their colleagues in the Tamil provinces were recruited mainly from the Vellale caste. Regarding the aberrant case at Panadure Cordiner went on to say "but as he has done his duty there for fifteen years and maintains in every respect a good character he could not with justice be removed"²⁹². The refusal to grant him a licence seems to have emanated from the Dutch Government. The statement also shows the disposition of the British Government to pull down caste-barriers when circumstances enabled them to do so.

In North's new set of schools were being nurtured the clergy-men and translators of the future. The composition of these schools from the view-point of caste should, therefore, be studied. At the beginning North intended to confine admission to the Sinhalese and Tamil schools to the children of "Cingalese high cast" and those of "the principal Malabars of this neighbourhood"²⁹³.

There can be little doubt that these remarks adverted to members

²⁹¹ Cordiner's Report on the schools 8 Feb. 1801, Public Dept.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ North to Court of Directors 5 Oct. 1799.

of the Goigama caste and the Vellale caste. Cordiner, however, proposed the admission of members of other castes. He sought to gratify the prejudices of members of the Goigama and Vellale castes by allotting "to those of the second order a separate department".²⁹⁴ North replied that "he had no objection to the admission of children of low cast to the schools provided the regulated sum is paid for their instruction and proper measures are taken to prevent the prejudices of the higher casts from being unnecessarily shocked".²⁹⁵ There is no evidence to establish that these ideas matured into reality. They however highlight two aspects of Government policy. In according to the Goigama and Vellale caste a superior position the British Government was bowing before the force of social prejudice. On the other hand, whenever it was possible to do so they were ready to enhance the positions of the other castes.

What role in the administration was envisaged for children of the provincial schools is something which cannot be definitely established. It is probable that from their ranks were drawn future school-masters for these schools and also some of the headmen. Cordiner in his report on the schools mentions that three out of a total of fifty were set apart for the children of the Salagama caste.²⁹⁶ By implication the other schools seem to have been confined to the children of the Goigama and Vellale castes. Such a conclusion would help to explain North's earlier attitude of restricting his new set of schools with the exception of that set apart for the Burghers to the children of these two castes.

The case of Pasqual the pesquar at Batticoloa serves to

²⁹⁴ Cordiner to North 12 Nov.1799,22 Nov.1799,Public Dept.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Cordiner's Report on the schools 8 Feb.1801,Public Dept.

illuminate the attitude of the Government in matters of castes. Pasqual was reputed to have been born of a slave mother. He had secured his appointment during the period of the Madras Administration.²⁹⁷ North was anxious to know what the effects "the confirmation of a man of so low a cast in such an office might have upon the prejudices of the people". The Commissioners of the Wannia were instructed to inquire into the matter.²⁹⁸ They reported that "he ought not to be allowed to interfere in any matters of ceremony in that district as it might and no doubt would be attended with disgust to the people of the higher cast".²⁹⁹ North gave Jewell the details of the case and asked him to negotiate with Pasqual "for some creditable mode of retreat from business" and report upon the results of their conversation to him.³⁰⁰ The upshot of the matter was that Pasqual was removed from office.³⁰¹ Once again we witness the sensitiveness of the Government to the social prejudices holding sway in the land.

Douglas hoped to see the hegemony of the Goigama and Vellale castes in the administration brought to an end "by judicious propagation of the principles of Christianity and prudent use of the knowledge of the habits and usages of Buddhists in other parts India..." He warned however that a change of that sort "should be gradually introduced in such a manner as not to wound the feelings or excite the discontent of the people".³⁰²

The Government entered into relations with the other castes.

297 North to Jewell 6 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept.
 298 North to Cordiner 28 Sept. 1801, Public Dept.
 299 Commissioners of Wannia to North 13 April 1801, 5 May 1800, Public Dept.
 300 North to Jewell 6 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept.
 301 Arbuthnot to Jewell 1 Feb. 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.
 302 S.G. Perera p 139.

There were special headmen for each of these castes and they enjoyed accommodessan lands from the government. ³⁰³ As we have seen the administration of geographical areas was in the hands of the representatives of the Goigama and Vellale castes. The administrative functions for which the headmen of the other castes received accomodessans were probably those relating specially to their castes. Each caste generally was engaged in a specific economic occupation. There are several instances of the Government calling upon these castes to perform their special function ³⁰⁴ for its benefit.

Among these castes was the Salagama caste. The relationship of the Government with this caste was of a special nature and deserves to be treated separately. The Salagama caste in Dutch times was assigned to the task of peeling and collecting cinnamon. In order to induce them to perform this function well they were granted many privileges by the Dutch Government. These privileges continued to be accorded them by the British Government in the ³⁰⁵ period before the North administration. Some voices in the Committee of Investigation were raised against the indulgence shown the Salagama caste by the British Administration. Both Agnew and de Meuron believed that "their present independence of all authority but that of their own immediate chiefs may throw difficulties in the way of many desirable arrangements for the ³⁰⁶ Revenue Department". North's view of the privileges enjoyed by the Salagama caste was that they were "perfectly inconsistent with

303 North to Court of Directors 5 Mar. 1799.

304 Orr to Board of Rev. & Comm. 3 Nov. 1801, 6 Nov. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.; Honner to North 26 Nov. 1798, 28 Nov. 1798, Public Dept.; Lushington to North, 20 Feb. 1801, 5 Mar. 1801, Public Dept.

305 North to Wellesely 27 Oct. 1798, Wellesley MSS 13866.

306 Agnew to Comm. of Inv. 10 Nov. 1798, 10 Nov. 1798, Comm. of Inv.

307

good government and little advantageous to themselves". What these privileges were we shall soon discover as we watch North setting about attenuating them.

The members of the Salagama caste were permitted to collect salt at the lewayas without making any payment either to the Government or to the renter. Gregory pointed out that if the Salagama caste was permitted to continue enjoying this privilege the retail of salt besides producing no revenue to the renter would come to be concentrated in their hands. He subjected the privilege to a further attack on the grounds that the intention of the Dutch Government had been only to permit the Salagama caste to collect tax free as much salt as was necessary for their personal use. North heeded Gregory's warning. A proclamation was issued limiting the amount of salt given to the members of the Salagama caste to four parras each and subjecting that too to a payment of fourteen stuivers per parras. In future they would also be obliged to leave behind a heap of salt for every heap taken away by them. The Board of Revenue and Commerce raised the objection that the renter would still be at a disadvantage because he bought salt from the Government store for the same price as that fixed for the Salagama caste. Thereupon the members of the Salagama caste were required to buy their salt at the rate of twenty stuivers per parras. It was also decided that the immunity of the Salagama caste from the export duty of five stuivers per parras of salt was to be ended and that duty collected from

307 Governor's minute 12 Oct. 1800, Rev. Dept.

308 Gregory to Boyd 8 Feb. 1800, 8 Feb. 1800, Rev. Dept.

309 Ibid.

310 Resolution 15 Mar. 1800, Rev. Dept.

311 Board of Rev. & Comm. to North 29 April 1802, 7 May 1802, Rev. &

312 Ibid.

313

them in the same way as from the others.

The members of the Salagama caste living in the neighbourhood of Panadure, Kalutara and Beruwela were accustomed to pay no duty to the fish renter. Hamilton complained that this exemption "gave rise to great confusion on account of disputed claims".³¹⁴ The Board of Revenue and Commerce responded by assuring Hamilton that this privilege of the Salagama caste along with all the others would be abolished on 1 May 1802.³¹⁵

Boatmen of the Salagama caste received port clearance for the coastal trade without being obliged to pay the duty imposed on all others. The Board of Revenue and Commerce instructed Hamilton on 28 October 1801 to continue to grant that concession "untill further orders".³¹⁶ As we have seen it was later decided to abolish all privileges of the Salagama caste. It is likely therefore that this particular one was included among those to be swept away on 1 May 1802.

It had been the practice for the chief of the Cinnamon Department to hear all civil disputes in which members of the Salagama caste were involved and to try criminal offences committed by them other than those involving murder.³¹⁷ North put an end to the separate legal status of the Salagama caste. In criminal cases they were brought within the jurisdiction of the magistrates and Landraads could take cognizance of their civil disputes.³¹⁸

North looked forward with added pleasure to the impending revocation of the service-tenure system because it would reduce the

313 Resolution 6 May 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

314 Hamilton to Board of Rev. & Comm. 1 April 1802, 16 April 1802, Rev. & Comm. Dept.

315 Ibid.

316 Board of Rev. & Comm. to Hamilton 21 Dec. 1801, Board of Rev. & Comm.

317 D. Robertson's memorandum Ceylon Volume 54.

318 Resolution 23 Sept. 1800, Public Dept.

great number of headmen in the cinnamon department and abolish the tax-free status of many lands claimed as accomodessans. ³¹⁹ As we have seen ³²⁰ the abolition of the service-tenure system was not to end the labours of the Salagama caste as cinnamon peelers. They were to continue to be obliged to perform that service while receiving their reward in a new form. To facilitate that measure North began a scheme to register all the members of the Salagama caste specifying the functions performed by each and the manner in which they had been remunerated in the past. ³²¹ The assessment of the success which attended this project is a matter which falls outside our period of study. All that we are concerned to note here is that one by one the privileges of the Salagama caste fell under the legislative scythe of the North Government. The decline in importance of the Salagama caste reflected the decline in ³²² importance in cinnamon.

There were several other spheres of administration on which the British Government became involved with the caste system. When the Government was contemplating the establishment of small-pox hospitals it was said that "a sufficient number of nurses must be engaged and proper attention paid to the prejudices of the people in point of cast" ³²³. The injunction to pay proper attention "to the prejudice of the people in point of cast" would have boiled down in practice to high-caste patients being tended by persons acceptable to them. The lists of patients subjected to inoculation

319 North to Hobart 5 Oct. 1801, Public Dept.

320 Chapter II p

321 Minute by the Board of Rev. & Comm. 22 May 1801, Board of Rev. &

322 Chapter IV p

Comm.

323 Plan for small-pox establishment 28 June 1800, 14 July 1800,

Comm. of Supt.

which we come across in the records are always divided according
 to castes. ³²⁴ It seems probable that their separation on paper
 was only a reflection of their physical separation in the hospitals.

North intended to formulate separate codes of law for each
 caste "in all points of contract and inheritance and in those
 cases which fall under the Court of Ordinary such as testaments
 and marriages and in those which relate to personal service, rank
 and privilege". ³²⁵ He informed Hobart that "no general code could
 be sufficient to extend the blessings of regular legal protection
 over all the various castes and sects into which these settlements
 are divided". ³²⁶ The instruments chosen by North to perform this
 task were the sub-committee of Superintendence. The information
 was to be sent by them to the Committee of Superintendence at
 Colombo and collated by that body into codes. ³²⁷ The work of
 formulating these codes was not completed in our period.

We witness the impact made by the caste-system on the law
 courts in other ways. North stated that he had heard in a judicial
 capacity appeals embodied in petitions relating to the customs and
 privileges of certain castes. ³²⁸ The earnestness with which North
 upheld caste-customs is demonstrated in his attitude to a case
 which came up for hearing before Robert Arbuthnot. One woman
 complained against her neighbour for not having returned a visit
 "within the proper time for performing so essential a duty".

Arbuthnot, writing about the incident to North's sister Kit Douglas

324 Reeder to Dormieux 1 June 1801, 7 June 1801, Comm. of Supt.
 " " " 20 Aug. 1801, 23 Aug. 1801, " " "

325 North to Glenbervie 12 Feb. 1801, North MSS.

326 North to Hobart 5 Oct. 1801, Public Dept.

327 Resolution 24 Dec. 1801, Public Dept.

328 North to Wellesley 16 April 1801, Public Dept.

said: "I was at first a little angry at my time being taken up by such trifles but Mr. North assured me that it was a very serious matter as the rules and customs of the caste were violated. The plaintiff spoke with a great appearance of feeling on the indignity which had been offered to her and as the defendant made but an indifferent defence I condemned her to pay two visits without having one returned to her and then made the ladies embrace and promise to be better friends for the future".³²⁹ When the new Provincial Court was instituted Paulus Samerekoon was appointed to act as an adviser to the Court "in questions relating to the casts or laws of the Cingaleze".³³⁰ Saka Lebbe Segoo Kanda Lebbe and Simon de Mello were appointed to perform a similar function on behalf of the Muslims and Tamils respectively.³³¹ It would not be too far-fetched to postulate that similar officials must have existed at least in the Landraads which the Provincial Courts were intended to replace if not in the higher civil courts. In criminal cases inquiries were invariably made about the castes to which witnesses giving evidence belonged.³³²

There is one other intriguing illustration of the relationship between the British Government and the caste-system. Arbuthnot made a statement to North's sister which deserves to be set out in full: "Among the honourable distinctions with which I am invested I am (ex-officio) head of the caste of fishermen as the Governor is the head of the Chalias or Cinnamon Peelers. In that capacity I have jurisdiction for the trial and punishment of slight offences".³³³

329 Arbuthnot to Lady Glenbervie 2 Oct. 1801, North MSS.

330 Tolfrey to Arbuthnot 27 Feb. 1802, 1 Mar. 1802, Public Dept.

331 Ibid.

332 16 Dec. 1799, Supreme Court of Criminal Jurisdiction
20 Jan. 1800,

333 Arbuthnot to Lady Glenbervie 2 Oct. 1801, North MSS.

It was in this capacity that Arbuthnot heard the case of the woman whose dignity was affronted by the snobbishness of her neighbour. Appeals on such disputes which North declared had been heard by him ³³⁴ probably originated from courts of the sort described by Arbuthnot. According to Valentia only the Karawa (fishermen) and Salagama castes had Europeans as heads of castes. In the case of the other castes indigenous persons occupied the position of head ³³⁵ of the caste.

There is one other social group whose lot should be considered. These were the slaves. According to Stuart there were a great many people who had been driven out of the territories of the East India Company by famine and forced by insuperably adverse circumstances to become slaves. They now claimed the protection of the East India Company and demanded to be set free from their bondage. Stuart besought the advice of the Madras Government on ³³⁶ how he was to proceed in the matter. Before the Madras Government could send him a reply acting on his own initiative and in a manner which belied the circumspection he had shown in his letter to his superiors Stuart issued a proclamation releasing from slavery all those who could prove that they had been inhabitants of the territories of the East India Company or of his Highness the ³³⁷ Nawab of the Carnatic. The response of the Madras Government was to object to any alteration in the conditions of the slaves on the grounds that "if the island should revert to the Dutch it would answer no good purpose to emancipate the slaves by an act of the

334 North to Wellesley 16 April 1801, Public Dept.

335 Valentia Vol.1 p303.

336 Stuart to Hobart 15 Nov.1795, 8 Dec.1795, 4768, Madras Mil. & Pol.

337 7 Jan.1796, Jaffna Diary.

British Government and if it be ceded to us the question will be more proper for discussion at that time".³³⁸ Hobart also took the view that since the articles of capitulation assured the protection of private property the abolition of slavery would amount to their violation.³³⁹ Stuart thereupon countermanded the earlier proclamation given by him.³⁴⁰

Probably emboldened by Stuart's short-lived legislative measures the Nalluas and Pallavas, two groups of slaves in Jaffna petitioned for release from their subjugated state. The argument they advanced in their favour was that they descended from Indian inhabitants.³⁴¹ A counter-petition was formulated by 1548 persons calling themselves "freeborn inhabitants of Jaffna" which countered the plea of the Nallua and Pallava slaves with the argument that the whole people of Jaffna could claim that their ancestors were at one time or another inhabitants of India.³⁴² The outcome of the matter was that the Pallavas and the Nalluas continued to be slaves.

North held strong views about several aspects of slavery. He did not think that the titles of many of the slave-owners to their slaves would survive a close examination. He also believed that the slaves were treated in a scandalous manner by the masters and of every racial caste or religious group. It was wrong for Stuart to reduce those whom his earlier proclamation had released from slavery once more to such a state. According to tenets of Roman Law the action of manumission even though grounded on false facts

338 Governor-in-Council Fort St. George 1 April 1796, No. 2, 20 May 1796

Bengal Pol. Cons

339 Hobart to Comm. of Inv. 9 June 1797, 4 Aug. 1797, Comm. of Inv.

340 14 Jan. 1797, Jaffna Diary.

341 11 Jan. 1797, " "

342 Ibid.

343

could never be revoked.

Inspired by these ideas North brought about many changes in the law of slavery. Owners of slaves were enjoined not to exceed the bounds imposed by the law in their chastisement of slaves. Whenever it was proved in the law courts that the law had been broken the slaves involved were set free. It was forbidden to buy persons as slaves during the prevalence of a famine. Veddahs (an aboriginal race inhabiting the jungles of Ceylon) who had suffered this fate were to be set free. Persons of the lower castes were not to be treated as slaves because of the humble position they occupied in society. The slaves who had belonged to the Dutch company at Galle were set free. One of them called Bebe who was from Bengal was sent back to her native land presumably at the Government's expence. Two others who were deemed to be suffering from serious mental illnesses were confined to the Material House (a place for housing invalids in Dutch times) without being obliged to work and their warder granted a government allowance for their maintenance. The importation of slaves into the island except for the personal use of the master of a shipping vessel or the passengers thereof also came to be forbidden. While the right to sell slaves within the British domains remained unfettered sale outside those limits was forbidden.

343 North to Wellesley 20 Oct. 1800, Public Dept.

344 Proclamation 19 May 1801, Public Dept.

345 Garrow to North 30 July 1799, 11 Sept. 1799, Rev. Dept.

346 North to Jewell 6 Mar. 1801, Rev. Dept.

347 Ibid.

348 Ibid.

349 Resolution Comm. of Supt. on circuit, 16 July 1800, Comm. of Supt.

350 Ibid.

351 Ibid.

352 Proclamation 15 Jan. 1799, Public Dept.

353 Ibid.

While in these ways North sought to improve the lot of the slaves he resolutely upheld the institution of slavery. At the outset of his tenure of office he issued a proclamation stating "whereas doubts have arisen concerning the Right of disposing of and acquiring slaves in this island it is therefore hereby published and made known that such persons as were considered as slaves by the existing laws of the island on the 1 of this present January shall continue to be the private property of those to whom they belong".³⁵⁴ Later another proclamation was issued warning slaves who had "lately shewn a disposition to mutiny and disobedience of the just authority of their masters and mistresses" that they would be severely punished if they proffered "false and frivolous complaints to us or the the magistrate under us".³⁵⁵

With the slaves ends our account of the British Government's policy towards the various social groups. In all these relationships one uniform policy was not followed. If anything there was a compound of policies. Much of the Government's partisanship was forced upon it. It inherited its proselytizing role from the Dutch Government. The vogue of the Dutch language and North's fear of the machinations of the Madras officials caused a large-scale employment of Dutch officials. The Government insisted upon Sinhalese renters because of its anxiety about the reputed misdeeds of Aumildars and the other Malabar officials. It found itself confronted with Muslim renters because of their greater wealth. By custom the posts in the indigenous section of the administration seem to have been reserved for the Goigama and Vellale castes.

354 Proclamation 15 June 1799, Public Dept.
355 " " 19 May 1801, " "

Some of its partisanship was, however, of its own choosing. The apparatus for propagating Christianity left behind by the Dutch harmonized well with North's zeal for religion. He saw special virtues in the Muslims both as revenue producers and as soldiers. In his mind it was the racial attributes of the Malays which fitted them for the role of soldiers. There was, however, no championing of one social group at the expense of all others. This is not to say that some social groups were not more important than others. Who they were and what criteria we use for measuring their importance is a problem whose discussion will be deferred for the moment.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Welfare Projects

This chapter will concern itself with the study of the British Government's policy revolving around the charity payments made by it, the leper hospital maintained by it and the efforts it made to combat the small-pox disease. From one point of view it will be a story of the encounter between the British Government and the institutions left behind by their Dutch predecessors. Looked at from another angle it is the story of how the British Government went to the succour of the sick and the needy. From a third view point it is the story of how, in order to achieve these aims the British Government transcended the barriers of race, caste and religion to a great extent.

The Dutch Government maintained a charitable institution called the Poor Fund.¹ We ought to infer from the name that its purpose was to minister to the material comfort of the poor. There was also a Widows Fund whose aim was to succour widows who had been left in financial straits by the unforeseen deaths of their husbands.² The Military Fund was a similar institution but with a more limited scope. Its pensions were confined to the widows of soldiers and sailors.³ The Singhalese Poor Fund and the Sunday Fish Rent intended by its founder Commandeur Fretsz to be another source of sustenance for widows were idiosyncratic institutions peculiar to

- 1 Articles of Capitulation 16 Feb. 1796, 23 Feb. 1796, 903-912, Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc.
- 2 Sub-Comm. of Supt. at Galle to Comm. of Supt. 12 July 1801, 19 July 1801, Comm. of Supt.
- 3 Dormieux to Uhlenbeek 15 May 1800, Comm. of Supt.
- 4 Sub-Comm. of Supt at Galle to Comm. of Supt. 12 July 1801, 19 July 1801, Comm. of Supt.

the districts of Galle. There also were a leper hospital and an orphan school which were considered to fall within the same sphere of government. All these institutions were placed under the control of the Deacons. These officials were chosen from the Church Assemblies at every one of the important towns. The income necessary for these institutions was received from a wide assortment of sources. They were entitled to a share of some of the export duties such as those on tobacco and coconuts. The bazaar-master and the ferryman were obliged to pay them a portion from their collections. Piece goods from the Company's warehouses were given them for the use of the orphan-house. The salt-renter also made them a payment in kind. Some of their sources of income are not without interesting features. The duties collected when whimsical alterations in the marriage ceremony were made by the parties concerned such as having the banns proclaimed on days other than Sundays or having the registration performed in their houses accrued to the charitable institutions. Another source of income of this sort was the duty paid by the Muslims and the Chetties whenever they wanted "extra pomp" at their marriages and public feasts. Other sources of income were testamentary bequests, fines imposed by judicial bodies and the payments made by headmen when they received their appointment. Although these sources of income are derived from lists issued by the Deacons of Colombo it is likely

- 5 Cecil Smith to North 20 Feb. 1799, 8 Mar. 1799, Comm. Dept.
6 Articles of Capitulation 16 Feb. 1796, 23 Feb. 1796, 903-912, Madras
Mil. & Pol. Proc.
7 "The Education Establishments of the Dutch in Ceylon" by
J.D. Palm, J.R.A.S., CB, 1846-47 pp 105-152.
8 Stuart to Hobart, 1 April 1796, 26 April 1796, 1709 & 1710, Madras
Mil. & Pol. Proc.
9 Ranzow to Dormieux 20 June 1800, 10 Nov. 1800, Comm. of Supt.

that a similar state of affairs prevailed in the other places.

The Articles of Capitulation considered these various charitable institutions to be among the species of property which the incipient British Administration was bound to preserve.¹⁰ Although it was not stipulated that these funds were to be continued in being or that their management was to be left to the Deacons as was done in the case of the clergymen, our evidence suggests that such was the state of affairs in the pre-North phase. The administration of these funds by the Deacons was in no way fettered. We have North testifying to that effect when he said that "the relief of the poor is conducted by the Deaconries".¹¹ Moreover all that these institutions needed for their function was the initiative of the Deacons. Since the clergymen of the Dutch Reformed Church were assured by the Articles of Capitulation of being continued in their functions,¹² it is likely that they took pains to see that the Deacons and their electors the Church Assemblies who were their functionaries performed their duties satisfactorily.

The establishment of a Committee for Dutch claims was the first encroachment made by the North Government on the administrative preserves of the Deaconry. The function of this Committee was to investigate the validity of the claims of military and civilian employees of the former Dutch Company who purported that they had not received the subsistence owing to them under the Articles of Capitulation.¹³ The assistance of the Dutch clergy in

10 Articles of Capitulation 16 Feb. 1796, 23 Feb. 1796, 903-912, Madras
 11 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1799. Mil. & Pol. Proc.
 12 Articles of Capitulation 16 Feb. 1796, 23 Feb. 1796, 903-912, Madras
 Mil. & Pol. Proc.
 13 North to Committee to investigate Dutch claims 1 Feb. 1799,
 Mil. Dept.

14

the matter was to be solicited. North also informed the incipient committee that he had enjoined all his officials to assist it in its labours and that the Government of Fort St. George had been written to for more information about payments made to Dutch employees during the period of the Madras Administration.

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Eighteen names of former Dutch employees were on one occasion recommended by the Committee for subsistence. Apart from this however the efforts of the Committee seem to have been slight and its career shortlived. One reason for its early demise was the coming into existence of the Committee of Superintendence. We shall shortly make our acquaintance with this body. At the moment it is sufficient to remark that the terms of reference of the Committee of Dutch claims ensured that the nature of its activity would be limited. There could not have been very many erstwhile employees of the Dutch Company whose claims for subsistence had been overlooked by the Madras Administration. The administration of charitable institutions was also at this time within the uninhibited control of the Deacons.

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The Committee of Superintendence was a much more powerful body. Its general terms of reference were to receive the accounts of and examine the administration of all charitable institutions. The Committee tried various methods in order to achieve its objectives. Count Ranzow was appointed as the Commissary of Government to the Assembly of Deacons at Colombo. He was required to participate in all the deliberations of the Deaconry. Although unequipped with

17

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 North to Comm.of Supt.20 April 1800,12 May 1800,Comm.of Supt.

the right to vote at their meetings he was endowed with a power to suspend "the effect of any of their deliberations till the pleasure of Government is known"¹⁸. He was also enjoined to investigate the background of applicants for charity particularly "their moral character, the decent Reputation of their houses and their attention¹⁹ to the Duties of the Religion to which they may belong". These instructions seem to show that in the case of Colombo applications for charity were first received by the Assembly of Deacons of the place and then passed on by them to the Committee for Superintendence.

Arrangements of a different sort were made for the other urban centres. There were sub-committees of Superintendence set up at Galle,²⁰ Trincomallee,²¹ Jaffna,²² Chilauw,²³ Mullaitivu,²⁴ and Negombo.²⁵ It was the task of these committees to examine claims for charitable payments and transmit the names of the persons recommended by them for the ratification of the parent body at Colombo.²⁶ Things seem to have been so arranged that the pleas for charity in these places were proffered to these bodies in the first instance.

The institution of all these committees had the effect of considerably abridging the powers of the Deacons. Their role was reduced to providing information whenever it was sought by the sub-committees of Superintendence about the backgrounds of the

18	North to Count Ranzow	21 April 1800,	Public Dept.
19	Ibid.		
20	3 Oct. 1800,	Comm. of Supt.	
21	10 Nov. 1800,	" "	" "
22	2 Nov. 1800,	" "	" "
23	1 Nov. 1801,	" "	" "
24	9 Nov. 1801,	" "	" "
25	6 Jan. 1802,	" "	" "
26	10 Nov. 1800,	" "	" "

27

petitioners for charity. It was decided to solicit the good offices of the priests of the various religions whenever the Deacons confessed to being unable to perform that function. In Colombo however the assembly of Deacons continued as we have seen to receive the applications for charity in the first instance. Probably the Committee of Superintendence at Colombo occupied as its time was with supervising the work of the provincial sub-committees along with those of other charitable institutions had little time to spare for such a task.

The Deacons were also under attack from another quarter. One of the earliest tasks to which the Committee of Superintendence gave its attention was the examination of the finances of the charitable institutions. Count Ranzow at Colombo and Barbut and Hunter at Jaffna and Galle respectively were enjoined to examine the state of the finances at the various deaconries within their purview. Captain Uhleenbeek was called upon to do the same in relation to the Military Fund. It was the practice to lend out most of the money at the disposal of the keepers of the charitable funds. The Deacons were accustomed to examine "the pawns" given for these monies on 31 October of every year with a view to seeing if the securities were "still alive" and the charity funds in no way jeopardised. According to Dutch law monies not lent were to be deposited with the Government and the charity funds credited with the payment of interest on their behalf. North declared

- 27 Dormieux to Deacons of Colombo 8 Sept. 1800, Comm. of Supt.
 28 Resolution 15 Feb. 1801, Comm. of Supt.
 29 Resolution 12 May 1800, Comm. of Supt.
 30 Ibid.
 31 Deacons of Colombo to Dormieux 23 Oct. 1800, 10 Nov. 1800, Comm. of Supt.
 32 Ibid.
 33 Holland to Dormieux 11 Feb. 1801, 15 Feb. 1801, Comm. of Supt.

himself satisfied with the manner in which the finances had been kept by all the Deacons with the exception of those at Galle and Jaffna.³⁴ The sub-committees of both these places were instructed to make a "strict and severe examination of their accounts".³⁵ As a result of their inquiries several borrowers of money at Galle were threatened with legal prosecution.³⁶ In the case of some of the other defaulters at that place more time was given them for the payment of their arrears of interest.³⁷ The malady does not seem to have been confined to these two centres and North seems to have changed his earlier views about the rectitude of the Deacons in the other places. We are led to this view by the promulgation of a new law forbidding all Deacons to invest charity funds without the prior consultation of the Committees of Superintendence enjoying jurisdiction over them.³⁸ Moreover all those in arrears with the payment of interest to the charity funds throughout Ceylon were threatened with legal action.³⁹ The injunction to the Deacons forbidding their lending of money without the consent of the Committees of Superintendence was renewed later.⁴⁰ The problem of Deacons who did not pay heed to the instructions of the Government and debtors who defaulted in honouring their obligations seem to have continued to harass the British Administration. We are therefore not surprised to learn of a decision of the Government to place the responsibility for administering all charity funds within the unrestricted control of the sub-committees.⁴¹

34 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb.1801.

35 Ibid.

36 Resolution 21 July 1800, Comm. of Supt.

37 Ibid.

38 Lusignan to Deacons of Galle 31 July 1800, 23 Aug.1800, Comm. of

39 Extract from Proceeding of Comm. of Supt at Galle, 9 July 1801, Supt.

40 Resolution 10 Nov.1800. 19 July 1801, Comm. of Supt.

41 Proclamation 30 Dec.1802, Public Dept.

In this way the Deacons were compelled to surrender to the sub-committees an important part of their functions.

North boasted to the Court of Directors that "there does not remain an object of charity within these settlements who does not receive it from your bounty". He explained that the "extensive Bounty on the part of Government" was necessary in Ceylon because "an entire revolution has thrown a multitude of innocent people into a state of the most hopeless indigence. Their number will diminish in the meantime their necessities call for support".⁴² The phrase "an entire revolution" used here seems to refer to the change of government brought about by the establishment of British rule in Ceylon. On another occasion he spoke of "the immense mass of private charity" which had been relieved by the charity dispensed by the Government.⁴³ The amount of persons consisting of men women and children who were subsisted by charity pensions during the time of the North administration numbered 2542.⁴⁴ If we accept the computation made by Douglas⁴⁵ and put the population of Ceylon at the time as one million we see that the proportions of both distress and succour were much less than the exuberant language of North would lead us to believe.

An examination of the grounds on which claims for charity were upheld will help in the understanding of the constrained nature of the Government's bounty. Charity was most often proffered to persons incapacitated by some physical handicap such as

42 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.
 43 " " " " " " 12 Sept. 1800.
 44 Resolution 19 May 1800; Resolution 8 Sept. 1800; Resolution 11 Aug. 1800; 9 June 1800, 14 July 1800; 13 Oct. 1800, 10 Nov. 1800; 23 Aug. 1800, 10 Nov. 1800; 8 Dec. 1800, 12 Jan. 1801; 1 Feb. 1801, 15 Feb. 1801; 4 May 1801, 21 May 1801; 7 June 1801, 14 June 1801; 21 June 1801, 5 July 1801; 19 July 1801, 9 Aug. 1801; 23 Aug. 1801; 6 Sept. 1801; 20 Sept. 1801, 11 Oct. 1801; 1 Nov. 1801, 15 Nov. 1801; 29 Nov. 1801, 13 Dec. 1801; Comm. of Supt.
 45 Chapter IV p

46 insanity, 47 paralysis, 48 blindness and venereal disease. Succour 49
 50 was also given to families whose breadwinners had lost their jobs
 51 and to wives deserted by their husbands. The Government does not
 seem to have tried to alleviate the burden of those whose poverty
 took the form of a low level of income and a low standard of life.

Such an orientation in the Government's policy helps to explain another striking feature in the charity payments of the period. 1927 of the 2542 who received charity pensions were persons bearing Dutch and Portuguese names. As we have seen the military and civil employees of the former Dutch company were entitled to receive subsistence by terms of the Articles of Capitulation. It seems unlikely therefore than many Dutchmen would have figured among those beseeching governmental assistance during North's tenure of power. It is more likely that these persons were Burghers. It was never the intention of the British Government to give preference to the Burgher community among the objects of its charity. Other factors seem to have been responsible for conferring upon them a special status. It is probable that the Burghers were sufficiently acquainted with the Dutch if not with the English language to correspond directly with the Government. The Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims on the other hand would have needed the assistance of a translator who it is difficult to imagine would have performed the service without demanding some sort of remuneration. Moreover as things were in Ceylon it is also likely that the Burghers would have needed the kind of charity

46 Comm.of Supt. on circuit at Galle, 26 July 1800, Comm.of Supt.
 47 Extract of the Proceedings of a sub-committee of Superintendence
 48 Ibid. 8 Feb. 1801, 15 Feb. 1801.
 49 Ibid.
 50 Ibid.
 51 Comm.of Supt. on circuit at Galle 26 July 1800, Comm.of Supt.

offered by the Government more than the indigenous races. It would not have been possible to hear from the Sinhalese or the Tamils a plaint of the type proffered by Wilhelmus Johannes Ernest to the effect that since his father had died while he was still an infant he had not been able to learn a trade. ⁵² With the caste system and the joint family system being what they were a Sinhalese or Tamil youth placed in a similar plight would not have found a lack of mentors or of employment. The distress succoured by the Committees of Superintendence seems to have been of a private kind. The distress which would have incommoded the indigenous society of the time would have been a more general one assuming the shape of famine, drought, floods or the dereliction of the irrigation system. The standard of living prevailing in the indigenous society of the time could not have been very far from the starvation level. That, however, was not the sort of distress to which the Government's charity policy was addressed.

At the beginning it was the intention of the Government to confine their charity payments to Christians. Among the first instructions given to the Committee of Superintendence was that "alms should be distributed by the Deaconries indifferently to Roman Catholics and those who profess the Reformed religions". ⁵³ The heads of other religious organizations were also called upon to see that the charitable institutions prescribed by each of their religions for the relief of their poor were functioning well. In the case of the Muslims the request was addressed to "the most intelligent and respectable among them" ⁵⁴ and in the case of the

⁵² Comm. of Supt. on circuit at Matara. 19 Aug. 1800, Comm. of Supt.

⁵³ North to Comm. of Supt. 20 April 1800, 12 May 1800, Comm. of Supt.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Hindus and the Buddhists to the heads of the different castes. It was assumed by the Government that charitable institutions for the relief of the poor existed in all these religious organizations. In the course of time, however, the Government seems to have given charitable grants from its own coffers to members of all religions. In the event of the Deacons not possessing sufficient information about the applicants for charity the Committee of Superintendence was instructed to turn to the assistance of the priests of the various religions.⁵⁶ The fact that those of the "Mohammedan and pagan persuasion" were included in that list of additional counsellors argues in favour of the conclusion that the recipients of charity had by that time come to consist of members of all religious faiths. Besides those whom we have regarded as Burghers⁵⁷ there were 615 other recipients of charity during this period. This number was made up of Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim persons. The advice given by the Government to the Committee of Superintendence to consult Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist priests for information about the background of would-be claimants for charity suggests the possibility that these persons were members of the Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu religions rather than converts to Christianity. The most plausible reason for the change of policy implicit in these facts is the probability that contrary to the Government's expectations there were no institutions maintained by these religious organizations for the relief of their poor.

We should now turn our attention to other innovations in the charity institutions made by the Government. North intended to

55 Ibid.
56 Resolution, 15 Feb. 1801, Comm. of Supt.
57 p

teach the art of spinning to the female pensioners. He hoped by that means to propagate the "habits of domestic industry" and to reduce the number of the female pensioners. One hundred spinning wheels were constructed in accordance with a model sent by the Madras Government. Johanna Gysberta Godlieb, Sergeant Sharpley, Corporal Singer, Wilhelmina de Jong and Maria Francina Naubert were appointed as instructors. After an experimental period of three months beginning from 1 July 1801, the female pensioners were going to be paid according to the value of the thread produced by them in place of the pensions they were already receiving. Women over sixty years of age and others of a lesser age but afflicted with natural infirmities were not included in the new scheme.

North told Hobart that the implementation of the plan was meeting with success. Since the rest of his remarks contain hope for "a considerable immediate reduction in the number of female pensioners" and not the assertion that the Government would be relieved of all payments of this sort it would be safe to conclude that the success spoken of by North was at this stage of a partial kind.

North claimed to have founded three orphan schools at Galle, Jaffna, and Trincomallee. We learn from the Articles of Capitulation that there was an Orphan House at Colombo in Dutch times. According to Percival there was also a school attached to that institution which had been founded by the Dutch Government.

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- 58 North to Hobart 5 Oct. 1801, Public Dept.
 59 Resolution 8 Sept. 1800, Comm. of Supt; Macdowall to North 13 Oct. 1800, 13 Oct. 1800, Comm. of Supt; Resolution 10 Nov. 1800, Comm. of Supt.
 60 Resolution 21 May 1802, Comm. of Supt.
 61 Ibid.
 62 Ibid.
 63 North to Hobart 5 Oct. 1801, Public Dept.
 64 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.
 65 Articles of Capitulation 16 Feb. 1796, 23 Feb. 1796, 903-912, Madras Mil. & Pol. Proc
 66 An Account of the Island of Ceylon Percival p 133.

All seven girls and fourteen boys in the Orphan House at Colombo bore Dutch names.⁶⁷ The probability is that they were Burgher children. North supports us in this view when he declared that he had opened schools at Jaffna, Trincomallee and Galle "for the lower classes of burghers and for those unhappy infants whom your numerous service has introduced and will introduce into this part of the World with a complexion different from that of their fathers".⁶⁸ He seems in this matter to have been continuing a policy observed by the Dutch Government. It is probable that the orphans of the indigenous races could have found shelter more easily within the frame-work of their society endowed as it was with the institution of the joint-family than burgher children deprived of their parents. This is the only reason we can find to account for this aspect of the Government's policy.

The Government's bounty towards these institutions soon came to be tempered by counsels of economy and expediency. The children of the Orphan House at Colombo were to be taught the stitching of clothes.⁶⁹ This work was "to be executed under the inspection of Mistress Williams".⁷⁰ The Government hoped to establish "a mode of government in the orphan school by which the young persons reared there may by early habits of industry not only qualify themselves to provide their future maintenance by creditable means when they shall be sent out into the world but that even in the meantime their labour may be so directed as to bring in a considerable contribution in aid of the scanty funds of this charity".⁷¹ This measure seems

67 Deacons of Colombo to Dormieux 23 Oct. 1800, 10 Nov. 1800, Comm. of
 68 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801. Supt.
 69 17 May 1802, Public Dept.
 70 Ibid.
 71 Ibid.

to have been restricted to Colombo. Perhaps it was intended to extend its scope to the other orphans' schools in the island after its practicability had been vindicated by a period of experiment in Colombo. Whatever such motives may have been the earning gained by the orphan children by their own efforts does not seem to have reached such proportions in our period as to have enabled the Government to withhold its support altogether.

We ought now to consider the attempts made by the Government to heal the sick. At the foundation of the Committee for Superintendence Christie, Orr and Carnie who bore the designations of Medical Superintendents at that time were instructed to send to that body reports pertaining to the condition of non-military hospitals, expences incurred in treating the sick, the state of health in the country and plans for enhancing it.⁷² The records of the Committee of Superintendence are devoid of any such reports during our period. We are therefore compelled to conclude that the medical establishment envisaged in the Government's instructions had not yet come into being at this time. The Medical Superintendents seem to have devoted a great part of their time to the administration of military hospitals save in the case of small-pox.⁷³ This view of their work is shared by Turner.

The Dutch Government does not seem to have bestirred itself greatly to eradicate small-pox. There is no record of hospitals maintained by it nor of inoculation campaigns. In the lugubrious manner described by Cordiner whenever the disease broke out the inhabitants, were they Government officials or private citizens,

⁷² Resolution 12 May 1800, Comm. of Supt

⁷³ Collected Papers on the History of the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon 1796-1805 Turner p 153.

seem to have fled from the place of contamination leaving the
sufferers to fend for themselves.⁷⁴ The credit for trying to fight
the disease belongs to the British Government. Thomas Christie⁷⁵
was appointed General Inspector of the small-pox hospitals.
Yates, Carnie, Brown and Reynolds were chosen as his assistants
for the Galle and Matara,⁷⁶ Jaffna, Trincomallee and Colombo
districts respectively.⁷⁷ North hoped to establish twelve small-
-pox hospitals. At each of these hospitals there would be a
European medical overseer assisted by a purveyor whose duties⁷⁸
would take the form of providing food for the patients. Hospitals⁷⁹
of this sort were established at Trincomallee,⁸⁰ Galle,⁸¹ Jaffna
and Manaar.⁸² Another hospital was in the process of being built
at Batticoloa.⁸³ Although North declared that fewer than twelve⁸⁴
hospitals "could be of no advantage to the people" those
mentioned by us are the only ones which seem to have materialized
during this period.

North was soon contemplating the introduction of changes in
the structure of the small-pox administration. For a good part of
the year the hospitals were empty. Persons transporting small-pox
patients to the hospitals ran the risk of infection. Moreover
most of the patients were brought to the hospitals at a stage when
their illness was beyond the succour of medicine and even in their

74 A Description of Ceylon Cordiner p 254.

75 Resolution 10 Nov.1800,Comm.of Supt.

76 Ibid.

77 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb.1801.

78 Regulations for small-pox hospitals 29 Mar.1800,Public Dept.

79 Dormieux to Reeder 23 Aug.1801,31 Aug.1801,Public Dept.

80 Yates to Boyd 5 Aug.1801,7 Aug.1801,Public Dept.

81 North to Hobart 5 Oct.1801,Public Dept.

82 Ford to Boyd 30 April 1800,2 May 1800,Public Dept.

83 Resolution 27 Aug.1801,Public Dept.

84 North to Court of Directors 5 April 1800.

cases force had to be employed for the purpose. For these reasons it was thought better to treat the victims of the disease in their homes. The hospitals were to be used for accomodating inoculated children.⁸⁵ A proclamation embodying some of these ideas was issued. When small-pox broke out in a village it was to be cordoned off and put in the charge of personnel from the small-pox establishment with their authority reinforced by the grant of police powers. The headmen of the disease stricken area were enjoined not to leave it on pain of being dismissed from office.⁸⁶ It seems that some hospitals continued to be used for adult patients. Yates complain-⁸⁷ ed that there were too many patients at the hospital in Galle and North informed Hobart that the number of patients at the hospital at Jaffna seldom fell below the number of four hundred.⁸⁸ The inmates of these places were probably those who contracted small-pox as a result of the Government's inoculation campaign. This is a matter which we shall soon examine.

At the beginning it was proposed that small-pox patients treated in hospital should pay two Rds. on their recovery to the medical overseers. The medical overseers however agreed later to forgo this allowance as a means of promoting the popularity of inoculation.⁸⁹ The financial embarrassment of the Government drove North to discuss with Barbut a proposal for charging three fanams⁹⁰ per day from every patient in hospital. By that measure he hoped⁹¹ to meet the expenses of maintaining medical overseers and purveyors.

- 85 Plan for Small-pox Establishment in Ceylon 28 Aug.1800,Public Dept.
 86 Proclamation 7 Sept.1800,Public Dept.
 87 Yates to North 14 Jan.1801,15 Jan.1801,Public Dept.
 88 North to Hobart 5 Oct.1801,Public Dept.
 89 Resolution 16 July 1800,Public Dept.
 90 North to Barbut 10 July 1801,Public Dept.
 91 Ibid.

When Barbut demurred on the ground that it would retard the diffusion of the practice of inoculation North concurred with him and abandoned the idea. The Government's ministrations to small-pox patients therefore continued in our period without any recompense save the prospect of annihilating the dread disease.

It was hoped to secure immunity from small-pox in this period by inoculating as many people as possible with the small-pox germ.⁹² This was however a process attended with grave dangers. North himself remarked that "that experience has proved that the partial introduction of inoculation into any country tends to multiply and extend the disorder without assuaging its violence"⁹³ and the Committee of Superintendence was informed by the Medical Superintendent for the Jaffna districts that the Mudaliyars and headmen of that district "instead of holding out to the natives, the very great advantages from the benefit of inoculation and persuading them to come into the ~~measures~~ adopted by Government impress their minds with an idea of fear and endeavour to ridicule the practice".⁹⁴ Such apprehension on the part of officials of both the European and indigenous sections of the administration prompts us to see whether these inoculations had any deleterious effect. From December 1800 Thomas Christie head of the small-pox administration sent every month to the Committee of Superintendence a list of persons inoculated in each of the districts and a list of persons being treated for natural small-pox in the same areas. From December 1800 to October 1801 4673 persons were inoculated against the small-pox disease. 3097 of these recovered, 79

⁹² North to Court of Directors 5 April 1800.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Reeder to Dormieux 1 June 1801, 7 June 1801, Comm. of Supt.

succumbed to the disease and the remainder continued to receive treatment in the hospitals. In the corresponding period 1670 persons contracted small-pox from natural causes. 823 of these recovered, 267 died and the rest continued in hospital. These figures suggest that a larger number of people were introduced to the disease of small-pox by the process of inoculation than by means of natural causes. Nevertheless they demonstrate that the Government did achieve a measure of success in its attempt to immunize the people from small-pox.

North was delighted when he heard of the success attending the experimental vaccinations with cow-pox being made in England at that time. He wrote to the Court of Directors "for sufficient quantity of the matter necessary for commencing that process." The use of cow-pox by obviating the necessity for hospitalization of patients, a practice followed in the case of small-pox inoculation, would offer the Government a much sought after opportunity for reducing its expences. Although Huskisson joined with Dundas in promising to send North a supply of cow-pox Ceylon continued to be denied its healing powers during our period. The difficulty of devising a satisfactory method of sending the cow-pox over the long journey involved probably accounted for the delay. It finally reached Ceylon from Bombay in the form of several cotton threads steeped in vaccine on 11 August 1802.

- 95 Orr to Macdowall 10 Aug. 1800, 11 Aug. 1800; Reynolds to Macdowall 1 Sept. 1801, 8 Sept. 1801; Christie to Dormieux 2 Jan. 1801, 12 Jan. 1801; Christie to Dormieux 23 Jan. 1801, 14 Feb. 1801; Christie to Dormieux 7 Mar. 1801, 4 May 1801; Reeder to Dormieux 1 June 1801, 7 June 1801; Reeder to Dormieux 20 Aug. 1801, 23 Aug. 1801; Reeder to Dormieux 3 Oct. 1801, 11 Oct. 1801; 21 Nov. 1801, 29 Nov. 1801; 5 Dec. 1801, 13 Dec. 1801; Comm. of Supt.
- 96 North to Court of Directors 26 Feb. 1801.
- 97 Ibid.
- 98 18 April 1801, North MSS.
- 99 Dundas to North 10 Sept. 1801, 10 Sept. 1801, Public Dept.
- 100 Ceylon Under the British Occupation De Silva p 225.

Unlike small-pox the Dutch Government had taken some pains to combat the disease of leprosy. A hospital had been established at Colombo and placed in the charge of the ubiquitous Deacons.¹⁰¹ The practice of paying every patient two fanams a day for his sustenance which was a feature mentioned by the British Administration in later times¹⁰² probably emanated with the Dutch. When the British power was established the hegemony of the Deacons over the leper hospital seems to have been continued as was their power over the other institutions the vicissitudes of whose history we have already witnessed.

Changes in the administration of the leper hospital came with the North Government. The leper hospital was put under the charge of Dr. Sansony.¹⁰³ On all matter relating to the administration of the hospital he was required to seek the advice and guidance of the Committee of Superintendence.¹⁰⁴ His relationship with the Deacons was never clearly defined. When reforms in the diet of the leper patients whose nature we shall discuss were introduced the Deacons expressed their opinion on the matter.¹⁰⁵ On this occasion they seem to have acted in an advisory capacity. This could well have been the role assigned to them in the administration of the leper hospital. It would have been a position not unlike that occupied by them in relation to the other charitable institutions.

Dr Sansony complained that before his time inadequate treatment was given to the patient - "Nothing is prescribed here for the principal disease which is left to itself, neither is any

101 North to Court of Directors 30 Aug. 1800

102 North to Macdowall 28 Aug. 1800, 8 Sept. 1800, Comm. of Supt.

103 Resolution 9 June 1800, Comm. of Supt.

104 Ibid.

105 Deacons of Colombo to Macdowall 14 July 1800, 14 July 1800, Comm. of Supt.

medicine given inwardly not even as a palliative and the only treatment the patient receives is a common plaster applied to his ulcers".¹⁰⁶ Sansony treated the patients with arsenic which according to North was a cure "recommended and brought to light by the late Dr William Jones".¹⁰⁷ While North was hopeful that some good would result from the new venture¹⁰⁸ Sansony reported that the arsenic had shown its "baneful influence on the constitution by inducing some very alarming spasmodic symptoms".¹⁰⁹

Another reform introduced by Sansony was to end the practice by which the patients prepared their own food. His proposal that the patients should be nourished by the person in charge of the hospital "in order that the food most suitable to the Malady and treatment to follow may be chosen"¹¹⁰ was approved by North.¹¹¹ It was also decided to increase the allowance of some patients chosen by Sansony according to their condition from two fanams to two and a half fanams per day. The quality of the food received by them was also to be improved to include "choice nourishment such as fowls, fresh fish etc".¹¹²

Persons suffering from other illnesses such as epilepsy,¹¹³ venereal disease¹¹⁴ and incorrigible beggars afflicted with various disorders were also sent to that insitution.¹¹⁵ We ought therefore to see with what care the non-leper patients were kept separate from leper patients in that place. The Committee of Superintend-

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- 106 Sansony to Dormieux 28 May 1800, 9 June 1800, Comm. of Supt.
 107 North to Court of Directors 18 Feb. 1801.
 108 Ibid; North to Hobart 5 Oct. 1801, Public Dept.
 109 Sansony to Dormieux 23 Jan. 1801, 9 Feb. 1801, Comm. of Supt.
 110 " " " 23 June 1800, 14 July 1800, Comm. of Supt.
 111 North to Macdowall 29 July 1800, 11 Aug. 1800, Comm. of Supt.
 112 13 Oct. 1801, Comm. of Supt.
 113 7 June 1801, Comm. of Supt.
 114 4 May 1801, Comm. of Supt.
 115 Dormieux to Mylius 30 June 1800, 14 July 1800, Comm. of Supt.

-ence advised Sansony that the four patients not afflicted with leprosy "should be kept as separate as possible from the rest till some detached apartment for their lodging and treatment can be provided...." ¹¹⁶ Sansony replied that he had placed the non-leper patients "in the three most distant rooms the doors of which being walled up and others opened on the opposite side it will thereby become entirely a separate lodgement" ¹¹⁷. When Sansony suggested that a section of the leper hospital should be converted into a separate establishment in order to accomodate persons with venereal disease North instructed the Civil Architect to see to it that this was done. ¹¹⁸ In these ways the Government showed its appreciation of the urgent need to keep apart the leper patients and the non-leper ones. The medical establishment in Ceylon at the time was as we have seen in a rudimentary state consisting mainly of a leper hospital and small-pox hospitals. It is to this deficiency that we must attribute the tendency to accomodate persons suffering from other illnesses in a leper hospital.

Each leper patient was paid an allowance of two fanams a day. ¹¹⁹ We have seen this allowance increased in the case of some patients to two and a half fanams per day. ¹²⁰ No monetary recompense seems to have been exacted from the patients. In the case of Johanna Maria Ludowyksz wife of the surgeon Christian Dirksz who was admitted as a leper patient together with her son who was deemed to be in "a state of idiotum" it was suggested that payment should be sought from them "if they can afford it". ¹²¹ No such demand was

¹¹⁶ Resolution 8 Sept. 1800, Comm. of Supt.
¹¹⁷ Sansony to Dormieux 10 Nov. 1800, 10 Nov. 1800, Comm. of Supt.
¹¹⁸ Resolution 27 Oct. 1801, Public Dept.
¹¹⁹ North to Macdowall 28 Aug. 1800, 8 Sept. 1800, Comm. of Supt.
¹²⁰ p
¹²¹ Resolution 14 July 1800, Comm. of Supt.

made from poorer patients.

The doors of the leper hospital seem to have been thrown open to all sufferers whatever was their race, religion or caste. A list of patients compiled by Sansony seems to include members of all races ¹²² and if the representatives of any particular community are absent from it their omission can only be attributed to the fact that they had been spared from the visitation of the dread disease.

The examination of the leper administration brings to an end our study of the Government's welfare projects. The title "welfare projects" was not chosen without misgiving because of the connotation enjoyed by the word "welfare" in relation to governmental activity in modern times. When we reflect, however, that the Government's benevolence was extended wherever possible to all races religions and castes and that it was not tempered by a demand for monetary recompense to any appreciable extent we feel that whatever credit accrues to the British Administration from such a term is something to which it is entitled.

Conclusion

It was not so much their ignorance of philosophy which prevented the British in Ceylon in this period from taking on the mantle of philosopher-kings as the lack of that absolute power which Plato was so ready to bestow on the creatures of his imagination. Several causes contributed to place the British in this position of weakness. They did not possess adequate knowledge of the indigenous languages and of the European languages there was greater knowledge among the inhabitants of Dutch and Portuguese than there was of English. The British Government was also continually harassed by the lack of money. As things were military victory by itself was not enough of a mandate with which to govern the country. There were several entrenched social groups whose power remained unimpaired in the immediate aftermath of the British conquest. There were the headmen, who were drawn from one caste and also held their positions by hereditary right. Almost every administrative function required their co-operation. There were the former employees of the Dutch Company, whom the British were induced to employ because by that means they could forgo paying them the subsistence promised them by the Articles of Capitulation and because the vogue of the Dutch language in the country required their employment. There were also the Muslims, who held a position of importance by virtue of being the leading traders and renters.

From the very beginning the British were unable to make full use of the land-tenure system. They had to use the incentive of

money to have performed those services which the holders of the service lands should have done for them gratuitously. Andrews' attempt to abolish the service tenure system, suppress the Mudaliyars and increase the state share of the produce from the land to that of one half was short-lived. Where Andrews made a frontal assault on the land tenure system North was more circumspect. He tried to encourage individual ownership and the registration of land. His efforts, however, met with as little success as those of Andrews. We cannot help but see the hand of the headmen behind both these failures and the revolt of 1797.

Unlike the Madras administrators North tried to develop agriculture. He looked on the communal ownership of land as its bane. He tried to circumvent the old social relationships which encumbered service-tenure lands by means of grants of waste land and the encouragement of single ownership. These policies of his did not enjoy much success. The importance that North accorded agriculture is to be gathered from the fact that he wanted to keep the forests as sources for land grants rather than as timber preserves.

When it came to export and import duties the Madras administrators regarded the drain of specie and the fact that the balance of trade was against Ceylon as being her main problems. They saw a remedy in the expansion of trade. With this aim in mind they removed all export duties. As the research of the Committee of Investigation established these hopes were disappointed. North did not look upon export and import duties or even the tolls within the

country in this comprehensive way. He saw them as sources of revenue rather than as instruments for promoting trade and would not interfere with them. His approach was pragmatic.

The Dutch system of price-fixing was ended in the period of the Madras administration. In this matter North had no hesitation in following the guidance of his predecessors. This attitude of both the Madras administrators and North had the effect of putting an end to whatever control had been imposed on the speculation of private traders by the Dutch Government.

The Madras administrators, as we have seen, also tried although in a desultory way to check high prices by sponsoring the government sale of scarce articles. North was less disposed to engage in such activity. The preponderant position among these traders seems to have been held by the Muslims.

In spite of the prompting of the Court of Directors North was at no great pains to develop trade with the Kingdom of Kandy. His remarks show that he considered that trade to be already sufficiently developed. He also feared that its further expansion would aggravate the drain of specie from the British dominions. Above all he seemed to look upon it from a political viewpoint. He hoped by its means to bring the Kingdom of Kandy within the control of the British.

During the period of the Madras administration the aim of the government was to reproduce Ceylon's commercial products as much as possible within the East India Company's dominion. This was a time when the feeling that the British tenancy of Ceylon would be of a short duration prevailed strongly among the British administrators.

North refused to look upon the question in this way. He thought that the Government should make every effort to develop Ceylon's commercial products within the island itself. In his case however practice fell far short of precept. His approach was once more pragmatic. He tried to develop the cultivation of cotton only in order to relieve himself of some of the expence of maintaining his female pensioners. His efforts to cultivate betel-nut within the Maritime Provinces was probably influenced by a wish to weaken the pre-eminent position held by the Kingdom of Kandy in that trade. The inspiration for the development of coir arose from the importunity of the Court of Directors. With a gamblers disposition he placed all his hopes on the success of the pearl fisheries. North also ignored the desire of the Court of Directors to have more products besides cinnamon placed on a monopoly basis. As we have seen there were several articles which he could have suggested for this purpose. While the conversion of new products into monopolies might have enriched the Company it would have had the immediately disastrous effect for North of depriving him of his precious sources of revenue in the form of the income from the duties. He also probably did not wish to alienate the traders who were already engaged in the sale of these articles by a measure which would deprive them of their profit. His indifference to the wishes of the Court of Directors should be explained on these grounds.

In the period of the Madras administration the handling of the charitable institutions and the leper hospital was left to the care of the Deacons who had exercised that function under the Dutch.

North however by means of Committees of Superintendence brought the administration of these institutions within the control of the fully-fledged officials. He tried to overcome the barriers of caste, race and religion in his distribution of charity and treatment of leprosy. As we have seen, however, the grounds on which charitable payments were made would have brought more relief to the Burghers than to the members of the indigenous races.

North's attempts to eradicate small-pox by means of inoculating the small-pox germ although fraught with the peril of spreading the disease were attended by a measure of success.

Both the Madras administrators and North were very anxious to do nothing that would offend caste prejudices. It was insisted that all the headmen should be chosen from the Goigama and Vellale castes. Even schoolmasters were drawn from the same castes. Caste distinctions were observed in the manner in which the small-pox patients were housed in the hospitals and children admitted to schools. When fortuitous circumstances elevated Pasqual a member of a low-caste to high office the British Government thought it wise to bring about his dismissal.

While paying the Dutch clergymen their stipends as they were bound to do by the Articles of Capitulation the Madras administrators left the manner in which they performed their functions completely to their own discretion. North, on the other hand, made it the business of the state to spread Christianity although he was not very fastidious as to whether its teachings consisted of doctrines of the Church of England or of the Dutch Reformed Church. In this way a very close connexion was established in this period

between Christianity and the British state.

The Madras administrators found a convenient way of collecting taxes in the form of the system of renting practiced by the Dutch. They adopted it with little alteration. North used the system of renting on a wider scale. He also added to the number of the renters' dependents who would be held liable by their principal's contract. The dependence on the system of renting emphasizes the administrative weakness of the British in this period. The Muslims figured prominently among these renters.

Feelings of pity for those whom the fortunes of war had reduced to a wretched state, the vogue of the Dutch language and an opportunity for reducing expenditure led the British to employ the Dutch as administrators. In this matter there was little to distinguish the attitude of North from that of his predecessors.

There was something more compelling in the dependence of the British Government on the headmen. As members of the leading castes they would have held the most important positions that the caste system could confer. The fact that the right to office was determined by the hereditary principle would have ensured the hegemony of a group of families. Theirs was also the knowledge of all the complexities of the system of land-tenure. It is difficult to imagine that the British could have ruled Ceylon without the co-operation of this class. When Andrews made ~~that~~ foolhardy attempt Ceylon was convulsed by a revolt which lasted for a year. Although the British congratulated themselves on the imminence of victory success attended their arms only when De Meuron promised to restore the headmen to their rank and to their possessions.

Military victory belonged to the British. But the political triumph was that of the Mudaliyars. Davy Robertson in his report to Glenbervie made this very point. The British came, saw and conquered but the Mudaliyars won.

If the British were forced to recognize the old indigenous society it must be remembered that they recognized it only in the form in which it had been amended by the Dutch. They supported not only the caste system and the rule of the headmen but also Christianity. It was the Dutch legacy that they were forced to accept.

Because of their dependence on the co-operation of various social groups British rule at this time took the form of government by consent. The British administrators may not have intended to be democratic but that was the only way in which they could survive as rulers. They may have come as all-conquering soldiers but they could remain only as wise politicians. If events in Europe determined the manner of the British arrival the manner of their staying was determined very much by their hosts.

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